



Atlanta SPIN

Software Process Improvement Network

The Atlanta SPINaker

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Eshan Chawla

Flurry of Interest in Project Portfolio Management

Eshan Chawla of Management Decisions Incorporated, an Atlanta SPIN sponsor, gave an interesting presentation on Project Portfolio Management (PPM) that generated considerable audience interaction and post-meeting discussions.

It was clear that the topic was somewhat unfamiliar to the audience, and addressed an area that previous presentations have not focused on. Early on, there were questions and clarifications aimed at better understanding just what portfolio management was and how it was different from project or program management. Eshan was quick to point out the critical role that a company's strategy played in this arena. PPM is fundamentally directed at ensuring that the collection of programs and projects that a company pursues in fact effectively advance and support its strategic imperatives.

Eshan provided some interesting data on the effectiveness of project management, emphasizing both shortcomings in the project management practices themselves, and the lack of alignment between company strategy and the portfolio of projects that it has chosen to pursue. The consequences of the gaps described by Eshan were daunting.

Given the key role that IT plays in the pursuit of strategic company initiatives, Eshan noted that it was apparent that PPM would necessarily be a "top ten" component within the agenda of the company's CIO. There were

numerous elements flagged in the talk, based on some analysis that had been performed by the Gartner Group. Eshan made it clear that this discipline also brought significant value to other organizations beyond IT; his focus was on IT given the critical role IT typically plays in addressing company business priorities.

Eshan expanded upon this notion, discussing in some detail the linkages of IT PPM with Company and Operations planning approaches. A key notion here was that PPM lay at the critical intersection between a top-down Corporate Planning perspective ("Doing the Right Things") and a bottoms-up Operations Planning perspective ("Doing Things Right".) Furthermore, when done properly, PPM can help drive a more proper balance between new initiatives and the existing efforts that populate a company's project pipeline.

The discussion went on to explore the kind of PPM reports and information that various tools currently supported. Examples ranged from investment classification on a risk versus value basis and business process automation workflow insight to resource and financial management exposition and earned value analysis.

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Q-Labs

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Eshan complemented these examples with analyst's perspectives on various tools that were commonly used in this space, including an indication of their effectiveness and appropriateness for different aspects of PPM. In the process (no pun intended :-), he laid out the Portfolio Management Process itself.

Eshan emphasized that change is typically the biggest challenge we all face. Rolling out PPM, especially if it is new to the company, is best rolled out in the small, with tuning and review as its use is adopted. This is a situation where a conservative approach will likely serve a company best. Before being besieged by questions from the audience, Eshan noted some important takeaways: Align with business priorities; Keep it simple; Optimize and adjust over time; and Drive accountability. For more information on this topic, you can find Eshan's slides at <http://www.atlantaspin.org/meetinginfo.htm> on the Atlanta SPIN website.

Don't Miss it! Our Next Signature Event - September 19th

Speaker: Ed Yourdon

The Internet's Second Wave: Web 2.0

- **6:00 - 6:30 Networking, Free fancy food and soft drinks, and sponsor booths**
- **7:30 - 6:35 Welcome, Introductions, SPIN Business**
- **6:35 - 6:45 Platinum Sponsor and Signature Event Sponsor Remarks**
- **6:45 - 8:15 Presentation + Q&A**
- **8:15 - 8:30 Job Openings / Announcements / Book give away**

**Southern Polytechnic State University
1100 South Marietta Pkwy**



SEI Event: Team Software Process (TSP) Symposium 2007

Theme: Transition Strategies for Large-Scale Introduction
September 17-19, 2007
Disney's BoardWalk Inn
Lake Buena Vista, Florida

The Team Software Process (TSP), helps the high-performance engineer to

- **ensure quality software products**
- **create secure software products**
- **improve process management in an organization**
- **The attendees will have the opportunity to exchange ideas, concepts, and lessons learned concerning the experiences, best practices, and suggested introduction strategy for the TSP methods and practices.**

Atlanta PMI and Atlanta SPIN form an alliance

We are excited about forming an alliance to work together with the Atlanta Project Management Institute Chapter, providing links on our web sites and cross promoting events and our members benefit by sharing membership privileges.

The Atlanta Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI) will host its second annual Professional Development Day (PDD2007) event on August 25, 2007. PDD2007 provides an opportunity to learn from qualified project management practitioners, view the latest in project management tools and applications; and network with project management professionals.

Don't miss out on this entertaining and informative day! Additional information and registration is available via the following link: <http://www.pmiatlanta-pdd.org>.

Process-Oriented SEI/SPIN BLOGs & Wiki

SPIN WIKI: <http://seispin.wikispaces.com/>

Watts Humphrey BLOG: http://tspusergroup.org/watts_up

SPIN Blog: <http://seispin.blogspot.com/>

Spotlight on our Sponsors: QSM Associates

QSM ASSOCIATES



Quantitative Software Management Associates helps solve the toughest deadline and budget challenges on software projects, through use of state-of-the-art software measurement and estimating tools combined with techniques from modern negotiation science. QSMA has been helping the biggest software companies in the world achieve this for nearly twenty years.

QSMA offers the SLIM (Software Lifecycle Management) Tool Suite, a powerful knowledge-based family of project measurement, estimation, and control models, derived from the pioneering research of Larry Putnam Sr., founder and chief scientist of Quantitative Software Management (QSM). Larry is considered one of the fathers in the field of software measurement and estimation. The SLIM tools contain knowledge from a current-day industry database of over 7,000 completed projects collected worldwide, both in-house and outsourced, domestic and offshore, for engineering and business IT applications. They provide agile managers with the ability to measure and estimate software projects in days instead of weeks. SLIM provides industry productivity and project trends on the desktop against which projects can be compared.

QSM Associates offers effective negotiation techniques drawn from its Program on Negotiation, and advises clients through negotiation consulting and executive coaching.

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And our 18 Individual Contributors!

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Process Improvement Sites:

Software Engineering Information Repository

<http://seir.sei.cmu.edu>, has over 30,000 registered users and is a forum used to contribute and exchange information about software engineering improvement activities, including CMMI.

The CMMI Process Improvement Yahoo! discussion group

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cmmi_process_improvement/ is a forum used to contribute and exchange ideas about CMMI-based improvement.

BSCW Shared Workspace <https://bscw.sei.cmu.edu/pub/bscw.cgi/0/79783> is a forum used to contribute and exchange CMMI-related materials.

Information courtesy of SEI Customer Relations. Find out more about SEI Membership online at www.sei.cmu.edu/membership
customer-relations@sei.cmu.edu

About Atlanta SPIN, Incorporated

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 850+ members. The group typically meets every third Wednesday of the month. Our meetings typically attract audiences of 40 – 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.

Ron Wojcik, editor