



# Atlanta SPIN

## Software Process Improvement Network



The Atlanta SPINaker

May 2006 Volume 1, Issue 2

### Spirited Discussion During Dashboards Presentation



rics and Dashboards - Managing Your Business in Real Time.” This topic drew an audience of nearly 45 people. While what follows is not a substitute for having attended the presentation, some of Mark’s key points are summarized below:

- Measurements and metrics should be directly driven by business drivers important to the enterprise
- There are many parties within an organization that can benefit from such metrics
- It’s crucial to know how the measures will be used; what are the actionable steps they will drive
- Some metrics are lagging measures; some are leading measures—the latter are more strategic in nature and most beneficial to improving the organization’s effectiveness and efficiency
- It’s important to get measures that are “good enough” - consistent measures can make trends visible even if the data is not “perfectly accurate”

*Mark Schadt Presenting to Atlanta SPIN*

The April 2006 meeting of Atlanta SPIN had some very interesting dialogue break out during the presentation by Mark Schadt of MKS Software. A spirited discussion broke out as Mark and various audience members discussed and debated among themselves the merits and risks of providing simplified metrics, in particular to upper management. The phrase “blood in the water” was bandied about with strong feelings apparent and various conflicting opinions expressed.

Mark’s talk was entitled “Development Met-

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### May Presentation: Model Driven Architecture

This presentation will include an introductory explanation on the theory and history of Model Driven Architecture (MDA) and an overview of its major underlying components, including an initial discussion on the Unified Modeling Language (UML) to establish a baseline understanding for the audience. It will highlight the various stages of an MDA approach and will emphasize the impact MDA can have on the software development lifecycle, specifically in regard to an organization’s ability to deliver high-quality, reusable software within a repeatable process while significantly reducing project risk and increasing return on investment.

Following this discussion, there will be a practical demonstration of MDA techniques to illustrate these principles and concepts. The discussion will address the pros and cons of MDA; the state-of-the-art; and the steps required to leverage MDA in your existing business environment.

**Robert Lario, Principal at Inherit, LLC, will be our presenter.**

## Mark Schadt Presentation Highlights - continued

- Automation of such measures can be a key for success; Look for workflow and process tools to automate processes and data capture
- Automation will not resolve all problems but it allows better decision-making
- The use of standard tools and processes across teams in the organization is crucial to success
- A centralized repository versus multiple point products can be extremely helpful in facilitating such measurement collection and management

There is much more food for thought in Mark's slides. Members interested in more information should make the time to review these. They can be found at <http://www.atlantaspin.org/meetinginfo.htm>.



**Mark Schadt**



## Focus on Feedback

If you regularly attend the Atlanta SPIN meetings, you're familiar with the feedback form that we distribute at the end of the meeting. The Membership Committee reviews all the feedback we receive and summarizes it for review by the Board as a whole. All comments that you provide are captured and follow up items are created when the feedback is actionable. In addition, the numerical ratings on the presenter and on the effectiveness of Atlanta SPIN are computed. Each month a report is updated for the Board that summarizes the results from the last meeting as well as displays this data for the past twelve months so that trends can be seen.

This effort also includes the feedback, both positive and critical, that you provide on the speaker's presentation and expertise. Each month the Board sends your feedback to the presenter so they can hear directly what you thought. We have received very positive feedback from our speakers about this; they single Atlanta SPIN out as of the few (for many of our speakers, the only) group that has done this.

We believe feedback is a gift and thank you for it. We feel an obligation to ensure that it gets the appropriate attention.

## Coming in June: Achieving Consensus in Technical Meetings

**June 21, 2006**

**Michael Wilkinson, Managing Director**

**Leadership Strategies**

## On the BOARD walk

Mike Sweeney - Vice President Atlanta SPIN

Mike Sweeney has been a fixture at Atlanta SPIN over the past four years. Mike is a person who really enjoys meeting and interacting with people. Mike is serving as Vice President on the Board for the third year. He is the Board's "Venue King", having played a key role in ensuring we first had Sun Microsystems and then Oracle space to meet in.



Mike Sweeney is a 20+ year IT veteran. He spent the first 8 years of his career working on Wall Street. In 1994, he moved to Atlanta joining Unisys Corporation. In 2000, Mike joined Sun Microsystems' Transportation and Energy Group as an Enterprise Architect, specializing in mission-critical OLTP systems, design and business analysis.

### How did you get involved with Atlanta SPIN?

I was working on several Customer projects, one of which was in pretty bad shape. Given my role as an architect, I normally hadn't been involved throughout the full development cycle. I felt there had to be better insight into how to do this well and discovered the Atlanta SPIN group from a TAG listing. My early interactions with SPIN Members were so positive that I volunteered the Sun Microsystems education facility for SPIN monthly meetings when the need arose.

### What process improvement-related activities have you personally been either responsible for or participated in?

I have participated in two CMMI assessments with Sun Microsystems customers. I have also been engaged in process improvement that is being done by our Solaris group. The environment here encourages such involvement. My experience is that CMMI has helped us both provide better quality products and be more successful predicting and then meeting our committed delivery dates.

### What benefits have you personally derived from participation in SPIN?

My participation in Atlanta SPIN has been a great learning experience. I have learned a lot from other professionals, and really value the kind of intelligent discussions that one can have. I've been alerted to traps that we might fall into, and feel that I have been able to share my experience with others to help them avoid mistakes I've made. I enjoy interacting with people, and the SPIN community is an excellent place to do just that.

### What motivated you to join the Atlanta SPIN Board?

I was approached by Stewart (Forscher) who was (and is) an active on Board member. He encouraged me to get involved with the Board. The opportunity to be able to make a difference personally was very appealing, and I've run with this ever since.

### What do you hope to achieve this year within Atlanta SPIN?

I have two different goals. One is to contribute to the overall Board objective to grow our membership and increase attendance at the monthly presentations. The other is to help foster more interaction and engagement between our local efforts and the national SEI itself.

## Spotlight on our Sponsors: Serena Software



Serena Software's ([www.serena.com](http://www.serena.com)) business is centered around *change management* across the application development lifecycle and more broadly across the enterprise. The foundation of Serena's **Change Governance** strategy is its process automation, control and audit capabilities, which extend the concept of change management to a broad set of operational processes that span the enterprise and ensure business processes are repeatable, enforceable, and auditable.

Whether it's ITIL, CMMI, Six Sigma, SOX or any other process-focused initiative, Serena's solutions mitigate the potentially catastrophic impacts of change, ultimately empowering customers to transform change into true business advantage. Serena, like 15,000+ of its customers worldwide, is benefiting from its own solutions in numerous ways, including the implementation of the ITIL framework for its internal IT service delivery using its TeamTrack process automation product. Becoming a sponsor of SPIN was a natural for Serena given its focus on process improvement.



Ronald J. Wojcik, editor  
 The Atlanta SPINnaker  
 Post Office Box 888004  
 Dunwoody, Georgia 30356  
 Email: newsletter@atlantaspin.org

### Atlanta SPIN Sponsors—They Make Our Efforts Possible!



And our 19 Individual Contributors!

### Atlanta SPIN Board of Directors

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### About Atlanta SPIN

The Atlanta SPIN organization was chartered in 1991. This group has been a force for software process improvement in the Atlanta area since then. The organization has a growing membership list that currently numbers 650+ members.

The group typically meets every third Wednesday of the month. Our meetings typically attract audiences of 35 – 50 people. These meetings provide a forum for like-minded people, interested in learning from others and sharing their own experiences. There is time allowed before and after the meeting for networking among the participants, including a review from the audience of any job openings that are available. The Board, through its work with Sponsors, ensures that food and drinks are also available at no cost to the membership.

The Board has a process for identifying excellent speakers, and provides guidelines and necessary support to help ensure the presentations are top quality. The Board sees these as the cornerstone of its value proposition to the overall group. To this end, the Board did surveys last year to gain a better understanding of its members' interests. This analysis has directly influenced the choice of specific presentations during the past six months. The Board continues to seek excellent relevant talks of interest to the membership; please advise us of potential talks and speakers that you think may be of interest; contact us at [education\\_committee@atlantaspin.org](mailto:education_committee@atlantaspin.org).

In future Newsletters, we plan to provide more information about the goals and activities that Atlanta SPIN is pursuing. We welcome your feedback on how to improve this newsletter; contact us at [newsletter@atlantaspin.org](mailto:newsletter@atlantaspin.org).

Ron Wojcik, editor