Fast Track to Higher CMMI Maturity Levels:
Lessons Learned from Five Initiatives

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Overview

- Whether your organization is Level 1, Level 5 or someplace in between, achieving higher CMMI maturity levels is often a major investment in time, capital and other resources.
- Realizing an acceptable rate of Return on Investment (ROI) often depends on accelerating the speed at which new processes can be implemented and adopted.
- Here’s how five organizations in commercial, government and outsourcing sectors outperformed industry benchmarks to increase process maturity in a remarkably short time.
Agenda

- Why this Study is Important
- Five Case Studies
- Successes
- Common Practices
- Tips for Accelerating the Pace of Change
Reality

Historically, 75-85% of all organization transformation initiatives fail in whole or in part to deliver promised business benefits.

For over 25 years studies confirm this.
Each year, executives of approximately 90% of fortune 500 companies will undertake a business initiative that requires organization change. Some of these will be CMMI initiatives. Less than 25% of these projects will show a return on investment.
Although Change Management and Business Process Improvement have been around for more than 40 years, overwhelming evidence suggest that methods based on these models simply aren’t reliable. There must be a better way.
Alternative Methods

By using breakthrough process improvement methods, these projects beat the odds.

Here is what you can do to increase the success rate of your next project
Five Case Studies
The Projects

Commercial Sector
- 3 SE organizations within one IT department totaling 450 people, 1 VP, 6 directors, 19 projects

Outsourcing Sector
- 2 organizations within a 90 person outsourcing facility providing IT development services to the insurance and US defense industries

Federal Government
- 1 project within an agency of the federal government

All projects faced high risks
Case Study 1: Commercial Sector

- Initial assessment as L1
- Given 2 years to assess as L2
- 6 Change resistant, hostile project teams, demoralized management
- Previous consultant asked to leave due to non-performance
- 18 months into corporate project
- Committed internal resources
- Dwindling budget
Case Study 2: Outsourcing

- Initial assessment as L1
- *Given 6 months to assess as L3 (Scampi Class B) by major client or lose contract*
- Highly committed management
- No internal resources available
- Limited budget
Case Study 3: Agency of Federal Government

- Initial assessment as L1
- Need to make changes to comply with periodic GAO audits
- Leadership focus directed to other mission critical issues
- Initial lack of progress due to general lack of interest
- Small team of internal change agents
- Assisted by external consultants
What Went Right
Summary of Outcomes

**Case Study 1:**
- L1 to L3 in 18 weeks (Scampi B)
- Assessed as L3 11 months from project start (Scampi A)

**Case Study 2:**
- L1 to L3 in 14 weeks (Scampi B)
- Assessed as L3 9 months from project start (Scampi A assessment grouped with other organizations)

**Case Study 3:**
- Continuous process improvement (validated by GAO audit)
- Date of L2 rating uncertain
Comparison of Project Outcomes

Elapsed time to Sustainable Process Maturity

CS1-L3: L1 to L3 in 18 Weeks

CS1-L3: L1-L3 to 14 Weeks

CS3-Steady Progress toward L2: ???
Case Study 1: Project Methodology vs Other Approaches Used During Initiative

Elapsed time to Sustainable Process Maturity

RCAT*  18 Weeks

Traditional Business Process Improvement  24+ Months

OD Intervention with Change Management  ???

*RCAT=Rapid Change Attainment Team
Case Study 1: Project (after 6 Months) vs Total Organization After 24 Months (L2 only)

- Affected organization of 350 SEs
- All IT groups in 1700 person corporation including target group
Common Practices
Common Practices

- Understood Risk
- Focus on what works best here
- Best performance and local best fit rather than on global best practices
- OSSP reverse engineered from multiple instantiated PDSPs
- Non-project work performed by consultants so the “real work” of business could go on throughout the transformation period
Common Practices

1. Use of standard methodology designed for Rapid Acceleration of Change

CMMI Change Agents who would never develop software without a PDSP frequently attempt organization change without a quantitatively proven transformation process.
2. Culture Change concurrent with Process Change
Common Practices

3 Organization training on how to reengineer corporate culture

4 Cultural assessments occur throughout the process improvement process

*Culture coaching helped teams overcome barriers to change*
Common Practices

5 Multi-threaded, iterative implementation cycles matched to the organization’s natural change cycles

14 KPAs were institutionalized in 18 weeks (or less) once planning was complete
Accelerating the Pace of Change
Critical Success Factors

1. Expected corporate benefits aligned with actual CMMI benefits
2. Leadership was stable and remains engaged throughout initiative
3. One qualified consulting group led the change initiative
4. Consulting group had ready access to leadership throughout program
5. Core transformation team was trained on methods & tools used for culture change
6. 4-10% organization work effort was committed to transformation activities
Contact Us for more information on these and other projects

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**Tips to Accelerate Pace of Change**

**Design business rules to be used:** Understand the constraints of organization culture on employee behavior and design new business rules, processes, and technology to accommodate those constraints.

**Limit disruption to business:** When it is a choice between business as usual and organization change, business always wins. Minimize disruption by implementing changes in tiny chunks.

**Include the right people on your team:** Some people are keepers of culture. They can tell you “what works around here”. Listen to them.

**Understand the comprehension of your sources:** Typically, people who work in organizations do not explicitly understand the basic rules of culture or how culture encourages them to behave. Success depends on knowing more about culture than employees do.

**Design, develop and implement agilely:** Organization culture is constantly changing. Tap into this “native” change ability to propel your project to success.

**Minimize negative culture responses during implementation:** Small bits of change delivered incrementally over time cause less change resistance than larger chunks.
Apply culturally reinforcing techniques: Culture will not push back when processes and technology support the status quo by conforming to existing organization rules.

Limit your stay inside the organization and work fast: Organizations tolerate outsiders temporarily and attacks outsiders who refuse to comply. Most change agents are immune to attack for 6 months. After that they either leave or they become an agent of culture (rather than an agent for change).

Be suspicious of corporate rule books: Although culturally sanctioned behavior is pervasive and persistent, it is rarely documented. Most rule books document behaviors management wishes were present and want to enforce.

Understand employee motivation: Persistent behaviors, especially crazy, dysfunctional or destructive behavior continues because culture rewards them.

Be wary of initiatives under new management: New managers, especially those brought in to run a change program, often leave within 2 years. (Average time in position is 21 months). Plan your project accordingly.
Ms White is a business enterprise architect specializing in the design and rapid implementation of IT and corporate transformation programs. With over 20 years experience in a wide range of organization transformation projects she has led strategic engagements resulting in the rapid implementation of CMMI, agile software development methods, ISO and six-sigma. She is the author of Change on Demand: The Science of Turbo Charging Change in Millennium Corporations (2007).