

Is IT Measurement and Process Improvement surviving the recession?

Executive Summary

In July 2009, DCG University (on behalf of the David Consulting Group – “DCG”) conducted an IT metrics and performance improvement practitioners survey to get a temperature check on the state of software development measurement activities in the current economic climate. This short paper summarizes our interpretation of the 67 responses received.

This is the first year of the survey and so comparison with previous years is impossible. On this year’s data, there is strong evidence that our respondent organizations care about and monitor actual project costs against estimates. There is also strong evidence that money is being wasted through weak controls over application code quality. There is not conclusive evidence for any of the other measurement practices we asked about. Indeed, there is strong evidence that our community or respondents falls fairly evenly into two groups on every other question. The written comments that we received confirmed the perspective provided by the charts – the current state of measurement seems to be a matter of culture.

Where a strong measurement culture is built into the organization it has continued to thrive – they don’t know any other way to do business: resilience

“Measurement is the heart of every employee and is the culture of the organization. Anything and everything can be measured for improvement is the attitude in the organization.”

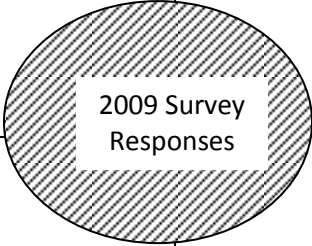
Where no strong measurement culture has been established, what exists comes under pressure continuously from external forces – the recession just happens to be the latest:

“True metrics are not a part of the culture here. We are slowly working to put them in place”

“We have had a measurements program in place for several years. It’s effectiveness is directly related to the management support given to the program.”

Clearly, this last respondent has experienced a range of levels of management support!

We can summarize the current mindsets of our respondents as follows:

Not Satisfied with current status	Builders	Continuous Improvers
		
Satisfied with current Status	Gamblers	Controllers
	Weak Measurement Culture	Strong Measurement Culture

DCG University 2009 Survey Report
Methodology

The goal of the survey was to produce a quick response to a few simple statements. We were seeking gut reactions to our assertions not detailed responses. The survey was read by a sample of 123 IT metrics and performance improvement professionals at different levels in their organizations. The survey request recipients (and the respondents) were a mixture of DCG clients, DCG website/newsletter subscribers (not clients) and individuals with no known prior contact with DCG.

67 responses were received – a response rate of 54%. Respondents were asked to specify whether, for their organization, they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or were “neutral “ on the following seven assertions:

1. We monitor our actual project costs against estimates
2. We have clear metrics for Application code quality
3. We have benchmarked our Software Development metrics against industry
4. We measure our productivity and it is better than industry average
5. We measure the value of outsourced Software Dev and maintenance
6. We are satisfied with the results of the above measures
7. We are not satisfied with the results the above measures

Respondents were also given the opportunity to make general comments in free text format.

[To see the full results, contact us for a full copy...](#)

The following pages present the response to each question then a side-by-side analysis of the responses to all the questions.

