

# How to get out of filling in a PIID...

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## Background

- Move an organisation of 1200+ people to Maturity Level 2 in 18 months
- Diverse organisation covering:
  - Systems, software and hardware development
  - Maintenance & Support
  - Short-term Tactical Projects
  - Long-term Strategic Projects
- Few formal processes, but lots of heroes!

## The Approach:

- Look at Organisation in discrete 'units' ( $\approx 10$ )
- Carry out an initial baseline assessment of each unit
- Formulate and implement an action plan
- Re-appraise every 6 months to gauge progress
- Creation and maintenance of PIIDs was central to this approach

# Practice Implementation Indicator Descriptions

- The gathering of objective evidence for an appraisal is a key activity.
- PIIDs are a simple and convenient way of gathering this evidence...

Source of OR	Description (S)	Comments	Not Started	In Progress	Completed	Other
	<b>SGL</b> Requirements are managed and inconsistencies with the project plans and work products are identified					
	<b>SPL 1.1</b> Develop an initial starting with the requirements products on the starting of the requirements					
	<b>SPL 1.2</b> Obtain commitment to the requirements from the project participants					

- ... but people don't generally like filling them in!
- This presentation is about what happens when people fight back!

## 10. This is a job for the work experience guy!



## Summary of the Problem...

- Responsibility for compiling PIID was given to a junior member of staff
  - New to the organisation
  - New to the project/role
- Very keen - but lacking in project experience.

### Result

- PIIDs were produced on time and were 'complete'
- Unfortunately, much of the evidence offered was inappropriate or irrelevant

## Lessons Learnt:

- Appraisal results are heavily dependant on the quality of the PIIDs feeding into it
  - GIGO!
- Compilation of PIIDs requires:
  - Good 'local' project knowledge (essential)
  - Good model knowledge (highly desirable)
  - Ensure both are available as necessary

## 9. I can't fill in my PIID - I'm busy waiting for an extremely urgent requirement...



## Summary of the Problem:

- PM was given 3 months lead time to prepare
- PIID completion was scheduled to take 7 days.
- **BUT:** an important new requirement 'imminent'
- PM refused to allocate resources to PIID to ensure staff were free to address requirement

### Result:

- The Requirement arrived 1 month later...
- PIIDs were not complete in time...
- The appraisal was rescheduled

## Lessons Learnt:

- Ensure Management backing is both present and highly visible!
- Escalate blocking tactics to management at earliest opportunities.
- Stress importance of early preparation to all participants

## 8. I don't have time for this...



## Summary of the Problem:

- Projects routinely 'kick-back' against process improvement on the grounds of:
  - Unplanned activity
  - Lack of available resource to support
  - Need to get on with 'Real Work'

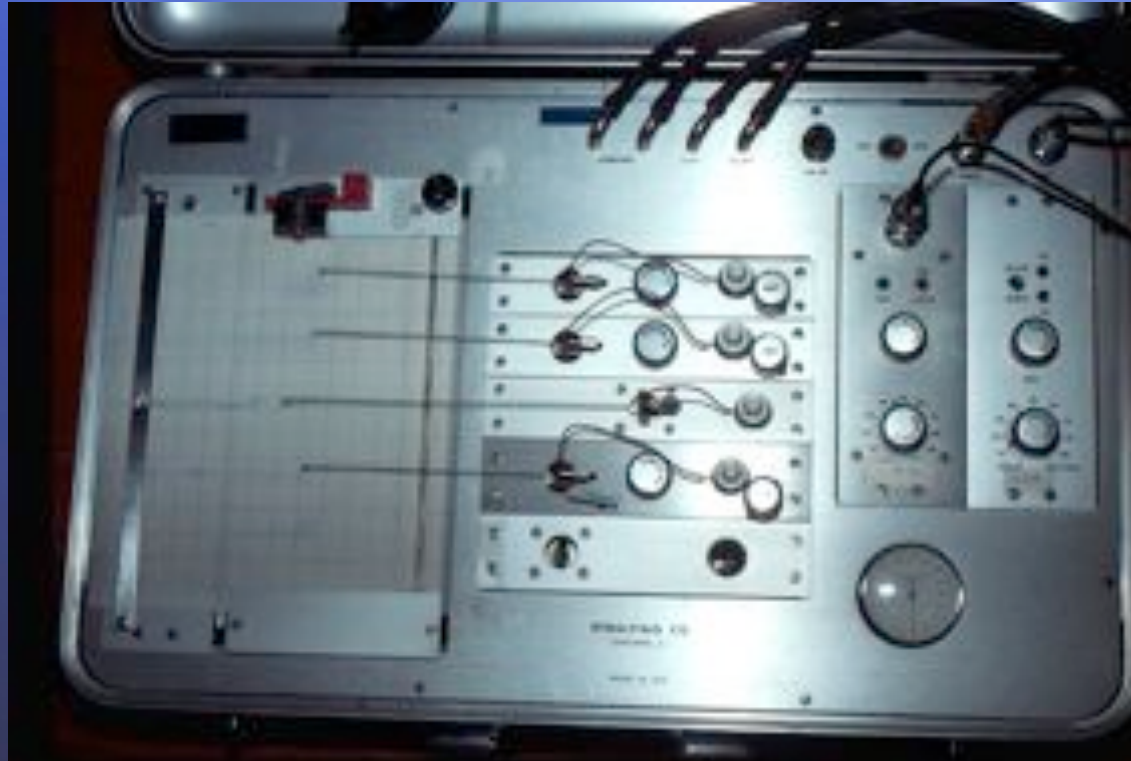
### Result:

- PIIDs not produced, of poor quality or incomplete
- Appraisal results may not be representative
- Appraisal conducted in 'discovery' mode

## Lessons Learnt:

- Allow a long lead time...
- ... engage as soon (and as much) as possible
- Ensure management are prepared to accept a 'hit' in productivity
- Stress the need to plan in process improvement activities.
  - Encourage projects to measure time spent preparing for appraisals
    - informs planning for future appraisals
    - enables cost/benefit analysis
- No pain, no gain!

## 7. These PIIDs - do you want the truth or...



## Summary of the Problem:

- Approached by person put in charge of compiling PIIDs for a project.
  - PM was unhappy with data being put forward
  - PIID compiler was unhappy with proposed changes!
    - Not realistic/representative of actual working practices

## Result

- Data from this project treated with caution
- Additional scrutiny of the project during interviews

## Lessons Learnt:

- Need to clearly communicate the purpose behind CMMI appraisals
  - Process improvement rather than ‘tick-in-the-box’
- Encourage PM to back this message personally
- Be wary of attempts to ‘game’ the appraisal
- Encourage openness and honesty in both PIIDs and interviews
  - Rigorously observe confidentiality during appraisals

## 6. CMMI doesn't apply to us - we're different



## Summary of the Problem:

- Another common claim
  - Many projects believe that they are so “*different*” that models such as CMMI do not apply
- Difficult to engage with
- Tendency to attempt to de-scope appraisal
  - rule out practices and/or process areas

### Result:

- Process Improvement efforts stall
- Valuable appraisal preparation time lost

## Lessons Learnt:

- At Maturity Level 2, applicability of most process areas is generally very high
  - No projects to date have successfully argued that ML2 PAs should be out of scope for them
- Need to educate project teams on the nature and purpose of the CMMI
  - tailored process improvement

## 5. I can't attend the interview - I'm scared of heights!



## Summary of the Problem:

- Interviews for an appraisal to be held in a meeting room two floors above the ground.
- Approached via a narrow walkway with a clear view downwards
- Interviewee refused to attend
  - afraid of heights.

### Result:

- Person concerned was interviewed separately after the event.
- Appraisal schedule adversely affected

## Lessons Learnt:

- Consider carefully the logistics for interview sessions
  - people need to be relaxed and co-operative
  - enquire about any access issues people may have
- Ensure interviewees are given a lot of notice of both time and location
- Ultimately, there's only so much you can foresee..!

## 4. CMMI Appraisals are sexist...!



## Summary of the Problem:

- Organisation has a strong emphasis on work-life balance within its culture
- One appraisal team member postulated that CMMI appraisals are inherently 'sexist':
  - Long working hours inconsistent with family obligations
  - Likely to affect women more than men

## Result

- Reluctance from some staff to participate in appraisal teams

## Lessons Learnt:

- Try to minimise length of working days during appraisals
  - appraisal teams often epitomise a “hero culture”!
- Beware of planning in ‘long days’ as a condition of service on an appraisal team
  - Potentially viewed as unfairly restricting the task to certain areas of the workforce
  - However, people do need to know what is expected of them!

### 3. If I gave you sight of my PIDD, I'd have to kill you....!



## Summary of the Problem:

- Project reluctant to supply much of its PIID data due to the sensitive nature of it
  - security implications
  - commercial implications
- Non-Disclosure agreements insufficient to enable data to be viewed by full appraisal team.

## Result

- Appraisal teams constructed with appropriate individuals from within the organisation
  - Acted as custodians of sensitive data

## Lessons Learnt:

- Allow adequate preparation time to enable issues such as this to be addressed.
- Educate projects on Data Management
  - Keep sensitive data well partitioned and handle accordingly
- If NDAs are inappropriate, investigate possibility of embedding a data custodian within the team
- “Ring-Fence” around ‘sensitive’ areas as a last resort

## 2. PIIDS cause undue headaches and stress.



## Summary of the Problem:

- Project Manager complained that PIID preparation was damaging to health!
  - Caused unacceptable levels of stress
  - Concentration required to fill in PIID resulted in severe headaches!

## Results

- Complaint dismissed - but caused some damage to the appraisal programme
  - increased wariness among project staff
  - appraisal teams difficult to recruit

## Lessons Learnt:

- Ensure adequate support and training is available
- Allow a realistic timescale for creating PIIDs
- Encourage PMs to plan accordingly
  - PIIDs should not be an “additional” task
- Failing all that - provide appraisees with appropriate medication...



## The Top Ten

10. This is a job for the work experience guy...
9. I can't fill in my PIID, I'm busy waiting...
8. I don't have time for all this.
7. These PIIDs - did you want the truth, or...
6. CMMI Doesn't apply to me - I'm different...
5. I can't attend the Interview - I'm scared of heights!
4. CMMI Appraisals are Sexist!
3. If I gave you sight of my PIID, I'd have to kill you...
2. PIIDs cause undue headaches and stress

# 1. “The dog ate my homework...”



## Summary of the Problem:

- Project Manager claimed to be developing PIIDs 1 month prior to appraisal
- 1 hour before PIIDs due to be delivered, claimed to have lost everything...
  - In fact, PIID had never been started

### Result:

- Project was removed from scope of appraisal
- Overall result less representative than planned

## Lessons Learnt:

- Active involvement of appraisal team in PIID preparation is useful.
- Readiness check prior to 'on-site' period to ensure everything is ready.
- Build in some 'redundancy' into appraisal sample if possible

## Summary of Key Lessons Learnt

- PIIDs are seldom welcome and feature very low on a Project Managers priority list
- Effective and visible Senior Management backing for CMMI appraisals is vital
- Planning and preparation is key
- Appraisals should be collaborative
  - problems occur when organisations feel an appraisal is something that is being ‘done to them’
- Emphasis should be on improvement not achievement of arbitrary goals

# Any Questions?

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