



Promoting IT Efficiency

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Blog Article
Methodology Audiences

Preaching to the Choir

Originating in the early days of information technology (IT), IT methodology has always acted as the “rope” in the tug of war between unstructured chaos and structured discipline. On the one side, the IT resources with their ongoing want to explore the newest technical alternatives and seeking the free range to develop without boundaries. On the other side, the business owner’s seeking to obtain value from their IT resources and the users of products/applications wishing to obtain the business functionality they require to deliver products and services to their clients.

Somewhere in the middle a number of IT methodologies and lifecycles (i.e. project management, software development, software testing) have evolved aiming to provide organizations with a set of tools they can rely on to consistently deliver products and projects on time and within budget. Applicable for all (small, mid-sized, and large) organizations, an IT methodology can have a beneficial and far reaching effect for multiple audiences across any organization. They include

IT Methodology - Organizational Audiences

This audience traditionally views a methodology as a process that can be leveraged to ensure consistency in the timeliness, quality and costs of delivering and supporting IT applications. As a process, a methodology also affords this audience the structure, repeatability and environment to effectively apply governance and continuous *process improvement* throughout their organization.

Senior/Executive Management

Senior Management is responsible for developing and administering the strategic direction of the organization. With regard to IT efficiency, Senior Management are searching for ways to improve the bottom line and make decisions on everything from IT budget to IT tool suite selection to outsourcing of IT functions. From this perspective, Senior Management understands that an IT methodology is a tool that can be leveraged to increase the efficiency of IT, establish a common process for developing and maintaining applications, and ensuring a degree of quality is being built into every product and application. Senior Management are more interested in achieving greater efficiency and delivering value than knowing the technicalities and dynamics of a methodology – they seek greater consistency, efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Line Management (Business)

Business Managers are responsible for the delivery of products and services to the user community (internal and external). From this perspective, Business Managers recognize their ability to deliver products and service is dependent on the viability, reliability and applicability of the applications/systems to be used by their staff. Business Managers recognize the importance of having their staff contribute to the development and maintenance of their applications and view an IT methodology as a mechanism their staff can utilize to ensure the business requirements are defined and communicated to IT project development or maintenance teams. Within some organizations, the Business Managers are responsible for authorizing and oversight of the IT Budget – in the majority of these organizations the Business Managers are insistent that an IT methodology be utilized for all IT development and maintenance work.

Line Management (Information Technology)

IT Managers are responsible for the delivery and support of applications/systems that contribute to the operational performance of the organization and its ability to deliver products and services. IT Managers monitor the technical architectures, tool suites, software products to ensure IT staff are positioned to deliver products, services and support to the business side of the house. The IT methodology affords IT Management the reassurance of predictability – they can be confident the methodology will provide project and maintenance teams the mechanism to consistently deliver quality applications on time and within budget. Applying a common IT methodology also provides IT Management with the flexibility to manage and re-direct their staff across multiple organizational IT priorities.

IT Methodology - Project Audiences

This audience traditionally views a methodology as a tool they can utilize to ensure they can deliver and support IT projects. As a tool, a methodology affords this audience access to a pre-defined structure, lifecycles, work products and deliverables that can be applied to ensure the project is properly planned, resourced, and executed.

Business Resources (Analysts)

Business staff are the individuals responsible for understanding the organizational products and services being delivered through day to day operations. They are the “business experts” that are responsible for ensuring all the required business functionality is available in the products and systems/applications being delivered and maintained by the IT resources. An IT methodology provides the business resources the mechanism to articulate and contribute their business knowledge into the requirements that will be used to develop the product or system/application. An IT methodology also provides the Business Analysts an understanding of how the system/application will be built (deliverable wise) and establishes the necessary documentation to ensure the product they are receiving can be tested and maintained to reflect the business requirements they have defined.

IT Project Managers

IT Project Managers are responsible for delivering products and systems/applications to the business stakeholders and user community. They plan, lead and manage a project from project startup through implementation. They are accountable for ensuring the product or system/application adheres to the schedule, cost and quality demands of the project stakeholders. An IT methodology is the tool they leverage to ensure the proper resources and skills are available to complete the project, the business requirements are incorporated into the final product, the final product serves the business need, and the project is completed on time and within budget.

IT Application Development & Support/Maintenance Teams

The IT application/system delivery and support resources are accountable for designing, delivering and maintaining the functionality of products and applications/systems. These resources are

responsible for delivering and maintaining business systems/applications that provide operational staff the necessary functionality to deliver products and services to the client. Examples of these roles can include system architects, functional architects, database administrators, team leaders, systems analysts, system programmers, system testers. These resources rely on an IT methodology to pre-define the deliverables (specific work products) the project team will be completing to deliver the project.

IT Application Testing Teams

The IT Application Testing Teams are accountable for ensuring the product or system/applications being delivered by the IT Application Development & Support/Maintenance teams align with the authorized business requirements and that the business requirements address the business need. These teams are frequently sub-divided into addressing Unit Testing, Integration Testing and User Acceptance Testing. These resources rely on an IT methodology to establish the necessary documentation and pre-defined testing criteria that will be used to validate the functionality being delivered in the product or system/application.

IT Methodology – Corporate Interfaces

In some organizations the following operational infrastructure (bodies) may exist. They interface with the **IT Methodology - Organizational Audiences** to contribute to the delivery and support of an IT methodology.

Process/Project Management Office (PMO)

In some organizations a group of experts in the fields of industry recognize standards, methodologies, best practices, quality frameworks are assembled for the purpose of guiding organizational process improvement, change management and quality initiatives. They normally report to Senior Management and are accountable for defining and implementing organizational IT methodologies, policies, processes, guidelines and “best practices”. The PMO are traditionally deemed as the “organizational owners” of all IT methodologies and are responsible for the creation, institutionalization, training and support of these methodologies.

Corporate Training Staff

In some organizations a group of resources are dedicated to delivering overall training (including IT methodologies) to organizational staff. They are responsible for ensuring corporate training standards exist and are applied (including IT methodology training) to the delivery of all corporate training. The training staff collaborate with the PMO to guide the development and delivery of the IT methodology training needs.

Communications Staff

In some organizations a number of resources are dedicated to developing and overseeing all internal and external communications – including the status and progress of PMO initiatives. These resources are accountable for developing and applying communication strategies and plans to ensure the “proper” message is consistently being delivered. These resources work with the PMO to ensure all organizational staff remain up to date and informed on the progress of the IT methodology implementation.

Corporate Quality Assurance/Governance Resources

In some organizations a team is assembled to monitor how the organizationally approved processes, standards, and IT methodologies are being applied. These resources work with IT staff and project team members to support the implementation of the approved corporate processes, standards, and IT methodologies – they usually have an independent reporting structure direct to organizational Senior Management. These resources use an IT methodology as the basis for performing process audits and reviews with the project teams. The audits consist of checking to see if and how the pre-defined deliverables of the IT methodology are being applied by the project teams. The underlying principle is that “quality” will be incorporated into the end product or system/application if the IT methodology has been effectively applied.

Wrap Up

An IT Methodology is a mechanism that can be used to consistently deliver quality applications on time and within budget. It provides benefits and support to a number of organizational roles that are responsible for delivering IT efficiency and ROI.

QAAssist is the industry recognized benchmark in information technology (IT) methodologies for small and mid-sized business (SMB's) – including the certification and support of practitioners delivering QAAssist IT Methodology solutions. Article authored by Cameron Watson – President of QAAssist. Visit [QAAssist's website—www.qaiassist.com](http://www.qaiassist.com)