

Atlanta SPIN

Software & Systems Process Improvement Network

The Atlanta SPINaker

April 2008

Volume 3, Issue 4



Tom Guthrie

Reinventing IT Operations as a Managed Services Organization—

.Presented by Tom Guthrie

Vice President of Information Technology Operations, Cox Communications

Not even a “process geek” would volunteer for an evening full of statistics without a good reason. It takes a special style to make statistics both easy to understand and interesting from a business perspective. Our March 19th meeting had just the right person to pull it off. Tom Guthrie is the Vice President, IT Operations for Cox Communications. His topic for his return engagement at Atlanta SPIN was “The Six Sigma Journey Continued”. Tom was a hit the last time he was with us, and packed the house again this time.

Tom began by discussing the challenge for IT including pressure to do more with less, competitive and predictable services levels, and customer focused metrics. He then described the search for the ideal quality dividend. This quality dividend is

maximized when capability increases at the same time as cost decreases.

Tom took a unique approach to presenting the statistical foundation for the evening. He held up two years worth of golf score cards and proceeded to statistically analyze his scores. In addition to the standard statistical fare, Tom explained the eccentricities of the USGA handicapping system.. Tom made it easy for everyone to understand the concepts of averages, deviation, variability and capability. His personal goal is to qualify for the Senior Open in 2010. He shared with the group his action plan to get there.

Next, Tom retrained the focus to business

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue:

March Meeting Synopsis	1
On the Boardwalk with Tarun Talwar	2
Spotlight on Sponsors Thompson Technologies Inc	3
About Atlanta SPIN	4

Next Meeting: April 16, 2008

Lessons Learned In Seamless Integration of CMMI, TSP, and PSP—Why All Three Are Needed

Presented by Girish Seshagiri
Advanced Information Services Inc.



Time: 6:00 PM—8:30 PM

Location: La Quinta Inn & Suites, 6260 Peachtree-Dunwoody Road,
Atlanta, GA 30328

On the Boardwalk: Tarun Talwar



What experience do you have in the software development lifecycle or technology?

I am the founder and CEO of Mindspan Systems, an Atlanta based IT consulting firm focused on custom software solutions, business process definition, data warehousing and business intelligence. I have spent twenty years in the IT industry, including the past ten years in the US and prior to that in Europe, India, and South East Asia. I started my career as a software developer and played almost all roles across the

SDLC in the first few years. My areas of expertise include software development process, business process definition, project management, requirements definition, and data warehousing.

Currently I am providing active leadership to solutions design and development in my company as well as building the knowledge capital of the group, including best practices, processes, methodologies and technologies.

What process improvement related activities have you personally been involved with?

In the first half of 1990s I was part of a team responsible for ISO 9001 certification for one of India's largest multi-national software companies. Later I was involved in SEI-CMM certifications for the same company. I have also been a certified TQM trainer for a few years. For the past few years I have been focused on setting up and improving software development processes, methodologies and best practices in my own company. I share my experiences and learning with my peers as a speaker in different industry forums now and then.

How did you get involved in Atlanta SPIN?

I was invited to speak at an Atlanta SPIN meeting about three years back, which was a positive

Continued on Page 3

Reinventing IT Operations as a Managed Services Organization (Continued)

concerns. He runs his IT Operations shop like a business and used his shop as the basis for the case study. Tom had a couple of people from his support team in the audience and occasionally called on them to confirm his statements. He also is no stranger to work. Tom has spent time in the front-line services desk chair fielding calls and getting a visceral understanding of where the data on call handling comes from.

As a result of his analysis, Tom has set some lofty goals for his group. All of it based on the principles of understanding the capability of the group and making small steps to realize improvements. Among his achievements are a 50% reduction in cost combined

with over a 50% improvement in service level in the Cox Media Back Office consolidation project. He has experienced similar improvements in other areas.

Summing it up, there are several keys to success. First is reducing variability as a process improvement strategy. You know what you are capable of and have the data to prove it. Next, use process improvement incentives. Don't be afraid to pay a little more up front to get a lot more in savings back along the way. And finally, look for the quality dividend. Don't be afraid to look for returns using unconventional strategies. It is possible to increase capability and performance while at the same time reducing cost.

Spotlight on Sponsors—Thompson Technologies Inc.

Platinum Sponsor



The Spotlight is a regular feature of the SPINnaker. This feature helps you understand who are sponsors are. Maybe you or your company would like to [sponsor Atlanta SPIN](#).

Thompson Technologies, Inc. (TTI) is a professional IT workforce solutions company dedicated to providing clients with the industry's best staffing, executive search, outplacement and managed services. Founded in 1995 by David Thompson, the company's prosperity is a reflection of its long-term client relationships and a passion for excellence, and uncompromising adherence to core values.

This year, Thompson Technologies marks its 12th Anniversary. "Success has come by forming lasting partnerships with clients and continually keeping their business goals and objectives in mind," says David Thompson. "We work hard to establish winning situations for our clients. We are known for providing a complete portfolio of flexible workforce solutions. Our team works closely with our clients to address each of their requirements.

Thompson Technologies was named an **INC 500** winner in 2000 and 2001, recognizing the firm among America's fastest growing privately held companies. The company was also among the winners of The Purple Squirrel 100 Awards, given to firms who show significant growth within the staffing industry. Thompson Technologies was also named Atlanta's Top Ten Best Places to Work for 2005 and 2006, by Atlanta Business Chronicle.

Thompson Technologies began with "lots of faith" and a vision to provide clients with the best IT professionals in the industry. The company's values provide a solid foundation as Thompson continues to build a reputation for consistently delivering exceptional workforce solutions to clients. Our values combined with our professional expertise in workforce solutions define what we call the *'Thompson Technologies Experience'* - a way of serving our clients, associates and community.

On the Boardwalk: (Continued)

experience. Since then I stayed in touch with some SPIN members. I recently took the opportunity to volunteer on the board of Atlanta SPIN, hoping to make a positive contribution and to learn.

What benefits have you personally derived from participation in SPIN?

The most important benefit is the stimulating exchange and sharing among peers in our industry. Atlanta SPIN is a great forum for meaningful dialogue with competent people and to gain from each other's experiences, initiatives, mistakes, and learning. It also keeps one abreast with how different people and companies are approaching the common issues, challenges and developments in our

field of work.

What do you hope to achieve by participating on the Atlanta SPIN Board?

I look forward to making my humble contribution to the good work Atlanta SPIN is already doing. Leading a software development company keeps me in touch with real challenges faced by software developers, their needs and areas of interest, as well as people/organizations doing good work in those areas. I hope that experience can be of use in enhancing Atlanta SPIN's effectiveness and appeal to the software development community in Atlanta. I also look forward to learning through interaction with my peers in the industry.

Atlanta SPIN Board of Directors

Director	Role
Abi Salimi	President
Larry Hyde	Vice President
Mike Sweeney	Treasurer
Jean Swank	Secretary
Will Bracker	Secretary
Scott Banks	Membership Chair
Bill Reister	Technology
Fred Haigh	Newsletter Editor
Garrison Atkisson	Programs Co-chair
Tarun Talwar	Programs Co-chair
Jeff Watson	Sponsorship Co-chair
Bruce Duncil	Sponsorship Co-chair
Stewart Forscher	Honorary Director Emeritus

Fred Haigh, editor
The Atlanta SPINnaker
Email: newsletter@atlantaspin.org

Atlanta SPIN Sponsors

They Make Our Efforts Possible!

Platinum SPONSORS



Gold SPONSORS



And our 19 Contributing Members!

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

www.atlantaspin.org

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.