

Please apologize for me for not being able to give me presentation in person. A reorganization meeting has taken priority. I think everyone can relate to reorganizations.

Slide One – On The Green Side – Looking In

This represents the way I felt going to the conference. A further explanation will be given in the following slide.

Slide Two – Introduction

About Your Presenter

Unlike most of you in the room, my background is not technical. I have been with First National Bank of Omaha for 35 years, holding numerous positions. However, I have been with First Bankcard Center for all of those years. In some capacity or another I have worked coordinating computer conversions, operating system conversions, software conversions for 30 years. But each time as a Liaison for the Bankcard Division working closely with the programmers of the bank's Data Automation Division. I am currently Manager of Technology Support and report to Dorest Harvey who is Technology Director for First Bankcard Center.

First National Bank of Omaha

The bank has not formally bought into the CMM/SEI product. That is not to say the organization is immature. Knowing what I know today, I would say that First National Bank is a level 2 organization. When I went to the conference in March, I didn't even know what CMM was. Let me explain more about my department's responsibilities and how I ended up at SEPG 2000.

Department's Responsibilities

I currently manage 25 Business Systems Liaisons. Our responsibility is to take a request from one of our clients, who represent one of twenty-five different departments within the Bankcard Division, and coordinate the project through to the end. We are responsible for the initiation of the project, writing the requirements, coordinating meetings and completing the Acceptance Testing. So we are the project managers of all of the software system enhancements, upgrades, fixes and new development required by First Bankcard Center. With the reorganization I talked about previously, we will also be supporting the Retail side of the company, which together will make up the Consumer Banking Group of First National Bank.

Looking For Process Improvement

With this added responsibility and the desire of the corporation to keep expenses down, we needed to learn to work smarter. So I have been given the task of leading the process improvement effort.

My boss has been on the technical side of the shop before in our organization and others and he is a member of many of the technical organizations and steering committees in Omaha and the state. He suggested that I attend the conference to get my feet wet.

Slide Three – Making Choices

Selecting Presentations/Discussions

I thought the conference would be big, but I had no idea how many people would be there. No one else from the bank was attending so I was left to “go it alone”.

I went to the registration desk to pick up my packet and was somewhat amused by the fact that the envelope that had all of my important papers in it was green. How appropriate!!

The program for the conference was in my packet and I was overwhelmed by the number of presentations (77), tutorials (22) and other sessions available. I took my best guess as to what would be the most beneficial to me and went from there. Most of what I chose related to what I thought was a more general base. I steered away from those that had the word level in the title, since I didn't know what that meant. Remember, that all I know about CMM is what the letters stand for.

Beginners Luck

I did a good job in not getting too confused, although I panicked a little when these general topic session presenters talked about “levels”. I thought that if I just listened real close, it might become clearer what everyone was talking about. And it did.

Before I get into a few of the actual sessions I attended, I do want to tell you about my beginners luck. Lunch was served each day in the lower level of the Convention Center. It was open seating of course, so I picked a table and sat down next to a lady who looked like she would be congenial. As we got to talking, we discovered that we were both from Omaha. Her name was Tanis and she introduced me to a gentleman who joined us. It was John Sautter. Later John asked me if I would share my experience as being a ‘first timer’ at the conference and I agreed.

Slide Four – Informative Sessions

The first session I attended was presented by Dick Waina, Principal, Multi-Dimensional Maturity and Bill Phifer, Senior Program Manager, EDS Corporation

The entire presentation was set on the premise that “Not all processes should be improved. To excel, organizations need to focus on improving those processes which support the strategic capabilities that are most valued in their particular market.”

Dick and Bill presented information that discussed how an organization could decide which process to focus on by providing a framework that focused on:

Slide Five – Purpose-Driven Process Improvement

- Deriving process goals and key indicators from organizational strategic objectives and business purposes.
- Selecting appropriate models and components which support the above.
- Choosing and utilizing assessment methods which effectively and efficiently determine the degree of compliance of organization processes to the selected model components.
- Developing and implementing action plans which address identified weaknesses and improvement opportunities.
- Reporting and Analyzing measures which can be used to evaluate operational results and relate them to business purposes and strategic objectives.

This was a lot to absorb for my first half-day session, but I couldn't help but come out of it with a better understanding of what I was there for in the first place. Process Improvement.

Slide Six – People-Oriented Software Quality Assurance

Another presentation I attended was People-Oriented Software Quality Assurance. Ken Dymond and Anne Hurley presented a half-day tutorial that was structured around case study material in a typical project. It demonstrated how SQA becomes a counselor to the project as well as a supporter of the best practices in a company

The three objectives they presented were to:

- Understand the people aspects of SQA – it's role, responsibilities and activities based on the CMM
- Recognize the value of SQA to the project

Observe and practice techniques to effectively interact with the project/organization.

Many good points were made in this session relating to WBS, Audit plans, documenting deviations, negotiating resolutions and tracking status. I did feel like I learned something. However, Ken tried to get more than 130 people to break out in small groups of 4 by counting off and moving everyone around in a theater style setting and that part did work well. He lost a number of people to that exercise.

Slide Seven – Informative Sessions (Con't.)

I have just two more sessions I like to share.

Requirements Management: A Study Of Commonly Missing Components

Becoming A Creative Change Agent: A Job Description For Staying One Step Ahead Of Process Improvement Efforts

Slide Eight – Requirements Management: A Study Of Commonly Missing Components

This session was presented by Richard Desjardins from Strategic Quality Alliance, Inc who walked through the key components of requirements management and discussed some of the commonly missing elements He suggested techniques and methods to ensure the process is fully defined and sufficient to support the projects in their requirements management efforts.

He stressed the following points.

Using formal techniques (e.g. JAD sessions) reduces the amount of requirements change.

Roles and responsibilities for requirements definition and analysis must be defined and established.

Keep the Business Partners Involved.

Set the Criteria for prioritization, approval and acceptance.

Use inspections to identify defects

Define a change management process

Ways to develop testable requirements.

This session was more of a reinforcement of practices that were already familiar to me.

Slide Nine- Becoming A Creative Change Agent

Allen Bennett of ITT Aerospace Communications Division presented this session. He talked about the eight stages of development of the organizations change process and described the special skills that the change agent needs to be successful.

The eight stages are:

- Establishing a sense of urgency
- Creating a guiding coalition
- Developing a vision and strategy
- Communicating the change vision
- Empowering for broad based action
- Generating short term wins
- Consolidating gains and producing more change
- Anchoring the new approaches in the culture

Through this discussion it was clear that change is inevitable. You shouldn't fight it. Become a change agent.

Slide Ten – Not So Green Now

I learned a lot about CMM/SPI in three days.

I met people I could call on in addition to getting a bunch of helpful reference material not only from the sessions I attended, but also from sessions I wasn't able to attend.

I even volunteered to help at the conference next year in New Orleans.

I guess that means, I'm not so green now.