

# Karen Mermel

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## Summary

- Director of Applications Development
- Certified Project/Program Manager/QA Manager displaying excellence in managing Programs/Projects, Quality Assurance and Development initiatives for large and mid-sized corporations
- Experience in managing enterprise-wide projects involving new development, upgrades, migrations, replatforming and process re-engineering.
- Significantly **experienced, high-energy manager** adept at meeting budgets and managing people and projects.
- Particularly effective in managing both large and small projects concurrently.
- Highly technical background in multiple IT areas allows coaching and mentoring teams and other manager reports to create a quality product, on time and on budget.
- Ensures **quality and customer satisfaction** through use of proper communication, planning, methodology, time management, and teamwork
- Extensive work with web-based, client-server, mainframe, and mid-frame technologies.
- Personnel management abilities include **leading, coaching, and motivating** teams toward accomplishing a common goal.
- QA Director

## Certifications

PMP Certified, Project Management Institute  
SAP FI Certification

## Technical Skills

**HARDWARE:** IBM 900X; B7900/4800; IBM PC/AT/486/PS2; RS6000, Infrastructure  
**SDLC METHODOLOGIES:** Method 1; Method 1 Lite; System Life Cycle; Spectrum; CMM; SEI CMM2/3/CMMI; RUP and many company written methodologies; JAD; RAD; Extreme/Agile; PMO  
**OPERATING SYSTEMS:** MVS/EXA; MCP; DOS; OS/2; WIN 3.1, 95, 98, 2000, XP; NT; Unix;  
**SOFTWARE:** Microsoft Project; Microsoft Office; Project Workbench; Wordperfect; Source Safe; VI editor; Unix commands; Dreamweaver; Documentum; SAP, Siebel ERP, Oracle Incentive Compensation  
**LANGUAGES:** HTML; Java 1.1, 1.2; Visual Basic 3, 4, 6; COBOL; Assembler; ALGOL; Easytrieve, Lisp; Javascript; VB Script; XML; DHTML; SHTML; APL; JCL; Smalltalk; C; C++; Perl; CGI  
**DATABASES and**  
**DATA COMMUNICATIONS:** Access; Oracle; IDMS/DB; Lotus Notes, Approach, Groupwise, CICS, Exchange; Sharepoint  
**AUTOMATED TESTING:** Mercury's Xrunner (WinRunner), Quick Test Pro, Test Director; Rational's Robot; Xrunner

## Professional Experience

### **FARMJOURNALMEDIA**

**3/2009-Present**

#### **Director of Applications Development**

Responsible for the development and maintenance of a large number of websites for this media company. Included hiring, firing, coaching and directing other managers and developers. Managed a large scale rewrite by outsourced onshore company of the major products. [www.agweb.com](http://www.agweb.com).

### **SYSTEGRATION**

**1/2008-2-2009**

#### **Practice Manager Quality Assurance**

Developing a practice for this small but successful consulting and training firm.

**USG** **1/2008-12/2008**  
**QA Project Manager/Consultant**

Helped the QA and user staff with best testing practices and techniques. Managed the user group and their testing. Presentations, scheduling, resources, monitoring, reporting. Resource planning and allocation.

**AT&T/SBC** **7/2005-3/2007**  
**Software Configuration Manager/System Deployment Manager/Consultant**

This was a migration and upgrade of multiple AT&T applications from legacy platforms to all client/server, UNIX and web to create a SOA atmosphere.

- Created and controlled SCM plan and System Deployment Plan.
- Coordinated program.
- Held and led peer reviews including Executive Directors.
- Responsible for 4 employees and 2 contractors.
- Held weekly meetings to discuss the various testing environments.
- Worked heavily with the infrastructure team. Directed maintenance and controlled software builds from vendor, Amdocs in Israel, into SCM tool (ChangeMan).
- Controlled deployment of various builds and versions in 10 environments including Production.
  - Responsible for SCM metrics.
- Maintained CMM level 2 and 3.

**CCH** **4/2005** -  
**7/2005**  
**Project Manager/Consultant**

Created processes to make division run smoother, including Business Case, Change Management, requirements gathering. CCH did not have a process for tracking dozens of ongoing projects.

Responsible for:

- Creating buy-in for priority setting and an understanding of how good processes would help.
- Working with various teams in helping them understand problems and solutions.
- Training management in tools and processes.
- Successfully bringing order out of chaos.

**Allstate Insurance** **7/2004** -  
**4/2005**  
**QA Training Coordinator/Consultant**

Wrote QA training proposal, created curriculum, trained instructors and prepared training materials.

**Sears** **1/2004-**  
**3/2004**  
**QA Lead/Consultant**

Managing the QA effort on the PRS Claims project. This was a migration of an old reporting system to an extremely complex client/server, web and outside vendor processing system using Java and Actuate. Also responsible for:

- Managing QA on the PRS A&E project.
- Directing, managing and controlling QA processes and procedures along with the QA schedule and offshore/onshore resources.
- Release/configuration management during the Unit/Integration/Systems and User QA processes. Vendor was CMM level 5.

**Washington Mutual** **1/2003-**

**5/2003**

**Project**

**Manager/Consultant**

Managed User Acceptance Testing for a mainframe to real-time client/server reporting system migration. The financial officers had never undergone such a **large rewrite** before and had no idea of what their role would be. I convinced them that it was to their benefit to do this testing and that they could delegate it to their subordinates but that they would have final sign-off. I wrote a test plan and suggested data that could be used for this effort. I coordinated all the various testing for the UAT and got signoff from everyone for both the test plan and the actual testing. I coordinated the other parts of the technical/user effort that was to happen before the UAT to be sure everything would be done on time.

Responsibilities included:

- Contacted and persuaded Officers and others to approve the plan and to supply requirements
- Created and maintained project plan and attended testing meetings with both technical and non-technical participants; wrote high level test cases and created metrics
- Worked with 57 Officers and other managers from all parts of the country

**ENDEAVOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**1/2001-**

**9/2002**

**Manager of Project and Release**

**Management**

Reported to the Vice President of Technology. Responsibilities included:

- Directing the Managers of Quality Assurance and Documentation teams
- Release/configuration management
- Communicating with customers
- Performed project management ensuring adherence to standards created in the PMO
- Developed a PMO repository
- Researched and recommended web-based time management system to track budgets providing improved control
- Re-negotiated a contract saving the company \$75,000 annually
- Put procedures into place for the QA and Documentation teams to develop quality products and successfully reorganized the QA and Documentation teams in order to streamline processes
- Developed Service Level

Agreements

- Set and supported career goals of the teams and deliver all phases of performance management programs
- Actively participated in recruitment and selection of resources.

**Navistar**

**12/1999-**

**11/2000**

**Project**

**Manager/Consultant**

Managed a project to enhance a very large Mainframe/Client/Server/Internet system from front-end sales through backend reporting and sales/invoicing. This was a partial migration. It began as a re-write of their ordering system on a mainframe and ended up as a client/server and web environment. Responsible for 50 people (employees and consultants) and the project plan. Budget was 4.09 million.

- Directed a project to develop and take a test repository to the Web
- Project was on time and within budget
- Educated users on service related information and continually improving related processes

**AMERITECH****5/1998-****8/1998****Development****Manager/Consultant**

Responsibilities

included:

- Managed a team of 20 individuals doing multiple projects in the Human Resources IT area. The largest project was a Migration of PeopleSoft from a client/server application to using the web and other outside reporting entities on various platforms.
- Responsible for management of personnel
- Created the 1998 budget for the HR/IT department of about 50 people and understood financial impact to the business and the appropriation process including the development and management of budgetary responsibilities
- Set and supported career goals of the teams and deliver all phases of performance management programs and accountable for resource acquisition

**ALLSTATE INSURANCE****1/1997-****3/1998****QA****Manager**

Responsible for Direction and planning for the Quality Assurance team consisting of 18 individuals. Set the direction of the QA team based on business and IT objectives and successfully executing projects and initiatives. Interfaced with approximately 30 other IT managers.

Duties included planning and tracking, hiring, reviews, training and budgets while insuring a quality product was delivered.

- Trained testers in new and faster quality methods of doing their job thus improving production
- Performed resource allocation and was responsible for financial requirements
- Created departmental budget
- Implemented products on time and with high quality
- Worked with Analyst team to help develop and implement Business Objects
- Set and supported career goals of the teams and deliver all phases of performance management programs and actively participated in recruitment and selection and accountable for resource acquisition
- Worked with the PMO to develop better processes for requirements, analysis and testing.

**Kemper Insurance****1995-****1997****Senior****Consultant**

Managed consultants in a maintenance effort while the employees handled a conversion project.

- Successful projects delivered improving company performance
- Trained client managers to be better leaders increasing customer and employee satisfaction

## **SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE INTEGRATION**

**1993-**

**1995**

### **QA**

#### **Manager**

Liaised with clients and management to establish a quality assurance process, and took responsibility for carrying out this process. Provided guidance to other QA specialists and to developers to assist their efforts to produce quality deliverables. Gave guidance to the writing of test plans, performed Integration and Systems testing and developed and presented overviews of testing. Specialized in User Interfaces. GIS Application - Automotive Navigation Database in the Unix/AIX/RS6000 environment manually tested and using Xrunner for load/regression testing.

- Quality Assurance process developed with employees using it successfully
- Trained testers in new and faster quality methods of doing their job
- Was sent to San Jose office to help users understand the complexities and different types of testing
- Set and supported career goals of the teams and deliver all phases of performance management programs.
- Actively participated in recruitment and selection and accountable for resource acquisition

### **Education**

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- **MBA Course Work**, Lake Forest School of Management, Lake Forest, IL
- **AAS, Data Processing**, College of Lake County, Grayslake, IL
- **PMP Certified**

### **Additional Affiliations**

- CEO of C-SPIN (Chicago Software Process Improvement Network). **Chair of PR for the Chicago Software Process Improvement Network**
- **Served as VP of Public Affairs**; Board of Directors; Chair, Strategic Planning; National Chair of Communications; Regional Chapters Coordinator; and Liaison to the Board of Governors of the National Space Society, a non-profit organization of 30,000 members with 100 chapters worldwide
- Provide free web site design/programming to non-profits worldwide
- **Worked as a Campaign Manager for Elizabeth Ann Hull for a position in the U. S. House of Representatives**
- **Currently working to design a new mobile website for NSS with public relations/affairs being the aim of attracting media interest and new members**
- **Worked as PR contact for numerous conferences. Those conferences included:**
  - **Mars Society, 2006**
  - **National Space Society ISDC 2009 including international contacts**
  - **Local coordination of media for Investment Seminar 2009 at ISDC**