



Promoting IT Efficiency

QAIassist

Selecting an IT Methodology

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As IT organizations and departments are being asked to do more with less they remain in a continuous effort to identify and implement processes and tools that will increase their efficiency and effectiveness. The underlying premise is that increased IT efficiency and effectiveness will contribute to organizational performance and bottom line.

Often the most difficult and important decisions that any IT department can make is to select and apply an organizational IT methodology. The majority of IT organizations are in a constant exercise of chasing the newest packages, tools and software - many of these products are laced with false expectations, poor training, and limited implementation support. This ongoing exercise leaves most IT organizations floundering without a standard process or methodology they can leverage and rely upon to consistently deliver IT efficiency and effectiveness.

To address this limitation, organizational management and stakeholders must recognize the first step in increasing their IT efficiency is to establish a selection process to ensure a meaningful implementation of an IT methodology. Difficult and fundamental questions must be asked, including

1. What dominant trends in IT practices are available to my organization and will increase productivity significantly (25% or more) in the next five years?
2. What proven methodologies, lifecycles, project management tools, and repeatable processes are available to meet this goal?
3. What are the benefits of a methodology (project management, software development, software testing) to my organization?
4. How do I go about selecting and implementing a methodology (project management, software development, software testing)?
5. Does senior management recognize the strategic advantages gained through IT methodologies (project management, software development, software testing)?
6. How can metrics and definitive data be obtained to validate the productivity of the methodology?
7. Will end users and business SME's be able to use a methodology?
8. What training has to be completed to ensure successful implementation?

9. What operational infrastructure must be in place to support implementing the methodology?
10. What operational infrastructure must be in place to maintain the methodology?
11. Can the methodology (as a process) be used to apply IT governance?

The most difficult step for many organizations is choosing an IT methodology (project management, software development, software testing). Over the past number of decades large consulting organizations have developed and flogged their elaborate and extensive methods and proposals (Andersen's METHOD/1, GE's OMT, DMR's Productivity Center, and so forth). Along with these products came very expensive consulting contracts. Today, several modern IT methodologies exist (IBM's Rational Unified Process - RUP) – an all encompassing methodology applicable to large sized complex business applications and QIassist's (Integrated Methodology) – scalable methodology leveraged by small and mid-sized businesses.

Prior to opting for any given IT methodology, an organization should recognize that any IT methodology worth its merit must provide a good overall guideline for the entire development process – it must fit their needs. An organization must remain vigilant on defining what is important. An effective IT methodology (used as a process) has the capacity to identify roles and define who does what and when; it must allow for flexibility – its purpose is to provide practitioners with a tool they can leverage to increase their productivity not encumber them with paperwork and clerical responsibility. The methodology should be scalable and easily customized based on input of the user community – post mortem project reviews should be conducted to assess areas where the methodology could be applied more effectively.

From an operational perspective, the methodology should be implemented in accordance with where it's needs are the greatest and where the organization can receive the greatest value.

The following factors should be addressed as part of organizational IT methodology selection discussion:

Direction and planning

Clarifying what needs to be accomplished. Involving IT management and end users in deciding what needs to be done. Communicating the vision across the organization as a corporate policy.

Action

Defining what actions need to be taken? What is the approach, what tasks need to be undertaken to implement the solution, and by whom? Define the tasks in detail.

Resources

Determine existing staff skills sets, necessary infrastructure and budgets. Agreement on initial roles and responsibilities needed to establish and monitor the implementation.

Communications

Continuous communication with the stakeholders, IT resources and user audience. Communicate regularly what's happening with regard to the implementation and the ongoing governance of the methodology.

Motivation

IT must listen and take into account and address any diverse views, praising achievements and celebrating successes.

Project structures and types

Define roles and organization of the methodology implementation team, management, and reporting structures. Analyze the different types of projects that the methodology addresses. How will the ongoing support be provided and who will be receiving the support.

Leadership

What leadership skills do the key members of the stakeholders and implementation team require to be successful?

Selecting and implementing an IT methodology is not a simple exercise. It takes strategic thinking to see the long term benefits, a business perspective to see where and how the methodology can best be leveraged to optimize operational performance, a technical understanding to recognize how project teams can better deliver functionality and support, and an eye for governance to ensure the methodology being used will continue to improve while it delivers effective solutions.

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. Visit [QAassist's website—www.qaassist.com](http://www.qaassist.com)