meet a deadline, we get it. Software developers are able to decode this situation quite correctly. We learn that what people say is what people say, but what people do is what is important to them.

COMMITTED TO COMMITMENT

One of my personal favorite ruses in process change is the "commitment" ploy. Without, hopefully, appearing too cynical I would describe the commitment ploy as follows. A senior executive makes a highly public statement about commitment to some facet of the business. It may be quality, customer focus, technology investment, appropriate resourcing of projects, or attention to the human needs of the work force. It may simply be whatever the current fad is, or the subject of the most popular business self-help book. This public statement is intended to generate enthusiasm on the part of those affected and who will be tasked to make, participate in, or endure the change. But it often has the reverse effect. Sometimes the statement is simply window dressing and nothing is done to implement it. Sometimes, the commitment does actually receive close attention and perhaps even its share of resources. That is, until fulfilling the commitment becomes difficult. Or expensive. Or a less popular fad. Or simply inconvenient. At this point, the commitment is shelved, or maybe just fades away, to be replaced by the next trendy initiative or the next fad. This is unfortunate, since the

approach drains a company's commitment batteries faster than anything. It also demonstrates a lack of understanding about the nature of commitment.

DOING WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO DO

Commitment is not doing what you want to do. Doing what you want to do is, well, doing what you want to do. Commitment is doing what you *don't* want to do—because it is difficult, expensive, or inconvenient. In fact, the more you don't want to do something, but continue doing it because you believe it to be the right thing to do, the more you are committed to it. We could actually measure our commitment by the quantity of pain we are willing to endure while doing whatever we are committed to doing. If we really, really don't want to stick to our quality gate process because it is costly, it slows us down, it is difficult and tedious, or is simply inconvenient some of the time, but we continue doing it anyway, then we are really, really committed to it.

People are very good at detecting this and separating the committed wheat from the rhetorical chaff. Too much of the latter and people stop believing and investing in change initiatives of any sort. They adopt compliant behaviors and work on the window-dressing aspects while continuing to attempt to provide the organization with what they think it really wants as evidenced by its actions.

MAKING MONEY

Some time ago, while conducting a seminar series on the nature of a software business, I asked the assembled executives: "…*what is the ultimate goal of your business?*" The almost universal response was "to make money." Now making money is a good thing; I am not against it in any way and candidly I wouldn't mind being a little better at it myself. However, if the core goal and purpose of a business is simply to make money, then the organization should be a bank or a casino. These are the only businesses where money is the business; all other enterprises have other reasons to exist. It is quite dangerous for companies to intentionally or accidentally get into this mode. When the focus of the executive management becomes directed entirely at the making of money they may completely abdicate the real purpose of the business, to the detriment of all.

When companies do this, the leadership may spend its time and energy buying and selling other businesses hoping to come out ahead financially. The company is gambling; it is playing the market and acting like a casino. Sometimes at the same time, the company may attempt to leverage its asset value by devices such as selling debt. This is, of course, a company acting like a bank. And these are just the legitimate businesses—we have seen recently that companies can also get into illegally "making money" by, say, cooking the books.

The fate of process change initiatives in companies behaving