

Karen Mermel

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Summary

- **Business Process Improvement** in all phases of software 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; Amipro; FrontPage; VI editor; Unix commands; Panvalet; Librarian; Internet Explorer, 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: IMS DB/DC; DMSII; DB2; Access; Oracle; IDMS/DB; Paradox; Procomm; Dbase II, III, IV; Lotus Notes, Approach, Groupwise, CICS, Exchange
AUTOMATED TESTING: Mercury's Xrunner (WinRunner), Quick Test Pro, Test Director; Rational's Robot; Xrunner

Professional Experience

Systemation, Glenview, IL

1/2008-present

Project Manager/Consultant

Developing a QA practice for this firm. Looking for ways to improve processes so this small firm can sell a good product. Most of this is business process improvement.

USG, Chicago, IL

1/2007-12/2007

QA Project Manager/Consultant

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

AT&T/SBC, Hoffman Estates, IL**7/2005-3/2006****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.
- Worked on moving to CMM level 4 using business process improvement for both metrics and reusability.

CCH, Riverwoods, IL**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. Used best practices and business process improvement to achieve this. 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, Glenview, IL**7/2004 – 4/2005****QA Training Coordinator/Consultant**

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

Sears, Hoffman Estates, IL**1/2004-3/2004****PM/QA 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. Improved business processes within the PM and QA arenas by installing best practices. 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.

Technology: DB2, Cobol, Java, Actuate, Stress Testing, Integration Testing, User Acceptance Testing, MS Project, PMO

Washington Mutual, Lincolnshire, IL**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. In order to achieve an excellent end to this project I installed best practices in business process improvement for this team and its users.

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

Technology: Mainframe, WinRunner, Cobol, Windows, DB2, MS Project

Endeavor Information Systems, Des Plaines, IL**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 using best practices and business process improvement.**
- **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.

Technology: Internet, Client/Server, Windows, Unix, Java, Javascript, Oracle, C++, HTML, XML, DHTML, SHTML, Visual Basic, MS Project, Rational Robot, VB Script**Navistar, Downers Grove, IL****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. Put best practices into place in order to achieve better process improvement. 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

Technology: Internet, Client/Server, Windows, Java, Javascript, ASP, Visual Basic, Cobol, DB2, Oracle, MS Project**AMERITECH, Hoffman Estates, IL****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

Technology: PeopleSoft HR module, Windows, Client/Server, MS Project**Allstate Insurance, Northbrook, IL****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.

Technology: Cobol, DB2, WinRunner, Windows, Java, Rational Rose, CICS, Visual Basic, Test Director, PMO

Kemper Insurance, Lake Zurich, IL

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

Technology: DB2, Cobol, Mainframe, MS Project, Windows, Visual Basic, MicroFocus Cobol, CICS

Systems and Software Integration, Chicago, IL

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 (business process improvement best practices) 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

Technology: Unix, Sun, Xwindows, Xrunner, Client/Server, GPS, C, Korn Shell, Bourne Shell, scripting, PMO

Education

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

Additional Affiliations

- President of C-SPIN (Chicago Software Process Improvement Network). A non-profit that specializes in spreading information about Business Process Improvement, Best Practices, Project Management techniques and Quality Assurance (not testing per se).
- Member Chicago Quality Assurance Institute. Both testing (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA, Process Improvement).
- 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. Trained Board in best practices and showed them how to look for items to improve within the organization.
- Provide free web site design/programming to non-profits worldwide.