

PMI-CTT Cracker Barrel Discussion Groups – Nov 19, 2008

Process Improvement: “Who’s process is it, anyway?”

Facilitator: Dave Bright

**Participant Introductions: 3 minutes:**

**Topic Introduction: 2 minutes:** Process improvements usually face some resistance to change.

Here are a few reasons:

- A project manager may be unable to absorb the cost within a single project
- Improving it may be beyond the project manager’s control
- The ownership of the process may be unclear, or shared
- Suggesting that it be improved may put the process owner on the defensive

**Example:** An IT department owns the process of implementing changed objects from QA to production. This same process can be invoked during an emergency production fix, a discretionary user-requested change, a mini-project too small for a project manager, or a major software release. Thirty percent of the time, when table changes are made, problems occur where manual intervention is required to complete the implementation. IT “owns” the process, but it also “belongs” jointly to all of the stakeholders: operations, other IT departments, project managers, the PMO, ... ultimately the entire organization. (ref: ITIL 3.0 and CMMI-svc. for related info)

**Discussion: 10 minutes:** Form groups of two (me if needed) and complete these steps:

1. List one or two processes that you think needs improvement in an organization (not necessarily your current one). Select ones which: multiple projects depend on for successful completion; are outside of your control to improve on a given project; there is already a general consensus that it needs improving; and you can think of small incremental improvements that may be made quickly and generate some kind of return.  
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2. Try to list and rank two or three aspects of the process that can be improved independently and incrementally, and estimate what the costs and benefits of each would be.  
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3. List the major stakeholders of the process (**Who’s process is it, anyway?**), and determine how you can get their feedback or influence their perception of your incremental improvement list in a positive way, without putting anyone on the defensive.  
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4. Determine what program exists, or what next project may be undertaken, that may be able and willing to fund the improvement, and how much they will save on one or more iterations of the new improved process.  
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5. Determine what metrics can be used later to determine your success factor (e.g. “30 percent of the time” in the example).  
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6. What methodologies can you draw upon to help you achieve your goals (e.g. ITIL, PMI / OPM3, CMMI, Six Sigma, TQM, BPR etc.)?  
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7. How may some of these methodologies be promoted so they are perceived as quality improvements, as maturity models, as financially beneficial, and thus worthy of incorporating into the organizational capabilities?  
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**Roundtable Discussion: 15 minutes (including two minute warning bell):**