
Preface

For a long time, many people have urged me to write this book. Managers and practitioners from four companies encouraged me to do this.

I really want to help software management personnel who know that they need processes but have no idea how to go about creating them. My objectives are to define a process architecture that makes sense, connect it directly to real-world project tasking, provide implementation guidance, talk about all the ways that you really get real-world use out of it for your business, and, lastly, discuss how to deploy it in your company culture. I want this to be an “easy read” — not an academia-oriented book. You don’t need a computer science modeling background to read this. You do need the will and desire to make process work for your organization. If you want to create a process bureaucracy just for that reason, you won’t like this book.

I have seen companies rush into creating process “stuff” with no rhyme or reason to any architecture and end up with a pile of unusable (and expensive) garbage. If you recognize this situation, it’s no wonder that process gets a bad name! On the other hand, if you follow my lead on developing process, it will open up all kinds of benefits, from people in the trenches to any company’s bottom line and survivability in our global economy. You can get measurable improvements with this model.

This book will definitely help implementation for those of you addressing SPEM (Software Process Engineering Meta-model). SPEM has a voluminous specification to understand and this specification is written as most specifications are written: for technical readers. Whereas SPEM focuses on modeling processes, my book gets into process definition, implementation, usage, and deployment that can augment the SPEM models to make this real. You don’t need UML (Universal Modeling Language) training and background to read my book. I use a single UML modeling diagram — the activity diagram. You will find out that it is

central to defining the repeatable tasking world that shows up in process and in project schedules.

I kept putting off writing this book from 1991 until now. Over that period, I saw my wife's health worsen because of Parkinson's disease until deep brain surgery stabilized her condition significantly. Her deteriorating condition consumed me and affected my life drastically. I really feel that I could not have done justice to this book during those trying times. I realize now that if I do nothing in two years I'll only be two years older. If I tackle this book, I can be a published author and be two years older.

I am absolutely passionate about process. People who know me tell me that that passion shows! That same passion can cause potential employment issues when you're trying to change company cultures and may be perceived as a threat to entrenched managers. I believe as strongly in this presented method today as I did when I first developed this process architectural approach. I believe that any company that adopts this methodology will achieve dramatic process improvements that will show up as reduced time to market, reduced development costs, increased repeatability, improved quality, improved employee job satisfaction, improved customer satisfaction, and an overall better working environment throughout the entire company.

I've often thought that the term "process improvement" is incorrect because process is only one part (although an important part) of a more comprehensive term: "operations efficiency." If you can streamline business operations to be more cost-effective, shorten time to market, achieve repeatability, improve internal and external product quality, and increase profitability, process improvement is merely one main way to get there.

I will discuss aspects of this software process method over and over again from different perspectives. This method is very powerful and needs such repetition to cement in these important concepts. So, for those of you who are looking for real down-to-earth guidance in defining and implementing processes, this book is for you.