



Management Basics: A Necessary Foundation



If you look back at the managers you worked for in your career, I'm sure the names of those who you considered quite good at their jobs come to mind quickly. Moreover, I'm sure the names of those that were not so good also come to mind. Now that I am a manager, I often try to remember what made the good managers in my career so good. How can I learn from them? All managers want to be good managers, but how do they ensure that they are doing their best and meeting their employees' needs and expectations? This month's issue of *CROSSTALK* highlights management basics. To do their best, I believe that managers need to conquer the *basics* first and then continually improve upon a sound foundation of management principles.

We begin our issue with *People Factors in Software Management: Lessons From Comparing Agile and Plan-Driven Methods* by Richard Turner and Barry Boehm. In this article, the authors address five basic, people-related management areas: staffing, culture, values, communications, and expectations management. Whether developing software under agile, plan-driven, or hybrid methods, the authors emphasize that managers improving upon these five key areas are more likely to succeed at software project management.

Next, in *Back to the Basics: Measurement and Metrics* by Tim Perkins, Roald Peterson, and Larry Smith, we are reminded of the importance of a measurement program as a basic, decision-making tool for managers. The authors have included a Measurement and Metrics Checklist to assist managers in developing, implementing, and reviewing their metrics programs.

Our Management Basics section continues with *How to Talk About Work Performance: A Feedback Primer* by Esther Derby. One of the most uncomfortable tasks for a manager is to provide criticism to an employee who is not performing well. Providing feedback – whether the news is good or bad for the employee – is something every manager must do. This author presents good advice and 11 feedback guidelines to follow to make feedback effective. Next, Johanna Rothman of Rothman Consulting Group, Inc. writes of her 15 years of management experience in *Successful Software Management: 14 Lessons Learned*. This author shares management lessons she has learned while balancing business, employee, and work environment needs.

Wrapping up our theme section is *Deciding to Act* by Walt Lipke. Project managers focus much of their time on monitoring their project's performance in terms of cost, schedule, and quality. This author presents an approach for project analysis and decision-making to assist a project manager on knowing when to act if performance begins to weaken, and what action should be taken to strengthen project performance.

Our Open Forum article this month is *Requirements Engineering Maturity in the CMMI* by Dennis Linscomb. This author expresses his opinion on the deficiency of the Capability Maturity Model® Integration (CMMI®) in defining requirements engineering (RE) maturity and shares his ideas on how the CMMI model should be revamped in the RE area. If you would like to comment on this author's opinion, drop us a line or a Letter to the Editor at <stsc.customerservice@hill.af.mil>.

Another calendar year for *CROSSTALK* is wrapping up. Thanks to all of our authors for their fine contributions and to the many readers who continue to turn to our publication as a source for defense software engineering best practices and lessons learned. *CROSSTALK*'s 2003 Article Index can be found on page 29. All of our articles and back issues can be found on our Web site at <www.stsc.hill.af.mil/crosstalk>.

On behalf of the *CROSSTALK* staff, I wish you a safe and very happy holiday season.

Tracy L. Stauder
Publisher