Checklist for Developing A Requirements Transformation Program

A Requirements Transformation Program

A program to improve the organization's capability to develop and manage requirements in support of application development and other business initiatives.

A program to move an organization up a maturity ladder of requirements capabilities in the following areas:

- Process
- Practices and Techniques
- Technology
- Organization
- Deliverables / Results
- Staff Competency

Building the Business Case

Generic statements concerning the value of good requirements will not be sufficient to support spending time, budget, and resources on a program to transform requirements in your organization. Whenever resources such as money or effort are consumed, a clear explanation of rationale is needed in business terms indicating quantifiable benefits.

It is always necessary to clearly explain the timeline and return on investment (ROI) that requirements improvement provides. Ongoing executive support is crucial for the success of a requirements transformation program.

1. Use the Maturity Model as a framework for improvement
2. Be forward looking, not backward looking
3. Positive in reasoning, not negative
4. Simple arguments get funded while complexity just confuses
5. Be sensible about what can realistically be accomplished
6. Spend your time asking good questions
7. Get the hard facts: Include industry studies such as the CHAOS and BA Benchmark Reports
8. Talk implication, not problem or need

Baseline Your Level of Requirements Management Maturity

- To understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of the organization across multiple capability areas
- To set a quantifiable baseline measurement to measure subsequent improvement against
- To serve as a reference for directing requirements improvement on a targeted basis to best suit your organization

Creating a Requirements Practice Improvement Plan

- To serve as a communication vehicle to the change process
- To provide a common understanding to the organization of the tasks and target objectives of the change process
- To serve as a reference for tracking progress against objectives

Plan Checklist

- ❏ Identify target goals by capability area
- ❏ Identify maturity level goals by capability area
- ❏ Identify activities required to meet objectives
- ❏ Document action plan to transform the practice
- ❏ Obtain acceptance for the plan

Implementing the Transformation program

- Build a Requirements Organization (Infrastructure and Support)
- Improve the Requirements Practice Competency
- Define and Manage the Process, Techniques, and Deliverables
- Implement Supporting Requirements Technology (Tool Integration)

Building a Requirements Organization

Your Requirements Management Office / Center of Excellence

- ❏ Setup the Infrastructure (Organizational Model & Services)
- ❏ Define the Services (including Charter, Mission, Mandate)
- ❏ Staff and Manage the Resources (Who provides and manages the people)
- ❏ Support the Process and Methods (Who 'owns' the processes and tools of requirements, how is compliance governed)

Develop/ Improve Staff Competency

Acquire, Internalize, Institutionalize

- ❏ Use the diverse options for training and knowledge reinforcement available today: Instructor-led, Web-based, research libraries, professional certification, etc.
- ❏ Ensure training takes the organization CLOSER to the achievement of the competency model
- ❏ Establish a program to measure analyst competency on a regular scheduled basis
- ❏ Adjust training based on the results

Improving Processes, Techniques and Deliverables

- ❏ Elicit proposed requirements practice
- ❏ Analyze and model the practice redefinition
- ❏ Document the process redefinition
- ❏ Review and approve practice redefinition
- ❏ Communicate updated practice redefinition

Technology Integration

Evaluation, Selection, Implementation and Support of requirements authoring, modeling and management software

- Tools bring discipline and focus to a specific area of process
- Don't force a round peg into a square hole (respect the tool's primary design)
- Look for the ability to reinforce your processes and replicate your deliverables
- Speed: Validate the overhead:outcome ratio

Optimize the Requirements Process

The requirements practice is optimized by an evaluation of transformation program results and subsequent updates of the program to enhance specific key performance indicators

- Perform effectiveness audit of the requirements transformation program
- Identify performance gaps relative to the original plan
- Update the action plan to address gaps identified by capability area
- Implement process improvements

Transformation Program Success Enablers

- ❑ Have strong support from an executive sponsor
- ❑ Have clearly defined business and program objectives
- ❑ Have strong organization buy-in / participation throughout the program
- ❑ Involve the right participants on the project team
- ❑ Implement the right improvements for your target maturity level
- ❑ Establish (and follow) a well-defined project plan
- ❑ Cover all the six capability areas to ensure success
- ❑ Adopt and maintain an evolutionary philosophy toward the requirements transformation process
- ❑ Apply the 80/20 rule
- ❑ Deliver improvements within 3-6 months
- ❑ The business organization receives "real" benefits for their development dollars
- ❑ Keep oriented on speed and efficiency for stakeholders
- ❑ Go beyond templates... define what it means to be clear, accurate and complete
- ❑ Requirements are a process... not a deliverable
- ❑ Some changes are top down, some bottom up: you need both to be successful
- ❑ Adoption is about communication – don't overlook who you communicate with, what you communicate, and how efficiently you can communicate in your planning

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT SUCCESS FACTORS

- Develop practice model against different project types and sizes
- Concentrate on ensuring efficiency (speed and timeliness)
- Review the practice redefinition relative to industry models to determine if components are missing
- Use pilot projects as a means to communicate demonstrate efficiency and seek optimization opportunities
- Build in the verification of "clear, accurate and complete"
- Closed loop processes are best but require a lot of thought to get right (plan, execute, evaluate against plan)