Lessons Learned in Overcoming Resistance to CMMI

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Rick Hefner and Ferol Lewis
Northrop Grumman Corporation
rick.hefner@ngc.com
Background

• Successful change requires the right combination of strategy, structure, and support

• Your chances of success depend on your current culture, the desired end state, the resources available, the past response to change, and your ability to recognize and address resistance

• This presentation will provide practical approaches, tools, and techniques for overcoming resistance in your organization
The IDEAL℠ Model

The Non-I-DEAL Model

- Management sets a goal of achieving “Level x by date Y”
- Change agent assigned the task with a fixed budget
- The projects listen politely (perhaps) to the change agent’s plans and schedules, but either ignore the requests for action or provide a minimal response
- Change agent develops plans and schedules
Topics

• **Necessary ingredients for change**
  - Why people resist change
  - Effective strategies for addressing resistance

• **Keys to leading the change**
  - Management support
  - Influence without authority
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- **Physiological**
  - Physical survival needs: food, water, shelter, etc.

- **Safety/Security**
  - Economic security, freedom from threats

- **Social (Belonging)**
  - Being part of a group, identification with a team

- **Ego (Esteem)**
  - Recognition from others, prestige and status

- **Self-Actualization**
  - Opportunities for innovation and creativity, learning and creating
Why Do People Resist Change?

I want to stay where I am because...
...my needs are already met here
...I have invested heavily here
...I am in the middle of something important

I do not want to change because...
...the destination looks worse than where I am now
...there is nothing to attract me forwards
...I do not know which way to move
...the journey there looks painful
...the destination or journey is somehow bad or wrong
...I do not trust those who are asking me to change

I am not going to change because...
...I am able to ignore the change
...I have the power to obstruct the change
Why Do People Resist Change?
Perceived Loss of Personal Power

Here’s the new practices you need to start implementing.

so they must not be essential industry best practices!

then I’ve been wrong…

and I haven’t been performing them…

If these are essential industry best practices…
Reaction to Change Perceived as Negative: Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle

- **Immobilization**: Initial paralysis at hearing the bad news
- **Denial**: Trying to avoid the change
- **Anger**: Frustration, outpouring of bottled-up emotion
- **Bargaining**: Seeking for a way out
- **Depression**: Final realization of the inevitable
- **Testing**: Seeking realistic solutions
- **Acceptance**: Finally finding the way forward
Reaction to Change Perceived as Positive

![Graph showing mood versus time with phases of Uninformed Optimism (Honeymoon period), Informed Optimism, and Informed Pessimism.](image)
Willingness to Change

- Early adopters are motivated by perceived benefits
- Late adopters are motivated by avoiding pain

Source: Geoffrey A. Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 1999, used with permission
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Different Practitioners Need Different Arguments

- (I, EA) Explain how the practice adds value
  - Identify a situation in which this value would be realized

- (EM) Where possible, provide data
  - It is difficult to find perfect data, which “proves” the value
  - Even perfect data may not convince a skeptic

- (EM) Identify others who have seen the (qualitative) value of this practice

- (LM) Couch the value in ways that appeal to the practitioner:
  - Reduced risk, addressing a customer issue, reduced workload, etc.

- (LM) Show ways that the practice can be done easily

- (LM) Suggest the practitioner try it and see

"Crossing The Chasm“, Geoffrey Moore
Communicate the Key Messages

• **The change is driven by proven, industry best-practices**
  - Adoption is about learning how to apply these practices to our work
  - The practices may feel awkward and have limited value until we learn them
  - It’s OK to make mistakes – we will get better over time

• **Improvement involves short-term investment for long-term gain**
  - Improving is essential to meeting our business goals

• **These improvements are an enabler (not a guarantee) of success**
  - Other aspects (people, technology, customer relationship, etc.) are equally important

• **When the entire organization is improves, everyone’s job becomes easier**

• **Continuous improvement is a way of life**
Address Fear of Failure

• The risk of change may be seen as greater than the risk of standing still
  – Making a change requires a leap of faith

• The perceived loss of personal power
  – I’m seen as competent now, but in a new culture…

Effective Strategies

• Clearly describe why the situation favors change
  – Business goals, WIIFM

• Make it clear initial mistakes are expected and will be tolerated
  – Create forums for asking and answering questions

• Show people how they can be effective in the changed environment
Encourage and Support

• Practitioners may feel they don’t have time to learn new ideas

• Practitioners may need role models
  - Most change agents don’t need role models, because they easily imagine new situations

Effective Strategies

• Ensure adequate resources during the learning curve

• Search out and publicize good examples and successes
  - Set up pilot programs that model the change

• Encourage the next step in the change process

• Ensure management takes accountability for action
  - Must change short term priorities to achieve long term results
Ensure Accountability

• Adopting and sustaining improvements is about each practitioner learning and performing the new behaviors

• The role of management in cultural change is to hold people accountable for the new behaviors and conduct

Effective Strategies

• Change agents can enable management by:
  - Helping them have a clear vision of the new culture
  - Identifying inappropriate behavior
  - Providing tangible, objective measures of adoption/sustainment
Help Them Accept Change

• People may fear hidden agendas
  – Late Adopters often look for messages in how resistance is handled

Effective Strategies

• Set up mechanisms for obtaining feedback
  – Some will prompt genuine improvements
  – Some will be based more on fear and anger than substance

• Be honest about setbacks and negative impacts

• Management must enforce change in the face of objections
  – Consensus will almost never be reached
  – Communicate that objections and uncertainty does not eliminate the need for change - "The dogs may bark, but the caravan goes on."
Management must:

• Understand the key messages

• Be willing to take actions to reinforce them

• Provide resources to support/sustain process improvement efforts

• Set expectations that essential project functions will be funded and processes will be followed
  - Project planning, estimation, tailoring, CM, QA, etc.

• Support process improvement and sustainment, rather than passing appraisals

• Reward mature processes development and sustainment rather than individual heroics
  - Tell me how you will reward me, and I’ll tell how I will behave
When Faced with Unexpected Resistance

Stop

- The natural tendency of many people is to respond immediately, with an authoritarian or angry response
- This may generate sympathy for the resisters, galvanize the resistance, and/or make it covert

Look

- Pause, assess the situation, and diffuse the emotion
- What is the person’s emotional state?

Listen

- Is this a misunderstanding or a legitimate concern?
- What does their message say about their underlying beliefs, values, goals, perceptions, potential, triggers?
Principles of Influence

• **All interpersonal behavior involves exchange**
  - “Paying” others for what we request; being paid for what we do
  - You have influence, insofar as you can give others what they need, in exchange for what you need

• **To have influence, you must:**
  - See the other person as a potential ally
  - Clarify your goals & priorities
  - Diagnose your ally’s goals & priorities
  - Possess resources to help your ally
  - Negotiate the exchange
Possible “Currencies” to Exchange

**Inspiration**
- Vision
- Excellence
- Moral/ethical correctness

**Task**
- Resources
- Challenge/learning
- Assistance
- Organizational support
- Rapid response
- Information

**Position**
- Recognition
- Visibility
- Reputation
- Importance
- Contacts

**Relationship**
- Acceptance
- Understanding
- Personal
- Gratitude
- Comfort

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Barriers to Seeing the Value

“Sometimes you have to believe it to see it.”

• Practitioners may not have worked in an environment where the practice was performed

• Practitioners may have worked in an environment where the practice was performed poorly or in a non-value-added manner

• Believing the practice is an improvement may require an action the practitioner is not willing to take
  – Awkwardness of doing something new
  – Admit they’ve been doing it wrong
  – Loss of personal power when perceived to be an expert in the current approach

“The Fundamental Value of Every Single CMMI Practice”, R. Hefner, Wednesday, 9:15-10:00am, Mesa Verde
Summary

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