



HIGH PERFORMANCE VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1, AUGUST 2009



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EFFECTIVE PROJECTS WORKSHOP

Effective Project Workshop Series announced for September in Bellevue. Steven M. Smith and Brian K Seitz have joined together to create a workshop previously only available for Microsoft or IBM Gold Partners.

Overview

The Effective Project Workshop Series helps participants create business cases that are both effective and can deliver sales. We will show participants how to turn an initiative into a project by guiding them in the creation of an effective business case. Participants are given a framework and guided through a structured methodology; Microsoft's Rapid Economic Justification that cre-

PARTNER MS101 COURSES FOR 2009-2010

- September 8-11, 2009 – Redmond, WA, USA
- February 1-4, 2010 - Redmond, WA, USA
- March 8-11, 2010 - EMEA Amsterdam
- July 11, 2010 - Washington DC (Short Version)

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CALANDER

Effective Projects Workshop Announced for September.

Microsoft MS 101 for Partners Schedule announced.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FROM THE TRENCHES

PROGRAM OR CAMPAIGN



Brian K. Seitz
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One of the problems in executing a Business Performance Improvement program is all too often it becomes a campaign instead of the program. Programs have a life to them; they have some longevity and acceptance within the organization. That acceptance and incorporation into the way the organization does business is called institutionalization in CMMI parlance. This is what differentiates programs from campaigns.

Campaigns are typically short term affairs and often do not have a lasting effect to an organization's way of doing business. Although they may have a lasting impact --potentially negative-- to an organization. Management Fads, Flavor of the month projects come to mind. Being unconvinced as to the benefits to corporation or self people patiently wait for this campaign to fade away into corporate history. Thus many in the organization go through the motions and chant the mantras but remain

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DRAWING OUT THE FACTS: THE ART OF THE DISCOVERY INTERVIEW

The following is an excerpt from Steve Smith's article *Drawing Out the Facts: The Art of the Discovery Interview*, which was originally published in Better Software Magazine, July, 2007 issue. You can find the complete version of the article on [Steve's website](#).

Question Sequencing

The sequence of your questions contributes significantly to a successful interview. A key aspect of most interviews is gathering information about problems. I like to look at questions as either branches or stems. Branch questions move to a new subject area. Stem questions (indented below) gather more detail about a branch. Let's look at a high-level plan for sequencing questions during a sixty-minute interview:

Q: Who is your customer?

How does your customer relate to Synergy?

Who else is your customer?

Would you recommend that I interview any of the people you mentioned?

Q: What problems did Synergy solve?

Tell me more.

Anything else?

Someone in a previous interview mentioned that Synergy retired a number of older applications. What's your take on that?

Q: What problems did Synergy create?

Tell me more—what evidence do you have?

Who else should I talk to about that problem?

Who might see this differently?

Anything else?

Francois suggested that I ask you about complaints about poor performance. What can

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FROM THE TRENCHES [CONTINUED]

uncommitted waiting for the time to snap or creep back to business as usual. The way to avoid snap or creep back is to ensure you create a change program instead of a campaign around your initiative.

Change programs are no harder to create than campaigns. These do require some thought, effort, and discipline which maybe difficult to achieve in this day of reactive management, sense and respond organizational mentalities, and a market that appears to require immediate behaviors and results.

There are a few simple actions to take that are critical to establishing a program. First and foremost define what the goal is! By goal I don't mean sell five hundred more units. The goal you define should be how the organization will look and behave after the program has been executed and the change has been successful.

While many organization are talking a good game of Six Sigma; hiring staffs with Six Sigma certifications, spending serious dollars on training, these initiatives unfortunately are turning into management fads creating more work and less benefit than was hoped for. I'm all for Six Sigma. However, Six Sigma is just a means to an end, not a goal. Unless you're using it for marketing fodder or compliance requirements, that is: "We have a Six Sigma program hire our company".

The real goal and one that is harder to achieve is creating a company that provides measurable high quality products and services in the six sigma range as seen by their customers. That the company uses fact based decisions to improve consistently as opposed to gut feelings.

Brian is the co-author of Microsoft Rapid Economic Justification (REJ), contributor to IBM's Investment Strategies for Information Systems (ISIS) and the process architect for IBM's Market Planning Process.



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EFFECTIVE PROJECTS WORKSHOP [CONTINUED]

ates the logic for solid economic justifications. Within that context, the business case is examined from multiple stakeholder perspectives to ensure buy-in, and to establish the appropriate means to measure and track success.

By the end of the workshop series, participants will have developed a three-pronged project plan: a cohesive and economically justifiable business case, the action plan to sell the initiative and get project approval, and an appropriate measurement plan to show that the promised results were achieved. Thus, the project plan will not only establish guidelines for technical success, but will also demonstrate business results.

What is the Effective Project Workshop Series?

The Effective Project Workshop Series is a multi-disciplinary series of workshops which guides participants in the process of establishing successful projects from conception to kickoff. The workshop series is based on an integration of several best practices (REJ, ISIS, I.T. Portfolio Management, and Benefits Chain) developed for IBM, Microsoft and DMR by the series authors.

Who should participate?

These workshops will provide valuable knowledge and hands-on experience to line-of-business executives and business development managers, I.T. & financial professionals, and consultants who need to bridge the gap between project initiatives and business results.

What will I get from participation?

Within the context of the workshop, participants will:

- 1) Learn how to develop an effective business case
- 2) Create a business case applicable for submission within their own business
- 3) Develop know-how for justifying future business cases
- 4) Gain insight into working more effectively with partners.

Why should I participate?

For business development managers, consultants, and marketing representatives, the workshops provide a safe environment where you, your clients, and your prospects can work together to develop a business case for a project initiative. This provides you with greater insight into your prospect's organization, increases sales probabilities, and accelerates closing sales.

For your prospects and clients, the workshops create an atmosphere in which to explore innovative ideas, test viability, and build the necessary justification needed to move the project from concept to kickoff.

How long are the workshops?

The series consists of 5 four-hour workshops (one-half day) in which specific stages of creating and implementing an effective business case are covered.

Space is limited, so contact us now:

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PARTNER MS101 COURSES

The primary objective for **Microsoft PARTNER MS101** is to enable and provide a jump-start on your understanding of Microsoft, covering our strategies, products, customer marketing campaigns, sales priorities and field organization for our key enterprise partner alliance, marketing and sales contacts to **decrease the time-to-opportunities & engagement** and to drive wins and revenue for both our firms!!!

This **"jump start and update"** will enable you to work more effectively and efficiently with Microsoft and **will provide you with the information, understandings, learning's and key contacts that could normally take you up to a year or more to acquire.**

Also this provides existing alliances, marketing and sales personnel with an intense update on all the major areas of Microsoft required for you to continue being successful.



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DRAWING OUT THE FACTS: CONTINUED

you tell me about that?

Why did this problem occur?

Could something have been done to prevent it?

What suggestions do you have for fixing the problems?

Q: What problems happened during development?

Tell me more.

How did that affect you?

What else?

What recommendations do you have for fixing the problems?

Q: What other questions should I be asking you?

How would you answer your questions?

Anything else?

Q: Do you have any questions for me?

Q: May I contact you if I have additional questions?

These questions can be asked to anyone in the organization. As you gain information from each interview, adapt your questions to fit the person you are interviewing.

Metaquestions

In addition to questions on the topic of interest, effective interviewers equip themselves with metaquestions to gather feedback about the interview process itself. Metaquestions are questions about questions. For instance, if you see a puzzled look on the interviewee's face, you might respond, "I see a look on your face that suggests to me that you might be puzzled by my question." I find answers to metaquestions open new possibilities about what to do next. For instance, you may discover that the person you are interviewing has a different role than you thought and the role isn't relevant to the discovery. Rather than continue the interview and waste his time and yours, you now have the option of ending the interview. The following is a list of metaquestions I have found valuable in any interview situation:

Do you have any questions for me?

Do my questions seem relevant?

Do my questions puzzle you?

Are you the right person to answer these questions?

Is there anything else I should be asking you?

Don't Worship the Plan

Plan the interview, but don't worship your plan. Effective interviewers adapt to the desires of the interviewee. Don't be the type of interviewer who never deviates from his list of questions. I have experienced that kind of interviewer, and I wondered if he even heard or cared about my responses.

If the interviewee makes it clear that he would enjoy answering more questions, you have connected. And connection is an objective of every interview.

Steve is a management consultant whose teaches leadership skills for managing technology projects effectively. With over two decades of experience as a technology leader for three major technology suppliers, he brings proven, practical methods for untangling complex problems that ensnare projects. He is a public speaker, a workshop leader, a published author who writes essays about effective management as well as a founder and host of the annual Amplifying Your Effectiveness (AYE) Conference, at which he leads experiential workshops about individual, team, and organizational effectiveness.

NEXT ISSUE

- ◆ Job Performance —High Performance Lessons
- ◆ Performance Improvement from the Trenches