



United States Navy

Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command
Office of Public Affairs and Corporate Communications
Contact: Steven A. Davis / steven.a.davis@navy.mil
Desk: 619.524.3432

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SPAWAR Is Writing the Book on Continuous Process Improvement – Literally

SAN DIEGO — Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) and Lean Six Sigma (LSS) are often viewed as competing initiatives, contending for the same process improvement funding and priorities. However, SPAWAR has demonstrated that CMMI and LSS are complementary, and implementing these methodologies in tandem can result in a synergistic effect that accelerates and enhances the benefits of process improvement.

To realize the benefits of this complementary nature, SPAWAR Headquarters' Organizational Process Management Office (OPMO) created an approach that utilizes both initiatives to address business unit challenges within the organization.

The combined approach targets risk areas identified by the SPAWAR Process Workbook. These risks become the focal point for application of process improvement activities. Specifically, the CMMI model is leveraged to conduct a gap analysis on an organization's business practices to identify opportunities for improvement. Then LSS is applied to provide the organization with the proper tools and techniques for achieving the necessary improvements.

"In order to share this innovative approach, we submitted an abstract to the Software Engineering Institute for consideration as a topic for the Software Engineering Institute's Software Engineering Process Group (SEI SEPG) North America conference," explained OPMO's Anne Prem.

After reviewing the abstract, SEI invited Prem and colleague Kileen Harrison to present at the 2010 SEPG North America conference in Savannah, Ga. The pair presented the brief *CMMI and LSS: A Dynamic Duo* to more than 75 conference participants, including senior members of SEI technical staff.



Kileen Harrison (left) and Anne Prem of SPAWAR's Organizational Process Management Office highlight the command's continuous process improvement initiatives in the latest edition of the Software Engineering Institute's *CMMI for Development* textbook.

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In June 2010, Sandy Shrum, co-author of CMMI textbooks *CMMI for Development*, *CMMI for Services* and *CMMI for Acquisition*, invited Prem and Harrison to write a case study based on the 2010 conference presentation.

Prem and Harrison co-authored the case study *Leveraging CMMI and LSS to Accelerate the Process Improvement Journey*, based on work they developed on behalf of SPAWAR's OPMO. This case study was published in the latest version of the *CMMI for Development* textbook, which was released in March 2011.

"Being in the textbook acknowledges our innovative approaches to process improvement. It provides an example of how SPAWAR is leading the way, not just for government but for industry too," said Harrison. "It's very rewarding to see your work recognized by industry experts and published internationally."

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