

Mature Software Project Management

One or Two Day Seminar^{*}

Seminar Description

Is there a widely held belief in your organization that software projects cannot be “managed?” Do software professionals consider the project schedules and commitments to the customer pipedreams with no connection to reality? Do your customers consider your plans as lacking credibility? Do you wish you could do a better job of managing your software projects?

This seminar addresses the challenges, strategies, and tools for managing software projects. The seminar is structured according to the knowledge areas of the Project Management Body of Knowledge. Project management methodologies such as critical chain and Scrum will be discussed, along with decision making styles, earned value, critical path, customer relationship management, and other management techniques..

Effective project management is a prerequisite for meeting commitments, yet all too many software projects fail to meet customer expectations for budget, schedule, functionality, and quality. Many customers now require their suppliers to demonstrate their commitment to process improvement and quality management by using, or being certified against, various models and standards. Project management is a fundamental requirement to achieve CMMI Level 2 or higher or to be certified against ISO 9001.

Effective project management requires more than implementing a set of basic functions, however. It implies selecting qualified people who can work together effectively, structuring decision making processes both internally and externally, managing customer expectations, monitoring progress, managing risks, and taking corrective action as appropriate. None of these are easy, although there are a number of tools that can help.

This seminar is therefore a broad survey of a variant of project management styles and techniques, as used in diverse environments. The perspective of the discussion is that of “mature” processes, i.e., processes that are well-defined, managed, measured, controlled, and effective.

Topics include posing, if perhaps not answering, the following questions:

- Should this project be initiated? Should it continue or be terminated?
- How are we ensuring that the project adds business value?
- Who is on the team? Do we have effective (high performing) teams?
- How do we set expectations and make commitments?

^{*} This seminar can be delivered over either one or two days. Longer seminars involve more case studies, exercises, and role plays, as well as a more in-depth study of the material. Shorter forms of this material can be presented also.

- How are we managing the relationship with the customer? With our partners? With our suppliers?
- What life cycle model will we use?
- What is our decision making process? How is our team/project structured?
- How are we managing risks?
- How are we tracking progress against our plans?

Who Should Attend

- Middle managers who need to oversee project managers
- Project managers who need manage software projects to success
- Process experts who are evaluating various project management methodologies
- Software professionals who participate in management activities – and who are interested in becoming project managers

Course Prerequisites

There are no pre-requisites for this workshop.

Course Objectives

After completing this seminar, participants should be able to:

- Understand the basic functions of management
- Describe the objectives of a variety of project management methodologies, such as Scrum and critical chain
- Discuss the importance of business context, e.g., commercial shrink wrap vs custom software development, on management methodology choices
- Describe a broad set of project management tools and techniques that should be available to a project manager, such as earned value, critical path, and iterative life cycles
- Characterize common management mistakes
- Weigh the emphasis on people issues, relationship management, and management tools and techniques on project success

Module Description

Module 1 – Project Management Methodologies

- The Project Management Body of Knowledge
- Software Program Manager's Network's 16 Critical Software Practices
- Scrum
- Critical chain project management
- McConnell's Rapid Development
- Weinberg's steering and congruent management styles

Module 2 – Software Project Planning

- Picking a life cycle
- Approaches to estimating
- Core measures
- Critical path

- Crashing, fast tracking, and concurrent engineering
- The impossible region

Module 3 – Tracking Progress

- Earned value management
- Scrum daily management
- Buffers in critical chain project management
- Risk management
- Support processes

Module 4 – Decision Making and Control

- Rational decision making
- Rational fallacies
- Control systems
- Multitasking and fragmentation

Module 5 – Relationship Management

- Customer relationship management
- Defining customer satisfaction
- Supplier relationship management
- Stakeholder relationship management

Module 6 – The People Side of Management

- Team building
- Psychology vs sociology
- Emotional and social intelligence

Activities and Exercises

Activities and exercises include case studies, situational analyses, role playing, and interactive lecturing.