



**Bogo Vatovec
Consulting**

Designing Business Interaction

A roadmap to usability in your organization



Presented by / Bogo Vatovec

Change Management / Knowledge Engineering / User Experience /
Interaction Design / Process Engineering

A usability success story

1. Nobody talks about usability
2. Everybody talks about usability
3. Nobody talks about usability

Step 1: Nobody talks about usability



- » A startup, typically technology-driven company
- » A marketing agency
- » A cutting-edge company

Step 2: Everybody talks about usability

- » Internet e-commerce, community and other .com companies
- » Mature and organized companies

Step 3: Nobody talks about usability

- » Almost no company right now.
- » Usability is simply there and being done.
- » No need for further promotion.

Usability is about Business



Having a vision is nice, but show me the money...

- » Find some business cases to present.
- » Analyze your stakeholders. What they are interested in? What are their concerns?
- » Immediate advantages are often not immediately perceived.
- » Saving time for the users may not bring the company any money.
- » Calculating actual numbers is difficult.
- » Support centers are profit makers, usability is a cost center.

Problems with Software Development

- » 63% of software projects overrun their estimates.
- » Frequent requests for changes by users.
- » Overlooked tasks.
- » User's lack of understanding of their own requirements.
- » Insufficient user-analysis, communication and understanding.

Speak the Language of Your Company

- » Everyone talking engineering? Talk engineering.
- » Everyone talking requirements? Talk requirements.
- » Everyone talking quality assurance? Talk quality assurance.
- » Everyone talking client satisfaction? Talk client satisfaction.
- » Everyone talking usability? Talk user experience.

Usability and the Bottom-Line

- » Investigate the cost calculation structure in the company.
- » Align with the controller and process development people.
- » Consider profit vs. cost centers.

Sample Sales Approach

- » Small R&D centric company, one usability advocate
- » Conduct a usability test and determine problems.
- » Talk to customer support. How much time do they spend on calls?
- » Calculate the savings based on a comparative calculation.

Sample Sales Approach

- » Point out benefits of reduced customer frustration.
- » Find some industrial reviews of your product.
- » Check with sales whether an account has been lost due to bad reviews or usability issues.
- » Put all this in a report and present it to executives one at a time.

The Power of a Usability Lab

- » Not necessary for integration of usability practices.
- » Brings visible attention to activities.
- » Allows for the creation of promotional material.
- » Is rather expensive.
- » Works better with departmentalized organizations instead of project oriented ones.

Presenting the Results

- » Create executive summaries highlighting the findings.
- » Create video tapes with interesting findings.
- » Present a written report, as well as an oral presentation of the findings to the team.
- » Integrate the findings with quality control.

Typical Discussions

- » Usability is expensive.
- » Usability errors versus quality errors.
- » We need something out quickly, but we'll refine it in the next release.
- » We DO practice iterative development.

Organization of Responsibilities

Who is responsible for:

- » Software usability?
- » Requirements analysis?
- » Auditing?
- » Interface design?
- » Visual design?

How is the Company Structured?

- » Is there a software testing unit or are testers part of a development team?
- » Is marketing part of the development team?
- » Is customer support an independent unit?

Having Usability in Projects

- » Usability is considered throughout the project.
- » Early involvement gives more influence.
- » Possibilities to train developers.
- » Hard to have objective opinion.
- » Not a lot of company learning outside the project.
- » Limited professional support and development opportunities.

Having Usability in a Department

- » More objective views.
- » Less possibility to influence the project at all stages.
- » Less possibility to train developers.
- » More professional knowledge sharing.
- » More development and training opportunities.

Preparing for Action

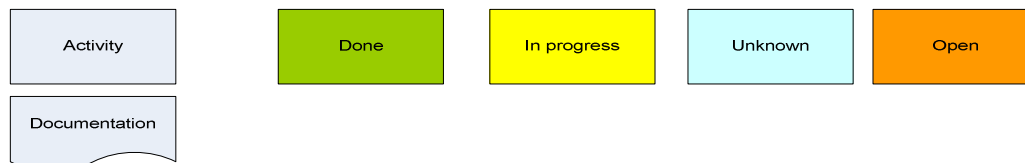
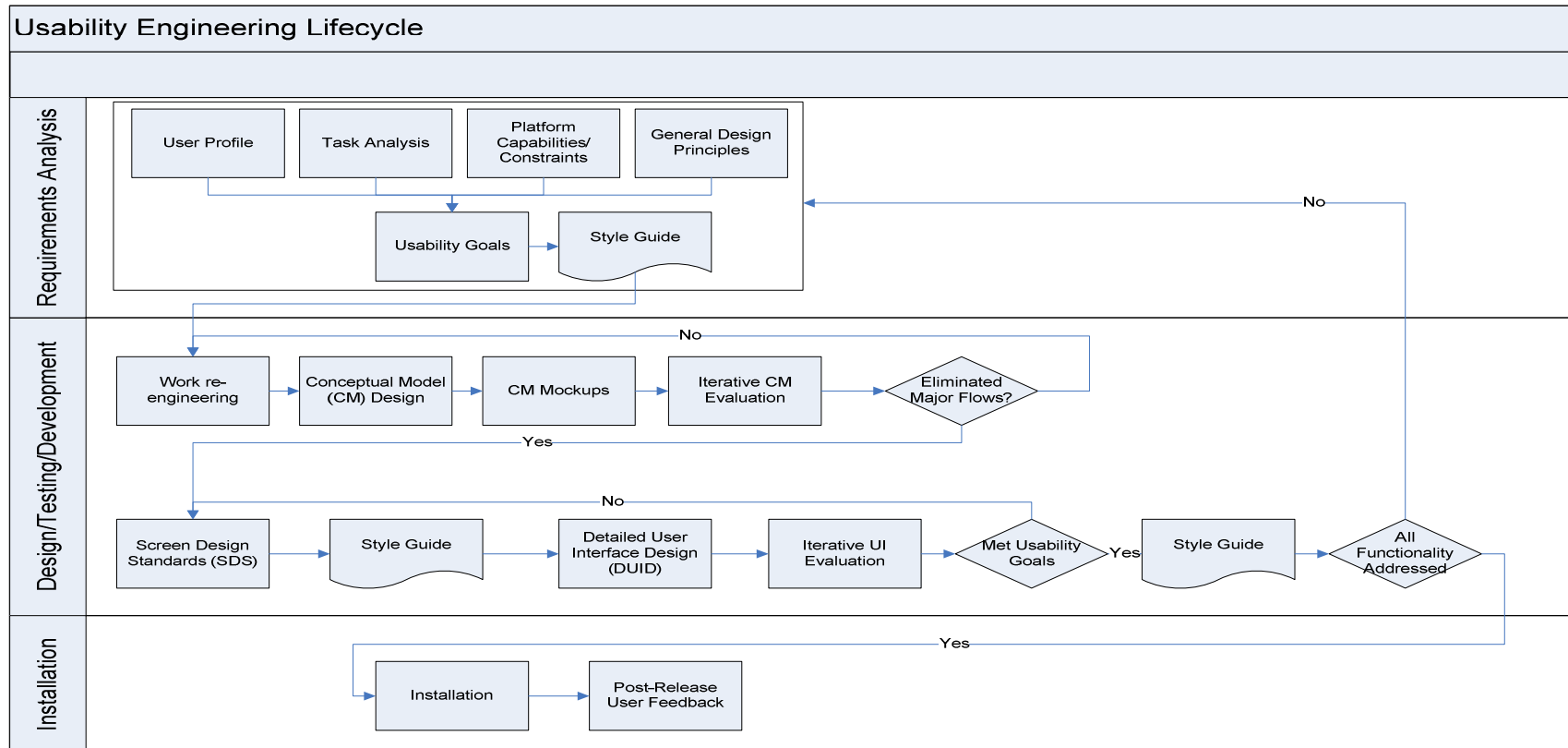
- » Become a usability champion
- » Understand your working culture
- » Where are undiscovered capabilities and good practices?
- » Where are the current practices grounded?
- » Who are the influential groups and individuals?
- » What are the common organizational communication channels?
- » What quality initiatives are going on in the company (CMM, TQM, TickIT, SixSigma)?

Preparing for Action

Understand the current development process:

- » Formality of the process.
 - » How strictly the process is used.
 - » Tools being used.
 - » Skills people have.
-
- » Work closely with people owning the current process.

Integrate Usability Engineering Activities with the Product Development Process



Hiring a Consultant

- » An external consultant may easily convince your management.
- » A process consultant may be able to influence a development process.
- » On projects, the work done by the external consultant leads to less organizational learning.

Hiring a Usability Expert

- » Work with a consultant beforehand to define the job opportunity and possibility.
- » Together with management, define the objectives for the person.
- » Hire an experienced person, possibly one working in several different environments.

Where to Start?

- » Your job is to be a change agent.
- » Make the usability visible. Without a commitment from top management and lead technical staff you will not succeed.
- » Provide appropriate training to the development staff.
- » Start performing usability inspections
- » Try to alter the existing practices.
- » Develop internal design guidelines.
- » Try to establish some measurements.

The Most Promising Activities

- » Interface redesign recommendations
- » Design principles and guidelines
- » Use case modeling
- » Abstract prototyping
- » Iterative development
- » Usability inspections

Forming a Working Group

- » Usability standards group
- » Usability testing group
- » Usability assurance
- » Usability consultancy group

Collaboration with Marketing

- » They may be your most important partner or an enemy!
- » Who “owns” users?
- » Who “knows” users?
- » Who is a user and who is a customer?
- » Design for use, refine for sale.
- » The customer may be wrong.

About Measurements

Only measure what makes sense.

- » Focus on measurements that affect the business value.
- » In a company where nothing is measured, don't attempt to measure at all.
- » Align usability measurements with other quality control measurements.

Standards and Methods to Consider

- » User interface standards: ISO 9241, ISO 11581
- » Quality standards: ISO 9126-1, ISO 14598-1
- » Capability Maturity Model (CMM)

References: Books

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Thanks!

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