



THE SMARTER WAY

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Process with support from Ivar Jacobson International

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The software engineering division of a large UK Government Department worked with Ivar Jacobson International's (IJI) Mentoring and Training services to standardise its software development capability around the Unified Process to boost reliability and productivity.

The division consists of over 1000 people with diverse skills that cover Software, Infrastructure, Telecoms, Project Management, Systems and Mechanical Engineering.

An incessant business thirst for more complex and scalable systems made for an extremely challenging environment which was constantly striving for improved agility and state of the art software development process assets and tools.

Initially, IJI deployed a team of mentors who were embedded in the Department's change management team. This joint team had to build a change roadmap that would address a list of expectations; including:

- Creating a long term plan of change while implementing this programme and establishing measurement criteria;
- Systemically change the way all engineering teams worked;
- Overcome the inevitable resistance to change;
- Establish a sustainable internal mentoring team; and
- Improve productivity.

Reacting to Change

The client required a shift in its operations to keep pace with business requirements. Existing proprietary and largely waterfall based methodologies did not allow for rapid delivery of projects. In addition, these methodologies stifled the ability to respond and adapt to change.

In an organisation with many concurrent software development projects, the need to reach many individuals and teams with mentoring and training support was extremely challenging.

The division needed a shift in professionalism and delivery capability to keep pace with business demands, specifically:

- Sustainable improvement in predictability
- Sustainable reduction in time to market (in terms of agility and productivity)
- Increased capacity
- Reduction in lifecycle costs
- Increased standardisation

Solution: The Unified Process

The division adopted the Unified Process with support from IJI. The most successful way to support the adoption of a new process is to assemble a highly skilled, expert team, dedicated to its successful rollout that can provide both proactive and reactive support to projects. IJI provided a full time leased-team of experienced mentors and trainers to transfer the necessary skill sets to the internal project team leaders.

The portfolio of on-going projects was prioritized in line with business needs and fundamental change initiatives were identified to ensure the maximum return on investment from mentoring and training resources. Progress against these change initiatives was monitored and analysed to understand overall process adoption progress.

Implementing effective organization change > Using IJI Mentoring

Introducing a new way of working within any organization can be a difficult and arduous task. Bringing about cultural change can be one of the most difficult changes to affect. Effective change relies on demonstrating benefit of everything being introduced and this in turn is reliant on the skills of a strong mentor.

The first step in the IJI mentoring process was to have the IJI mentors engage with as many development teams as possible, raising awareness and proving that effective change could be delivered. Having accomplished the first step, IJI established a rolling mentor-the-mentor programme enabling identified team leaders to become mentors so the client could eventually become self-sufficient. The Unified Process was chosen due to its iterative approach that provides the flexible framework needed to fit current practices into an agile way of working. Mentoring was based around this framework.

IJI focused on mentoring and training based on iterative project management through Unified Process techniques because they are central to achieving project success. This highly effective combination of learning and practices provided a basis for a sustainable core of excellence that allowed the management of multiple projects simultaneously.

Ensuring Control and Project Predictability

The customer was using the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) to provide objective measurement of their improving capability. CMMI provides a set of criteria for a number of process areas that need to be met; it does not however describe how to achieve them. To meet the CMMI criteria and define a framework for being able to achieve the process goals, PRINCE2 for macro level project management and a modified Unified Process for engineering were used. The customer was aiming for CMMI Maturity Level 2 which is mainly about achieving a level of control and predictability on projects by good practice in Project Management. With the adopted practices and framework learned through the mentoring and training provided by IJI, their long term ambition is to reach Capability Maturity Level 3 and move the focus from project management to engineering process areas. This will provide consistent usage of process across the organisation.

The smarter way to train >

IJI developed a number of general and specialised training courses focused on iterative development tailored to demonstrate how the new way of working would enable engineering improvements.

The training portfolio for the client included both specifically designed courses written for the customer as well as IJI's existing modular courses including: Introduction to the Unified Process, Use-Case Modeling, Iterative Project Management, and Advanced Use-Case Modelling.

Using a combination of just-in-time training and mentoring, the training was targeted to the needs of the team, and adapted to the specific risks and problems facing the project.

IJI has to-date completed training for over 300 of the client's staff with many of them attending multiple courses.

Continued success >

Drawing together the two major initiatives of the Unified Process and its incorporation into the CMMI adoption, IJI has been able to maintain a consistent message and method of delivery for the client. This critical approach has accelerated the cultural change needed to sustain a true change in the customer's way of working.

The adoption of more agile variants in processes and approaches to problems is leading to a more flexible and appropriate use of process and practices. There is a wider appreciation and expectation of change at the grassroots level. Project predictability and speed have improved with engineering gaining the trust of the business to deliver.

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Ivar Jacobson International

Ivar Jacobson International is a global services company that helps software organizations transform and improve the way in which they develop software solutions as well as guide them in meeting the expectations of the business. Our consultants provide an environment of experiential learning to develop the right competency levels amongst all roles and functions by becoming an intricate coach and mentor to the entire team. We have a framework that we adapt to effectively define and communicate business and technical expectations across the organization as well as create collective responsibility by teams and individuals for project outcomes. We introduce a proven practice driven approach that is goal oriented, incremental and measureable and is highly successful with either an existing software project or the implementation of new systems. We support our customer engagements with a rich set of technology assets inclusive of training materials, practice guides, and tooling.