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High Maturity: the Payoff

The articles in this issue of **CROSSTALK** discuss the payoff of high maturity software processes. For years, I along with many of my colleagues have had in-depth discussions about the merits and potential drawbacks of high maturity software processes. In fact I can remember having similar debates almost 20 years ago when 309 SMXG first embarked on CMM® process improvement. I think this debate will continue for the foreseeable future. About two and a half years ago, the Air Force Material Command's three Software Maintenance Groups (SMXGs) formed a software enterprise. This enterprise is comprised of the Software Maintenance Groups from the three Air Force Air Logistics Centers at Hill Air Force Base, Warner Robbins Air Force Base and Tinker Air Force Base. The enterprise is comprised of more than 2,100 engineers and computer scientists whose focus is providing high quality software on time, and within cost, for Air Force weapons systems. This enterprise provides a single software perspective for Air Force Material Command leadership and in some cases Air Force leadership. One of the first things the three SMXG directors did after forming the software enterprise was agree to the pursuit of high maturity software processes across the three groups. The enterprise leadership meets about twice a year to share good ideas ranging from management to process improvement. Under my direction, the 309th SMXG at Hill AFB has spent the last few years working toward implementation of high maturity CMMI® Level 5. Even though our course toward high maturity CMMI has been set, there continues to be debate within the organization about the value of high maturity CMMI Level 5.

I am a strong proponent of high maturity process improvement, however, within SMXG there are still some who doubt the validity of the benefits of high maturity CMMI Level 5 software processes. Most of the doubt seems to stem from the financial investment and the perceived lack of flexibility required by high maturity processes. Most do not argue the validity of high maturity process to improve quality, reliability, and the ability to leverage lessons learned within the group. This ongoing debate is what makes this issue of **CROSSTALK** so interesting.

Articles in this issue provide a wealth of information from those who have achieved high maturity CMMI Level 5. The authors address many of the issues surrounding the debate over high maturity software processes. I am excited to utilize the information in this issue to improve future discussions of high maturity process improvement not only within the 309 SMXG, but also across the larger software enterprise and industry.

As we continue to learn about high maturity software processes, we will progress toward better software processes and management techniques. I would like to thank all those who took the time to provide articles for this issue of **CROSSTALK**.

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