

Atlanta SPIN

Software & Systems Process Improvement Network

The Atlanta SPINnaker

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Michael Yudanin

Implementation Assurance: Quality in the Age of Packaged Software and SaaS

Michael Yudanin, Conflair

It's safe to say that anyone who's attended a few Atlanta SPIN meetings recognizes Michael Yudanin; he's a long time member of our chapter who rarely misses a meeting. He's also an excellent example of the quality of person you'll meet when attending one of our gatherings; extremely knowledgeable, very experienced, and more than willing to share with their fellow SPIN members. Without fail, I've walked away from every meeting with at least one good contact, a new nugget of information, or fresh perspective that I've found useful in my day to day work. Michael's presentation was no exception.

Michael's topic, "Bringing Quality to Software Implementations" is an area that most of us have encountered at least a few times. Given the size and complexity of business today, it is inevitable that we will encounter a software package implementation at some point. "The promise of the package" as Michael defined it;

1. More functionality than you could have developed yourself
2. Better usability
3. Minimal customizations
4. Low maintenance costs

The reality, of course, is that there is

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Next Meeting: June 18, 2008

Overcoming Process Improvement Inertia

Michael B. Nearman, Principal, AGSI

Time: 6:00 PM—8:30 PM

NOTE: We have a different location for this meeting:

Southern Polytechnic State University
Apparel and Textile Building— "M" room 100
1100 South Marietta Parkway
Marietta, GA 30060

Be sure to get a parking pass from AtlantaSPIN.ORG

Spotlight on Sponsors: CDI



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

CDI was incorporated on September 16, 1950 in Philadelphia as Comprehensive Designers Inc., with the mission of providing quality technical and engineering services to businesses on a temporary or outsourced basis. The company went public in 1967 and its name was condensed to CDI Corp. in 1973.

The post-World War II manufacturing boom created the need for large numbers of skilled personnel with engineering, design and drafting experience. Much of that demand was spawned by project work, which meant spot labor shortages could occur seemingly overnight. The idea of filling those seats with skilled contract personnel was an innovative solution that made sense.

CDI steadily expanded its service

offerings over the years and now provides engineering and information technology outsourcing solutions and professional staffing to a wide range of Fortune 1,000 customers in the aerospace, process & industrial, IT, life sciences and government services sectors. Operating units include CDI Engineering Solutions, a provider of high-value engineering outsourcing services to clients in key industries; CDI IT Solutions, providing a full suite of IT consulting, project outsourcing and staffing solutions; CDI AndersElite Limited, a professional staffing and services firm focusing on the construction and engineering markets in the United Kingdom; and, Management Recruiters International, Inc., one of the world's largest executive search and recruitment organizations with 1,000 MRINetwork™ offices in over 35 countries.

Implementation Assurance (Continued)

often a tremendous gulf between the picture painted by the promise and the reality of the actual implementation.

Setting the stage by walking through a number of real world examples of individual issues and typical remedies found in the industry, Michael brought us to a project he found himself working for a large Atlanta organization. Looking at the problems being faced on the project gave him the opportunity to consider how these projects were being implemented. His conclusion – "...using the 'usual lifecycle', we are doing the wrong thing."

The remainder of Michael's discussion covered his approach, using quality assurance in a modified lifecycle to support the implementation of the package. Requirements gathering was addressed in

depth, with special attention paid to how to surface enterprise issues during the phase. One of the most interesting parts of the discussion was the recounting of how he tested the various assumptions and theories for his new approach. It was a very refreshing look at a process that has become almost codified in the software industry.

In the question and answer section of the evening, Michael fielded a wide range of questions. Once more his experience shone through; generally providing an actual historical example of where he had encountered the question or issue, he acquitted himself well.

At the close of the meeting everyone was reminded that the meeting for next month will be held at Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta! See the web site for a parking pass.

Member Memories

Many of our members have been with Atlanta SPIN for a number of years. The organization itself has been around since 1991 and there are still a few of the early members on the Board of Directors. As our membership and sponsorship roles have grown and changed there have also been a number of changes in our programs, venues, and other offerings. Even this newsletter has changed and adapted over the last three years.

As a part of our efforts to keep things fresh and current we have had several suggestions to make changes to parts of our offerings to you. We will be bringing some of those changes to you over the remainder of the year. One of those changes affects the newsletter. A suggestion has been made to bring it closer to you, our members.

In the past, we have had articles about sponsors and members of the Board of Directors. In the last issue we had an article about stealth sponsors and others who help behind the scenes. With this issue we are reaching out a little further. We are looking for stories from you, our members.

The core of the concept is this: over the years we hope that SPIN has made some impact on your lives. In many cases it may be small. You may have learned something in a meeting that helped you in your job. For some, SPIN may have helped you get a job. For others, SPIN may have helped you in your career in some other way. Maybe we helped to bring you training that helped. Maybe you met someone through networking that you helped to bring into your company. We would like to capture these stories and share them with the rest of the members.

What can you do? Put your shyness aside. Let a board member know that you would like to share your experience with us. Your story may inspire others to take advantage of something that SPIN has to offer. We can all help one another by sharing the good stuff in our lives. If you would like to get started just send an email to newsletter@atlantaspin.org. We would love to hear from you and help you share your story with others.

Upcoming Speakers

In the next few months we have secured some terrific speakers. Here are some of the confirmed speakers for the next few months:

- July — Lisa Grant, President, PMI Atlanta Chapter — "Project Management. Lessons Learned — Best Practices"
- August — Fred Jewell, Accenture — "Applied Influence"
- October — A Special Halloween treat (no tricks) for our October meeting "Process Horror Stories" — We need your horror stories for this panel story telling session. Send your ideas and experiences to Newsletter@atlantaspin.org and you may be selected to share your story with the group
- November — Iraj Hirmanpour — "Testing Capability Model (TCM) - *What Is It, Why is It Needed, How Is It Used?*."

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www.informit.com/usergroups
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.