

Process Improvement Strategies

There are a number of roles that the software manager can take on to help improve process. They include:

1. Engaging top management
2. Securing sponsorship and funding
3. Defining why your organization wants to implement process improvement
4. Identifying company goals such as:
 - a. Becoming more efficient and profitable
 - b. Producing products and services that consistently meet customer requirements
 - c. Achieving customer satisfaction
 - d. Increasing or maintaining market share
 - e. Improving communications and morale in the organization
 - f. Reducing costs and liabilities
 - g. Increasing confidence in the production system
5. Defining the organization's mission, vision, and values
6. Defining your organization's stakeholders including customers, suppliers, stockholders, employees, end users, shareholders, and society
7. Identifying what others expect of you and your organization
8. Defining your organization's quality policy
9. Defining and aligning organizational objectives and related product/service quality objectives
10. Knowing where you are
11. Knowing where you are going
12. Identifying key processes and the interactions to meet quality objectives
13. Preparing your organization for change
14. Communicating and coordinating
15. Forming a process group
16. Creating process improvement
 - a. Gathering requirements to begin improving process
17. Implementing the improvement plan
18. Updating and managing process improvement
 - a. Mapping requirements with any existing process improvement plan
 - b. Making a gap analysis: identifying where in your existing system the requirements are fulfilled, and where they are not
 - c. Identifying activities, procedures and controls needed
19. Training company staff
20. Verifying effective operation of your organization's processes and tracking progress
21. Managing the process improvement
 - a. Focusing on customer satisfaction
 - b. Monitoring and measuring the operation of processes
 - c. Striving for continual improvement
 - d. Possibly implementing business excellence models in the company operations
22. Seeking third party certification/appraisal or issuing a self-declaration of conformity techniques
23. Continuing to improve your business

Conclusion/Summary

In summary, process improvement whether it be ISO standards, CMMI®, Lean Six Sigma or any of a number of standards and models, helps organizations focus on customer needs, change the company culture through quality initiatives, encourages more process savvy employees, often reduces the number of audits, increases the competitive edge, and enhanced marketability. Again "Better quality may not always be free, but it can occur with better project performance as a result of disciplined process improvement."

