Leveling Up

Five Real-World Examples of Incremental Maturity

Abstract |

While maturity models are very prevalent in today's business world, they are frequently better understood in theory than they are in practice. In this paper, the author walks readers through five examples of how maturity models have been effectively employed in different industries across the globe. The models covered include diverse disciplines including business processes; sales and marketing; information technology; governance; and – of course – project, program, and portfolio management.

The paper will guide the reader through the opportunities and the challenges experienced by each organization when employing a maturity model and the benefits ultimately achieved as a result of their use. Moreover, critical learnings are discussed to help the reader understand best practices associated with engaging maturity models, including how the reader can help gain support for their employment and ensure that any organization can achieve their desired business results through the proper use of a model.

Key words |

Maturity models, business process improvement, operational excellence, strategic alignment

Introduction

Maturity models seem to be everywhere. A practitioner in his or her industry of choice does not have to go very far before stumbling across a maturity model that can theoretically be employed to make life for the practitioner's organization simpler and more effectual. A quick Internet search will result in models available for information technology, six sigma systems, telecommunications, project management, quality assurance and control, talent management, software development, customer experience and loyalty, enterprise risk, healthcare provisioning, analytics, data centers, knowledge management, research and development, transportation logistics, supply chain management, energy procurement and distribution, and many, many more.

And while many practitioners are somewhat familiar with a maturity model for their industry, at least conceptually, most do not have a sense of how they can be reasonably employed and to what effect. The intent of this paper is to provide an overview of the structure of maturity models in general, help the reader understand some practical activities associated with employing a maturity model, and demonstrate how different maturity models have been employed in different organizations and the results those entities realized afterwards.

What Are Maturity Models?

First, let us understand what a maturity model is intended to accomplish, how they are developed and employed, and the different types that exist. Maturity models examine an aspect of a profession or an industry's activities and determine, across a

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spectrum of practices employed by organizations in that field, which of those practices are considered more efficient and beneficial than others. In general, the framework illustrates the less efficient, practical, or meaningful practices through to those best practices generally acknowledged by the profession or industry as the most effective and advantageous to an organization's success.

The premise of a maturity model is that as an organization or entity improves its position within the maturity framework it correspondingly improves its performance. Theoretically, specific benefits are associated with improving maturity, warranting the time and investment in changing the organization's behaviors and activities.

A simple example might help to illustrate the point. The owner of a new car has options associated with the maintenance of that car, as shown below:

Action Set (Maturity Level)	Annual Cost to Owner	Average Life of Car
Low Maturity: Performs no maintenance	$ 0/year	7 years
Mid-Level Maturity: Performs only major maintenance activities	$ 250/year	10 years
High Maturity (Best Practice): Performs all manufacturer-recommended maintenance	$ 500/year	15 years

By investing a little bit more, the car owner can extend the life of the vehicle and by doing so with some additional rigor (or, in this case, dollars) can extend the life of the initial investment significantly. By examining the model, the new car owner is provided the opportunity to understand the ramifications of his or her maintenance decisions and be able to make an informed decision on how to proceed with caring for the investment (the car).

Granted, the example above is both fictitious and heavily simplified. And most industry maturity models are indeed comparatively complex,

examining multiple dimensions of an organization's activities across hundreds, or even thousands, of potential activities. And this level of complexity can be slightly daunting to many practitioners when first examining a maturity model. So let us look at how most maturity frameworks are constructed.

There are two primary types of models: scalar and vector. The scalar model type is the most prevalent and usually is fashioned such that maturity ranges from a low number (zero or one is normative) to a higher number (five is fairly usual as the upper limit), with advancing levels of maturity denoted through the range. The most common models employ a construct similar to that in Exhibit 1.
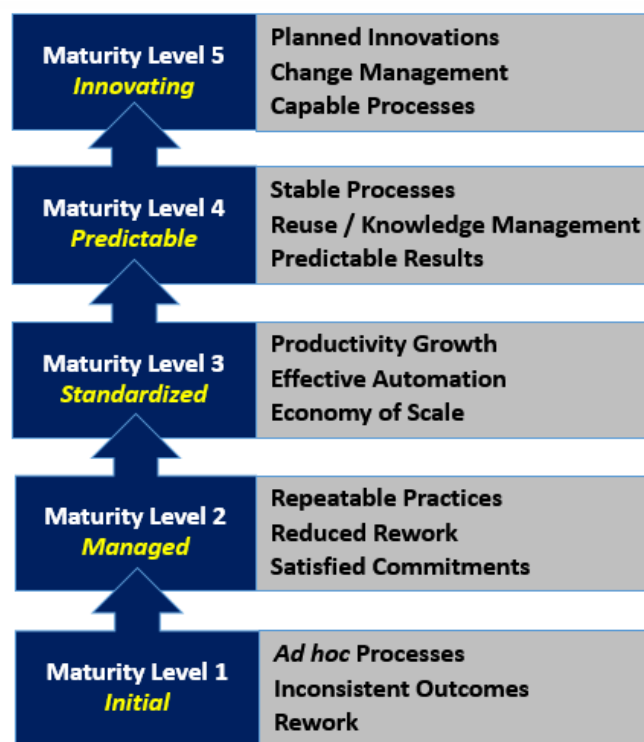

Maturity Level 5 Innovating — Planned Innovations, Change Management, Capable Processes

Maturity Level 4 Predictable — Stable Processes, Reuse / Knowledge Management, Predictable Results

Maturity Level 3 Standardized — Productivity Growth, Effective Automation, Economy of Scale

Maturity Level 2 Managed — Repeatable Practices, Reduced Rework, Satisfied Commitments

Maturity Level 1 Initial — Ad hoc Processes, Inconsistent Outcomes, Rework

Exhibit 1: A typical scalar maturity model

In Exhibit 1, the lowest level of maturity (one) represents *ad hoc* processes and increasing proficiency moves higher on the maturity scale through two, three, and four, to five, the optimized state of institutionalized continuous improvement. In scalar models, it is generally assumed that for each dimension within the model, the organization may only achieve one specified level and that the

overall maturity of the organization is either the least or the average of these levels.

For example, a company which has undertaken a maturity examination of its project management practices may find that it has achieved a Level 2 for half of the ten knowledge areas within the Project Management Institute's (PMI's) *PMBOK® Guide*, and a Level 3 for the remaining half. This is illustrated in Exhibit 2 below. Depending on how the authors of the model recommend overall ratings, the company would be considered to have achieved a total or overall maturity rating of either two (the *lowest* of the achieved ratings) or two-and-a-half (the *average* of the achieved ratings).
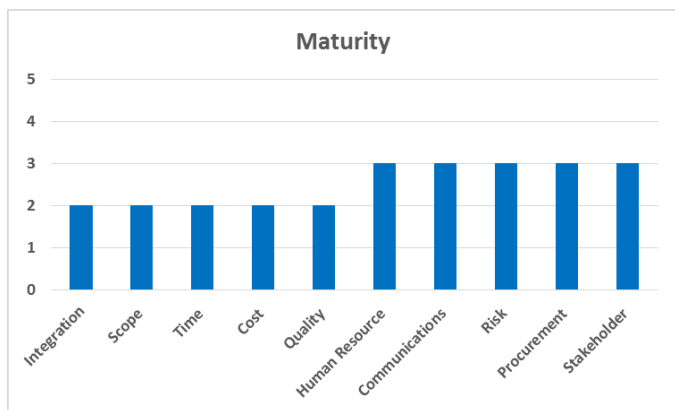

Exhibit 2: An example of scalar maturity ratings across multiple model components

By examining the results of the maturity findings, an organization is better enabled to have an informed dialogue about where to invest in improving its competency. If the maturity model is based on rich industry data, there may very well be additional information that helps support and inform that decision-making exercise, too. In more established maturity models, comparison data may also be available to understand what peers and competitors have achieved or what might be found as normative in a particular industry vertical and/or geographic region. Using the example above, there might be data that suggests raising Integration from a 2 to a 3 will also concurrently improve Scope, Time, and Cost and yield significant reductions in time-to-market. This understandably helps the organization to determine where to start with improving its efforts. In reality, maturity ratings

usually range widely and vary across any given model's various component areas.

Exhibit 3: Example of a vector maturity ranking and an embedded incremental improvement path to achieve a specific objective.

In the vector type of maturity models, organizations are generally rated as having achieved a percentage of the best practices or capabilities associated with the model's various components. For example, a company might achieve 10% of Component A, 25% of Component B, and 50% of Component C in a given maturity model, which provides it with a 20% overall maturity rating. Vector models are usually a bit more complex than scalar models and the calculation of overall maturity is generally a result of multiple interacting paradigms within the model's construct.

The advantage to most vector models is that there are usually fairly clear predefined paths for improvement activities that are tied to benefits that may be realized by incrementally increasing maturity. Frequently these pathways for

improvement vary depending on the desired results to be achieved. For example, in PMI's Organizational Project Management Maturity Model, or *OPM3*®, separate improvement paths exist for project predictability, resource optimization, and/or alignment with a balanced scorecard.

How Is a Maturity Model Employed?

There are two general approaches to the employment of a maturity model. The first is self-assessment, where an organization leverages a model and rates itself. The second is an independent assessment, where a third party is used to perform the rating activities. Additionally, many of the more robust models provide both a "light" version of the model as well as a more rigorous detailed version of the model. Robust models are generally created by industry professional associations with an open review performed by hundreds (or even thousands) of subject matter experts. Beyond lending significant credibility, they differ from the models espoused by independent companies which are usually crafted by small in house teams and, while still meaningful and potentially beneficial to employ, are usually proprietary and require organizations to purchase the consulting services of the entity which crafted the model. Such models, while not suspect in and of their own rights, frequently are skewed toward the philosophy of the company which created it and tend to be geared toward advancing that company's extended services.

In-house ratings are generally quicker and less expensive to perform, but are limited by the talents of the individual(s) performing the assessment activities and may be subject to internal cultural biases. An external third-party is usually much more proficient with the model and can frequently discover more salient information than an internal assessor based on experience and the results will be unbiased. While there is a cost associated with employing a third party the assessment results are normally accompanied by rich industry detail on

improvement best practices which may not be readily available to an internal resource.

With "light" versions of a maturity model, there is usually a very simple series of questions that require responses and which might be found online or within a workbook. After answering all of the questions, a maturity rating is generated with some accompanying generic suggestions on next steps for improving the competency or discipline of the organization. While "light" versions of maturity models do not provide deep insights into the capabilities and shortcomings of an organization's proficiency, they can be useful in gauging how the organization may be proceeding with an already-established improvement plan. In benchmarking existing capabilities, service levels, and outcomes with a light version of maturity model, the organization can quickly perform subsequent checks using the original benchmark ratings to ascertain if the improvements are achieving the desired results and make any appropriate adjustments as the improvement initiative continues.

A more rigorous version of a maturity model is appropriate for when the organization is attempting to understand the underlying root causes of problems that it is experiencing but does not have the capability or capacity to define such on its own. A maturity model illustrates the entire range of functionality that may (or not be) employed by the organization and presents a clear picture of where on the spectrum of maturity the organization resides. In doing so, management gains insights into what it is and is not achieving and is better able to understand the areas of opportunity for improvement that will allow the organization to achieve its desired results.

There are a number of recommended practices associated with performing a detailed maturity assessment, which are summarized – at a high level – below:

1. **Prepare for the assessment.** It is important to understand the climate within which the

organization operates and whether or not management is ready to support inspection of its internal processes and capabilities, either by an employee or an external entity. Having the requisite organizational support is essential to ensuring that the individuals to be interviewed and the systems to be examined are made available to the maturity assessor. Those who will be engaged as part of the discovery activities will need to have an understanding of the purpose of the effort and be willing and able to support the assessor. Be clear about the objectives of the maturity assessment and what the expected outcomes will be for undertaking improvement initiatives. Exhibit 4 below illustrates some of the top expectations of employing a maturity model.
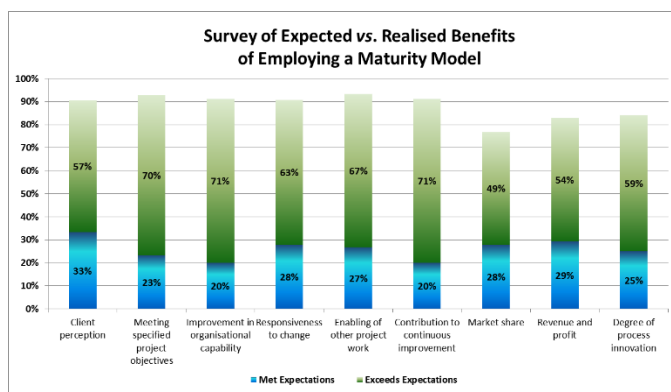

Exhibit 4: Selected perceptions about the efficacy of maturity models to achieve specific results.

2. **Perform the assessment.** The assessor must be either a trusted internal resource (such as from a different line of business and not part of the management tier) or an unbiased third party skilled at discovery and consulting with the maturity model. Participants oftentimes need to be placed at ease and helped to understand that the assessment is of the organization itself and not an attempt to gauge their individual competency or adherence to policies. It is a process designed to uncover reality and not just *perceptions* of reality and, further, it is not an audit; frequently employed terms include assessment, discovery, investigation, evaluation, appraisal, and analysis. Multiple tools should

be employed to gain a holistic and reliable understanding of the practices and capabilities of the organization; these include interviews, surveys, focus groups, analyses of knowledge systems, and reviews of artifacts.

3. **Analyze and present the maturity information.** Working with management, define the desired to-be state of the organization and perform a gap analysis of the maturity results and where the organization envisions itself. Map out a detailed roadmap of improvement initiatives that helps illustrate the path forward, inclusive of line-item returns on investment that will help facilitate an informed dialogue with the executives responsible for achieving the envisioned future state.

4. **Help facilitate the implementation of the improvement initiatives.** Internal organizational resources who have performed the maturity assessment should be available to advise those tasked with the improvement endeavor and refine the improvement activities as they proceed. External consultants should be available to provide additional on-call input and clarifications as the improvement team proceeds with its efforts.

It is important to recognize that many, if not most, maturity model assessments will need to take into consideration aspects of the organization which may not be present within the model. And certain aspects of models may need to be discounted or adjusted depending on the exact nature of the organization being assessed. Such considerations may include foundational enablers (or disablers) such as the governance mechanisms of the organization, the culture of the company and/or the geographic region in which the company is located, organizational politics, as well as other factors.

Real World Example No. 1: Information Technology

Organization A is a regional municipal entity in the United States with 2600 employees and an

information technology (IT) support group of 48 personnel. The organization had been struggling to understand why technology projects have been severely mismanaged and why routine operational activities seem to require tremendous time and effort to complete. IT staff indicated they felt overworked and overwhelmed and the executive management team was unable to determine whether or not additional personnel need to be hired to help manage the increasing workload effectively.

The organization contracted a third party to help the executives ascertain if additional staff were required and, if so, in what areas and with what technical competencies. Moreover, executives wanted an understanding of workload capacities, how the IT shop compared with its geographic industry peers, and where there might be areas of opportunity for improving IT services overall. The consulting company, after an initial review of the circumstances, determined that an ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) maturity assessment would be an appropriate assessment mechanism for understanding the situation and crafting a comprehensive set of improvement initiative recommendations. ITIL is a globally recognized standard for IT services and its maturity modelling mechanism allows for benchmarking against other organizations across multiple dimensions. It was created by the government of the United Kingdom and has been refined over a period of decades.

After examining the IT group using the maturity model, the consulting team noted that the front-end aspects of IT service management activities were predominantly non-existent within the organization. Such activities include such things as creating a viable organizational strategy with goals, objectives, and supporting critical success factors and key performance indicators; the governance of priorities and changes; establishing expectations for IT services; and defining desired work outcomes of the IT group. Indeed, as far as performing IT services, the IT group was dedicated, knowledgeable, and capable. Their primary challenges were constantly changing priorities and

the continual reallocation of IT resources in both project-based and operational activities.
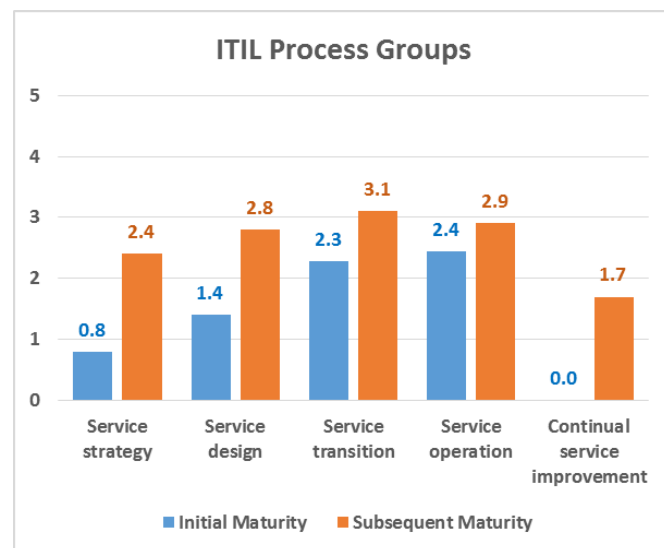

Exhibit 5: Maturity results for Organization A before and after improvements.

The consultancy worked closely with the executive leadership team of the organization to help them develop an overarching strategy which was able to be decomposed into criteria useable by the IT group to help develop a supporting IT strategy. Governance and reporting mechanisms were emplaced and clearly delineated IT service level management functions were established. Within twelve months the organization had nearly doubled its overall maturity level from a 1.4 to a 2.6 by emphasizing the front-end strategy and structural design capabilities of the organization, which have subsequently also helped to improve the operational work effort process areas as well. The organization is still continuing on its journey and expects to exceed the desired end-state of all process group activities being at a 3.0 or higher within the next year. Stakeholders are exceptionally pleased that the work processes for the IT group have stabilized and that priorities are known and resources allocated appropriately. IT staff are uniform in their support of the effort, indicating high levels of job satisfaction that had not previously been the case. Most significantly, no need for additional headcount in the IT shop was needed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Real World Example No. 2: Governance, Risk, and Compliance

Organization B is a multinational mining corporation, with primary offices in South Africa and a global employee base of over 10,000 personnel. South Africa requires companies doing business in the country to meet certain governance, risk management, and compliance (GRC) requirements. The organization wanted to go beyond auditing the company, though. It desired to increase corporate accountability; strengthen financial, strategic, and operational efficiencies; maximize performance; and better understand its enterprise risks. To avoid internal biases, the organization hired a consultancy to provide the desired insights.

The consultancy employed the Open Compliance and Ethics Group's (OCEG's) GRC Capability Model to assess the organization's maturity and help understand areas of opportunity for improvement for the organization. OCEG is a non-profit think tank that promotes best practices associated with GRC and their maturity model was developed by a committee of hundreds of experts, including advisors, auditors, and academics, and is generally considered one of the most rigorous GRC models available. The model examines multiple principles, common sources of failure, outcomes, practices, and sub-practices across a wide array of GRC elements.

Working closely with the organization's existing internal audit function, the consultancy stepped through the various aspects of the maturity model and validated items that were already planned for remediation, as well as a few significant oversights and some efforts that were either duplicative in nature or at odds with one another. For example, differing reporting requirements in separate lines of business were aggregating information in such a way that executive leaders – who thought they were comparing like items – were actually unwittingly "comparing apples to oranges" and making multimillion Rand investment decisions based on erroneous data sets. More distressingly, though, several business units of the organization were not performing their GRC functions appropriately, leaving the company open to unnecessary liability.

Based on the consultancy's recommendations, a series of improvement initiatives were commenced and, after eighteen months, a set of hard and soft potential benefits had been realized, including the following:

- Extraneous/duplicative staff were identified and re-tasked to attend to more value-adding efforts;
- Business processes were streamlined and/or appended to existing automation efforts which reduced some efforts' time by over 50 percent;
- A significant reduction in fees paid to extraneous external auditors and other professional service providers through the implementation of in-house mechanisms which would ultimately provide more timely information to the executive suite;
- Decrease in risk by having a better loss prevention mechanism in place and better information regarding event-driven risks; and
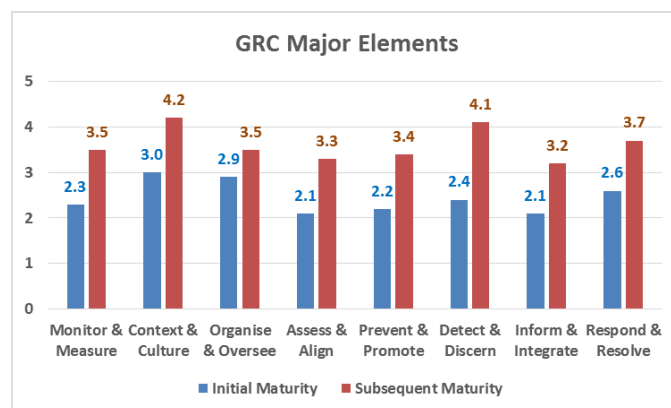- The elimination of redundant systems used across the organization's various assurance groups.

Exhibit 6: Maturity results for Organization B before and after improvements.

Moreover, both the internal audit and compliance teams as well as executives had a level of confidence in their GRC program that had not

previously existed. Indeed, the corporate board of directors indicated a heightened level of awareness of the organization across five major indicators (financial position, current strategy, value creation, industry dynamics, and company risks) that they had not previously had. The organization's increase in maturity using the OCEG model was of a significant magnitude, elevated to a 3.6 overall maturity from an initial 2.4 overall maturity. The organization continues to invest in other maturity assessments and reassessments, finding additional areas of opportunity across the company's various practice areas.

Real World Example No. 3: Business Development

Organization C is a major multinational telecommunications carrier based in Europe, employing over 175,000 people and with revenues in excess of 50 billion Euro. Following a period of acquisitions, it revised its sales and marketing strategy but was challenged with meeting several of its critical success factor targets, specifically with its business-to-business commerce offerings. After several rounds of internal reviews, the organization engaged a consultancy to assist it with understanding where it was failing to execute on its business development activities.

The consultancy employed the Capability Maturity Model for Business Development (CMM-BD) as the primary tool for evaluating the organization's sales and marketing efforts and activities. As part of the discovery effort, the consultancy was able to discern that known pain points were not being addressed or remediated and that, cumulatively, there were having a deleterious effect on the sales staff's ability to secure new work. Established processes intended to create uniformity across divisions, child companies, and work groups were actually hindering sales efforts as they did not provide for the requisite cultural and geographic differences in the areas where the sales teams were actively working. Indeed, the company's recently installed state-of-the-art customer relationship management (CRM) system was not actually

providing the detailed information that sales staff needed to perform their job effectually. The CRM in many cases hindered or unduly constrained the sales staff and in some circumstances severely crippled their ability to make the appropriate sales connections or, worse, pitted them against one another for complex service accounts.

The CMM-BD is a vector model which provided the consulting team with the opportunity to carefully examine which activities were most likely presenting the most impactful challenges to the sales force, which activities were actively supporting sales efforts, and which activities were at odds with others.
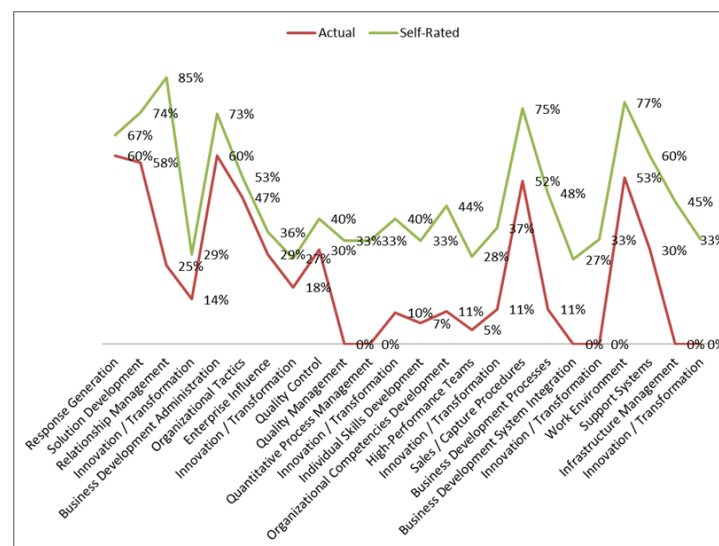

Exhibit 7: Results of Organization C's self-assessed rankings against the consultancy's actual findings. Note that respondents uniformly perceived themselves to be performing better than their actual capabilities.

Through a detailed forensic analysis of the model's best practices and the organization's actual practices, and ongoing dialogues with sales leadership and staff, the consultancy was able to determine seven specific elements of the organization's work activities that – once adjusted – would most likely allow the organization to achieve its target goals. Additionally, the model captured the sales team's and management's self-assessment of capabilities, allowing the consultants to graphically demonstrate the differences between

what they thought they were doing *versus* what they were actually doing when it came to their business development support and execution activities.

The organization complied with the recommendations and is now exceeding the originally established strategic objectives, moving from about 80% of target to over 110% of target in under three quarters of a year. The senior executive in charge of the sales force has institutionalized the CMM-BD as a foundational input for future decisions regarding adjustments to the company's sales and marketing strategy and has trained an internal resource on the maturity model and tool for ongoing organizational enhancements.

Real World Example No. 4: Business Process

Organization D is a U.S. state government agency that employs 9000 personnel across 170 field offices. As a state organization, it had been burdened with deferred technology upgrades and was performing the vast propensity of its work effort using heavily manual processes. With impactful legislation and a steadily growing number affected civilian clients, the situation was deemed untenable and a strategic plan developed to bring long-overdue technological applications into the agency in a short period of time. To help prepare for the massive organizational change impacts this effort would have, the agency decided to employ the assistance of a consultancy skilled at helping its clients navigate the complexities of process improvements.

The consulting team determined that employing the Object Management Group's (OMG's) Business Process Maturity Model would be appropriate for the scope of the effort. OMG is an open membership, not-for-profit computer industry standards consortium. The consultants also employed a rigorous organizational change readiness assessment and a talent assessment to supplement the maturity model. Through the discovery process, the consultants were able to clearly identify areas of the agency's business

processes which were not optimized and determine which processes were actually redundant and/or not adding value. Separate from a detailed business process mapping effort, which would have entailed many months of work and been impractical given the agency's time constraints, the consultants were able to leverage the maturity model to swiftly determine the process areas which would most benefit from technological automation.

Moreover, the consulting team was able to help build a groundswell of support for the change through its interactions with the employees. The change readiness assessment helped to identify change champions and change detractors within the organization as well as common themes which would need to be addressed during the development of the change management plan. The talent assessment helped to identify group opportunities for training to ensure that the appropriate skills were available for personnel to be successful in the agency's envisioned future state, for both the agency's practitioner communities as well as their management teams.

As a result of performing the maturity assessment, the consulting team was able to recommend a detailed list of 177 specific actions which would be needed to raise the maturity of the agency to one which would be commensurate with the strategic plan. These were subsequently included as primary achievement goals in the technology solution's business requirements, along with another 192 specific activities which the agency's staff were currently performing correctly. This analysis has been credited with being the single most important piece of requirements gathering and planning for the technology initiative and earned the consultancy both an award and a preferred partner status. The concept of employing a maturity model has subsequently been promoted as a best practice for large technology improvement initiatives for all of the state's agencies.

Real World Example No. 5: Organizational Project Management

Organization E is a multibillion dollar, multinational research and product development firm with over four thousand technical, scientific, and administrative employees across its major manufacturing locations. The organization's unique corporate culture encourages employee collaboration in a very flat, non-managerial environment where each employee is expected to define his or her own job function and ensure the success of product development and sales within the marketplace. Whilst quite successful with its product lines and sales, the company frequently missed introducing new products at major trade shows or came to market after a competitor had already introduced a similar product. A team of employees recognized that there were opportunities to shorten the product development lifecycle and introduce products into the marketplace in a more timely fashion. As the company did not have a formal project management discipline or competency established, it looked to an external consultancy to assist it with understanding how project management practices could be embedded within the company's unique culture.

While not a formal competency, the management of projects does occur within the organization, to varying degrees of efficacy depending on a wide variety of factors. The consulting team determined that PMI's *OPM3®* would be the appropriate maturity model to best understand both how the organization is performing its project practices and what missing elements would be most appropriate to consider to help the organization incrementally improve its maturity. *OPM3* provides the ability to examine multiple dimensions of organizations, allowing the consultants to analyze differences in practice behaviors across continents and lines of business. In doing so, areas where practices are more mature could be quickly identified and examined further to ascertain if those practices could be more readily leveraged across the remainder of the organization.

The consultants also leveraged the model's ability to examine program management and portfolio management and perform an analysis of organizational enablers which lend support to, or detract from, the ability of the organization's practitioners to effectually manage their project endeavors. The results of the maturity model did indeed illustrate areas within the organization where aspects of project efforts were employing good practices. For example, the China operations facility was adept at leveraging some quality assurance and control mechanisms for projects that were available to all employees. By illustrating how these mechanisms helped with project success, other regions were able to emulate the practice. Similarly, one of the divisions employed a unique methodology to help facilitate the efficient promotion of project priorities which – given the organization's culture of eschewing managerial mandates and allowing employees to self-govern – was a perfect "proven" fit for other divisions to employ.

	PjM	PgM	PfM	OEs
APAC	10%	15%	2%	5%
EMEA	12%	12%	4%	4%
LatAm	22%	9%	3%	3%
NA	14%	24%	3%	4%

	PjM	PgM	PfM	OEs
LOB A	10%	13%	2%	4%
LOB B	12%	13%	4%	3%
LOB C	12%	9%	24%	3%
LOB D	11%	17%	3%	4%

Exhibit 8: Aggregated achieved capability maturity levels for Organization E differentiated by geographic region and line of business.

By carefully examining good practices existent across the organization, the consultants were able to suggest a course of improvement that would be more likely to be readily accepted by the organization's employees. While the organization is still undergoing its improvement initiative, it is already realizing results in employee satisfaction with having better tools and methods available to ensure the success of their projects. This particular

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organization, because of its unique culture of employees self-determining what levels of rigor to employ in their actions, will take some additional time to mature, but it has a dedicated team of champions who firmly believe that the *OPM3* maturity model has effectively helped them and their colleagues to clearly comprehend the value associated with improvement and the detriments to the organization in not doing so.

Best Practices

While it is outside the scope of this paper to describe all of the challenges and lessons learned in leveraging a maturity model, there are a few key items worthy of noting. These include:

- Be prepared to inspect a wider set of stakeholder communities than just the core team under examination. The inter-relationships and perspectives of those affected by, contributing to, and the recipients of work products need to be assessed.

- Be aware that additional time may be required to get on the schedules of senior leadership team members. Gain commitment from the sponsoring organization that they will help facilitate the timely arrangement of interviews.

- Gaining access to internal systems and work artefacts and be able to listen in to or attend meetings may be problematic and arrangements should be made to help the assessor with this before the assessment starts.

- It is crucial that awareness communications regarding the assessor and his or her role be made clear to all affected by the assessment very early on in the process. This helps reduce wariness on the part of participants and helps facilitate support for the assessment.

- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that participants know that anything shared

during interviews, focus groups, survey, or other means will not adversely impact them.

- The maturity model is not the be-all-and-end-all of an assessment. Assessors should look for items within an organization not included within the model that may help provide management with appropriate insights.

- Ensure that any improvement initiatives that result from the assessment are managed as projects, inclusive of string organizational change considerations.

- Be prepared to expect low maturity results from the model. Most organizations recognize that they need significant help when they employ a model and the strength of the model is less in understanding the current state than having a focused mechanism to plan a way forward to the envisioned future state.

- Be aware that some individuals who participate in the assessment may have a desire to influence the outcomes of the assessment. It is crucial to success to ensure impartiality and maintain a neutral stance.

- A properly conducted assessment can be very grueling and demanding task for the assessment team. Do not underestimate the amount of time and rigor that is required to perform an assessment properly.

- External maturity assessment consultants should not be directly involved with improvement efforts as part of their own engagement with the organization and their contract should clearly indicate such is to be excluded. If this is not the case, it is altogether too easy for a consultant to make recommendations that will lead to potential additional services for the consultancy and this obviously has the potential to bias or skew the recommendations set.

Conclusion

Maturity models can be an invaluable tool in helping an organization to understand both in its strengths and its areas of opportunity for improvement. This paper has illustrated how leveraging a maturity model has provided discrete and quantifiable benefits to some exemplar organizations who have examined and investigated the potential associated with maturity models. We conclude that maturity models are a tool that, if properly employed, assist with elevating the capability sets of an organization and should be considered a viable option for business improvement efforts.

About the Author

Tony Appleby has been involved with organizational project, program, portfolio, and governance maturity engagements on six continents, working with the senior leadership and country executives of Fortune 500 / Global 2000 companies, international not-for-profit associations, and governmental entities. He specializes in organizational project management maturity and has assisted numerous organizations with successfully advancing and transforming their capabilities and effectively achieving their business objectives. He is a long-time volunteer with PMI and is currently a member of PMI's Ethics Member Advisory Group.

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