

Tried and true

Program managers use best of Boeing to speed improvements

By DIANA EASTMAN

Why do some programs succeed while others falter? That's the question a Boeing team was chartered to investigate in 1998. It discovered high-performers used management strategies the other programs didn't. The finding led to the Boeing Program Management Best Practices (PMBP), a management system for executing to plan, maximizing value and meeting customer expectations.

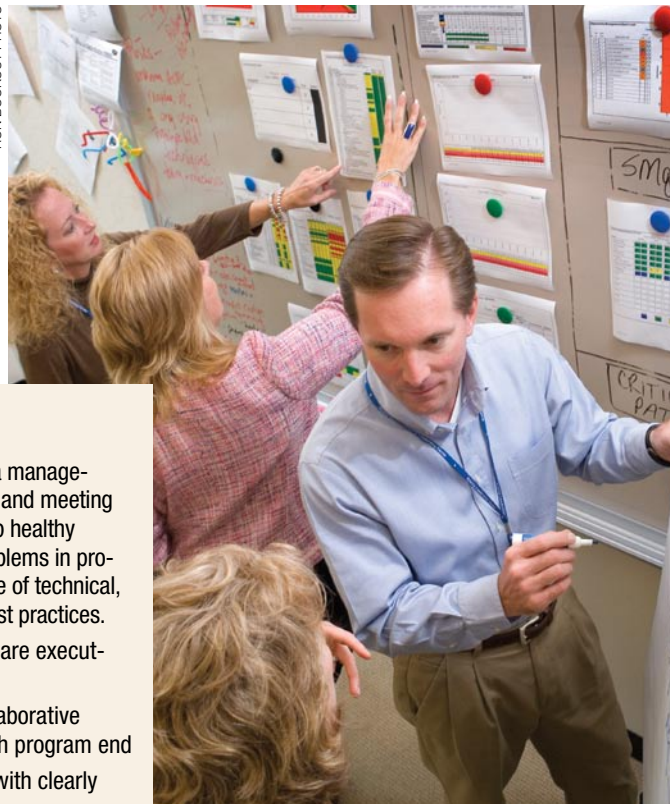
Today, Boeing is making implementation of the best practices a top priority and is initiating policies, processes, tools and metrics to assist program managers. The targeted results are improved program performance, greater consistency, increased productivity and stronger growth—all of which are good for Boeing and its employees.

“Use of the best practices allows us to replicate our successes and take maximum advantage of what we've learned as a company,” said Steve Goo, vice president of Program Management and Business Excellence at Integrated Defense Systems.

While there are no guarantees, Goo said the best practices can help healthy programs see better results and can reduce problems in programs that are overcommitted or at high risk because of technical, schedule or budget challenges.

The eight best practices (see box at left)

RON BOOKOUT PHOTO



Steve Sipprell of C-17 Production Contract Program Management and his classmates review their simulated program during an intense week of best-practices training at a Program Managers Workshop at the Boeing Leadership Center in St. Louis.

serve as a road map for creating a focused, disciplined and integrated management approach. They include almost 150 supporting strategies, attributes and actions required to achieve peak program performance. For each of these, there are five implementation levels that help program managers track how well they are utilizing the PMBP.

At IDS, all programs are required to assess themselves annually against the best practices so they can analyze their performance and measure the progress being made in their improvement plans. Earlier this year, they were challenged to accelerate their improvements and “strive for five” to reach the top implementation level.

Best-practice experts from Goo's team are providing consultation and on-site assessments to help IDS program managers attain this stretch goal.

In addition, they conduct the monthly Program Managers Workshop at the Boeing Leadership Center, where for five days program managers from throughout the enterprise take part in a business simulation based on the PMBP.

Goo noted that Boeing annually reviews the best practices to incorporate lessons learned during the previous year's PMBP assessments. Assessment information will be used also to identify and share successes among programs through the new enterprisewide database that supports the four Boeing growth and productivity initiatives. (As another way of supporting the Global

Sourcing initiative, Goo said supplier-partners are encouraged to use the PMBP.)

“Experience is a powerful teacher,” Goo said. “If our program managers use what Boeing knows to improve their focus and execution, we can delight our customers and move ahead of our competitors.”

For more information on the Boeing Program Management Best Practices, visit http://web-sbc-11.slb.cal.boeing.com/pmpc/program_management/pmbp_2.html on the Boeing Web. ■

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The Big Eight

The Boeing Program Management Best Practices is a management system for executing to plan, maximizing value and meeting customer expectations. These best practices can help healthy programs see better results and can help reduce problems in programs that are overcommitted or at high risk because of technical, schedule or budget challenges. Here are the eight best practices.

Business Offer: Understand requirements and prepare executable and profitable proposals and changes

Supplier Integration: Establish and maintain a collaborative working environment from the earliest stage through program end

Organization: Develop an organizational structure with clearly documented team responsibilities

Business Plan Creation and Review: Set strategic objectives and measure progress throughout the program life cycle

Program Execution and Control: Use a formal concept of operations to manage activities, monitor performance and implement changes to meet technical, quality, schedule, cost and other objectives

Risk, Issue and Opportunity Management: Use an integrated methodology to capture opportunities and mitigate or correct risks and issues

Help Needed and Independent Review: Promote a culture of open communication and continuous improvement

Program Communication: Maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders