



Relationship Maturity Model Integration (Rmmi)

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ABSTRACT

This article provides the different levels of relationship maturity an IT company can have with their customers. The IT industry has been investing a lot on process improvement to ensure zero defects and a satisfied customer to ensure business growth but this study shows that the relationship maturity ensures better customer satisfaction and increase in business for different kind of IT projects implemented in different countries. The relationship maturity model presented in this article will always help in resolving uncertain events and quick resolutions of the issue. The relationship maturity model help in growing the engagement level between the two organizations.

0.1 Introduction

For the past few decades, the software industry has invested substantially to improve quality of its products, with an expectation of satisfied customer and business growth. This has been a difficult job, since the size and complexity of software increases rapidly with customers and users are becoming more and more demanding. Despite encouraging results with various quality improvement approaches the software industry is still far away from zero defects hence dissatisfied customer and below expected business growth.

To ensure business growth from existing customer software industry has often work to improve product quality by focusing on software development processes. A guideline that has been widely used to improve the development processes is the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMi) is regarded as the industry standard for software process improvement. Due to the fact that testing often accounts for at least 30-40% of the total project cost testing community developed its own model. This model is called Test Maturity Model Integration (RMMi).

For business growth in a service industry Relationship management has been an extremely important aspect. Recently many IT companies have started focusing on relationship management. We have created Relationship Maturity Model Integration (RMMi). The RMMi is a detailed model for relationship improvement and is positioned as being complementary to CMMi and RMMi. RMMi provides a structured presentation of maturity levels.

0.2 Background and History

The RMMi framework has been developed as a guideline and reference framework for relationship management improvement and is positioned as a complementary model to the CMMi Version 1.2 [CMMi] addressing those issues important to relationship managers, vendor manager and Account managers. Just like the CMMi staged representation, the RMMi also uses the concept of maturity levels for process evaluation and improvement. Furthermore process areas, goals and practices are identified. Applying the RMMi maturity criteria will improve the relationship and have a positive impact on product quality, engineering productivity, and cycle-time effort. The RMMi has been developed to support organizations with evaluating and improving their relationship management process. Within the RMMi, relationship evolves from a chaotic, ill-defined process with a lack of resources, tools and well-educated relationship managers to a mature and controlled process that has business growth and escalation prevention as its main objective. Practical experiences are positive and show that RMMi supports the process of establishing a more effective and efficient relationship manage-

ment. Relationship maturity becomes a profession and a fully integrated part of the IT full life cycle processes. The focus of relationship management changes from escalation detection to escalation prevention and business growth facilitator to business growth escalator.

0.3 Sources

The development of the RMMi has used the RMMi framework as developed by the Illinois Institute of Technology as one of its major sources [Burnstein]. In addition to the TMM, it was largely guided by the work done on the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMi), a process improvement model that has widespread support in the IT industry. The CMMi has both a staged and continuous representation. Within the staged representation the CMMi architecture prescribes the stages that an organization must proceed through in an orderly fashion to improve its development process. Within the continuous representation there is no fixed set of levels or stages to proceed through. An organization applying the continuous representation can select areas for improvement from many different categories.

The RMMi has been developed as a staged model. The staged model uses predefined sets of process areas to define an improvement path for an organization. This improvement path is described by a model component called a maturity level. A maturity level is a well-defined evolutionary plateau towards achieving improved organizational processes. At a later stage a continuous representation of the RMMi may become available. This will most likely not influence the content of the RMMi. It will 'only' provide a different structure and representation.

0.4 Scope of RMMi

0.4.1 Software and System Engineering

The RMMi is intended to support relationship management activities in both the systems engineering and software engineering disciplines. Systems engineering covers the development of total systems, which may or may not include software. Software engineering covers the development of software systems.

0.4.2 RMMi and CMMi

It is also important to note that RMMi is positioned as a complementary model to the CMMi. In many cases a given RMMi level needs specific support from process areas at its corresponding CMMi level or from lower CMMi levels. In exceptional cases there is even a relationship to higher CMMi levels. Process areas and practices that are elaborated within the CMMi are mostly not repeated within RMMi.

0.4.3 Assessments

Many organizations find value in benchmarking their progress in

relationship improvement for both internal purposes and for external customers and suppliers. Relationship management process assessments focus on identifying improvement opportunities and understanding the organization's position relative to the selected model or standard. The RMMi provides an excellent reference model to be used during such assessments. Assessment teams use RMMi to guide their identification and prioritization of findings. These findings along with the guidance of RMMi practices are used to plan improvements for the organization. The assessment framework itself is not part of the RMMi. The RMMi assessment method requirements contain guidelines for various classes of assessments, e.g., formal assessments, quick-scans and self-assessments.

0.4.4 Improvement Approach

The RMMi provides a full framework to be used as a reference model during relationship management process improvement. Practical experiences have shown that the most powerful initial step to relationship management process improvement is to build strong organizational sponsorship before investing in process assessments. Given sufficient senior management sponsorship, establishing a specific, technically competent relationship management process group that represents relevant stakeholders to guide relationship process improvement efforts has proven to be an effective approach.

3RMMi Maturity Level

A maturity model can be viewed as a set of structured levels that describe how well the behaviours, practices and processes of an organization can reliably and sustainably produce required outcomes. A maturity model may provide, for example, a place to start, the benefit of a community's prior experiences, a common language and a shared vision, a framework for prioritizing actions, a way to define what improvement means for your organization.

A maturity model can be used as a benchmark for comparison and as an aid to understanding - for example, for comparative assessment of different organizations or different customers within an organization where there is something in common that can be used as a basis for comparison. In the case of the RMMi, for example, the basis for comparison would be the organizations' customer relationship management processes.

0.5 Overview

RMMi has a staged architecture for process improvement. It contains stages or levels through which an organization passes as its relationship management process evolves from one that is ad hoc and unmanaged, to one that is managed, defined, measured, and optimized. Achieving each stage ensures that an adequate improvement has been laid as a foundation for the next stage. The internal structure of the RMMi is rich in relationship management practices that can be learned and applied in a systematic way to support a quality relationship management process that improves in incremental steps. There are five levels in the RMMi that prescribe a maturity hierarchy and an evolutionary path to relationship management process improvement. Each level has a set of process areas that an organization needs to implement on to achieve maturity at that level. Experience has shown that organizations do their best when they focus their relationship management process improvement efforts on a manageable number of process areas at a time, and that those areas require increasing sophistication as the organization improves. Because each maturity level forms a necessary foundation for the next level, trying to skip a maturity level is usually counterproductive. At the same time, you must recognize that relationship management process improvement efforts should focus on the needs of the organization in the context of its business environment and the process areas at higher maturity levels may address the current needs of an organization or project. For example, organizations seeking to move from maturity level 1 to maturity level 2 are frequently encouraged to establish a relationship management group, which is addressed by the relationship management Organization process area that resides at maturity level 3. Although the relationship management group is not a necessary characteristic of a RMMi level 2 organization, it can be a useful part of

the organization's approach to achieve RMMi maturity level 2.



Figure 1: RMMi maturity levels and process areas

The process areas for each maturity level of the RMMi are shown in figure 1. They are listed below along with a brief description of the characteristics of an organization at each RMMi level. The description will introduce the reader to the evolutionary path prescribed in the RMMi for relationship management process improvement.

0.6 Level 1 Initial

At RMMi level 1, relationship management is a chaotic, undefined process and is often considered a part of delivery team. The organization usually does not provide a stable environment to support the processes. Success in these organizations depends on the competence and heroics of the people in the organization and not the use of proven processes. Relationship management and project management are interleaved to get the growth in and escalations out of the system. The objective of relationship management at this level is to show that the software runs without major failures. Products are released without adequate visibility regarding quality and risks. At RMMi level 1 there are no defined process areas. Maturity level 1 organizations are characterized by a tendency to over commit, abandonment of processes in a time of crises, and an inability to repeat their successes. In addition products tend not to be released on time, budgets are overrun and delivered quality is not according to expectations. No business growth and unsatisfied customer.

0.7 Level 2 Managed

At RMMi level 2, relationship management becomes a managed process and is clearly separated from project management. The process discipline reflected by maturity level 2 helps to ensure that existing practices are retained during times of stress. However, relationship management is still perceived by many stakeholders as being an activity same as project management. In the context of improving the relationship management process, a company-wide or program-wide relationship management strategy is established. relationship management plans are also developed. Within the relationship management plan an approach is defined, whereby the approach is based on the result of a risk assessment. Risk management techniques are used to identify the risks. The relationship management plan defines what relationship management is required, when, how and by whom. Commitments are established with stakeholders and revised as needed. Relationship management is monitored and controlled to ensure it is going according to plan and actions can be taken if deviations occur. The status of the relationship management is visible to management. In RMMi level 2 relationship management is multi-levelled: there are engagement levels, communication mechanisms and escalation mechanism levels. For each identified engagement level there are specific relationship management objectives defined in the organization-wide or program-wide relationship management strategy. The processes of relationship management and Project management are differentiated. The main objective of relationship management in a RMMi level 2 organization is to verify that the customer is satisfied with the product delivered. Many quality problems at this RMMi level occur because customer doesn't have an independent person or group to highlight the issues and get them resolved.

The process areas at RMMi level 2 are:

- 2.1 Relationship management Policy and Strategy
- 2.2 Relationship management Planning
- 2.3 Relationship management Monitoring and Control
- 0.8 Level 3 Defined

At RMMi level 3, relationship management is no longer confined to a sales job. It is fully integrated into the project lifecycle and the account management. Relationship management planning is done at an early project stage, e.g., during the contract signing phase, and is documented in a master plan. The development of a master plan builds on the relationship management planning skills and commitments acquired at RMMi level 2. The organization's set of standard relationship management processes, which is the basis for maturity level 3, is established and improved over time. A relationship management organization and a specific relationship management training program exist, and relationship management is perceived as being a profession. Relationship management process improvement is fully institutionalized as part of the organization's accepted practices.

Organizations at level 3 understand the importance of reviews in quality control; a formal review program is implemented although not yet fully linked to the dynamic relationship management process. Reviews take place across the engagement.

A critical distinction between RMMi maturity level 2 and 3 is the scope of the standards, process descriptions, and procedures. At maturity level 2 these may be quite different in each specific instance, e.g., on a particular project. At maturity level 3 these are tailored from the organization's set of standard processes to suit a particular project or organizational unit and therefore are more consistent except for the differences allowed by the tailoring guidelines. Another critical distinction is that at maturity level 3, processes are typically described more rigorously than at maturity level 2. As a consequence at maturity level 3, the organization must revisit the maturity level 2 process areas.

The process areas at RMMi level 3 are:

- 3.1 Relationship management Organization
- 3.2 Relationship management Training Program
- 3.3 Relationship management Peer review

0.9 Level 4 Measured

Achieving the goals of RMMi level 2 and 3 has the benefits of putting into place a technical, managerial, and staffing infrastructure capable of thorough relationship management and providing support for relationship management process improvement. With this infrastructure in place, relationship management can become a measured process to encourage further growth and accomplishment. In RMMi level 4 organizations, relationship management is a thoroughly defined, well-founded and measurable process. Relationship management is perceived as evaluation; it consists of all lifecycle activities concerned with checking customer satisfaction, business growth and reduced escalation.

An organization-wide relationship management measurement program will be put into place that can be used to evaluate the quality of the relationship management process, to assess customer satisfaction, business growth, and to monitor improvements. Measures are incorporated into the organization's measurement repository to support fact-based decision making. A relationship management measurement program also supports predictions relating to relationship management performance and cost.

Governance meetings and Steering reviews are considered to be part of the relationship management process and are used to measure relationship quality early in the engagement and to formally control quality gates. Such reviews as a detection technique is transformed into a relationship management quality measurement technique in line with the process area relationship management Quality Evaluation.

The process areas at RMMi level 4 are:

- 4.1 Relationship management Measurement
- 4.2 Relationship management Quality Evaluation
- 0.10 Level 5 Optimization

The achievement of all previous relationship management improvement goals at levels 1 through 4 of RMMi has created an organizational infrastructure for relationship management that supports a completely defined and measured process. At RMMi maturity level 5, an organization is capable of continually improving its processes based on a quantitative understanding of statistically controlled processes. Improving relationship management process performance is carried out through incremental and innovative process and technological improvements. The relationship management methods and techniques are optimized and there is a continuous focus on fine-tuning and process improvement. An optimized relationship management process, as defined by the RMMi is one that is:

- managed, defined, measured, efficient and effective
- statistically controlled and predictable
- focused on escalation prevention
- supported by automation as much is deemed an effective use of resources
- able to support technology transfer from the industry to the organization
- able to support re-use of relationship management assets
- Focused on process change to achieve continuous improvement.

To support the continuous improvement of the relationship management process infrastructure, and to identify, plan and implement relationship management improvements, a permanent relationship management process improvement group is formally established and is staffed by members who have received specialized training to increase the level of their skills and knowledge required for the success of the group. In many organizations this group is called a Relationship Management Process Group (RMPG). Support for a RMPG formally begins at RMMi level 3 when the relationship management organization is introduced. At RMMi level 4 and 5, the responsibilities grow as more high level practices are introduced, e.g., identifying reusable relationship management (process) assets and developing and maintaining the relationship management (process) asset library.

The Escalation Prevention process area is established to identify and analyze common causes of escalation across the project lifecycle and define actions to prevent similar issues from occurring in the future. Outliers to relationship management process performance, as identified as part of process quality control, are analyzed to address their causes as part of Escalation Prevention.

At RMMi level 5, the relationship management Process Optimization process area introduces mechanisms to fine-tune and continuously improve relationship management. There is an established procedure to identify process enhancements

The two RMMi level 5 process areas, Escalation Prevention, and Process Optimization provide support for continuous process improvement.

The process areas at RMMi level 5 are:

- 5.1 Escalation Prevention
- 5.2 Relationship management Process Optimization

4 RMMi Structure

The structure of the RMMi is largely based on the structure of the CMMI. This is a major benefit because many people/organizations are already familiar with the CMMI structure. The CMMI structure makes a clear distinction between practices that are required (goals) or recommended (specific practices, typical work products, etc.) to implement. This aspect is also included in the RMMi.