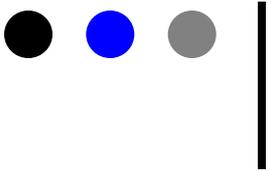




“Patience is a Virtue” Day in the Life of a SEPG Lead

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9th Annual CMMI Technology
Conference and User Group
11/18/2009



Objectives

- Describe difficult scenarios that SEPG Leads often find themselves in
- Identify problems that SEPG Leads encounter on any given day
- Share lessons learned

Organization

- Strike Weapons Systems Division
 - Division of Strategic and Weapon Control Systems Department at Naval Surface Warfare Center/Dahlgren Division
- 130+ Government Employees and 67 Contractors
 - 1 SEPG Lead (full-time)/6 Process Leads (part-time)
- New Development and Maintenance of Twcs
 - Covering entire lifecycle including support
 - Program and Project Management
 - Systems Engineering through Fleet Support
 - Configuration Management, Quality Assurance, Systems Administration, Integrated Logistics Support, Infrastructure Support

Background- Process Improvement Journey

- 1991- Tomahawk began SPI efforts and established the SEPG/SQA
- 1993- Assessed as Level 2 project (SPA methodology)
- 1997- Rated as CMM-SW Level 3 organization

- CMMI Appraisal History
 - 2002- Appraised using CMMI-SE/SW 1.1 Class C Appraisal method
 - Identified strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for improvement
 - 2007- Transitioned to CMMI-Development Version 1.2
 - 2009- Conducted Model Based Appraisal (MBA) developed by NAVAIR
 - Developed Tactical and Operational Plans to address findings
 - In process of executing plans
 - 2010- SCAMPI Class A appraisal



Background (2)

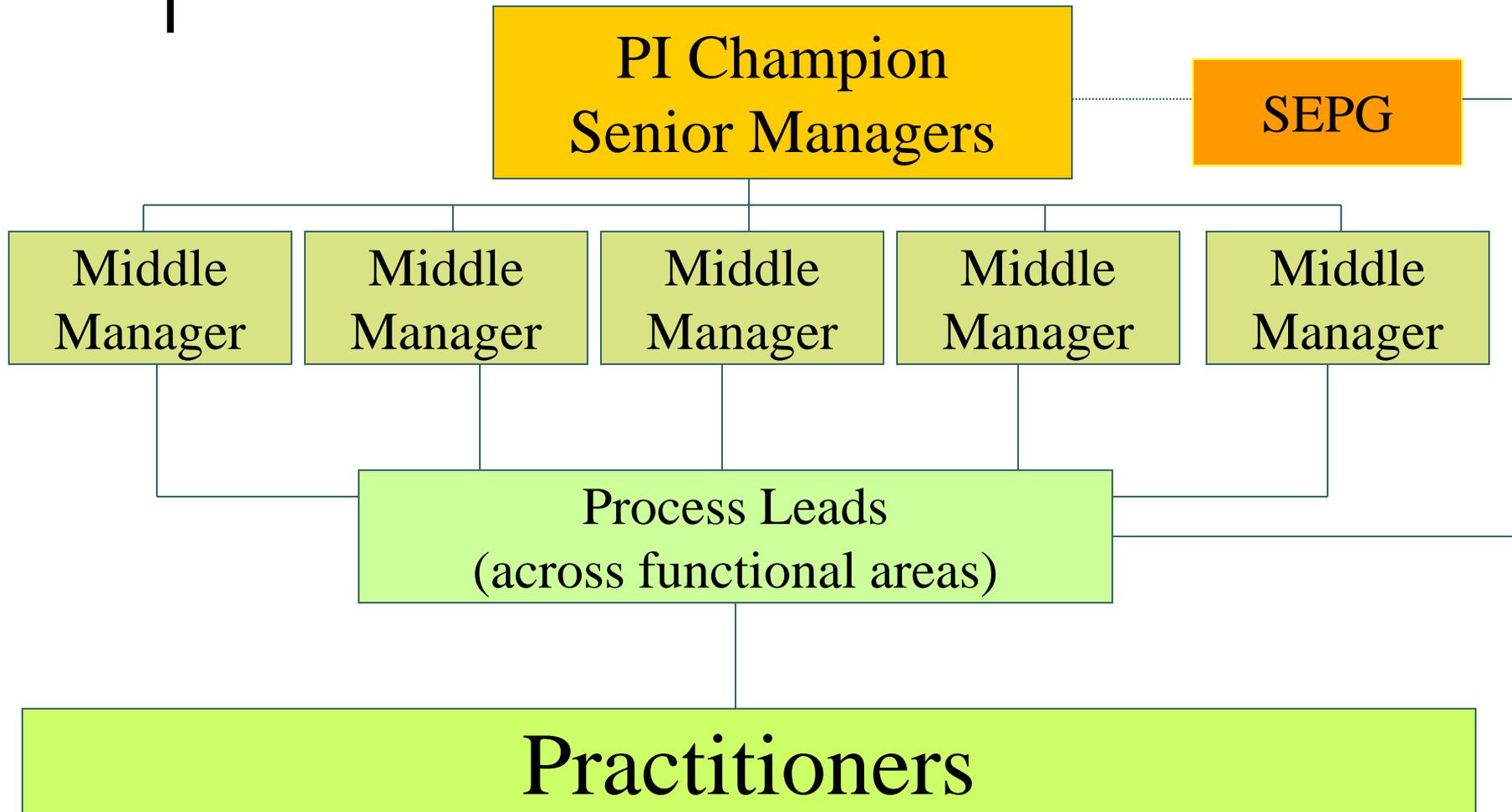
Process Improvement Journey

- Lean initiatives*
 - 2005- 2006 Participated in NAVAIR (PMA-282) Lean initiative
 - 2006- present- NAVSEA Lean Six Sigma (LSS) initiative

*NAVAIR- Sponsor; NAVSEA- Command



Process Improvement Organization



Hour 1

Shrinking Budget

- Scenario:
 - You get called into a budget meeting and are told that your budget will be cut in half, as a result, you will lose most of your primary support. However, senior management does not want to abandon the improvement goals.
- Problem:
 - When budget cuts are on the horizon, the priority is often placed on the “real work” and process improvement gets the “leftovers”
- Lessons Learned:
 - Prioritize, Prioritize, Prioritize
 - Think of creative ways to do the “same” with “less” resources
 - Find other avenues of support

Hour 2

Over-Eager Champion

- Scenario:
 - During the weekly staff meeting the senior manager announces that he wants the organization to be Level 3 in six months. Everyone in the room looks in your direction. You know from experience that “just saying it” won’t get you there.
- Problem:
 - Unrealistic expectations.
- Lessons Learned:
 - Learn to manage expectations
 - “Speak truth to power”.
 - Educate, educate, educate
 - Plan a gap analysis or mini-appraisal to set realistic goals

Hour 3

Changes in Sponsorship

- Scenario: Changes in Sponsorship
 - Your supervisor calls an “all hands” meeting and you’re told that you have a new Captain. You had a good rapport with the previous Captain who was “process-centric”, but you are not sure about the new person.
- Problem:
 - Levels of buy-in for process improvement activities may change with new sponsorship
 - Sponsorship of process improvement initiatives can be eliminated with the stroke of a pen
- Lessons Learned:
 - Establish relationships with the new sponsor.
 - To obtain buy-in have a “canned” brief ready in order to make the case for process improvement in your organization.
 - Work within organization to find creative ways to fund the improvement effort.

Hour 4

Handling multiple improvement initiatives

- Scenario:
 - During the staff meeting you are told that another improvement initiative is on the way. Since the current improvement effort is already putting a strain on resources, this news is not taken with enthusiasm by anyone in the room including you.
- Problem:
 - Multiple improvement initiatives often compete for limited resources
 - Typically the same people are assigned to work on the new effort because of their skill set
- Lessons Learned:
 - Keep an open mind and learn as much as you can about the new proposal
 - Often there is a lot of overlap between initiatives, so find ways to integrate them
 - Focus on solving critical issues

Hour 5

Dealing with Negativity/Cynicism

- Scenario:
 - You participate in an “all hands” meeting to raise awareness of the improvement effort and you are met with strong resistance from the workforce
- Problem:
 - People are typically resistant to change
 - Everyone has a war story about an initiative that did not work
- Lessons Learned:
 - Be optimistic, positive, and resilient
 - Post the and “Kubler/Ross Change Model” and the “Crossing the Chasm” diagrams in your workspace as a reminder that negative reactions are normal

Hour 6

Frustrated Process Group members

- Scenario:
 - You meet with the Process Group and find out that the members are not receiving the support that they need from the areas that they represent
- Problem:
 - Though certain individuals may say that they support the improvement effort (in front of the boss), there is often behind the scenes resistance
 - Managers often underestimate their part in achieving the improvement goals
- Lessons Learned
 - Make sure that middle managers understand that they must show support by committing resources, tracking plans and action items, and applying pressure when needed
 - Make sure process group members receive appropriate training (e.g. Change Agent skills)

Hour 7

Weary Middle Managers

- Scenario:
 - During the staff meeting the managers are reminded that they are behind in their improvement action plans. Their reaction is “what else is new”?
- Problem:
 - Middle managers are primarily responsible for meeting cost, schedule, and performance targets, as well as, the “care and feeding” of their people. Improvement initiatives often add an extra burden to an already full plate.
- Lessons Learned:
 - Empathize, Listen, Acknowledge
 - Tie improvement effort into critical issues confronting the organization

Hour 8

“Overworked practitioners”

- Scenario:
 - Joe is a part-time member of the process improvement group. He has missed several process improvement milestones. After several e-mails, you go to his office to check on his progress. Joe hides as soon as he sees you enter.
- Problem:
 - Most workers are multi-tasked. Process improvement work is often a collateral duty that goes to the bottom of their priority list.
- Lessons Learned:
 - Empathize, Listen, Acknowledge.
 - Offer assistance.

Lessons Learned

- Create and communicate a detailed plan for improvement
- Avoid “buzz words” and use terminology that is common to your organization
- Focus improvement efforts on solving critical issues in your organization
- Understand your organizational culture
- Manage expectations

Lessons Learned (2)

- Developing change agent skills is critical, and it does not happen overnight
 - “Sharpen the saw” by attending classes, conferences, professional meetings, and reading
- Lead by example
- Stay connected to the organization’s day to day challenges
- Empathize, Listen, and Acknowledge
- Take care of yourself by managing your stress
- Don’t take resistance personal !!!!!!!!

Summary

- Process improvement takes resources, time, energy, commitment, and patience
- Process Leads, managers, and practitioners are often under different types of stress
- Understanding basic human resistance to change will help you deal with the negativity that you sometimes encounter
- Developing change agent skills will benefit you as well as the organization



Good luck on your
improvement journey