

# **Do's and Don'ts of Process Improvement**

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# Acknowledgments

Terms like these are often used in the following material:

CMM<sup>®</sup> Framework  
IDEAL<sup>SM</sup> Model

Capability Maturity Model <sup>SM</sup> and IDEAL<sup>SM</sup> are service marks of Carnegie Mellon University

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# **“Primary” Lessons Learned**

- **Secure Senior Management Sponsorship**
- **Treat SPI as a Project**
- **Engage Internal Staff.**

# OK, what now?

- **Yeah, but what do we DO?**
- **And is there anything we should AVOID doing?**

# Caveat

- **Weinberg's Organizational Dichotomy**
  - No two organizations are entirely the same
  - No two organizations are completely different
- **Weinberg's Law of Raspberry Jam**
  - The broader you spread it, the thinner it gets
- **This tutorial covers 32 specific **Do's** and **Don'ts****
  - Assume about a 20% “raspberry jam” rate
  - The rest is intended for “a friend of yours.”

# Do's and Don'ts

- **Senior Management**
- **CMM(I)**
- **Measurement**
- **Process**
- **Behavioral Change**
- **(K)PA Specific**
- **Message from our Sponsor**

# Do's and Don'ts: Senior Management

**“Sponsorship” is nice,  
*Proactive Leadership* is better!**

- **Don't** Treat the Level as the Goal
- **Do** Establish “Alignment Principle”
- **Do** Take Time Getting Faster
- **Do** Align the Reward System
- **Do** Ask Different Questions
- **Do/Don't** Lead by Example

# **Don't** Treat the Level as the Goal

- What are you really trying to achieve?
  - What is the business imperative?
  - How do your customers evaluate your products?
  - Why do potential customers keep buying your competitor's products?
- Which would be better:
  - Achieve Level 2, but NOT the business objectives
  - Achieve the business objectives, but NOT Level 2?
- So what's the REAL goal?



# **Don't** Treat the Level as the Goal

- **Maximize the VALUE, not the LEVEL!**
  - **Problem:** Focusing on the level establishes conflict between the SPI project and the software projects
  - **Solution:** Focusing on the business imperative produces harmony
    - Well, at least it reduces the conflict!
    - Lends credibility to the SPI program
    - Changes discussion from “if” to “how.”

# **Do** Establish “Alignment Principle”

- **Faster, Better, Cheaper - pick ONE!**
  - If you could improve in only 1 area, which would it be?
    - Which “number one priority” is really on top?
    - Remember Deming’s “constancy of purpose”?

# **Do** Establish “Alignment Principle”

- **Example:**
  - “Achieve an annual, sustainable 10% reduction in field reported defects without degrading current levels of cost, schedule, and functional variance.”
- **Align business, project, and SPI goals**
  - SPI becomes “Software Project Improvement”
- **Communicate this broadly**
- **Focus with a passion!**

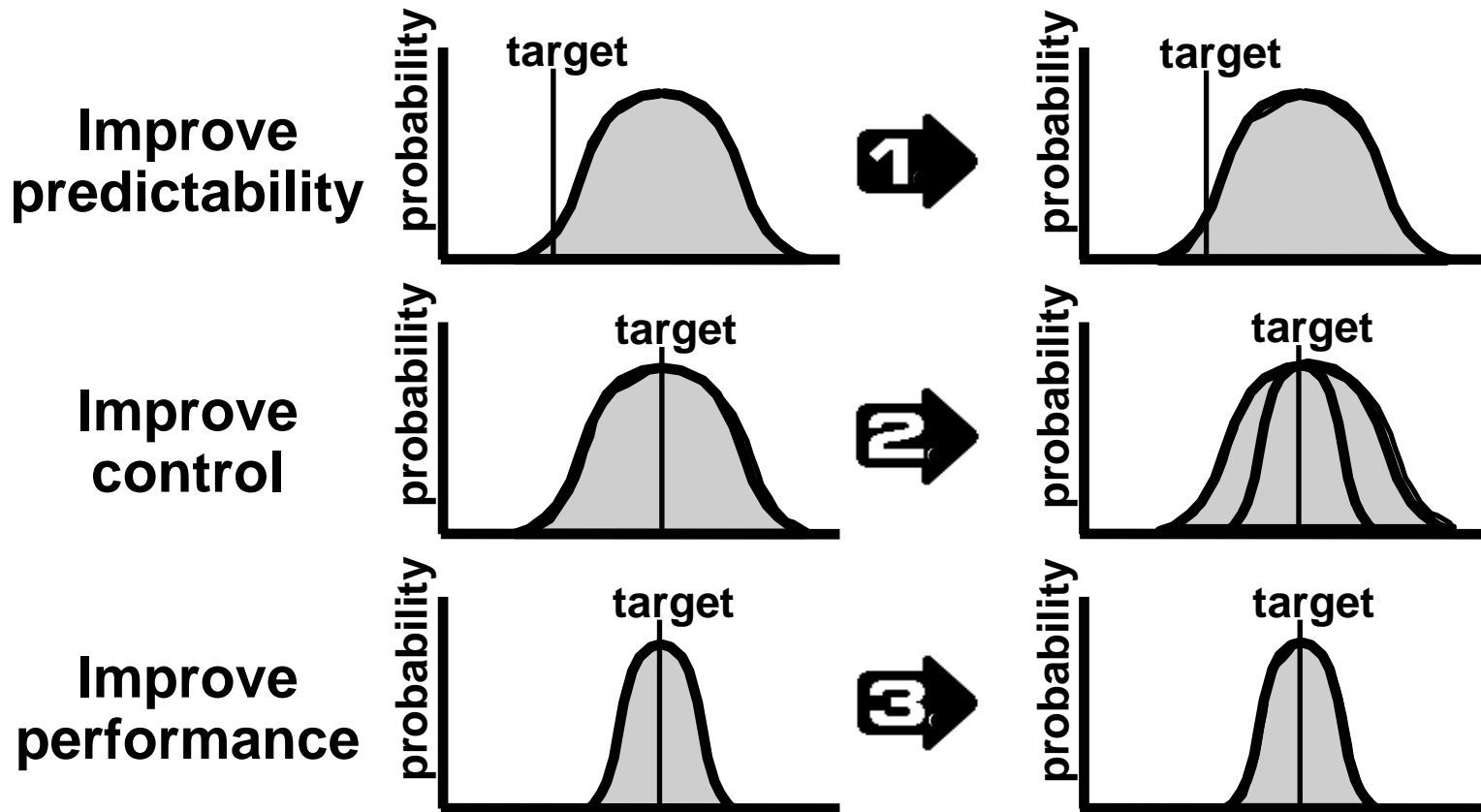
# **Do Take Time Getting Faster**

- **Why would your customer believe 6 months when they don't believe 8?**
  - **Do YOU believe it?**
  - **Have you seen the plan?**
  - **Is it credible?**
  - **Remember: A wish is NOT a plan!**
- **How will the troops respond to this goal?**

# **Do Take Time Getting Faster**

- **Despite what they SAY, most customers WANT predictability - they want to believe**
  - Applies equally well to:
    - Internal customers (Product Mgt / Marketing)
    - External customers
- **Prerequisite: enhance the credibility of your estimates**
  - The troops want to be believed!
  - It's a matter of professional integrity.

# Improving Capability



# **Do** Align the Reward System

- **What behavior do you reward today?**
  - **Who received the last few achievement awards?**
  - **Why did they receive them?**
  - **Why do people *perceive* they received them?**
    - **Perception is reality to the perceiver**
  - **Are the reward system and the Alignment Principle aligned?**

# **Do** Align the Reward System

- **The behavior you reward is the behavior you get**
  - **Stop rewarding process arson and fire fighting**
  - **Start rewarding disciplined planning & execution**
- **Not all rewards are monetary**
  - **Atta-boys**
  - **Success stories published**
  - **Executive recognition**
  - **Promotions**
- **But money's nice too!**



## **Do Ask Different Questions**

- **What do you ask about in project reviews today?**
  - Is the project on schedule?
  - Is the project on budget?
  - Whose fault is it?
  - Why don't I see anybody in here on Saturday?
- **Do you ask any questions related to process or process improvement?**

# **Do** Ask Different Questions

- **The power of the executive question:**
  - **Management can:**
    - **influence behavior by asking different questions**
    - **change behavior by insisting on getting the answers!**
- **Try asking:**
  - **Is SPI helping you achieve our alignment principle?**
  - **What improvements are you piloting?**
  - **What SPI suggestions have you made recently?**
  - **What are the pain points in the current way of doing things?**

## **Do/Don't Lead By Example**

- **What are YOU doing to become more process disciplined?**
  - **Are any of your processes documented?**
  - **Does anyone verify that you are following them?**
  - **Are you trying to improve them over time?**
- **Are you sending the message, “Do as I say, not as I do”?**

# Do/Don't Lead By Example

- **Consider documenting the Organizational Commitment Process first**
  - “How does our organization commit to doing work on behalf of a customer?”
  - Involve peers in Marketing/Product Management
  - Pilot the process
  - Have SQA verify adherence
- **Demonstrate your personal commitment to process discipline and process improvement**
- **Sponsorship is nice; proactive leadership is better!**

# Exercise

- **Do's and Don'ts: Senior Management**
  - **Don't** Treat the Level as the Goal
  - **Do** Establish “Alignment Principle”
  - **Do** Take Time Getting Faster
  - **Do** Align the Reward System
  - **Do** Ask Different Questions
  - **Do/Don't** Lead by Example
- **What now?**
  - Which would help your organization the most?
  - What are you going to do when you get back?
  - Are there other Senior Mgt **Do's** and **Don'ts**?

# Do's and Don'ts

- Senior Management
- CMM(I)
- Measurement
- Process
- Behavioral Change
- (K)PA Specific
- Message from our Sponsor

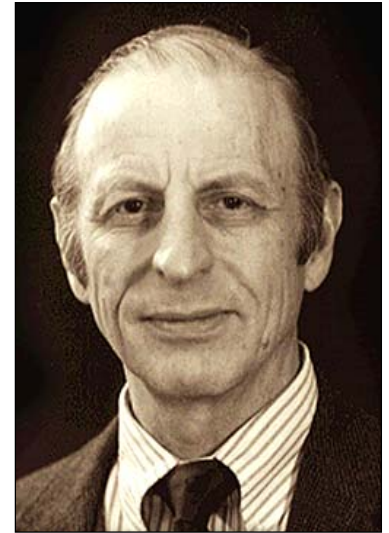
## **Do's and Don'ts: CMM(I)**

**“All models are wrong;  
some models are useful”**

- **Don't** Treat the CMM(I) as the Bible
- **Don't** Train the Masses on CMM(I)
- **Do** Become a Stronger Maturity Level 1
- **Don't** Skip Over Maturity Level 2
- **Don't** Use Appraisals for Diagnosis
- **Don't** Use the Continuous Representation
- **Don't** Use the Staged Representation

## **Don't Treat the CMM(I) as the Bible**

- **Does Watts really look that much like Moses?**
  - **The CMM(I) is a good book but it's not THE good book!**
  - **1000+ suggested changes submitted**
- **It's just a model!**
  - **Goals - sound engineering/management principles**
  - **Practices - one way to accomplish the goals**
  - **Subpractices - insight into the practices.**





## **Don't Treat the CMM(I) as the Bible**

- **Don't have one policy per (K)PA!**
  - Apply CMM(I) with your brain in “ON” position
  - Consider policies for:
    - Project Management Stuff
    - Engineering Stuff
    - Process Stuff
  - Write the policy LAST
- **Look elsewhere for additional guidance**
  - IEEE standards, ITIL, ISO, Baldrige
  - Books, periodicals, employees, Dilbert, etc.

# **Don't Train the Masses on CMM(I)**

- **Have you heard the expressions:**
  - Here we go again?
  - The next silver bullet?
  - Yet another flavor of the month?
  - This too shall pass?
- **Have you ever read the CMM(I) like a novice?**
  - “System requirements allocated to software”?
  - “Software process database”?
  - “Organization(al) Process Focus”?
  - “Instantiation”???

# **Don't Train the Masses on CMM(I)**

- **What should you do?**
  - **Train the SEPG on the CMM(I)**
  - **Train Process Action Teams on relevant portions**
  - **Train the unwashed masses on THEIR process**
  - **Consider providing CMM(I) orientation after:**
    - **Initial value has been proven**
    - **Momentum has been established**
- **Translate CMM(I)ese into local jargon**
  - **In order to influence behavior, folks have to understand it!**

# **Do** Become a Stronger Level 1

- **How many Process Action Team do you have?**
  - **Do you have a PAT for each of the Level 2 KPAs?**
    - **Is your “process pain” equally distributed?**
    - **Can projects absorb all of these concurrent changes?**
- **Are the project managers, the SEPG’s customers, actively involved in establishing SPI requirements and priorities?**

# **Do Become a Stronger Level 1**

- **Treat Level 1 as a continuum, not a point value**
  - **Improve in a few areas to gain:**
    - **Experience**
    - **Credibility**
    - **Momentum**
    - **Process discipline**
  - **One or two improvements per target audience**
  - **It's OK to improve in non-CMM(I) areas**
- **It's the education, not the degree, that makes you smarter.**

# **Don't Skip Over Level 2**

- **Level 2 approach:**
  - Document the “as is” practices
  - Basis for improvement and sharing good practice
- **There is no "CMM(I) Level 2 In-a-Box"**
  - It's not the process documentation, Stupid!
  - The process documentation is **NOT** the process
- **Believe it or not, it's a BEHAVIORAL model.**

# **Don't Use Appraisals for Diagnosis**

- **Diagnosis implies sickness/disease**
  - Nobody enjoys going to the doctor
- **An appraisal should be more like a health check**
  - “Health” is our overall feeling of well-being
    - Many people do enjoy going to the health club
  - Assume that the patient is already healthy
    - "Seeking opportunities to make the organization even better than it already is"
    - Assume that the patient wants to get even healthier
  - However, **IHEAL** sounds worse than **IDEAL**!

# **Don't Use Appraisals for Diagnosis**

- **It's not about levels, it's about capability**
  - **Process improvement is a *tactical* approach to achieve a *strategic* business objective**
  - **When the map and the terrain disagree, always believe the terrain**
    - **The process documentation is the map**
    - **The process as performed is the terrain**
  - **Alternatively:**
    - **The level is the map**
    - **The behavior is the terrain.**



**Don't Use the Staged Representation**

**Don't Use the Continuous Representation**

- **Staged representation**
  - Prescribed ordering with proven results
  - Organizational change model
- **Continuous Representation**
  - Feel the pain/fix the pain
  - More granular level of information
  - Encouragement to consider quantitative management in any/all process areas
- **Don't** use *either* – **Do** use *both*.

# Maturity Level 2 Example

	Staged at	1/1/03						
	Maturity	MSA	1Q04	2Q04		3Q04	4Q04	
	Level	Act	Plan	Plan	Act	Plan	Plan	Act
<b>Project Mgt:</b>								
PP	2	2	2	2		2	2	
PMC	2	1	1	2		2	2	
SAM	2	0	1	1		2	2	
<b>Engineering:</b>								
RM	2	1	2	2		2	2	
<b>Support:</b>								
CM	2	2	2	2		2	2	
PPQA	2	2	2	2		2	2	
MA	2	0	0	1		1	2	

# Maturity Level 3 Example

	Staged at	1/1/04												
	Maturity	MSA	1Q04	2Q04	3Q04	4Q04	1Q05	2Q05	3Q05	4Q05				
	Level	Act	Plan	Plan	Act	Plan	Plan	Act	Plan	Plan	Act	Plan	Plan	Act
<b>Process Mgt:</b>														
OPF	3	1	1	2		2	2	3		3		3	3	
OPD	3	0	1	1		1	2		2	2		3	3	
OT	3	1	1	1		1	2		2	2		3	3	
<b>Project Mgt:</b>														
PP	2	2	2	2		3	3		3	3		3	3	
PMC	2	1	1	2		2	2		3	3		3	3	
SAM	2	0	1	1		2	2		2	3		3	3	
IPM	3	0	0	0		0	1		1	1		2	3	
RskM	3	1	1	1		1	1		1	2		2	3	
ISM	3	0	0	0		0	1		1	2		2	3	
<b>Engineering:</b>														
RM	2	1	2	2		2	2		3	3		3	3	
RD	3	1	2	2		2	2		2	3		3	3	
TS	3	1	1	1		1	1		1	2		2	3	
PI	3	1	1	1		1	1		2	2		2	3	
Ver	3	1	1	1		1	1		2	2		3	3	
Val	3	0	0	1		1	1		2	2		3	3	
<b>Support:</b>														
CM	2	2	2	2		2	2		3	3		3	3	
PPQA	2	2	2	2		3	3		3	3		3	3	
MA	2	0	0	1		1	2		2	2		3	3	
DAR	3	0	0	0		1	1		1	2		2	3	

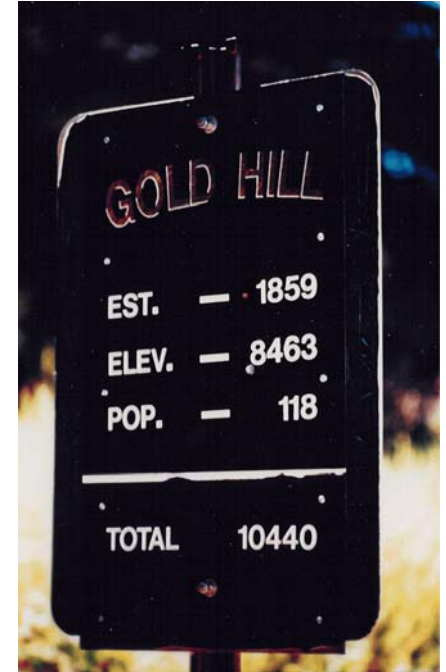
# Do's and Don'ts

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# Do's and Don'ts: Measurement

**“In God we trust,  
all others bring data”**

- **Do** Employ Basic Measures **NOW!**
- **Don't** Collect Data You Don't Use
- **Do** Enhance Data Integrity



Picture by Bill Riddle  
(Used with permission)

# **Do** Employ Basic Measures **NOW!**

- **You don't have a current baseline?**
  - **If you don't start now, you'll be saying the same thing two years from now**
  - **Remember saying it two years ago?!**
- **What to measure?**
  - **Look to**
    - **The Alignment Principle**
    - **The goals of the process improvement program**
  - **Defects, effort, schedule.**

# **Do** Employ Basic Measures **NOW!**

- **There is no physics in software**
  - You can't say, "It can't be done"
  - You should be able to say, "We can't do it"
- **Management's gut is typically bigger than yours.**

# **Don't Collect Data You Don't Use**

- **Do you have “write-only” databases?**
  - **Do you use your:**
    - **Historical data to improve your estimates?**
    - **Inspection and risk data to detect trends?**
    - **Etc.**
- **Are your people “surveyed to death”?**
  - **Are your surveys valid?**
  - **Do things change based on the results?**
    - **Would the survey participants answer the same way?**



# **Don't Collect Data You Don't Use**

- **Use it or lose it!**
  - **Data collection is an expensive investment**
  - **There is no ROI if the data is not used**
- **Don't conduct appraisals if nothing is to change**
  - **Same for Employee Satisfaction Surveys, etc.**
- **Better yet - USE THE DATA!**

# Do Enhance Data Integrity

- **Data =>Information =>Action/Decisions =>Results**
  - Many organizations have “numbers”, not data
  - Many others have “stuff”, not even numbers
- **Define data for consistency**
  - Operational definition or some other technique
    - Unambiguous definitions
  - Automate data collection whenever possible.

# Do Enhance Data Integrity

- **Track actuals at the same level you estimate**
  - Don't throw darts in the dark
  - Track actuals to *motivate* corrective action
- **Providers of data must be consumers of the data**
  - WIIFM?
  - Predictability/control/professional integrity/\$100
- **Adopt Grady's Rules of Data Etiquette**
  - Private vs. public data
  - Don't misuse the data.

# Do's and Don'ts

- Senior Management
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# Do's and Don'ts: Process

**It's NOT the process documentation, Stupid!**

- **Don't** Over-Engineer Processes
- **Don't** Target Mega-Projects First
- **Do** Standardize Process, Not Procedure
- **Do** Establish a Process Architecture
- **Don't** Make Gurus Write Processes
- **Do** Think “Good” Not “Best” Practice

# **Don't Over-Engineer Processes**

- **Engineers thrive on detail & elegance**
- **The "accordion effect" may be unavoidable**
  - **Typically start with very little in place**
  - **Develop thick process**
    - **Generate consensus**
    - **Train personnel**
  - **Developed abridged versions**
    - **Thin to win!**
    - **Experienced practitioner's cheat sheet**
    - **SQA/PPQA's review checklist**
    - **“Decomplexification.”**

# **Don't Over-Engineer Processes**

- **Differentiate between:**
  - Process documentation
  - Training material
- **Don't give Process Action Teams too much time**
  - Parkinson's Law is sure to creep in
- **Have "good case examples" for guidance.**

# **Don't Target Mega-Projects First**

- **Many groups build the “standard process” to address their largest projects**
  - **Theory is: easier to eliminate, than to add**
  - **Problem: Projects have to “justify” scaling down**
  - **Question: If it were built small=>large, would it be fundamentally different?**



# **Don't Target Mega-Projects First**

- **Build thin process layer for medium projects**
  - **Scrutinize/rationalize changes as it's scaled up**
  - **Scale to accommodate additional:**
    - **Complexity**
    - **Coordination**
    - **Communication**
    - **Control**
- **Remember that the process serves the projects, not vice versa!**

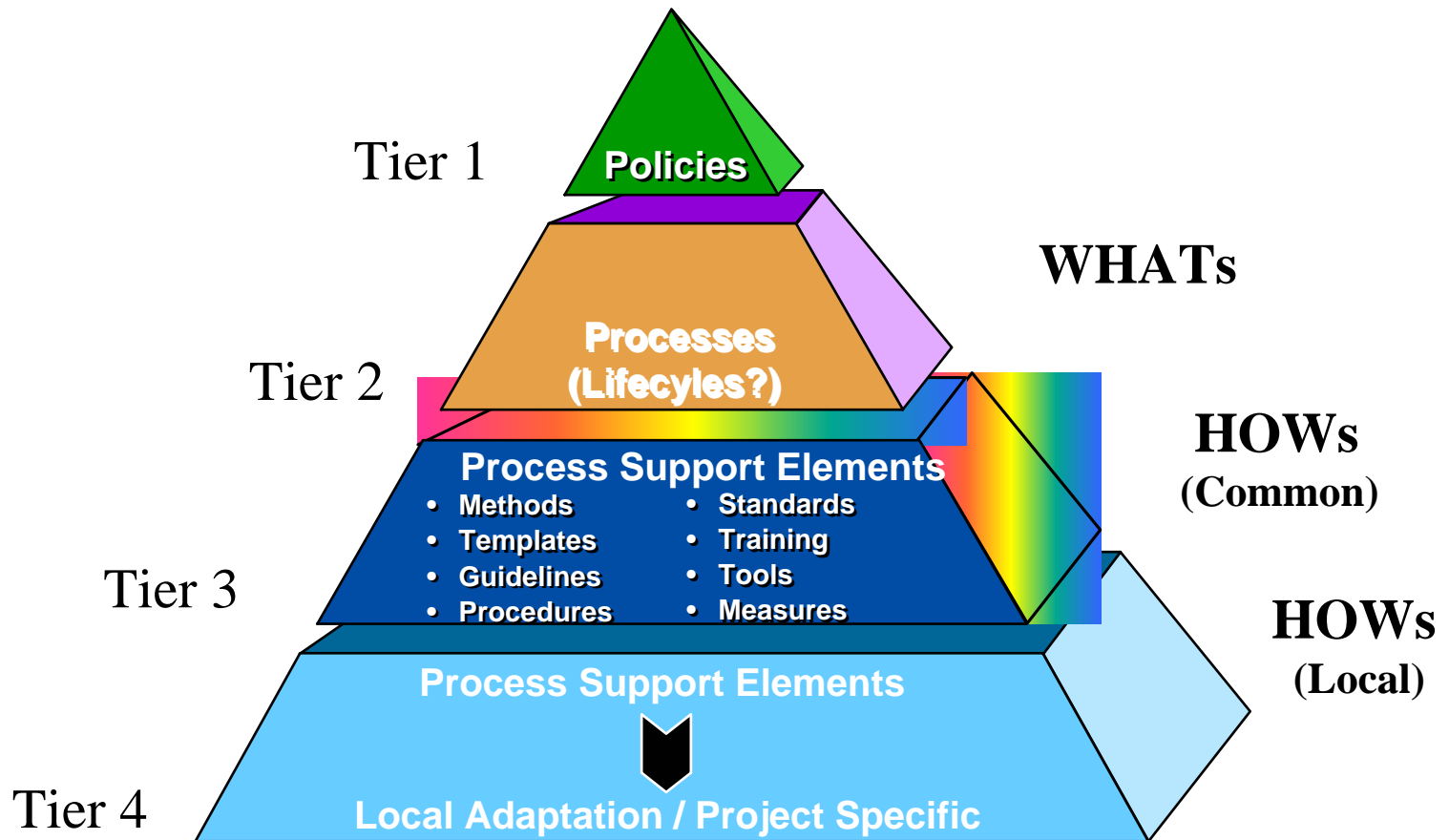
# Do Standardize Process, Not Procedure

- **Level 3: Organization Std Software Process**
  - Process defines “what” is done
  - Procedure defines “how” it is done
- **Localized procedures make sense for different:**
  - Technologies/environments
  - Size/complexity of projects
  - Practices that are achieving success!
- **Level 3 requires standardized processes, not procedures!**

# **Do Establish a Process Architecture**

- **Organizes process elements**
  - Policies
  - Processes
  - Process support elements
- **Assists with navigation**
- **Leads to common process-related jargon.**

# Process Architecture



# **Don't Make Gurus Write Processes**

- **SEPG can interview the guru**
  - Have them “think out loud” as they work
  - Generate a rough draft of the current process
  - Work with the guru to sand down rough edges
- **Tech writers can apply doc standards/packaging**
  - Present tense
  - Active voice
  - Each step begins with responsible role
  - Standard acronyms/roles, no split infinitives, etc.

# **Don't Make Gurus Write Processes**

- **Subject process element to peer review**
  - **Involve other subject matter experts**
  - **Changes “your process” to “our process”**
  - **Build in “voice of the customer”**
  - **Introduces peer reviews on “safe” work products**
- **Make changes based on their feedback**
  - **Don't collect data you're not going to use!**
  - **Gets their fingerprints on the process element**
  - **Further enhances buy-in.**

# **Do** Think “Good” not “Best” Practice

- **Avoid religious warfare for a 2% improvement**
  - “Just because I do it differently doesn’t mean I do it wrong”
  - Consistency is good, but weigh the cost/benefit
- **Don’t exercise stupidity in the name of consistency!**

# Exercise

- **Do's and Don'ts: CMM, Measurement, Process**
  - **Don't** Treat the CMM as the Bible
  - **Don't** Train the Masses on CMM
  - **Do** Become a Stronger Level 1
  - **Don't** Skip Over Level 2
  - **Don't** Use Assessments for Diagnosis
  - **Do** Employ Basic Measures NOW!
  - **Don't** Collect Data You Don't Use
  - **Do** Enhance Data Integrity
  - **Don't** Over-Engineer Processes
  - **Don't** Target Mega-Projects First
  - **Do** Standardize Process, Not Procedure
  - **Do** Establish a Process Architecture
  - **Don't** Make Gurus Write Processes
  - **Do** Think “Good” Not “Best” Practice



# Exercise

- **What now?**
  - Which would help your organization the most?
  - What are you going to do when you get back?
  - Are there other CMM, Measurement, or Process **Do's** and **Don'ts**?

# Do's and Don'ts

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# **Do's and Don'ts: Behavioral Change**

**If it isn't helping the projects succeed,  
the SEPG is failing!**

- **Do Eliminate Low-Value-Added Tasks**
- **Do Pilot Early and Often**
- **Do Make Friday SPI-day**
- **Do Become a Learning Organization**
- **Don't Ignore the Adoption Curve**

# **Do Eliminate Low-Value-Add Tasks**

- **Seek and eliminate some useless administrivia**
  - **The plate is only so big!**
- **Do this early and make some friends**
- **Helps avoid the "process weenie" tag.**

# Do Pilot Early and Often

- **Don't debate issues in the ivory tower**
  - Wastes a lot of time
  - Chances are, both sides are wrong!
- **Run “alpha pilots” to test competing theories**
  - Seek feedback from the process executors
    - Value vs. overhead/disruption
    - Skills and cultural fit
    - Toolability
- **Run “beta pilots” to demonstrate readiness.**

## **Do Make Friday SPI-day**

- **If you allocate part-time SEPG/PAT members:**
  - **Less than 20% is useless**
  - **Remember the Law of Raspberry Jam**
    - **The broader you spread it the thinner it gets**
    - **Don't spread it out - allocate a full day for SPI work**
    - **Friday is a lousy day - pick Wednesday instead!**
  - **Hold SPI people accountable for:**
    - **Achieving their SPI milestones and deliverables**
    - **Renegotiating their SPI commitments**
  - **Make it part of their performance review.**

# **Do** Become a Learning Organization

- **Most organizations are Learning Organizations**
  - **But, most are Forgetting Organizations as well**
- **Don't just cram for the final exam - use quizzes**
  - **At the end of each *phase*, ask:**
    - **What went right; why?**
    - **What went wrong; how could it have been avoided?**
    - **What problems escaped from previous phases?**
  - **Recommit to next phase work products/processes**
    - **Review “lessons identified”**
      - **From your last project**
      - **From other projects.**

# **Do** Become a Learning Organization

- **The flip side of every assumption is a risk**
  - And the flip side of every risk is an opportunity!
- **Every problem is a risk that was overlooked**
  - How can you gain better foresight next time?
  - Establish triggers indicating, “Here we go again!”
- **Learn from other projects**
  - Each project exploits organizational knowledge
  - Each project contributes as well
  - Flag data from “less than successful” projects
    - Otherwise, those who study history are bound to repeat it!



# **Don't Ignore the Adoption Curve**

- **You will NOT convert the unwashed masses**
  - Don't waste cycles on the late majority/laggards
  - Target the innovators and early adopters
  - Prove the value and capture the early majority
- **Senior management must exercise “tough love”**
  - Apply pressure on the late majority
  - Apply sanctions on the laggards
  - Ultimately, compliance becomes part of the “salary continuation program.”

# Do's and Don'ts

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# **Do's and Don'ts: (K)PA Specific**

- **Do Implement Value-Added SQA**
- **Do Evolve SQA's Role**
- **Do Implement Peer Reviews Slowly**
- **Do Reinvigorate Your Peer Reviews**

# **Do Implement Value-Added SQA**

- **Invest your best and brightest**
  - **Train them to serve as project coaches/mentors**
  - **Consult on the selection of process elements**
- **First focus on process adoption not compliance**
  - **Assist projects in adopting the process and deriving the intended value**
    - **Ask about the value of the process - and LISTEN!**
    - **Solicit feedback on administrivia/improvements**
  - **Are there resources/skills issues to be addressed?**
  - **Help them Obiwan, you're their only hope!**

# **Do Implement Value-Added SQA**

- **The first two audits of a new process are freebies**
  - **First one is “understanding”**
  - **Second one is “alignment”**
  - **Third one is for real**
- **Differentiate non-compliances by severity**
  - **Tailor reporting and escalation accordingly**
- **Consider naming SQA “Process Assurance”**
  - **Don't use full Process Assurance until you have:**
    - **Defined process**
    - **Work product standards.**

# **Do Evolve SQA's Role**

- **Level 1: SQA instills process discipline**
  - Assists with process adoption
  - Compliance based on “fear of the audit”
- **Level 2: SQA detects process erosion**
  - Sampling is fine! Selection based on:
    - Most critical items
    - Systemic problems
    - Items selected at random
  - If major non-compliances, then conduct full audit
  - Perform trend analysis to detect process erosion.

# **Do** Introduce Peer Reviews Slowly

- **Peer reviews have huge potential payback**
  - Provide higher quality products at a lower cost
  - Achieve application/technical cross-training
- **Start with no more than 3 work products**
  - Favor early life cycle work products
  - Requirements, design, high-complexity code?
- **Add new work products slowly and judiciously**
  - Sampling is OK!
  - Establish the process, value, buy-in, and culture.

# **Do Introduce Peer Reviews Slowly**

- **Conduct data analysis**
  - **Determine how data will be used**
    - **Work product defect density**
    - **Defect phase containment**
  - **Establish how data will NOT be used**
- **Softer, gentler approach**
  - **“Saves” and “escapes” vs. defects**
- **Inject defects to gauge review effectiveness**
  - **Hawthorne effect kicks in as well**
- **Make the team co-responsible for the quality of the work product.**



# Exercise

- **Do's and Don'ts: Behavior and (K)PA Specific**
  - **Do** Eliminate Low-Value-Added Tasks
  - **Do** Pilot Early and Often
  - **Do** Make Friday SPI-day
  - **Do** Become a Learning Organization
  - **Do** Implement Value-Added SQA
  - **Do** Evolve SQA's Role
  - **Do** Implement Peer Reviews Slowly
  - **Don't** Ignore the Adoption Curve
- **What now?**
  - Which would help your organization the most?
  - What are you going to do when you get back?
  - Are there other Behavior or KPA **Do's** and **Don'ts**?

# Do's and Don'ts

- Senior Management
- CMM(I)
- Measurement
- Process
- Behavioral Change
- (K)PA Specific
- **Message from our Sponsor**

# **Do Participate in Your Local SPIN**

- **Learn from others' experience**
- **Get consultation on your issues**
- **Provide consultation on their issues**
- **Expand your network**
- **All for one low price of admission!**

# Questions?

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