



Your Vision - Brought to Life.

White Paper
Informulate Application Development Methodology



Quality = Motivation x Process x Expertise

Disclaimer

Although Informulate LLC takes great care to ensure the accuracy and quality of these materials, all material is provided without any warranty whatsoever, including, but not limited to, the implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose.

Trademark Notices: All product names and services identified throughout this document are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. No use of any such trade names in this document is intended to convey endorsement by Informulate or affiliation with Informulate.

Copyright © 2010 Informulate LLC. All rights reserved. This document is prepared for the use of Informulate, its clients and its authorized representatives only, and may contain confidential, personal and or privileged information. Please contact Informulate immediately if you are not the intended recipient of this communication, and do not copy, distribute, or take action relying on it. Any communication received in error, or subsequent reply, should be deleted or destroyed. This publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, storage in an information retrieval system, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Informulate LLC (866-222-2307). Informulate's World Wide Web site is located at <http://www.Informulate.net>.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
How it came about	4
Overview.....	5
How it works.....	6
Process Details.....	7
What the process is	7
What it aims to do.....	7
What it assumes	7
What the process provides	7
To the Customers	7
To the Project.....	8
To the Team	8
Conclusion	9
Measuring progress.....	9
Feedback	9

Introduction

This white paper talks about Informulate's specialized development methodology that has been derived to meet the requirements of a distributed development environment and *ad hoc* team assembly and disassembly.

How it came about

Software development is a complex activity at the best of times. But with the business model Informulate that leverages widely distributed teams of varying skill levels, which are assembled and disassembled on demand it is especially so. Variations in business requirements and processes (with a myriad of technologies for each) presented unique management challenges.

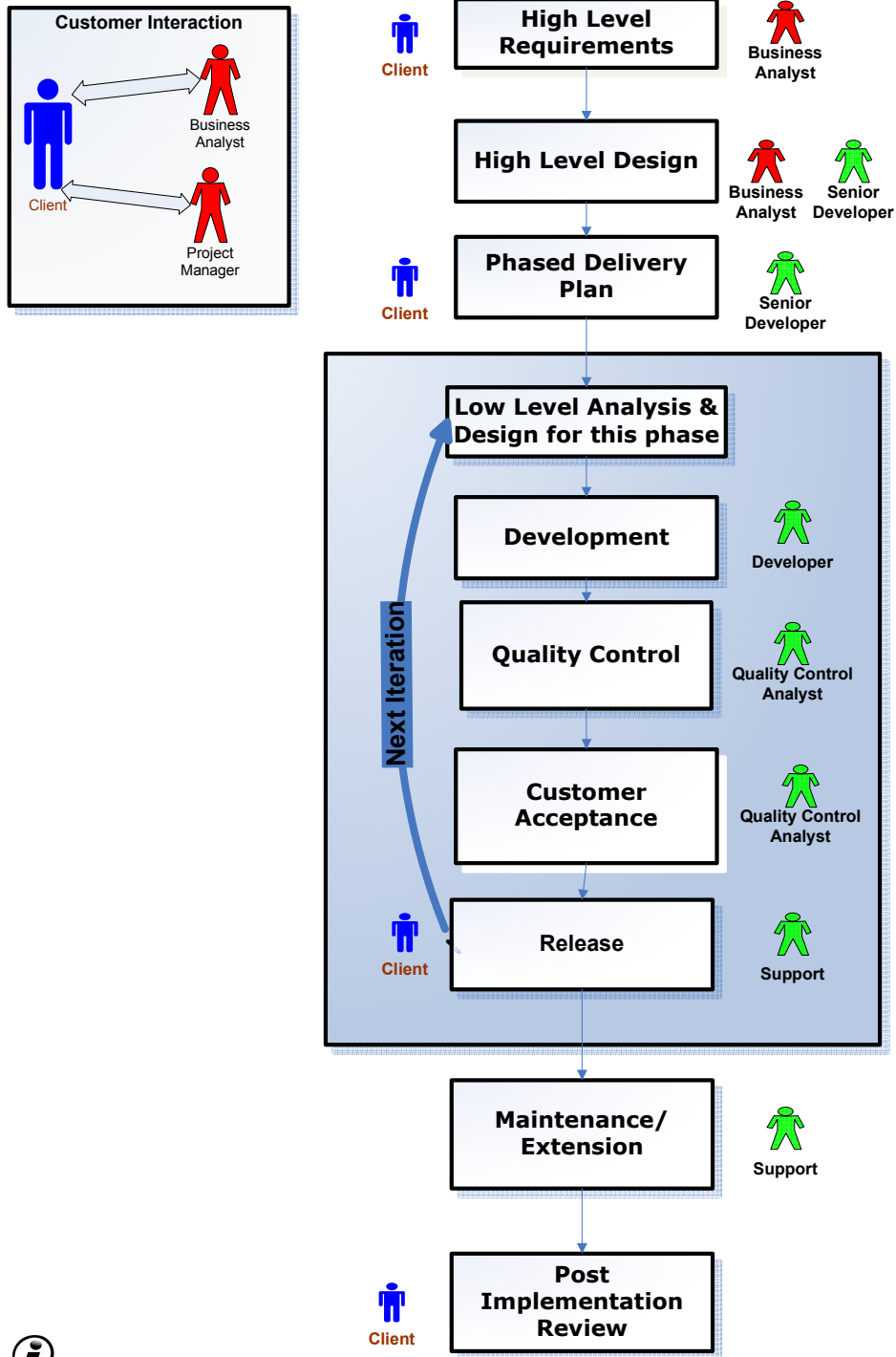
How does one maintain predictable quality? What about communication gaps? How can customers be provided clear visibility into progress? What would best motivate and challenge team members to perform? Having worked and experimented with various methodologies, a need for measured departure from pre-existing approaches was felt necessary at Informulate as the search for an optimum solution. Instead, the result of these conflicting demands helped shape the IADM, which Informulate considers a perfect fit for a distributed sourcing model.

Naturally a process with such conflicting needs placed on it must not be a rigid bureaucracy but a custom fit for each project. So decisions are made on the methodology based on the specific attributes of the project. Large project? Add continuous integration build servers and automated unit tests to minimize issues found in later, more expensive, stages. Small Project? Minimize documentation and overhead, set focus on quick turnaround to customer acceptance. User Interface intensive work? Ensure constant customer involvement to achieve consistent results. Complex internal processing? Include design and code reviews for each iteration.

Interested in how the IADM© process achieves this? Read on.

Overview

Informulate Application Development Process



The schematic diagram above shows the Informulate Application Development Methodology.

How it works

The project goes through the following phases:

1. High level requirements: This is the phase immediately following the sales cycle. The clients/users are put in touch with a Project Manager (PM) and a Business Analyst (BA) who discuss their requirements with them. The outcome of these conversations is some high-level requirements and functional specifications.
2. High level design: The BA then gets together with the Senior Developer (SD) to chart out a high level design and the work effort involved. This finds its way into a proposal (if required) or an estimate of hours and cost.
3. Phased delivery plan: Once the proposal and/or estimates are accepted, the PM, the BA and the client decide on classifying features into iterations such that a set of features are completed in short time spans and the user/s can validate progress as well as provide feedback early in the game.
4. Development Iterations: The PM and the SD monitor the progress of development, release and testing as feature sets are developed and tested in preparation for Customer Acceptance of that iteration. The client can choose to move some iterations to be post-Go Live. Which means they can even take a limited set of features to production, and then continue to add higher-end functionality while cutting down on time-to-market. As the release gets close to production, detailed end-to-end testing can be performed to ensure that the customer experience is optimal.
5. Maintenance: Informulate provides post-release support for the actual installation in production as well as on-going issues for a previously contracted period.
6. Post Implementation review: Once the initial release has been completed, Informulate engages the client and the project team to evaluate perceptions and to collect data for ongoing improvement of the IADM.

Process Details

Let's take a closer look at the process:

What the process is

- It falls loosely between Scrum and RUP methodology
- It is use case based, requires high level analysis and design up front
- It uses iterations to increase customer involvement and reduce risk

What it aims to do

- Provide better predictability to aid customer planning and budgeting
- Cover all major aspects of a project such that “deal-breaker” requirements or serious bugs do not surface at late stages
- Provide the client clear visibility into such dilemmas as costs and features, documentation and quality, detailed business process and time-to-market etc. so that they can decide what is best
- Foster customer involvement through delivery plans, iterations and interactions with BA and PM
- Be customizable to ensure optimal effectiveness for each project
- Last but not most important, Informulate recognizes the vital importance of communication in setting achievable expectations. A key effect of standardization of process, tracking and monitoring is to provide the data to predictably set expectations and achieve goals.

What it assumes

- Process and People are *both* critical aspects of a successful project
- Accountability must fall to one role (i.e. the project manager)
- Undocumented requirements tend to be under engineered or missed completely
- Project resources must be skilled in their specific roles but need not be multi-skilled
- Customers may be confused initially by such a close-quarters interaction but this method of engagement will foster trust, enable communication and ultimately yield successful projects

What the process provides

To the Customers

- Granular expectations of timelines, budget and deliverables
- Insight into how the project is progressing and the opportunity to recognize issues very early

- Valuable, reusable documentation that can be used to maintain, improve and extend their business processes for future projects as well as maintaining the current project

To the Project

- A single point of accountability
- Ease of management and tracking

To the Team

- Clear role definitions and assignment of responsibility
- Clear expectations on quantity and quality of output
- High degree of flexibility around when and how work is done

Conclusion

Measuring progress

All this might sound great on paper but what about validation and metrics? How does one test to see what works? As has often been said in the engineering world “Unmeasured equals unproven”.

Informulate meets this need by using Customer Satisfaction Indexes derived from data that is created from post implementation reviews where customer's can voice their opinion on a variety of aspects. This includes multiple choice questions to measure success of the project and the engagement but also open text questions where customer's can say in their own words what impacted their project whether positively or negatively.

But Informulate does not stop there, a Team Member Satisfaction Index is also calculated and the Project Manager uses these two indexes and data to gain a 360 degree view of the project's success and also create a learnings document that is used to further improve the IADM.

Feedback

If you have feedback on this White Paper or on Informulate in general, please contact them at clients@informulate.net or visit their website at <http://www.informulate.net> for more details.