



CMMI Institute

WHEN THE APPRAISER BECOMES THE APPRAISED

NAME: David Quinn

TITLE: Chief Quality Officer

ORGANIZATION: MOSAIC Technologies Group, Inc



BRIEF CAREER HISTORY FOR CONTEXT

- Federal government civilian employee for 19+ years
- Commercial firm for 15 months
- Major CMM/CMMI consulting firm acquired by major tool developer for ~5 years
 - Defense, finance, telecommunications, aerospace, healthcare
- Presently, MOSAIC Technologies Group for 8.5 years

HISTORY AS A LEAD ASSESSOR/APPRaiser

- First appraisal/assessment was Nov 1993, under the original Software Process Assessment (SPA) method
- Became a SPA Lead Assessor in Dec 1994
- Became a CMM-Based Appraisal for Internal Process Improvement (CBA IPI) Lead Assessor in Jan 1995
- Became a Standard CMMI Appraisal Method for Process Improvement (SCAMPI) Lead Appraiser in Oct 2003
- Also an Introduction to CMMI (and SW-CMM) instructor since 1996
- CMM Advisory Board member in 1997-1999
- Never on the receiving end of any type of appraisal (SPA, CBA IPI, SCAMPI) until 2014

APPRAISALS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

- Always started a process effort with a formal assessment (80% at MLI)
- Teams worked late into the evening, just to start again early the next day
- Everything in hardcopy
- Started to add more time to the onsite period as we moved to the CBA IPI
- Lots of digging for evidence (artifacts and affirmations)
- Verification mode introduced with SCAMPI to reduce onsite time for the appraisal team
- Greater reliance on finding data before the onsite period
- Special certification for ML4 and ML5 Lead Appraisers

TYPICAL ADVICE GOING INTO A SCAMPI A APPRAISAL

- Shop for a Lead Appraiser (Great evidence for DAR)
- Select appraisal team members that can express a thought
- Know the sampling factors and formula for project selection
- Map the evidence to CMMI practices through hyperlinks
- Make sure you have evidence for every practice – every practice
- Prepare people before going into an interview or presentation
- Provide translations into CMMI-ese and vice versa
- Prepare your appraisal team for the evidence they will see

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} \# \text{ of} \\ \text{Subgroups} \end{array} * \begin{array}{c} \# \text{ of BU's} \\ \text{In Subgroup} \end{array}}{\text{Total \#} \\ \text{of BU's}}$$

UNDERSTAND THE ROLES IN AN APPRAISAL

- Have a well-informed Appraisal Coordinator
- Have an Appraisal Sponsor who will dedicate the time to the appraisal
- Have a SCAMPI Lead Appraiser who has a similar mindset on the model and your business domain
- Have Appraisal Team Members who know where to find the evidence
- Have a Process Group Lead who can organize the evidence
- Have people who do the work ready to participate in the appraisal so they can explain what they do
- Have managers who don't overreact to bad news

WEARING MULTIPLE HATS

- While it is wonderful when you can have lots of people involved in an appraisal, it is not fiscally reasonable to expect it for small organizations
- For the MOSAIC SCAMPI A appraisals, I was the Appraisal Coordinator, the Process Group Lead, an Executive Manager, and a Project Manager
- Each role required I provide different support, sometimes at the same time
- I recommend trying to delegate some of the responsibilities in order to avoid the panic episodes

PLANNING THE APPRAISAL

- Get your Lead Appraiser identified early
- Highly encourage doing a SCAMPI C with the Lead Appraiser to get more familiar with the Lead Appraiser and to get the Lead Appraiser familiar with you
- Have your Organization Unit defined in advance
- Bring defined sampling factors to the Lead Appraiser to start the discussion of project selection
- Don't "cherry pick" projects but try to get projects with project managers who know and can articulate the process
- Figure out how to get your other process experts into the appraisal

PREPARING THE EVIDENCE

- Define a data mapping framework (guidance documents, implementation evidence)
- Define how data will be accessed by the appraisal team
- Know which organization guidance documents (process descriptions, templates, standards, etc.) map to which CMMI practice(s)
- Tell the projects what documents they should have that will help with the appraisal
- Projects do not need to know what evidence supports what practice
- Have someone from the appraisal team try to access the data
- Know your gaps at all times during this phase

PREPARING THE APPRAISAL TEAM

- Model knowledge is important; knowledge of your processes is more important
- Help them understand the appraisal process before SCAMPI Appraisal Team Training (SATT) begins
- Get them familiar with the projects before the Readiness Review
- Train them on the evidence and how to access it
- Sit in on the SATT event as much as possible

PREPARING THE PROJECT MANAGERS

- Let them know which of their artifacts are being used for the appraisal
- Try to get them involved in the evidence collection as much as possible
- Ensure artifacts that are updated regularly have the most recent version pointed to
- Go over the process areas with them to help them understand the context of questions that may be asked
- Provide them a script that is tied to CMMI practices (not allowed to be taken into the affirmation session(s))
- Go through a trial run of any presentation or demonstration

PREPARING THE PRACTITIONERS

- Pick practitioners who are somewhat comfortable talking to strangers
- Know the difference between opinion leaders and opinionated leaders
- Assure them that the artifacts will cause greater harm than what they say, unless they decide to say something outlandish
- Provide an overview of the process areas being appraised
- Conduct mock sessions for practice at hearing CMMI-ese in order to translate into real English or geek-speak
- Again, provide a script they could read through to help understand CMMI practices, even though they cannot take it into their session(s)

BE READY TO BE FLEXIBLE

- The appraisal schedule will be provided early – get it onto people’s calendars
 - Especially the Appraisal Sponsor(s)
- If you did your preparation well, the schedule is likely to get accelerated
- Going into the onsite period, know whether your Project Managers and other incredibly busy people are able to move sessions forward
- Have a “hot spare” for your appraisal team ready to plug in at the beginning of the onsite period
- Be ready for the odd circumstance (weather, government shut downs, network/server failures)
- Ensure ancillary people know the appraisal is happening and what is and is not allowed (knock and it shall be opened)

BE READY TO HEAR YOUR BABY IS UGLY

- The preliminary findings session is the hardest part of the appraisal
- Findings can be tough to hear, especially when there are very limited strengths
- Remind people that this is an improvement activity so weaknesses and improvement opportunities are welcome
- Yet, be ready to get the credit you deserve, not just the digs you created
- Ensure things are worded in a way that helps the Appraisal Sponsor with understanding actions that will be needed after the appraisal
- Have the Lead Appraiser meet with the Appraisal Sponsor before the final findings to ensure appropriate reactions

ULTIMATELY, DEFINE SUCCESS

- Getting the Maturity Level rating you want is critical but getting insight into what is happening in the organization is equally critical
- When targeting a Maturity Level, consider using the continuous representation with equivalent staging as a safety net
- Leave open the option for an Action Plan Reappraisal in case the results are not what you want
- Communication throughout the appraisal preparation and execution phase with all relevant stakeholders will increase your likelihood of success

LET'S ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS



CMMI® Institute Partner

MOSAIC Technologies Group, Inc.
8135 Maple Lawn Blvd, Suite 450
Fulton, Maryland 20759-2571

Tel: (301) 725-0925

Fax: (301) 725-0985

www.mosaicsgroup.com

David P. Quinn
Chief Quality Officer
Certified SCAMPISM Lead Appraiser
Introduction to CMMI[®] Instructor

Direct: (240) 459-1334

Mobile: (717) 451-2149

dquinn@mosaicsgroup.com



**CAPABILITY
COUNTS 2017**
CMMIINSTITUTE.COM/CONFERENCES