

PS&J SOFTWARE SIX SIGMA

Measured Managed and Controlled Project Performance

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Implementing a Measurement Framework

The Measurement and Analysis process area supports all process areas by providing specific practices that guide projects and organizations in aligning measurement needs and objectives with a measurement approach that will provide objective results. These results can be used in making informed decisions and taking appropriate corrective actions. The purpose of Measurement and Analysis is to develop and sustain a measurement capability that is used to support management information needs.

The Measurement and Analysis process area involves:

- Specifying the objectives that are aligned with identified information needs and objectives
- Specifying the measures, data collection and storage mechanisms, analysis techniques, and reporting and feedback mechanisms
- Implementing the collection, storage, analysis, and reporting of the data
- Providing objective results that can be used in making informed decisions, and taking appropriate corrective actions.

The integration of measurement and analysis activities into the processes of the project supports:

- Objective planning and estimating
- Tracking actual performance against established plans and objectives
- Identifying and resolving process-related issues
- Providing a basis for incorporating measurement into additional processes in the future.

Implementing a metrics framework at the start of a process improvement initiative allows an organization to baseline current process performance. This is invaluable in assessing if “process improvements” have a real bottom line impact and in calculating the return on process related investments. Furthermore, process performance cannot be managed without measurements and the performance of processes that are not actively managed almost invariably deteriorates to the point where the process is of questionable value.

It is not necessary to put a comprehensive metrics framework that will support a level 5 organization in place immediately. However, with a little foresight, it is possible to put a simple framework in place that collects all the core measurements necessary to manage processes at all maturity levels. Analysis and decision support can be added as necessary in the future, but if the basic framework is put in place as an organization moves to CMMI level 2, it will provide the data needed to systematically improve and manage all the organization’s processes as it moves up the maturity ladder.

Unfortunately most lower maturity organizations lack the experience with metrics to put an effective and efficient framework in place at level 2. They tend to oversimplify, collecting incomplete and

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fragmentary data that is of no real use for decision support and process management. Or they tend to take too many measurements that bog everyone down with excessive data collecting overhead.

PS&J has worked with software metrics for years in the context of CMM, Personal Software Process, Six Sigma, and CMMI. If you want to put a cost-effective CMMI compliant metrics framework in place, we can help you with training, and consulting services.