

CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE

Satyam Computer Services Ltd. has a long history behind pursuing model based process improvement programs. While it has been the endeavor of our business units to constantly evolve how they leverage practices contained in models such as the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI), we have also ensured that the most current appraisal technique, such as the SCAMPI Method, is used to validate our understanding about the capabilities of our process. A large part of software quality assurance lies in effective diagnosis of the causes of process variation before improvements can be rendered. This book by Raghav Nandyal captures the essence behind how such a strong foundation of evaluation was used to engineer process improvements at Satyam.

This was our challenge. For a large Organization like Satyam with approximately 20,000 people working on several technical domains and on diverse projects executed across multiple locations within business units, adopting and implementing a process improvement model such as CMMI was not adequate unless the efficacy of the implementation and the outcome could also be assessed in a discrete and focused manner. The sponsorship objective of each assessment was to identify those practices that are strong and pin-point others that needed improvement. The Process Management Group in consultation with our SEI authorized lead appraiser, Raghav Nandyal, determined that an enterprise wide appraisal was not the way forward. Instead, the appraisal would be organized into several projects by grouping similar business units or process contexts into organizational units for purposes of conducting staggered appraisals. Further, by cascading the resulting improvements from such focused appraisals prior to the next roll-out, we were confident about one thing—we would ensure that the impact of special causes of process variation would be resolved or minimized, and the impact of common causes would be isolated, corrected and eliminated by effective process management.

This book relates the application of appraisal best practices adopted on the seven independent appraisals led by Raghav, over approximately two and half years. The rigour it lays out has proven effective in unearthing process strengths and weaknesses while helping Satyam calibrate the process maturity of its business units. Raghav's structured assessment approach as described in this book, wherein he conducted CMMI overview sessions prior to administering questionnaires, Class C, Class B and Class A assessments for each business unit helped us to focus and extract the maximum value out of each assessment. Raghav also helped us enhance and establish credibility of our assessments by registering Class C, Class B and Class A assessments with the SEI. All through the CMMI initiative, we had an excellent rapport with Raghav and there were so many things that we shared and so much that we learnt. The intangible benefits that result from conducting a value added or qualitative appraisal as described in this book, far exceeds the potential of a SCAMPI appraisal.

Making Sense of Software Quality Assurance Customer Perspective

Despite having conducted seven appraisals, at no point did Raghav consider the assessments to be run of the mill activity. Each assessment was a project and the same amount of rigor and seriousness was maintained all through. The focus, eye for detail and the grind through which he conducted each of these assessments is unmatched. Each assessment for Satyam had a different perspective ingrained by Raghav and each of these assessments gave us great learning. All through the seven assessments, Raghav maintained independence and at no point did he let his independence get compromised as an external assessor. We did have our share of disagreements on model interpretations, but we always reached a mutual understanding through our discussions and the way he presented his case and the perspective relevant to the context on hand. It is my belief that value added quality appraisals is also about effective interpretation of practices to the business context, without diluting the meaning.

What you are about to read in this book by Raghav is an approach that has paid us rich dividends. Personally, as head of Quality in Satyam, I am extremely positive that following the recommendations in this book will go a long way in enhancing the state of the software quality assurance practice.

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