

Atlanta SPIN

Software & Systems Process Improvement Network

The Atlanta SPINnaker

November 2008

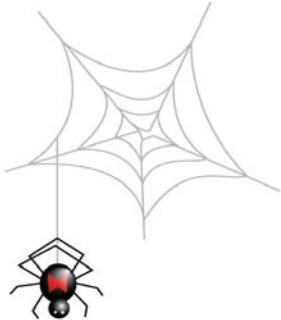
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Halloween Horror Stories

Every once in a while we try to shake things up and bring you a little something different. After receiving several suggestions for panel discussions, we decided to try out a format that was used last year by one of our sister SPINs. That is how we came up with the idea for the “Halloween Horror Stories” theme for our October meeting.

interesting, although sometimes scary, stories from their personal experiences. No one offered to show their scars (now that would have been REALLY scary) but the lessons learned from these projects showed the real value in the projects. You always can learn more from a failure than you learn from a success. With success you rarely push the envelope and take any chances.



During the planning for the meeting we opened up the topic list to the whole membership of Atlanta SPIN. After reviewing the ideas that were submitted, our Program Committee came up with three speakers for our panel. Each speaker was allocated 15 minutes for a short presentation of their favorite horror story. Finally there was a 15 minute open question and answer period for anyone to share their experiences with the group.

Our first speaker was Angela Gshwind from CGI. The following is her recipe for a quality nightmare:

- Project management that does not want to follow established processes because their group “is different”
- Managers estimate by “gut feel”
- Ambiguous requirements
- Limited design and testing
- Lack of time for almost everything
- Inadequate planning

We all have a horror story about a process improvement project that went haywire. Some were able to be salvaged and turned into a success. Others may have ended in disaster or made marginally acceptable even if they didn’t meet their original goals. Our three speakers presented very

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Next Meeting: November 12, 2008

“ Testing Capability Model (TCM) -
What Is It, Why is It Needed, How Is It Used?”

Dr. Iraj Hirmanpour

Time: 6:00 PM—8:30 PM
 Location: La Quinta Inn & Suites,
 6260 Peachtree-Dunwoody Road,
 Atlanta, GA 30328

Atlanta SPIN – Call for 2009 Board Members



We are getting to that time of year when people are thinking about their commitments and maybe considering making some changes in their activities for the new year: taking on new responsibilities or reducing them. It is also the time of year when some of our board members let us know that they will not be able to make as large a commitment next year as they made this year. While we would like to keep all of our valuable board members, it is inevitable that some move on.

In order to keep the board fresh and energized we have an annual “Call for New Board Members.” This is an open call for anyone who thinks that they would like to contribute some time and energy toward continuing to keep Atlanta SPIN a high quality organization. In addition to the typical officer positions that any organization would have (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer) we have needs in standing committees like

Membership, Sponsorship, and Program (arranging speakers for general meetings). There are also other activities like Technology (keeping the web site up and running), our newsletter, marketing, and other special committees that are established for specific purposes like coordinating our annual signature event. If you are interested in observing an actual board meeting you are more than welcome. Just contact any board member for the date and time of the next meeting. Normally these meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm at Aldo’s restaurant in Sandy Springs.

If you think that we are talking about YOU, you might be right. The only way you can be sure is to step up and make yourself known to the board. Apply for membership on the board. Here is how to do it. Go to the www.AtlantaSPIN.org web site and look for the link on the home page “2009 Call for Board Members.” This link will take you to the details on submitting your information for consideration by the current board. All applications are due no later than midnight November 21, 2008. The Board will review all applications at the December Board of Directors meeting and notify all candidates of the results at the December 10, 2008 general meeting.

Halloween Horror Stories (Continued)

An unhappy customer that wants more delivered faster and everything fixed yesterday

Her project had to interface with a Maturity Level 3 organization in a different city in order to deliver the system resulting in continuous friction among the working level organizations. Angela was able to apply some fundamental project management and process principles to the project and save it from certain disaster.

Fred Haigh from AMERICAN SYSTEMS was our second speaker. He told a particularly horrid tale of a client who wanted everything, and wanted it now. Sound familiar? It wasn’t really that bad but wanting to spend only a year getting to CMMI maturity level 3 (less than six months of that time was devoted to actually using the processes) was bad enough. Through a process of refocusing the client’s attention onto what could actually be accomplished in the time available, there was a successful appraisal albeit on a

dramatically reduced scope.

Mike Nearman from AGSI was our final speaker on the panel. Mike told a story from early in his career. In this story, the client was faced with the worst possible situation: fix the problem or risk going out of business. The problem was so large that there was no technology available to solve the problem. On top of that the project was six months late, \$6 million over budget and there was no end in sight. Some critical resources had quit the company and there were threat of lawsuits. How’s that for a horror story? Mike’s formula for success included proper selection of the SDLC for the project, very tight scope management, active leadership taking personal responsibility for success of the project, and keeping moral high.

If you liked this meeting format please let us know and we will look for more opportunities to have panel discussions in the future.

Spotlight on Sponsors:

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](#).



AGSI is a Management and Technology Consulting company headquartered in Atlanta. Since 1981, we have provided consulting solutions that help our clients turn great strategy into great performance.

AGSI's consultants **average 16 years of experience** and provide seamless integration between our Management and Technology Consulting services. AGSI leads our clients through the complete project life cycle, from vision to execution, to maximize their business and IT investments, reduce project risk, improve quality, increase customer satisfaction and lower costs. AGSI is also **vendor neutral** ensuring that our client's priorities are our only concern.

Management Consulting

AGSI pairs our Management Consultants with our client's leadership team to drive and manage the

development, design and deployment of new processes that are sustainable and measurable. AGSI offers the following services

- Business Process Improvement
- Enterprise Program Management
- Organizational Change Management

Technology Consulting

AGSI's Technology Consultants provide the expertise to validate our client's technology strategy and help deliver supporting initiatives, resulting in sustainable and measurable value. AGSI offers the following services

- Application Development and Management
- Project Management
- Systems Integration

Upcoming Speakers

Our Program Committee is working fast and furiously on a full slate of speakers for next year. As the program for next year becomes firmed up we will bring you the lineup for the next few months in this spot. We also post our upcoming speaker list on our web site—www.atlatnaspin.org. Please check our web site frequently for the latest information about our programs. Also, don't forget to let us know that you are coming to our meetings. If you register for each meeting it will give us a chance to print out a name tag for you and be sure to have enough food and drink for all.

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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.