

Foreword for ‘Interpreting the People CMM’

In 1998 I had the pleasure of introducing the People CMM to India in classes overflowing with professionals asking insightful questions. In the spring of 1999 I returned to teach the first People CMM Lead Assessor class in India to 10 exceptional candidate Lead Assessors. One member of that class struck me as a natural leader with an instinctive understanding of what we were trying to accomplish in the People CMM. It is rewarding to see Raghav Nandyal emerge as a leader and communicate his insights so effectively in this book.

Raghav has assisted many Indian companies in implementing the practices recommended in the People CMM. This book integrates his excellent grasp of the material with his growing experience in helping companies interpret the People CMM within the context of their culture, environment, and business strategy. As a result, this book is an excellent companion to the actual text of the People CMM, and should be used to help interpret the intent of the practices and process areas contained therein. More than just restating the practices, Raghav offers examples of methods and procedures that can be used to implement them. This is a practical book for practical people who want to improve the capability of their organizations using practical methods.

This book is especially valuable for organizations transitioning from Version 1 to Version 2 of the People CMM. It compares the process areas and goals between the two versions and provides insight into what changed and why. It does not surprise me this book is the best current source comparing the two versions of the People CMM, since Raghav was one of the heaviest contributors of comments and change requests during the international review process that preceded the completion of Version 2. Raghav’s incisive comments influenced some of the toughest decisions regarding improvements in Version 2.

The strongest commitment to implementing the People CMM has emerged in India. India understands the competitive value of the great natural resource represented in its people. Indian companies understand that the day they can win business simply by having lower labor rates will ultimately pass. Indian companies understand that when this day passes they can still win consistently if the capability of their workforce exceeds that of their competitors. Finally, Indian companies know that implementing improved workforce practices now, ahead of their international competitors, may make the barrier to entry against them too high, even as labor rate differences dissipate.

I have been impressed that Indian executives have a clear sense of their responsibility in building great organizations. They know that their job is as much about organizational development and capability as it is about business strategy and execution. In fact, they know that the former provides the most reliable foundation for the latter. In most of the world I get briefings about People CMM-related accomplishments and plans from the Human Resources Director. In India I get these briefings from the CEO, and their knowledge of the implemented practices is sophisticated. Raghav’s book emerges from this culture, a culture committed to the development of people as a primary business strategy.

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