



IBM Business Partner Unified Process Mentors helps clients increase predictability and consistency using IBM Rational solutions.

Overview

■ Challenge

Help a wide range of organizations, from geographically distributed teams in large multinationals to small and midsize businesses, develop quality software systems on schedule and on budget.

■ Solution

Provide IT teams with mentoring services and practical guidance in the adoption of the IBM Rational Unified Process, or RUP, methodology and the IBM Rational Software Delivery Platform.

■ Key Benefits

Unified Process Mentors and IBM Rational solutions have enabled clients to align IT priorities with business needs, while helping to improve visibility and communication, effectively bringing management expectations in line with IT realities. Software development processes are more consistent and predictable, which improves senior management's ability to make informed decisions.

With a client list that includes industry leaders such as General Motors, Freddie Mac, Capgemini and BlueCross BlueShield of Florida, IBM Business Partner Unified Process Mentors has built a reputation for helping software organizations improve their development capabilities. Founded by Mark Lines, Julian Holmes and Joshua Barnes, Unified Process Mentors provides process improvement, education and mentoring services to a broad spectrum of customers throughout North America, Europe and Asia, ranging from small and midsize businesses to government agencies and large enterprises.

Among the most common problems faced by Unified Process Mentors clients is a disconnect between senior management and IT teams. "Management realizes that software delivery within their organization is perhaps not going as well as it could be," explains Holmes. "Often they're not quite sure why that is. They recognize problems

but they are not sure what the root causes are." Symptoms of this breakdown in communication include projects that are late or over budget, or that simply do not meet the needs of the business. "The ultimate penalty for the disconnect is a project failure," notes Lines.

To help bridge the gap between management and IT, Unified Process Mentors performs an assessment to identify and prioritize a client organization's pain points. "Every organization has pains, whether it is requirements churn, bad architecture, poor testing practices, scope creep or other problems. Based on the assessment, we work with the client to determine the set of tools that address the pains, and how to apply them in a practical process. We explain the real bottom-line business benefits of adopting IBM Rational® tools and IBM Rational Unified Process®, or IBM RUP®, best practices. Then we set up a plan for training, implementation and mentoring services that they need to be successful," says Lines.

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Key Components

Software

- IBM Rational ClearCase
- IBM Rational ClearCase MultiSite
- IBM Rational ClearQuest
- IBM Rational Method Composer
- IBM Rational RequisitePro
- IBM Rational Software Modeler
- IBM Rational Unified Process (IBM RUP)
- IBM Rational Performance Tester

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—Julian Holmes, founder, Unified Process Mentors

Better communication for geographically distributed teams

A key benefit of applying the RUP methodology in a geographically distributed development environment is the adoption of a “common language” for software development. “Many of our clients have developers in multiple countries,” says Holmes. “For these teams, RUP becomes the common language that they use to communicate across countries, regions and native spoken languages. Teams in Europe and the United States can converse with each other and with teams in India with no ambiguity, and that has been a huge enabler. There is no confusion, because everyone uses the same standard terms.”

Unified Process Mentors clients also use IBM Rational ClearCase®, IBM Rational ClearQuest® and IBM Rational RequisitePro® software to coordinate and automate software configuration management, change management and requirements management. “I work with a client that has more than 6,000 people working in each of 2 sites separated by 400 miles. They use IBM Rational ClearCase MultiSite [software], the Rational ClearQuest Web interface and the Rational RequisitePro Web interface to improve communication and collaboration among their distributed teams, and with developers working remotely from home,” says Barnes.

Improved communication is also an advantage for clients that have started using Agile development techniques. “Software development is a team sport and communication is key,” explains Lines. “Many companies want to do Agile development, but when the team isn’t all in one room it isn’t an ideal pure Agile environment. And, practically speaking, you can only put so many people in one room. This is where Rational tools really help. For example, with Rational ClearQuest, Agile teams can stay on top of who is doing what and track the state of every enhancement and defect. Teams use [the] IBM Rational Software Modeler [application] to define an architecture, communicate it to others and promote component reuse across the enterprise. Rational solutions help maximize the benefits of Agile development by enabling better collaboration. With a small team, you can get away with a lot of the things that the Agile community is advocating. But in larger environments with multiple teams, you have dependencies and you need consistency. In these environments, IBM Rational tools and RUP enable teams to scale Agile methods.”

Ensuring compliance and improving governance

Holmes points out that adopting RUP is a significant advantage for development organizations that work in highly regulated industries, as well as for teams that must comply with internal governance rules. “I recently worked with a client that had an enormous amount of governance rules, corporate standards and guidelines, all of which needed to be available and referenceable through one set of process descriptions,” Holmes recalls. “We used IBM Rational Method Composer [software] to establish links between the governance rules, regulations and the RUP process, and to ensure all of that was accessible through a standard framework. Developers could see not only their customized RUP development approach, but also how it fit with rules approved for a particular client engagement, and the corporate rules that always apply. The teams knew that if they followed RUP, then they could be sure they had complied with the rules because the process was mapped to the rules. As a result, the organization was better able to prove, during audits, that they were in compliance with established standards. At the same time, we eliminated a lot of confusion and the overhead of having to constantly interpret new standards and rules that just don’t appear to relate to each other.”

Integrated solutions to support the process

When assessing a client’s development processes, Unified Process Mentors takes a holistic view that spans both processes and tools. From this perspective, the integration of IBM Rational solutions provides added value to clients. “The real power of IBM Rational tools is the ability to bring everything together in an integrated fashion. In many organizations, everyone has their own tools and nobody knows what the others are working on. With IBM Rational, everyone—including analysts, developers, testers and project managers—can use an integrated solution, and that adds real value,” says Lines.

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Lines tells businesses not to expect success overnight. “It takes time,” he notes. “Getting teams to deliver as many requirements as possible is one goal, but getting those requirements consistently delivered on time and on budget is a huge improvement for many clients.” Holmes agrees: “It’s amazing how many organizations think that a new process or tool will be a silver bullet. When we get them using RUP and Rational tools, they typically discover that the best result is predictability,” he notes. “Over time, the teams continue to improve—developing faster, cheaper and with higher productivity—but the predictability is what lets senior managers make better decisions, manage resources and keep all their stakeholders happy.”

For more information

To learn more about IBM Rational solutions, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit:

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