Refocusing Appraisals on Achieving and Sustaining Improvement

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Background

• A CMMI appraisal is an expensive and time-consuming affair

• Too often, those involved lose sight of the real objective of CMMI – to improve project/organizational performance!

• This presentation will examine approaches for structuring an appraisal that results in true project performance improvements

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Appraisal Objectives

• The goal of the appraisal process area to:
  – Develop an accurate assessment against the model
  – Build organizational understanding and buy-in
  – Promote further process improvement

• Appraisal activities and style should be focused on ensuring these goals (and any others the sponsor may have) are met
Factors to Consider in Selecting an Appraisal Style

• An organization’s culture
  – Guides decision making
  – Provides identity for members
  – Amplifies commitment
  – Guides employee behavior
  – Provides justification for actions

Types of Cultures

The Clan Culture
A very friendly place to work where people share a lot of themselves. It is like an extended family.

The Hierarchy Culture
A very formalized structured place to work. Procedures govern what people do.

The Adhocracy Culture
A dynamic entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. People stick their necks out and take risks.

The Market Culture
A results oriented organization whose major concern is with getting the job done. People are competitive and goal-oriented.

How do these organizations react to... Being measured? Success? Failure?

Key Decision Factors

• Formal or informal?
  – How formal is information sharing in the organizational?
  – How does formality effect perceived accuracy? Fairness?

• Interview-focused or evidence-focused?
  – Is the culture documentation intensive?
  – How distributed is knowledge and decision making?

• Educational or audit?
  – How knowledgeable is the organization about model implementation?
  – How will misconceptions be perceived?

• Cooperative or adversarial?
  – How are external views perceived?
  – What value can an external view provide?
SCAMPI Activities

Day 1 → Day n

Parallel Activities:
- Perform Document Review
- Perform Follow Up Interviews

Conduct Opening Brief → Interview Project Leads → Consolidate Information

Interview Middle Managers → Consolidate Information

Interview Functional Area Representatives → Consolidate Information

Prepare Preliminary Findings → Present Preliminary Findings → Prepare Final Findings

Conduct Executive Briefing → Present Final Findings → Appraisal Wrap Up
Opening Briefing

An opportunity to set expectations…

Promoting Further Process Improvement

• Explain why following CMMI is important to success of the business

• Explain the improvement activities that led up to the appraisal

• Present the background and pedigree of the appraisal team members (“Why should I value what you say?”)
  – Address any potential conflicts of interest
  – Explain team consensus

• Explain that the purpose of the appraisal is to identify further improvements
  – Ensure sponsor reinforces
Document Review

A opportunity to demonstrate depth of the review…

Promoting Further Process Improvement

• Evidence requests should make it clear what the team is looking for and why current evidence is not adequate (avoid “bring me a rock”)
Interviews

An opportunity to demonstrate the objectivity of the appraisal...

Promoting Further Process Improvement

• Ensure you are interviewing the thought leaders

• Explain that interviews are looking to confirm understanding of written evidence

• Ensure interviewees are relaxed and do not feel that they are in a pressure chamber
  – “I do not know is an acceptable answer”

• Ensure everyone has a chance to provide the information they feel is key to understanding their implementation
A opportunity to build understanding and buy-in…

Promoting Further Process Improvement

- Presentation should focus on education
  - Here’s why this is a weakness… Here’s what the model expects and why…

- Give every opportunity to refute the findings
  - A finding perceived as inaccurate destroys credibility and buy-in

- Draft findings should identify gaps in direct evidence for each project
  - Avoid “Some projects do not perform…”
    (Note: This does NOT violate confidentiality, if done correctly)
  - No need for discussion, except to ensure findings are understood
  - Anyone who supplied evidence can participate, not just interviewees
### Findings Worksheet

**L2RM: Requirements Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Practice Text</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Affirm</th>
<th>Inst Char</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Information Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP 1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an understanding with the requirements providers on the meaning of the requirements.</td>
<td>Project A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Build 4 requirements added without normal review process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project B</td>
<td>Project B</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project C</td>
<td>Project C</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>TIM #2 did not follow defined process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SP 1.2</td>
<td>Obtain commitment to the requirements from the project participants.</td>
<td>Project A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>Efficient Process for obtaining commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project B</td>
<td>Project B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>No commitment obtained.</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project C</td>
<td>Project C</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Note: Not yet reached in life cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Manage changes to the requirements as they evolve</td>
<td>Project A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Alternate Practice: Customer Provides CCB for Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Immediately after the interview (consolidation), the mini-team completes the Findings Worksheet together.
- Direct column: **X** if evidence of the practice was reviewed and appropriate; **blank** if not.
- Affirm column: **X** if the direct practice was positively affirmed in the interview; **blank** if not.
- Note any weaknesses and any evidence requested; send out evidence requests.
- Before team consolidation, each mini-team provides a recommended ratting (e.g. LI, PI) for each instantiation (do not rate the organization).
What causes a weakness, when the projects/organization have prepared for the appraisal (Verification mode)?

| The projects/organization understood they had a weakness, but hoped the appraisal team wouldn’t find it | Accuracy is key for buy-in |
| The projects/organization didn’t review their evidence carefully enough | Finding weaknesses provides further opportunities for improvement |
| The projects/organization misunderstood the intent of a practice | Must be able to explain intent |
| The projects/organization don’t value compliance with the practice | Must be able to explain the value |

Reference: Rick Hefner, “Becoming a Highly Effective Appraiser”, 2012 CMMI Technology Conference and User Group, Thursday Nov 8, 10:30am
Final Findings Presentation

A *opportunity to start the next round of improvements*…

**Promoting Further Process Improvement**

• **Continued focus on education**
  – Here’s what else you can do to improve…
  – Here’s how addressing this will improve performance…

• **Ensure sponsor reinforces**
  – Set expectations early in planning, remind during Executive Briefing
Summary

• The appraisal style will greatly affect the appraisal accuracy, project/organization understanding and buy-in, and especially the perceived value

• Appraisers should be adopt practices which promote continued sustainment and further improvement