

CMMI: Is Your Business Mature Enough?

Joel Hans, Managing Editor, Manufacturing.net



Kirk Botula, CEO, CMMI Institute

Back in November, the CMMI Institute announced a number of new initiatives to extend the reach of its model and to help manufacturers improve their performance. The Institute, established by Carnegie Mellon University, is the current home for the [Capability Maturity Model Integration \(CMMI\)](#) [1], which was developed in the late 1980s at the Software Engineering Institute (SEI) within Carnegie Mellon, in order to push excellence in software and systems development.

Unlike other frameworks or standards, CMMI isn't a compliance exercise, and doesn't require adherence to a particular methodology, such as Six Sigma or Lean. It's methodologically agnostic, which means that rather than focusing on how to do something, it focuses on what needs to be done. Companies who utilize the framework learn about their capability, or lack thereof, and can then work to bring that into alignment with their business goals. In other words, Six Sigma is a "how," whereas CMMI teaches about the "what" that needs improvement.

Since the '80s, the philosophy has been extended beyond software and implemented in some of the largest and most influential manufacturers around the world: Raytheon, Samsung, Intel and even NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab have taken the model onboard and improved their businesses because of it. It moved quickly through the aerospace and defense markets before being translated into more general manufacturing.

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