

**Jim Sartain, Director of Software Engineering Processes, Intuit Inc.  
Interview with Jim Sartain by Doug Llewelyn (as seen on T.V.)**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

**Jim, first off, tell me why Intuit elected to get involved with this process, the Fagan Defect-Free Process. What attracted Intuit to this?**

Okay. We've been looking for ways to more efficiently produce better products and we've had some successes from people that have applied Fagan inspections in other companies. Fagan inspections were first used in our San Diego division very successfully, and now they're being rolled out on a broader basis based on the success that we've had in San Diego.

**What do they do for a company like Intuit because I think the outsider would just assume that you've got brains here, these are software developers. Why do you need someone to come in and teach them something?**

Well, Intuit produces some great products but we still have the opportunity to get those products out quicker, spend more time creating valuable features in the products, and not working on defects. And so, what we're constantly striving to do is be the best we can be and find ways of improving the way that we do software development. And the Fagan inspection process has been something that's been very helpful in that respect.

**Explain to me how it's been helpful.**

Well, it helps in a number of ways. One is it helps find defects and prevent them from being discovered by customers or discovered in later phases of the cycle, the development cycle, when they're more expensive to fix. The other thing, that's almost more important, is it helps people focus on software development as a process and as part of the Fagan inspection you find what we call systemic defects, problems with the process that causes the defect to be created in the first place.

And so what we're finding is, we're finding lots of process improvement ideas that prevent future defects from being created in the first place. That's even better than finding and fixing them.

**And explain to me how it works when Michael and his team come in here. What actually happens?**

O.K. What we do is get a group of a combination of managers and engineers, folks involved in different disciplines including product management, engineering, quality assurance. We get them together for a three-day class and they go through a combination of exercises that are intended to help people understand how to do the Fagan Defect-Free Process and also why you'd want to do it in the first place. And the best why, the most compelling way to convince someone that this is a good idea is actually have them go through the experience of doing an inspection, seeing the defects that they find, seeing the process improvements that they can identify and actually experiencing, first hand, the benefits.

**And in general what's the reaction of the people who have the opportunity to go through this program?**

Well, frequently engineers are skeptical at the beginning when they start into the class. But what we've found, and we've done about, I think eleven classes here, is we see a very high degree of acceptance after they've gone through the three-day training. And so, we actually do post class surveys seeing how many people believe that this is a valuable addition to the work process and a vast majority of people either strongly agree or agree. Very few believe that it's not going to help them.

**So, in general, then, you think that this is something that is very beneficial for a company like Intuit.**

Absolutely. And that's why we've been very aggressive in rolling it out in several of our major divisions.

**Again, this is the last question. I gather, then, that Intuit thinks this is really very worthwhile. Am I right?**

Yes. So what we're planning to do is continue the institutionalization at three of the major business units that it's currently being applied to and then look at a broader role out across the company next year.