SEPG 2007

SPIN Panel

Agenda

Atlanta SPIN - Abi Salimi

Philadelphia SPIN - Chad Haggerty

Boston SPIN - Donna Johnson

Great Lakes SPIN - Mary Watson

Austin SPIN - Jeff Smith

Each SPIN will cover

Introduction

Steering Committee and Planning

Funding and Sponsorship

Speakers and Locations

Meetings and Logistics

Communication and Feedback

Membership

Collaboration with other Groups

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Atlanta SPIN – Introduction

Founded in 1998 as a non-for-profit organization to provide a forum for the free and open exchange of software process improvement experiences and ideas

The Atlanta SPIN provides the following to its members:

- Educational opportunities in software development and software process improvement
- Networking opportunities

http://www.AtlantaSPIN.org

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Steering Committee and Planning

12 person steering committee consisting of a president, a vice president, two secretaries, a treasurer, and directors in charge of various committees.

- Develop yearly plans
- Meet every month to discuss the status of plans, the logistics of the upcoming meeting, and unexpected items

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Funding and Sponsorship

A budget of about $6000/year

Sponsorships - tiered

- Contributing Members ($50), Gold Sponsors ($750/year), Platinum Sponsors ($1250/year), Meeting Sponsors ($100/meeting), and Signature Event Sponsors (price varies)

Example benefits to the sponsors, depending on the level of sponsorship.

- logo and URL link on SPIN home page
- name & link in SPIN announcements
- name mentioned at SPIN meetings/events
- feature in newsletter
- dissemination of relevant announcements/offers from the company to our members

Steering committee location are provided free of charge by a local company

We manage our own Web site.

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Speakers and Locations

Speakers are identified through

- conferences
- local contacts
- requests from individuals interested in speaking
- Software Engineering Institute
- call for abstracts
- past speakers
- sponsors providing speakers
- steering committee members giving talks

Locations

- a local company (free)
- hotels (discounted rate)

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Meetings and Logistics

12 meetings a year

Before meeting:

- Identify speaker, ask for and review the abstract, and invite the speaker
- Announce the meeting through e-mail, posting on our web site, and other mechanisms
- Ask for the full presentation and produce hard copies
- Prepare name tags, feedback forms, and award certificate
- Order food

During the Meeting

- Greet people as they come in to meeting and have them sign in
- Welcome members, thank sponsors, & recognize board members
- Distribute the survey and the presentation material
- Make announcements
- Introduce the presenter and the topic
- Present the award to the presenter
- Ask about job openings and those looking for a job
- Collect the sign-in sheet and the completed surveys
- Announce next month's meeting
- Give a free book away

After the meeting, the following tasks typically take place:

- Clean and organize the room
- Post the presentation on the Web site
- Process survey feedback and provide to the steering committee for review
- Provide survey feedback to speaker

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Communication and Feedback

Web Site

- Monthly meeting announcements
- SPIN mission, steering committee members, previous presentations
- Joining and sponsoring SPIN
- Resources

E-mail

- Monthly meeting announcements
- Availability of discounted trainings (opt out option)

Brochures

- Announce signature events
- SPIN mission and activities

TechLINKS, a local magazine/Web site

- Promoting SPIN activities and events

Member Feedback

- Feedback forms after every meeting
  - Rate the meeting and speaker

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Membership

800+ members

Online registration and removal

Automatic population of an Excel spreadsheet

Periodic maintenance of the file to address failed messages

Members automatically receive the meeting announcements

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Collaboration with Other Groups

Agile Atlanta

Atlanta Quality Assurance Association (AQAA)

Local Universities

SEI

- Enabling communication between SPIN founders and possible participants and among regional SPIN groups
- Creating, maintaining, and distributing the SPIN Directory on the SEI Website
- Distributing the SPIN start-up information to anyone who is interested in forming a SPIN
- Arranging for members of the SEI technical staff to speak at SPIN meetings
- Implemented a SPIN Meeting Calendar to assist presenters looking to speak at SPIN meetings
- Hosting a SPIN BoF at SEPGs
- Others… http://www.sei.cmu.edu/collaborating/spins/

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Atlanta SPIN – Challenges and Lessons Learned

Losing about 15-25 percent of volunteer steering committee members

  l Other members have to step in

Lack of consistent participation in gene

ral meetings

  l Decided on fixed locations

No shows at the monthly steering committee meeting

  l Set expectations at the beginning and enforce

Atlanta SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Philadelphia SPIN – Introduction

Founded in 1997 as a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Philadelphia Section of the American Society of Quality (ASQ) with the objectives to

- Raise the level of awareness of the importance of software quality
- Present different techniques of implementing software quality concepts
- Provide a forum for best practice exchange
- Have local members speak of success stories that have lead to productivity improvements
- Be a resource to software professionals
- Create a networking opportunity with other software professionals

http://www.asqphilly.org/spin/SPIN.html

SPIN Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Steering Committee and Planning

6 person steering committee consisting of a Chair, Treasurer, Programs, Publicity, Membership, and Scribe.

- Meet yearly for planning the program year
- Meet after meetings and use e-mail throughout the program year

5 meetings a year, planned based on membership feedback

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Funding and Sponsorship

Small budget from ASQ

- Enough to cover costs of food and beverages

Sponsorships

- No formal sponsorship program, but considering it for the future

- Locations are provided free of charge by local companies

- ASQ provide Web-site free of charge for communication to our members

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Speakers and Locations

Maintain list of past and future speakers and locations

Utilize the following resources for speakers and locations

- Member suggestions via feedback forms

- Committee Members contacts

- Call or e-mail presenters of various conferences who are local

- Call or e-mail presenters who have presented at nearby SPINs (NY,NJ, Boston)

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Meetings and Logistics

Five meetings a year (September, November, January, March, and May)

- Pre-meeting
  - E-mail announcement, and e-mail reminder (-2 days)
  - Create sign-in sheet, badges, speaker certificate and gift
- Meeting
  - 6:00 PM Check-in/Networking/Light Dinner
    - Sign-in sheet, badges
  - 6:30 p.m. Presentation
  - 7:30 p.m. Networking
  - 8:00 p.m. Close/Feedback Form
- Feedback Analysis
  - Meeting review and new speaker and locations

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Communication and Feedback

E-mail and the web-site are primary communications methods

- Members e-mailed only for meeting announcements and updates to the web-site (job opportunities and training)
- Web-site contains information on program year, steering committee, and presentation of past meetings

Member feedback

- Yearly on-line survey
  - Overall satisfaction, topics of interest
- Feedback forms after every meeting
  - Rate the meeting, speaker and location opportunities

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Membership

450+ membership maintain in Excel file with name, e-mail, company and history of attendance

New members join by e-mailing PhillySpin@yahoo.com, manually added to file

Member is removed when e-mail bounces twice.

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Collaboration with Other Groups

SIG of Philadelphia Section of ASQ

- Joint meeting once a year
- Small Budget

SEI

- Sharing across SPINS and speakers

Northeastern SPINS

- Philadelphia, NJ, NY, and Boston
- Meet monthly to share and collaborate

Philadelphia SPIN

Philadelphia SPIN – Challenges and Lessons Learned

Steering committee volunteers

- Strong commitment, but as a volunteer time allocation can be difficult

Speakers and Locations

- Utilize your membership professional contacts and company resources

Philadelphia SPIN

Boston SPIN – Introduction

Founded in 1992 as the third SPIN organization

- First open meeting held January 1993
- Planning committee composed of industry, government, private industry, academia, and consultants (about 8 people)
- Created a charter for the Boston SPIN organization and established it as a non-profit organization
- Established Boston SPIN as an independent group with funding to be solicited from sponsor companies and organizations
- "SPIN year" runs from September through June

http://www.boston-spin.org

Boston SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Boston SPIN – Steering Committee and Planning

Boston SPIN Committees

- Steering Committee: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and two At-Large Members (elected by membership at June meeting)
- Standing Committees: Membership, Program, Library, Newsletter, Roundtables (chairs appointed by steering committee)
- Ad Hoc Committee: Nominating (appointed by steering committee)
- Volunteers: Publicity, Web Designer, SEI Contact

Boston SPIN Committee runs the organization

- Committee consists of Steering Committee members and chairs of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees
- Meetings held monthly before the open meeting
- Frequent email exchanges between meetings
- Program Committee, with input from the Steering Committee, plans the programming and handles speaker arrangements

Boston SPIN – Funding and Sponsorship

Sponsors support the Boston SPIN

l Services support:

- Meeting space, reproduction, web site hosting

l Monetary support:

- Varying levels of monetary support dictate term of sponsorship (2-year, 1-year, 3-month, 1-month)
- Sponsors receive recognition of support at open meeting and through the newsletter, email meeting announcements, and web page

Boston@SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Boston SPIN – Speakers and Locations

Speakers

- Potential sources to find speakers: local volunteers, well-known local and national names, well-known companies, conference speakers, authors, SPIN Committee contacts and suggestions, membership suggestions (feedback forms and surveys), roundtable facilitators

- List of past speakers maintained on web site

- Program chair maintains list of possible future speakers based on suggestions and volunteers

Popular meetings

- Well-known national speakers

- Well-known local speakers

- "Hot" topics (Agile, Outsourcing, CMMI)

Less popular topics

- Audience participation (10 minute madness Q&A the experts)

- Tales of the past

Boston SPIN programs: http://www.boston-spin.org/talks.html

Boston@SPIN
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Boston SPIN – Meetings and Logistics

Meeting criteria

- Set time, day of the month, and location
- Meeting location: central location, large enough to hold 120+ people, refreshment area, resource table, roundtable and committee meeting space
- Meeting announcements: minimum of 2 emails to membership, other local organizations, newspapers, web site

Ten meetings per year

- Roundtables and networking precede open meeting
- Open meeting format: announcements (slide presentation), speaker presentation, Q&A, closing (gift presentation, book raffle)

Meeting attendance:

- Range: 40-120; typical: 70
- Factors affecting meeting attendance: weather, job market, speaker, topic

Boston SPIN – Communication and Feedback

Communication to membership

- Membership list: meeting announcements, Boston SPIN-related information, surveys
- SPIN Plus list: courses, other group meetings, tools, non-SPIN surveys
  - anything SPI related that does not pertain directly to Boston SPIN
- Web site: upcoming meeting notice and roundtable topics, schedule for SPIN year, past programs and newsletters, speaker slides, job opportunities, sponsors
- Resource table at all meetings: conference and training notices, vendor advertisements, slide handouts

Feedback from membership

- Email surveys: satisfaction with meeting location/ facility, SPIN itself, and services offered by SPIN; ideas / suggestions for programming and ways to improve SPIN
- Feedback forms at meetings: feedback on evening's speaker and presentation, request for volunteers, general comments on SPIN itself, suggestions for speakers and topics

Boston@SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Boston SPIN – Membership

Membership list

- Maintained by Membership Chair
  - List validated periodically: emails sent out to all members requesting verification to stay on list
  - Bounced emails removed after repeated attempts over time

- 900+ members

- List is proprietary: only membership chair and backup committee member have access to list

New members email: withall@rcn.com

Boston @ SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Boston SPIN – Collaboration with Other Groups

Joint meetings with other local organizations

- ASQ – meeting hosted by ASQ, programming by Boston SPIN
- SQGNE – panel discussion, hosting organization alternated

Advertisement of meetings

- Meeting announcements exchanged with other organizations for distribution to membership
- Links to other local organizations maintained on SPIN web site and other local organizations link to Boston SPIN
- Publicity sent to variety of papers and organizations

SEI

- Announcements from other SPINs

East Coast SPINs

- Philadelphia, NJ, NY and Boston
- Monthly conference call to share and collaborate

Boston SPIN – Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Finding sufficient volunteers
- Recent challenge in finding new meeting space
- Maintaining a high level of meeting attendance (translates to interest)
- Dealing with non-performing or poorly performing volunteers

Lessons Learned

- Constantly look for new ways to attract members (organization needs to evolve)
- Communicate with the committee and keep the committee informed
- Keep committee meetings short and succinct; start and end open meeting on time
- Attract speakers with practical knowledge to offer to the attendees (case studies or examples) and/or speakers with national recognition

Boston @ SPIN
Software Process Improvement Network

Great Lakes SPIN – Introduction

Founded in 1997 as a forum for the free and open exchange of software process improvement experiences and practical ideas.

The GL-SPIN is non-profit and promotes achieving higher levels of process maturity and software quality through an active program of networking, publications, recognition of excellence and mutual support.

The GL-SPIN provides the following to its members:

ı Ten monthly technical seminars (at no charge)

ı Monthly networking opportunities.

ı Educational opportunities in software development and software process improvement

ı http://www.gl-spin.org

Great Lakes SPIN – Steering Committee and Planning

A 10 person all-volunteer steering committee consisting of a Leader, Co-leader (assistant), Treasurer, Membership Liaison, Government Liaison, Network Liaison, Meeting Liaison, Sponsor Liaison, Web-master Liaison, Training Coordinator, University Liaison.

- Develop yearly plans

- Meet every month to discuss the status of plans, the logistics of the upcoming meeting, and unexpected items

Great Lakes SPIN – Funding and Sponsorship

A budget of about $3000/year

Sponsorships - tiered

- In-Kind Sponsorship (rooms, paper supplies, servers, etc.), Silver (Meeting) Sponsor - $500, Gold Sponsor - $1,000 per year, Palladium Sponsor - $2,500 per year and Platinum Sponsor - $5,000 per year

Example benefits to the sponsors, depending on the level of sponsorship.

- Training registration cost reduction for public training program.
- Logo published monthly on the back of the meeting tri-fold
- Company Sponsorship published on web site for the year of sponsorship (link to sponsor's web site if desired).
- Company Sponsorship and logo monthly on the GL-SPIN General Membership Meeting 'Welcome' Sign.
- Certificate of Recognition

Steering Committee and general meeting locations are provided free of charge by a sponsoring university

We manage our own web site via a host service provider.

Great Lakes SPIN – Speakers and Locations

Speakers are identified through
- Conferences and local contacts
- Recommendations from membership
- Requests from individuals interested in speaking
- Software Engineering Institute
- Past speakers
- Sponsors providing speakers
- Steering committee members giving talks

Locations

- 2006 at a local university (room free, catering at cost)
- Prior to 2006 – alternated between two local universities (room free, catering at cost)

Great Lakes SPIN – Meetings and Logistics

9 general meetings a year – Sept thru May

Steering Committee meets 11-12 months – additional months for planning

Presentation roster planned (in-advance) for the year and commitment from speakers obtained as much as possible for the meeting date.

Before meeting:

- Announce the meeting through e-mail, posting on our web site, posters posted at specified locations and other mechanisms (primarily email notices)
- Prepare feedback forms
- Order food and confirm room and facilities availability.

During the Meeting

- Greet people as they come in to meeting and have them sign in
- Welcome members, thank sponsors, & recognize board members
- Distribute the feedback survey
- Make announcements
- Introduce the presenter and the topic
- Q and A session and meet the presenter
- Collect the sign-in sheet and the completed surveys
- Announce next month's meeting

After the meeting, the following tasks typically take place:

- Clean and organize the room
- Post the presentation on the Web site (if/when available)
- Process survey feedback and provide to the steering committee for review
- E-mail "Thank you" to the speaker

Great Lakes SPIN – Communication and Feedback

Web Site
- Monthly meeting announcements
- GL-SPIN Charter, mission, steering committee members, previous presentations
- Sponsorship information, industry events, resource links
- Working groups

E-mail
- Monthly meeting announcements
- Availability of discounted trainings (opt out option)

Tri-folds (distributed monthly)
- Announce general meeting speaker, topic and location
- SPIN mission, web-link, Steering Committee and meeting dates & speakers

GLITR, a local, daily e-zine
- Promoting SPIN activities and events

Print posters posted at specified locations

SEI Web Page and (email) announcements

Member Feedback
- Feedback forms at the conclusion of every meeting
  - Rate the meeting and speaker – solicit recommendations for improvement

Great Lakes SPIN – Membership

450+ members representing over 125+ entities (multiple insurances, government and military, academia, various commercial industries) in multiple disciplines (IT, engineering, quality)

Feedback Summary and membership and attendance charts generated in an Excel spreadsheet and distributed to the Steering Committee following each general meeting.

Great Lakes SPIN – Collaboration with other Groups

Working groups, affiliates and collaboration organizations:

- SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) Embedded Software J-Committees (Software standards development and review organizations)

ASQ Working Group

- Collaborative efforts for the Michigan Quality Conference

Information Assurance Professionals Association

SEI See http://www.sei.cmu.edu/collaborating/spins/

Great Lakes SPIN – Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Finding and maintaining sufficient volunteers
- Finding and maintaining meeting space
- Maintaining a high level of meeting attendance – both steering committee and general meeting

Lessons Learned

- Constantly look for new ways to attract members
- Organization needs to constantly evolve and grow
- Communicate with the committee members
- Keep committee meetings short and succinct
- Attract speakers with practical knowledge to offer to the attendees (case studies or examples) and/or speakers with national recognition to keep members interested

Austin SPIN – Introduction

Founded in the early 1990s based on the SPIN model from the SEI at Carnegie Mellon University, with close ties to University of Texas (UT) Austin and the Software Quality Institute.

- Economic downturn and new UT policy drove the group to become independent around 2000
- The group drives to be an agnostic and intense forum for all issues around software and IT... Which has us often collaborating with other groups (ASQ, AITP, PMI, AJUG, ADNUG, STC) and supporting a range of process thinking (Lean, Agile, Six Sigma, CMMi, RUP). We strive to extend the toolset and understand the range of methods and tradeoffs
- A local resource to professionals and a Leader in driving wider Collaboration for the Austin Technical Community

http://www.austin-spin.org

Austin SPIN – Steering Committee and Planning

Board currently includes:

President - Team facilitator driving primary goals, team collaboration, strategic direction, community relationship building

Vice President – General board member, special projects

Two Program Chairs - Generally charged with finding speakers and developing content

Communications Chair - Acts as Webmaster(bringing on a backup), general board contributor

Secretary - Announcements, scribe, general board contributor

Two Adjunct Members - General board member, special projects

Board Meets As Needed (typically monthly; end of month) - Looking at use of videoconference call as alternate meeting mechanism

Ten Group Meetings a year (2nd Thursday) - Based on user feedback, opportunities, planning

Austin SPIN – Funding and Sponsorship

No budget – Lots of sweat; We have contemplated making the leap to a formal non-profit, dues, sponsorship model, but currently all volunteer and able to meet thru the graciousness of hosts, free speakers, and collaborators

Meeting places have included UT Pickle Center, Dell Parmer Facility, Applied Research Labs

Yahoo group for announcements to members; **Donated web space** and redirect for Web site

Austin SPIN – Speakers and Locations

Maintain list of past and future Speakers

Utilize the following resources for speakers and locations

- **Member suggestions** via feedback forms
- Committee members **contacts**
- Call or e-mail **local presenters** of various conferences, meetings (PMI, ASQ, …)
- **General Outreach** thru networking and cold calls
- Create panels with **other groups**, board members as moderators (sometimes speakers)

Location is usually fixed, except for joint meetings(negotiated location)

Austin SPIN – Meetings and Logistics

Ten Monthly meetings a year (Skipping December and June)

Pre-meeting

- E-mail announcement, e-mail reminder, webpage update, newspaper, others(word of mouth, fliers, other groups and web pages)
- Create sign-in sheet, PMP/ASQ PDU continuing ed forms, fliers, questionnaires

Meeting

- 6:30 p.m. Sign-in/Networking, Badges
- 7:00 p.m.   Meeting Opens
- 7:20 p.m.   Presentation
- 8:30 p.m.   Q&A
- 9:00 p.m. Building Exit

Austin SPIN – Communication and Feedback

E-mail, Web site are primary communications methods; We also rely on **fliers, outreach to other groups, newspaper, word of mouth**

Members **e-mailed** for meeting announcements, some related job opportunities, training, conferences, events with other groups

Web site contains announcements, board, bylaws, charter, links, presentation archives (more planned)

Member feedback

- Yearly on-line **survey**: Overall satisfaction, topics of interest
- **Feedback forms/questionnaires** after every meeting: Rate the meeting, content, speaker; Ask how you heard of us; Ask for volunteers

Austin SPIN – Membership

600+ Membership maintain in **yahoo group** with name, e-mail (looking to create application for badges, more contact and employer info, attendance history)

New Members join by e-mailing **President@austin-spin.org** , manually added to group

Member removal when e-mail bounce twice or by request

Group membership grows through word-of-mouth, opportunistic emailing

Austin SPIN – Collaboration with Other Groups

Past Joint Meetings have included

- Joint ASQ/ASPIN Meeting

- Joint STC/ASPIN Meeting

- A few Joint ASPIN/IEEE Computer Society Meetings

Large **Joint Event** – **Austin Interop (All Day Event)**

- Austin Java Users Group, Austin Chapter IASA, IEEE Computer Society, Austin .NET User Group, XML Users Group, ASPIN

Working Directly with **SEI** on this event

Austin SPIN – Challenges and Lessons Learned

Volunteer efforts and donated space(especially in a good location) are the most precious commodities

Collaboration (versus competition) with other groups pays off

Speaker and content quality keep things happening; Give them something they can use tomorrow, new ideas and techniques, depth

Interactive sessions and panels produce solid and varied content

Lots of interest from **job-seekers and networking opportunity**… but you have to set the hook to grow the organization

Lots of things help – Speaker awards, book give-aways, SWAG, name badges, themes and identity, outreach, challenging the audience and inviting opposing views

Contact Information

Atlanta SPIN

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Philadelphia SPIN

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Boston SPIN

- Donna Johnson, johnson@logos-intl.com

Great Lakes SPIN

- Mary Watson, Mary.Watson@us.contiautomotive.com

Austin SPIN

- Jeff Smith, visionary1usa@gmail.com

References

Presentation materials and examples

- ʟ Sample documents to support SPIN activities
  http://www.sei.cmu.edu/collaborating/spins/spins.start.html

- ʟ SEI - http://www.sei.cmu.edu/collaborating/spins/spins.html

- ʟ Atlanta - http://www.AtlantaSPIN.org

- ʟ Philadelphia - http://www.asqphilly.org/spin/SPIN.html

- ʟ Boston - http://www.boston-spin.org

- ʟ Great Lakes - http://www.gl-spin.org

- ʟ Austin - http://www.austin-spin.org