Workshop on Six Sigma

CMBAAA joined hands with SGS Lanka (Pvt) Ltd for the purpose of conducting a series of workshops on "Six Sigma", the management tool used by many successful corporate giants internationally for achieving success.

The inaugural workshop was held recently at the Taj on 25th March 2004. The chief guest was the ambassador of Switzerland in Sri Lanka His Excellency Bernadino Regezzoni

The resource panel consisted of
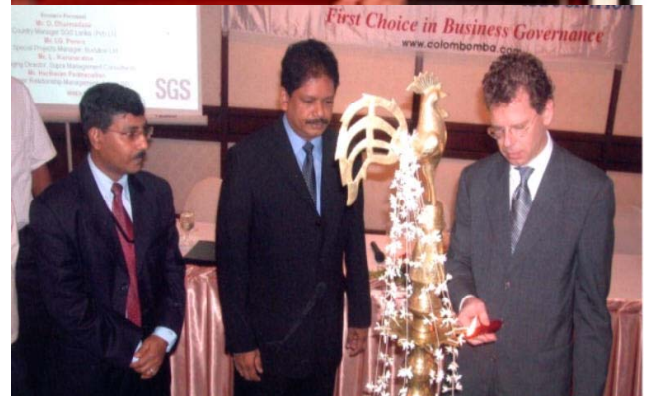Mr. D. Dharmadasa, Country Manager, SGS Lanka (Pvt) Ltd
Mr. I.G. Perera, Special Projects Manager, Bodyline Ltd., who is directly involved in implementing SIXSIGMA at his place of work.
Mr. L. Karunaratne, Managing Director, Supra Management Consultants
Mr. Hariharan Padmanaban Customer Relationship Management, Astron BPO, formerly at GE, USA where SIXSIGMA was used to turnaround the corporate giant into profit making and market leadership.

Sixsigma is today's most dynamic management approach for dramatically improving product and process quality along with employee enthusiasm and involvement. It has created an interest among managers and executives for its ability to reduce cycle time, eliminate product defects, and enhance customer satisfaction.

This is a programme designed to impart knowledge on the Six Sigma concepts and it's applications in Quality, Productivity and Cost Management Systems. The target audience would be senior and middle management groups in result oriented organizations. Participants will be exposed to Six Sigma principles, Six Sigma tools and techniques in Cost Reduction and Productivity Improvement, Process Based Quality Management Systems and ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management Principles.

CMBAAA Annual General Meeting –09th July 2004
at TransAsia – Earl's Court at 6.30pm

"OPEN SOURCE" SOFTWARE
The Next Big Thing in Sri Lanka's IT industry ?

By Chris Corea BSc ACMA MSc MBA chris@riscor.net

Friday, 23rd January saw the inauguration of the first Sri Lankan 'open source' conference. Organised by the Lanka Software Foundation in just 3 weeks, it was attended by 160 IT professionals and enthusiasts.

The effort was spearheaded by **Dr Sanjeeva Weerawarna** who works for IBM in the US and telecommutes from Sri Lanka - a happy situation indeed.

So what is the significance of "Open Source" ? Communicating via the internet is a community of dedicated software experts who develop bits of software code purely for the reward of the intellectual stimulation that it provides !

The best known example of open source development is the Linux operating system. This initiative was started by Linus Tourvaulds a Finnish student, who posted an unfinished (pardon the pun) version of Unix on the internet and invited all comers to add to and improve on it. Many did so and the resulting piece of software (Linux) is now a very sophisticated and robust operating system. And it is free.

In fact the phenomenon of open source development is scaring the daylights out of big name software vendors - such as Microsoft ! "Open Office" is an open source rival of their "MS Office" product.

In this **'bazaar model'** development where there are so many contributors, you might wonder how quality is maintained. Quality control is by a rigorous peer review process. Your suggestions for additions/ changes would be reviewed by many experts in the group before it is incorporated into the code base. The source code for your modification would be open to public scrutiny and further improvement - thus the term 'open source'.

How can money be made in this process ? Making a presentation entitled **"Open Source Business Models" Sujiva Dewaraja**, CEO of John Keells Computer Services drew a parallel between open source and the English alphabet and words. No one owns them but they are used by many to create literature and intellectual property. Similarly one can use open source software products to create commercially saleable products (a few conditions do apply).

To come back to software development, the opposite of the free for all 'bazaar' model is the centrally controlled **'cathedral model'**. In this model, tight central control is maintained by a commercial organization over a group of developers who are typically paid for their efforts.

Sanjeewa has been able to assemble a team of developers who have been volunteered by their respective employers toward specific projects started by him. They have been granted duty leave to work on these projects. This talented group has been able to impress the international community of developers and has been able to contribute to important open source initiatives.

So what do we, Sri Lankans, get out of all this ? Significant contributions to the open source community results in making a name for Sri Lanka as a source of IT brainpower. Although these efforts do not bring in direct revenue, the good press we get in the 'newsgroups' on the internet may bring in requests for commercial work.

Like being known worldwide for Ceylon Tea and for cricket, we must acquire a reputation as a source of excellent software. This is important if our IT companies are to go up the value chain from the 'body shopping' that most of them seem to be doing nowadays, where the only competitive advantage we offer is lower cost.

Chief guest **Eran Wickramaratna**, Chairman of the ICT Agency kicked off the proceedings with his opening address, giving inspiration to the local IT industry and urging them to seize opportunities for advancement as they became available.

There were two prominent foreign speakers. One of them was **James Clark - the 'father of XML'** (as in eXtensible Markup Language). James, a "typical" Oxford educated mathematician spoke on **"An Independent Developers Perspective of Open Source"**. He described some of his contributions to the Open Source community with particular reference to XML which is emerging as an extremely important markup language for data exchange and web services on the internet.

The other foreign speaker was - **Ken Coar - a VP of Apache** - the world renowned open source web server. He cut quite a figure being a very big made silver haired, bearded person dressed in denims and festooned with keys, pens and all manner of equipment. He spoke on **"Open Source : Opportunties Abound"**. Both the foreign gentlemen made stimulating presentations albeit in two very different styles.

Sri Lankan presenters included **Dr Nimal Ratnayake** of Peradeniya University and of the Lanka Linux user Group (LKLUG). He spoke on **"Open Source History and Culture"**.

Dr Shahani Marcus Weerawarna, Chief Software Architect of Virtusa (and incidentally Sanjiva's wife) spoke on **"Open Source and Software Solutions Companies"** with particular reference to Virtusa**.**

Sankalpa Gamwarige of Crossvue USA spoke of **"Open Source in Embedded Real Time Systems"** and identified some of the open source products used by him in this field.

"Legal Aspects of Open Source Software" were amply covered by **Jayantha Fernando** - legal advisor to the ICT Agency and previously a legal advisor to the South African Government.

At the end of the conference, there was an animated Panel Discussion moderated by **Prof Rohan Samarajiva** on the theme **"Open Source in Developing Countries"**. Panellists were **Manju Hathotuwa** CEO ICT Agency, **Prof V.K. Samaranayake** Director UCSC, **Dinesh Saparamadu** CEO of hSenid and many of the presenters.

The general consensus was that Sri Lanka should not miss out on another wave of opportunity in the field of IT. Sri Lanka does not have the large numbers of qualified graduates that India does. However, contributions to Open Source initiatives do not need large numbers of people and a few very good contributors could make a good name for Sri Lankan IT.
So what does all this mean to you as a CEO or Head of IT ? Well, the next time your IT staff suggest that a free, open source product (eg the Apache web server) is robust and easier to work with than a commercially available product – they could be right.

Congratulations to Sanjiva and his team at the Lanka Software Foundation on an excellent conference. For more information on the worldwide Open Source Initiative you could visit *www.opensource.org*

Profile: K.V. Pushpakumara

Past President CMBAAA

A banker for 27 years at people's bank, Pushpakumara is the Assistant General Manager in charge of the bank's southern province operations. He is also a director/deputy chairman of Ruhunu Venture Capital Company limited formed by SDA, Peoples Bank and Bank of Ceylon.

Pushpe obtained his MBA from the University of Colombo in 1994. He is a founder member of the CMBAAA and contributed as an executive committee member from its inception. He is the only CMBAAA president so far to be elected from a Public Sector background.

He is a member of the chartered management institute, UK and a member of the institute of management, Sri Lanka and the management club. Pushpe also contributes as a visiting lecturer of the University of Kelaniya for final year marketing students on services markrting. He is an alumnus of JASTECA. Pushpe obtained his first degree in mathematics and statistics from the University of Peradeniya. He has also obtained the Management development certificate from the Postgraduate Institute of Management.

Pushpe loves yoga and billiards. His wife Janaki is also a banker and the daughter Niyomi is a CIMA qualified management accountant and a management student at the Sri Jayawardenepura University.

Guest Lecture by Dr.Hans Wijesuriya

Dr.Hans Wijesuriya, CEO, managing director of Dialog GSM – MTN Networks (Pvt) Ltd., the market leader in celluler communication in Sri Lanka delivered a Guest Lecture on 20th May 2004 at the auditorium of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo.

Dr.Wijesuriya spoke on "Organisational Leadership in a Dynamic Environment" and made a detailed presentation of the Business Model used by Dialog GSM to achieve market leadership in record time. The event was well attended by Members and MBA students of the faculty. The lecture followed an extensive question and answer session.

Guest Lecture by Dr.Uthum Herath

CMBAAA in collaboration with the Faculty of Management and Finance organized an interactive workshop conducted by Dr.Uthum Herath on 27th February 2004, at the conference room of the faculty. Dr. Herath is the additional director, Economic Research Department of the Central Bank of Ceylon.

Members of the Academic staff. MBA students and Members participated at this event.