



## Understanding and Recognizing *Testing Trends*

The cover page and page 14 of the Journal of the QAI Global Institute (October 2009, Volume 23, Issue 4) have been reproduced with permission from the QAI Global Institute .

Details about the QAI Global Institute and their Journal, are available at their website

<http://www.qaiglobalinstitute.com>

### Also In This Issue:

- Software Testing Improvement: Factors for Success
- Managing a Virtual Test Team
- Center of Excellence (CoE) Framework: Training & Development Challenges of SPI Implementation and Human Factors associated with That
- How to Quantify and Maximize the ROI on Software Testing
- Cost Based Performance Modeling - Dealing with Performance "Uncertainties"



# Book Review: Aligning Ferret

## A Business Novel by Swapna Kishore & Rajesh Naik

BY TOM TICKNOR  
QAI – Chief Operating Officer

I have to begin my review of *Aligning Ferret* with a confession. After reading the first couple pages, I thought I was in for a slow exhausting read as I, an American reader, trudged through the Indian prose of this novel. I could not have been more incorrect. What I found as I continued to read was a story that drew me in. As any good work of fiction, the character development allowed me to identify and empathize with the story's characters. Most importantly, I began to see how I could use this story to re-engage my own teams in a variety of improvement initiatives.

I have not read many "business novels," so this unique style combining fast-paced fiction with practical discussions of the uses and value of CMMI, People CMM, and Balance Scorecard was rather new to me. The story chronicles both the corporate dynamics and personnel challenges of an Indian software company named Ferret, which has been recently acquired by a USA-based MNC, and struggles to meet the rapidly changing expectations of the new parent company.

In parallel with the story line of corporate transformation, the story follows the personal life of the protagonist, Sunil 'Sunny' Chinnappa who is tasked almost daily with a new set of priorities when his boss, Rajiv, keeps tossing more on his plate. Sunny must also deal with an increasingly complicated set of circumstances in his private life, involving his wife and nephew.

As a business book, *Aligning Ferret* is about the tools to align every facet of business strategy, tactics, and operations to reflect changing business conditions. Also included are exercises at the end of each chapter with questions that review the topics of the chapter as well as thought provoking discussions and references to additional reading materials.

For me, this book had an unexpected added value. As a member of a global team which includes substantial team members in India, this story provided a glimpse into the day to day lives of my Indian counterparts. I now have a better appreciation for their culture, what they think beyond the business of business, and most importantly, how I can temper my American perspective to more effectively communicate with my global team.

*Ferret* is not about CMM, although you will have a better understanding of its implications; it's not about People CMM, but you will increase your knowledge of its uses; it isn't about Balanced Scorecard, although you will likely be inspired to investigate more. What is *Ferret*? *Ferret* is a great story that teaches us lessons about business, about life, and about balancing and aligning all the pieces, both professionally and personally.

### About the Authors

**Swapna Kishore** currently serves as a writer and consultant. She qualified as an engineer from IIT Delhi in 1978, and after a year of working as a production engineer, did post-graduate studies in management from IIM Ahmedabad. Since then, she has worked in the area of software engineering/ process/ quality. In addition to the usual coding, analysis and project management, she wrote training material and books on areas such as software engineering, project management, requirements, estimation, processes and quality models.

**Rajesh Naik** is a consultant, trainer and author by profession, and also a founding partner of QAI India Limited, and currently lives in Bangalore, India. After he received a B Tech (Chemical Engineering, IIT Madras, 1979), he joined IIM Ahmedabad for post graduate studies in management. He graduated in 1981 and opted for IT by joining TCS, then an 800 person company. Bitten by a six-year itch, he switched to a fertilizer company, where he was reminded why he preferred IT to chemical engineering. He then worked for NIIT, and various other assignments until he finally broke free of hierarchy and began to work independently as a process and quality consultant around the time the ISO 9001 wave hit Indian companies. In 1994, he joined QAI while it was being formed, and has stayed all these years. He has helped QAI clients with project management, software estimation, software testing and reviews, ISO 9001, and SW-CMM (now transformed to CMMI). He has discontinued his role as a CMMI Lead Appraiser (a decision made in Sept 2008). His current interest areas include human capital management and performance alignment using PCMM and Balanced Scorecard. Over the last fifteen years, he has co-authored six books.

