



No One Really Reads Processes

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HELPING YOU ACHIEVE YOUR STRATEGIC BUSINESS GOALS

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Background



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- **Few people read the directions to their cell phones or their GPS**
 - How then, are we going to motivate an organization to read and follow processes consistently, day after day?
- **People forget to record their time on their timecard each day, yet we expect them to collect, analyze, and report on a whole cadre of metrics?**
- **Just like there are only a few people who actually like to write processes, there are only a few people that actually like to read processes**
- **But most people don't like to do either and most people won't**
- **Are our expectations realistic?**
- **Processes will be hard to comply with if they don't take into consideration:**
 - How people actually work
 - The organization's culture (e.g., Large defense contractor vs. small agile shop)
- **I will discuss proven techniques that facilitate engineers to do the unimaginable: follow the process.**

Scope

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- **In this presentation we will cover the importance of and provide examples of:**
 - Making it easier to follow the process than not
 - Streamlining processes and metrics so that they are a transparent part of the workflow



Instructions for Our Electronic Gadgets

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- **We want instructions for our electronic gadgets (cell phones, GPS') that are:**

- intuitive and concise
- easy to locate and use
- at the right level of abstraction (not too ambiguous, and not too prescriptive)



- **Think of cell phone "Quick Start" instructions: they aren't usually long and verbose, they are usually one sentence instructions with pictures**
- **But we only use them if we can't figure it out ourselves by pushing the buttons**
- **These same principles apply to processes if we want them to have a chance of being read**
 - intuitive and concise
 - easy to locate and use
 - at the right level of abstraction (not too ambiguous, and not too prescriptive)
- **There is nothing in CMMI or ISO that states processes need to be hard to read or really, really long and complicated**

Templates and Examples (1/2)

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- **Templates, forms, worksheets, and examples work well**
- **Think of forms that you fill in; it's easy when each step (each field) is explicit rather than subject to interpretation**
- **Templates are good, but people sometimes forget to:**
 - **Think through the details when making it project-specific**
 - **Filling in risks, lifecycle specifics, training, ...**
 - **Fill in the placeholders when making it project-specific**
 - **"All projects at THEBESTCOMPANYEVER, LLC follow AMAZING. <Put project name here> is a <specify development or maintenance here> project and will follow the AMAZING lifecycle, see below."**

Templates and Examples (2/2)

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- When using templates, the process describes who uses it, when it is used, and how it is used (the standard process EITVOX (Entry, Input, Tasks, Verification, Output, Measures))
- Specific process steps refer to templates:
 - GOOD:** “Develop a WBS (Work Breakdown Structure) using the WBS template located at http://www.ourintranet.com/wbs_template”
 - BAD:** “Develop a WBS and make sure it includes all of your tasks”
- Each manager may describe their “tasks” very differently, some with the appropriate level of detail, and others not
 - Reduce the likelihood of this happening by being specific

Shrink-wrapped Processes



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- **Using shrink-wrapped processes (one size fits all, downloaded from the web or purchased) doesn't work well**
 - They are at too high of a level
 - Each manager must re-invent the wheel and they don't have time
- **Processes must reflect the unique work and personality of the organization**

Rules of Thumb for Usable Processes (1/2)

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- **Appearance counts, image is everything**
 - Use your organization's standard logos, headers and footers
 - Use proper grammar
 - It should be of the quality of a deliverable or of marketing material
- **Titles are important - call it what it is, take out the guesswork**
- **Use standard naming conventions that do what they are supposed to do, but are simple as possible and consistent with your organization's standard naming conventions**
- **Don't call them by CMMI terms, call them by your business process names**
 - **BAD:** PP/PMC process
 - **GOOD:** Project Management process or similar
 - It is good to have CMMI compliant processes, this doesn't mean using its vocabulary verbatim, it means **using the CMMI concepts using your organization's vocabulary**
 - Processes *comply* with CMMI, but CMMI is transparent to the end users



Rules of Thumb for Usable Processes (2/2)

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- **Manage and control the changes, the releases and the pilots**
 - Early releases and pilots have their costs and challenges
 - Uncontrolled changes ruin the process group's image and chances for success
- **Ensure CMMI compliance and usability with your consultant before, not after releasing the processes**
 - Avoid pulling processes back and re-releasing them
- **Assign the right people to the process development teams and train them not just in CMMI, but also in writing processes**
 - The “right people are the ones that know the processes, e.g., a project manager should write the PM processes
- **Make sure process writers have the time to write the processes**
 - Someone who is already working 55 hour weeks, may be the “right” person but not have the time



Process example 1 something sort of likeish do you think, or not

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Quality Assurance process/procedure/Guideline

All projects can do good work by following the policies/guidelines if you want when you want There are a lot of studies showing its good to do it write the first time so you should really do it. Its good document test and tell them to customer. See requirements guideline information.

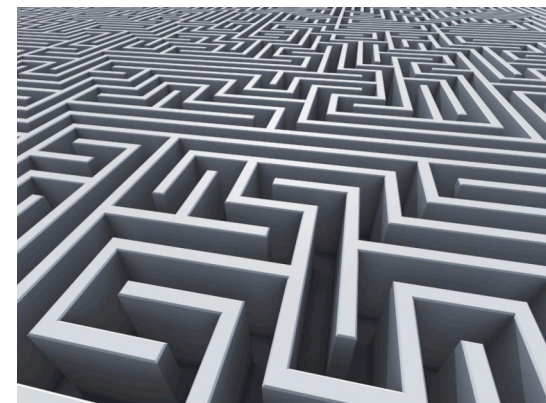
Would you follow this or would you not bother reading any more?

Any questions?

Where Are The Processes Located?

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- A list of policies, processes, guidelines, etc. in a directory or on a website is not very helpful
- In fact, it has the opposite effect
- Without any context folks won't know what to look for, what it's called, what document it would be in, and will **GIVE UP**
- They may be **self-motivated to (versus *having* to) find it and follow it**
 - But they will still give up!
 - Even type A's will give up - it's taking too much of their time!
 - Type B's will do it if you tell them the exact link
 - Type C's don't care enough to chase it down



Work Flow Tools/Graphics

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- **Strive to make following the process almost as simple as using a cell phone**
- **Some types of workflow tool is far better than a webpage with a list of the processes and procedures**
- **Most companies are not about to invest in the Ferrari of Workflow tools, and may be more than happy to use a homegrown Chevrolet model**
 - While this may not be pretty and fast, it will still get a project to follow the process from cradle to grave
 - Make the links to the documents clickable right on the graphics



Workflow Suggestions (1/2)

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- **Develop relatively simple workflows of all business disciplines that are expected to follow the methodology, not just software development**
 - Software maintenance
 - Systems
 - Services
- **Put the workflows on the organization's intranet**
 - Use in-house existing tools, e.g., SharePoint, Wikis, etc.
 - Have graphics folks modify it for visual appeal and user interface simplicity
- **Ensure there are multiple ways ("views") of getting to the desired process**
 - by life cycle phase
 - by role
 - by task
- **Each view includes links to policies, processes, templates, worksheets, and the good ol' list**
 - Use the directory and list as the last option for locating processes, not the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd

Workflow Suggestions (2/2)

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- **Provide training on the work flow and the methodology, which consists of policies, processes, worksheets and templates, etc.**
 - Use tests and quizzes, provide feedback
- **Mandate the workflow be followed as the way of doing business each day**
- **Audit project work against the workflow (methodology)**
 - This is an audit against the CMMI compliance since the methodology is now (should be) CMMI compliant
- **Provide one-on-one mentoring and review sessions, don't expect everyone to do it right the first time**
- **Provide incentives for following the workflow/methodology**
- **Help senior management lead the way**



Work Flow Tools Summary

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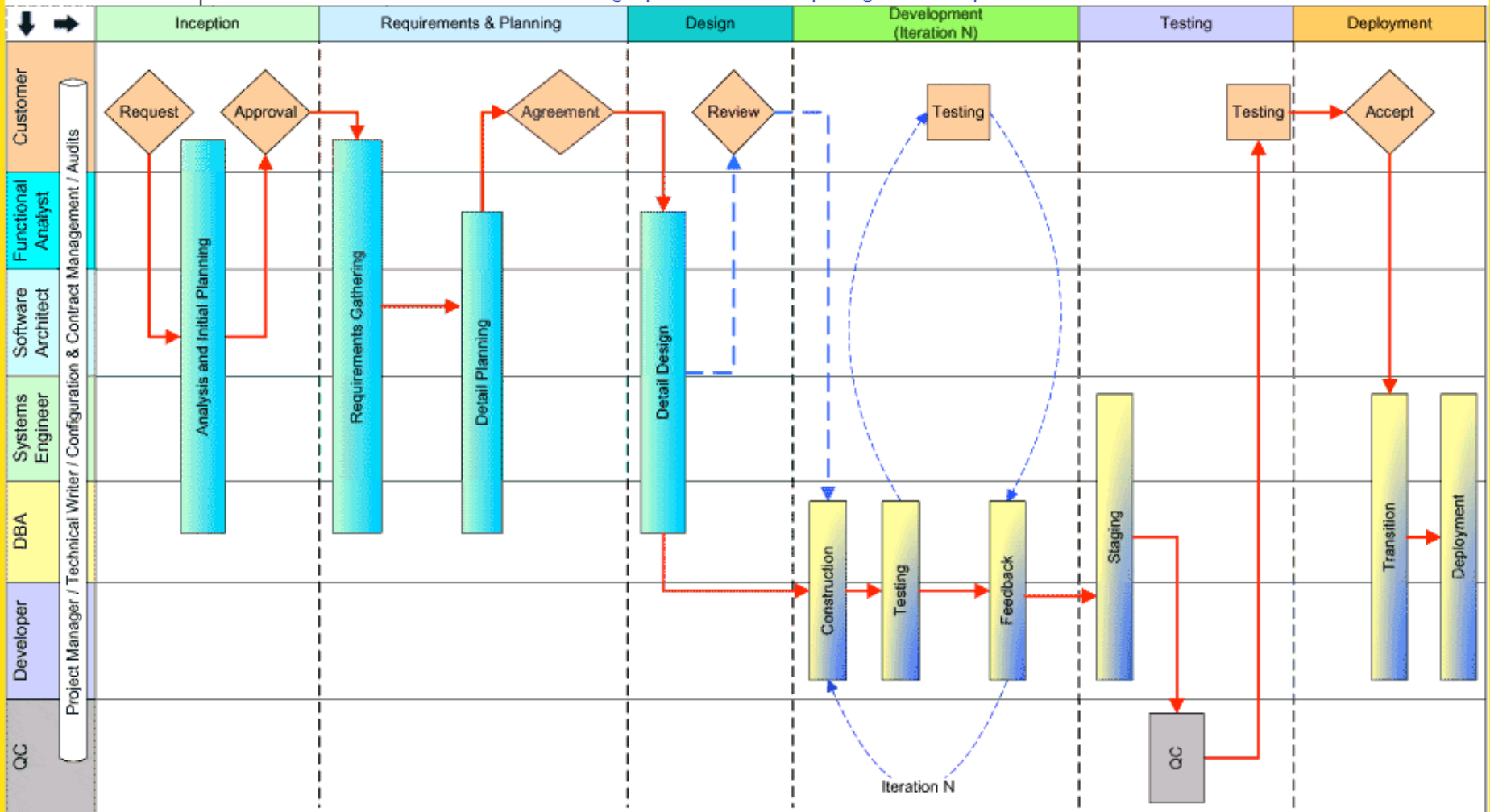
- **Given that most of the organization won't read your well-written processes other than during training, they will still be following the workflow and therefore they will be following the organization's methodology**
- **As the workflow becomes institutionalized, it becomes easier to follow the process than to not follow it**
 - The organization's workflow tool (website) make it easier to get the job done
 - Not using the tools is inefficient



PIPE Phase

How to navigate? - Click on the top tab titles to see all forms and documents for that phase.
 - Click on the intersecting squares that make up the grid to see specific row forms and documents.

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Fundamentals are Fundamentally Important

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- **Defining clear roles and responsibilities is underrated**
 - How is the time for personnel with multiple hats allocated and tracked?
 - Whose job is it?
 - Where does the buck stop?
 - Matrix management is messy
 - Are there too many bosses? Who makes the decision?
- **How are decisions made?**
 - Is it loudest voice that is rewarded?



Creating the Process Buzz

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- **Make it fun!**
- **Branding is a key to selling the methodology to the organization and getting everyone to use it**
 - Catchy, kitschy, easy to remember, easy to say
 - Attach it to something visual
 - Hold a contest to solicit names and logos
- **Effective methodology names of my clients:**
 - Fusion, GUIDe, SEGway, STEP, C4, SIPA, PIPE, RSEM,
- **Tricks that work and help to change the organization's culture**
 - Ken Murray, CIO at Aspen Systems developed a music video for their processes
 - He would sing new verses at status meetings, he developed a verse for each Process Area
 - Their methodology name: PIFIT
 - The music video PIFIT was done to the song Whip It by Devo



Walk This Way

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- **The last and most crucial ingredient to engineers (happily and regularly following the process) is that all management, starting at the top, follow the process themselves and expect others to as well.**
- **Motivate, train, cajole, and convince the executives that they must set the example and that when they do, the rest of their organization will follow**
- **Executive management is often resistant to change themselves**
 - They want the organization to change around them
- **Getting executives to change usually takes:**
 - Several one-on-one sessions
 - Hand holding during staff meetings (figuratively not literally)
 - A few SCAMPI B's failing all of GP 2.10



Conclusions

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- **Develop processes that are user friendly**
- **Processes are part of how the business is run; look at the bigger picture**
- **Don't fight human nature; incorporate the process into the natural flow**
- **Use existing and familiar tools**
- **Work with executive management to lead by example**





Comskil is a woman owned small business headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland

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 - Process Improvement since 1987

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