Blog Article
Snow White – Most important methodology deliverable

Snow White & Seven Dwarfs – The Most Important IT Methodology Deliverable?

Context

One of the questions I am asked most frequently is "What is the most important deliverable of an IT methodology"?

The simplest answer is "it depends". The more appropriate answer is "it depends on the scope of the project, whether a project team has been assembled, whether the project has been approved, if user requirements have been defined, what the technical alternatives are, when the project has to be completed, if the business users have been trained, etc, etc, etc".

Every project is different. Every project stakeholder is different. Every project team is different. Every deadline is different. The uniqueness and dynamics of these ever changing variables ensures the "deliverable" deemed "most important" will change as the project and project team evolves. When I am faced with this question I usually try and respond with a story about Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Stew Anyone

Once upon a time Snow White had invited all of the dwarfs over to her place for dinner. The first thing to meet the dwarfs upon their arrival was the aroma emanating from the kitchen – its scent was delightful and they kept asking Snow White what was for dinner. After some coaxing Snow White revealed that she had made up a pot of stew.

The Dwarfs conceded that they did not know what stew was and wanted Snow White to tell them what the ingredients were. Snow White relented and said "my stew is made up of a number of things – roast beef, potatoes, carrots, yams, peas, barley, and celery." Snow White then invited the Dwarfs into the kitchen to look into the pot as the stew simmered. The Dwarfs were so excited to see the stew and each of them kept telling Snow White they could not wait to try it. They all promised they would eat all of their stew.

After viewing/smelling the stew, Snow White told the Dwarfs to find their seats at the dining room table and she would bring the stew out for everyone to enjoy. The Dwarfs gleefully found their spots at the table and were eagerly awaiting Snow White to arrive from the kitchen. Snow White entered the dining with a huge bowl of stew and told the dwarfs to help themselves to a serving while she went back to the kitchen to get the salad, the buns and to make sure she had turned off the oven.

Upon her return to the dining room, Snow White was pleased to see the hungry dwarfs devouring their dinner and asked if they were enjoying the stew. Their collective response was a resounding "yes!". In hearing this praise, Snow White sat down at her place at the table to recognize a most disconcerting reality - Sleepy had only the roast beef on his plate, Dopey had only the potatoes on his plate, Sneezy had only the carrots on his plate, Happy had only the yams on his plate, Grumpy had all only the peas on his plate, Bashful had only the barley on his plate, and Doc had only the celery on his plate.

Upset, Snow White confronted the Dwarfs saying: "Why did you separate all of the ingredients in the stew?" Each of the Dwarfs responded with the same answer: "We each knew what we liked and knew we would enjoy our own if we separated the ingredients."

Snow White got up from the table, went back to the kitchen and returned with another large bowl of stew. This time she served the Dwarfs herself – each receiving a plate full of all the ingredients. After a little encouragement each of the Dwarfs tried the new concoction – with every mouthful the smiles on their faces got broader and broader. The Dwarfs had come to realize that the combination of all the ingredients was the true secret to success.

Moral of the Story

Although an IT methodology is made up of specific and unique deliverables, its true value is best realized when the all deliverables are used together throughout the life of the project. An approved User Acceptance Test Authorization deliverable utilized at the completion of a project is no more or less important than the Project Charter that was created to initiate the same project.

Bon Appetit !

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