

Chapter 5 Discussion of Results

5.1 Awareness Measure and the Factors Affecting Awareness

According to the research findings, the awareness level of APM among the IT projects managers is not satisfactory. It was also evident that only 25% of the traditional projects managers are aware of APM. Nature of business requirements such as the rate of change of requirements and the project complexity and customer influence have a positive relationship with the awareness level of APM. These are important findings to improve the awareness level of IT project managers in Sri Lanka regarding different project management practices.

5.2 APM Implementation Challenges and Recommendations

The following findings and recommendations stem from the results obtained through the semi-structured interviews carried out as well as from the open ended question in the questionnaire.

When deciding which methodology to follow for a certain project, most of the time the customer requests to follow a certain methodology. Two Sri Lankan IT companies who are successfully practicing agile said that the customer request is a key deciding factor for following a certain methodology.

Some risk averse customers, and customers who require very high-level of predictability prefer traditional/structured methods. Some customers even pay a premium to follow the structured approach. This may sometimes be due to the traditional thinking pattern of the customers. Customers sometimes request to use agile methods due to various reasons such as unclear requirements, hazy deliverables and cutting down costs. Some customers request agile without proper understanding. Apart from a customer request, the companies who are practicing both traditional and agile methods, decides which methodology to follow for a given project based on the factors like

- Time line/ time to market
- Nature of requirements. How well they are defined/hazy/ on the fly requirements
- What is seen important to the project

- Cost
- Project type/ client
- The best way to use technology

During initial stages of implementation one company found that some members found it difficult to adopt the concept of “task taking” in Agile methodology. However this was resolved with time when the team gains the domain experience. For another company working with different time zones which doesn't have a good overlap between the working times found it bit difficult to conduct the daily meetings. However they have overcome this by having a bridging engineer in the client side to work with the team in Sri Lanka. One company has sent a team to the client site in Canada and has instructed them to update the team in Sri Lanka. They have also used approaches like Joint Application Development (JAD) with some of the clients who are in different time zones.

One company stated that following APM becomes a challenge when a product reaches a certain level of maturity. Company also stated that knowledge management aspects like logics, algorithms, version controlling and configuration management can be also challenging in APM. However one company stated that using approaches like wikis address the issues of documentation and they also states that in whatever the methodology the knowledge management can be challenging as many things are not written down and the documents may not be updated correctly.

One company stated that finding the right people with the right mind set can be a challenge. To follow APM it is better to have senior people who could be expensive. It is also stated that project managers who have been with the software industry would adopt agile without much of a friction than project managers who have been in another sector like civil engineering.

Companies who are successfully practicing APM in Sri Lanka recommends that a proper training given to all layers of the company can lead to successful adaptation of APM. It is necessary for the team to learn why they should do things rather than blindly following them. It is also

important to know the pros and cons of both traditional and APM approaches so that the team can decide which approach is suitable for a given project. One company has assigned a person to drive the processes and methodologies in the organization and he drives the messages across to the employees.

Companies believe that to get the best output of the agile methods it is necessary to have an expert in the area with a good understanding. However the expertise available in Sri Lanka for APM is not satisfactory and there are no facilities available to provide the required training.

Agile attributes like daily meetings can be beneficial for any approach and one company has brought these attributes to the company culture. A company revealed that with APM they were able to deliver lot of ideas within a very short period. Also they have identified a cost reduction in the initial phases of the project. One company has witnessed that an information sharing culture was formed while an empowered team was created.

It is necessary to understand the pros and cons of both traditional and agile approaches and when a particular methodology would be suitable. Using an unsuitable methodology for a project will be the very reason for failure. One company stated that a methodology should not become a religion of the organization but a tool to deliver projects successfully.



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