



TERATECH NEWS

Tools for Programmers

12221 Parklawn Drive Ste 200 Rockville, MD 20852
(800) 447-9120 ? (301) 881-1440 ? Fax (301) 881-3586
<http://www.teratech.com/> info@teratech.com

Lucy Mwinamo, Editor

September 2001

This month we cover:

- ?? The Architect of the Capitol
- ?? Fusebox2 Conference
- ?? Interviewing made easy
- ?? On project management

The Architect of the Capitol

Teratech is providing personal hands-on ColdFusion training for The Architect of the Capitol. The



Architect of the Capitol is responsible to the United States Congress for the maintenance, operation, development, and preservation

of the United States Capitol Complex, which includes the Capitol, the congressional office buildings, the Library of Congress buildings, the Supreme Court building, the U.S. Botanic Garden, the Capitol Power Plant, and other facilities.

Fusebox2 Conference



There is still room at the Fusebox2 Conference. Come to this year's Fusebox Conference! This one-day event will help you understand the intricacies of Fusebox. Make your next Fusebox project a success!

The fee is \$225. For more information:
<http://www.cfconf.org/fusebox2/>

Interviewing made easy

Interviewing is selling yourself. What most people (including sales and marketing types) don't like to do is sell themselves. If you view sales as talking someone into something you need to retool your ideas. The best type of sales is solutions sales: First, you identify the problem, then present your product as the solution. The best salespeople always tell the prospective client if their product won't solve the problem and even refer them to a competing product that will solve it.

The same applies to interviewing. Your "client" is the company, with whom you are interviewing, and the position they have is the "problem", which includes the actual work plus intangibles such as culture, management style, business philosophy, etc. Conversely, the manager should treat you as the client. Your "problem" is that you are looking for an opportunity that includes the actual work plus intangibles such as culture, management style, business philosophy, etc. The interview itself is no different than any other presentation.

It's up to you

You are (or should be) your favorite product. Take the time to evaluate yourself in that light so you know and understand your product's FAB (feature, accomplishment, and benefit) and be sure that you can articulate your "problem!" During the interview you want to learn all about their problem in order to present yourself as a good solution or refer them, if you know someone who could be one. Unfortunately, since you can't count on the manager(s) and staff to effectively communicate their problem (most people don't like being the interviewER any more than they liked being the interviewEE) it's up to you to interview well enough for two!

<http://www.RampUpSolutions.com> [email miki@RampUpSolutions.com](mailto:miki@RampUpSolutions.com)

On Project Management

[Continued from last month...]

Key issue: What program and project management practices and procedures will improve project

success? Last month we looked at the Checklist items:

- ?? Business sponsorship
- ?? Business case
- ?? Project oversight
- ?? Organization
- ?? Project plan
- ?? Risk assessment

Now we continue with other important project points.

Checkpoints: There should be an end-of-project checkpoint and regular checkpoints throughout to ensure the business case still exists and to review the progress and risks.

Requirements: There should be a concise vision and specification of requirements and deliverables, with defined change and risk assessment processes for dealing with the inevitable changes.

Size: The project should have short phases, each capable of delivering benefit. Any project that is not structured into phases capable of delivering benefits in chunks of less than six months' duration increases its risk of failure due to fast-moving requirements, technology, and people.

Communications: There must be a clear plan for communicating project objectives and tasks.

Performance appraisal and remuneration: Evidence is that sponsors are more engaged where their own compensation and performance evaluation is influenced by the project outcome.

Risks: Identify all the events that may adversely impact the project. Estimate the probability and impact. Look for opportunities to reduce probability and/or impact by taking actions immediately or by putting a contingency plan in place should the event occur. Be open about the risks and share them with the project team and steering committee. Assign responsibility for key risks to a named individual, who should be the one most affected by the outcome of the risk. Create a "top 10 risks" list to keep the team's focus on them, and continually update it.

Project management methods: These should cover project initiation, planning, execution, and close down. The project management methodology should not be confused with a systems development method, which covers only the execution phase. Methods cannot compensate for poor judgment and bad decisions, but they

do prevent process and communication mistakes.

Kill projects early and often: Many enterprises will keep running a failing project, sometimes because they do not know it is failing, but usually because there is no mechanism or will to kill it. Spotting the early signs of failure will help get most projects back on track, but projects afflicted with continual failure should be killed early and often. It is worthwhile specifying what should be reviewed at the milestone checkpoints. This should include a list of risks that would indicate the project was heading toward failure (e.g., loss of sponsor, loss of key staff members, or technology change).

Change control: Recognize that change is inevitable and important. Define a change control process that includes a process to prioritize requests. Define the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in change control. Create an audit trail. Perform risk and impact analysis for each change. Bundle changes together to form releases.

Key factors in project failure

Leading causes of project failure include:

- ?? Poor participation from the sponsor.
- ?? Insufficient business and user involvement.
- ?? Difficulties in defining work in detail.
- ?? Poor project management.
- ?? No clear objectives or statement of requirements.
- ?? Continual and unregulated change.
- ?? Inappropriate experience and competence.
- ?? Unrealistic time frames.
- ?? Denial of risk.

Bottom line

By adding this checklist to the approval process, many projects that would otherwise be destined to failure, or at least several restarts, can be saved or killed before even starting!

TERATECH CUSTOM PROGRAMMING

- o ColdFusion
- o VisualBasic
- o SQL, Oracle, Access, FoxPro
- o Numeric Analysis

Copyright TeraTech 2001
TeraTech, Inc.

12221 Parklawn Drive, Suite 200
Rockville, MD 20852