

Case Study

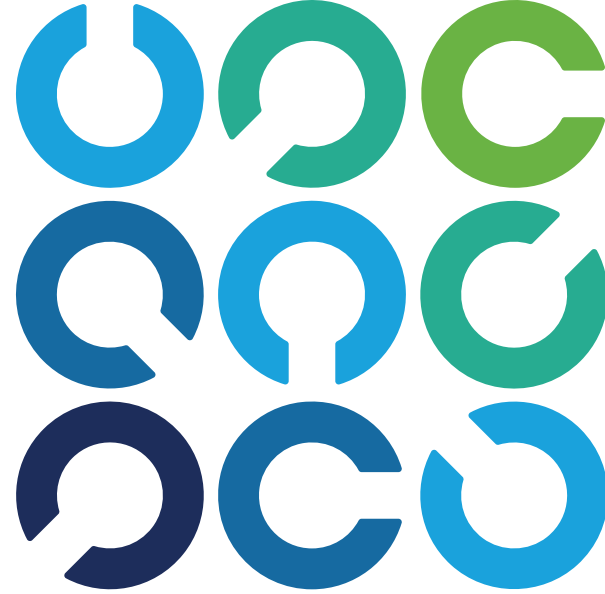
Avantare, an ISACA® CMMI® Premium Partner and Leading Process Improvement Consultancy, Evaluates Itself to Improve Processes and Outcomes

The Business Need

Avantare has been a CMMI Partner since 2006, achieving Maturity Level 2 in 2015, and Maturity Level 3 in 2017, and in September 2020, Maturity Level 5 for three of its business units. They help other organizations achieve measurable and sustainable business results using ISACA®'s CMMI® maturity model. After helping so many other organizations grow and thrive using CMMI's methodology, they realized that they should turn the lens on themselves: they selected the CMMI Services view as the best fit for their business units and adopted it in 2014. They felt it would be a clear demonstration to customers of CMMI's real and lasting benefits, and it would show their commitment to CMMI's best practices approach, while continuously improving their own business performance.

Avantare's organizational business unit includes:

- **Consultancy:** Consultancy services for the adoption of best practices in project management, service management, software engineering and process improvement management, based on standards and models such as CMMI-DEV, CMMI-SVC, PMBoK, ISO 20000, 27001, Moprosoft¹ (aligned with ISO29110) and using methodologies such as Six Sigma, design thinking, LEGO® Serious Play™, and the IDEAL model.
- **Professional Training:** Training services for process improvement, software engineering practices, project and service management as well as coordinating certification training in global standards such as CMMI, SCRUM, and ITIL.
- **Specialized Services:** This unit provides short and long term onsite projects with consultants specially trained in process improvement, quality and development methodologies models like CMMI-DEV, CMMI-SVC, PMBoK, TMMI, ISO20000, ISO27001. They also provide project management office services for specialized project management and business analysts. They are all Avantare employees who are embedded at their customers' locations, and managed by Avantare's project management staff.



Company Background

Avantare, founded 21 years ago in Mexico, helps organizations improve their efficiency and profitability through the adoption of innovative processes and disciplines, based on the principles of quality, competitiveness, permanence and growth. Avantare serves customers in Mexico, Latin America, Spain and China. A Mexican pioneer consultancy company, Avantare offers consulting services in process improvement programs based on models and world-class standards such as CMMI, ISO/IEC 20000, ISO/IEC 27001, ISO/IEC 29110, ITIL, among others.

For more information, go to avantare.com

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The Solution

Avantare identified several specific areas for improvement:

- **Improved response times for their Specialized Services unit:** The Specialized Services unit provides short- and long-term onsite staff trained in process improvement, quality and development methodologies models like CMMI and others. They sought to shorten the timeframe between an initial staffing request and presenting candidate profiles and increase of percentage of candidates hired.
- **Increase pipeline and customer retention** in Professional Training and Consultancy business units.
- **Measure and improve overall quality of services** provided to customers in the organization.

The Services view was selected because it is totally focused on customer satisfaction and aligned to the different needs of each separate Avantare business unit. For the 2020 appraisal, Avantare chose to concentrate on these capabilities.

- Ensuring Quality
- Delivering & Managing Services
- Selecting & Managing Suppliers
- Planning & Managing Work
- Managing Business Resilience
- Managing the Workforce
- Supporting Implementation
- Sustaining Habit & Persistence
- Improving Performance

Avantare identified several specific business goals:

- **Maintain profitability of each business unit** by adopting a commercial strategy focused on the diversity of their customers and services and aligned with their customer's needs.
- **Increase customer satisfaction ratings** of each of the Avantare strategic business units, maintaining a rating range between 4.6 and 4.8, using specialized satisfaction surveys.
- **Improve the perception of service quality** through the application of agile and innovative techniques in consulting services and professional training that are focused on generating a culture of tangible improvement through the implementation of KPIs in each service unit.



“This achievement is the result of great teamwork, which compels us to improve our processes in a constant quantitative manner aligned to business goals, making decisions based on quantitative analysis, identifying factors that influence our critical processes, improving our day-to-day performance and achieving a high level of satisfaction from our customers.”

Mariana Pérez-Vargas Obregón
CEO, Avantare



Adopting the CMMI Services view helped Avantare create the required discipline to create a management methodology for the services they offer and helped them standardize the way they work. This process also helped steadily improve customer satisfaction and service and to create a culture focused on feedback and continuous improvement, leading to improving business outcomes.

Key Performance Goals Achieved



Target Business Objectives	Target Measurement	Actual Measurement Results	Post Improvement Results	Summary of Quantifiable Organizational Benefits
 <p>Increase customer satisfaction of the three strategic business units (UENS) to maintain it within a rating range of between 4.6 and 4.8 by using Satisfaction Surveys</p> 	<p>Training Services: Improve customer satisfaction score by 2% for training courses</p> <p>For certifiable courses: 4.11 to 5</p> <p>For non-certifiable courses: 4.44 to 5</p> <p>Scale: 1–5 (minimum–maximum)</p>	<p>Avantare improved CSAT for training services 6%!</p> <p>Before improvement: Customer satisfaction for certifiable courses: 4.61 (average)</p> <p>Customer satisfaction for non-certifiable courses: 4.76 (average)</p>	<p>After improvement: Customer satisfaction for certifiable courses qualification: 4.6192</p> <p>Customer satisfaction for non-certifiable courses qualification: 4.78</p>	<p>Service Quality: Customer satisfaction improved in Professional Training Services by 6% on average</p> <p>Customer satisfaction improved by 11% for non-certifiable courses</p> <p>Customer satisfaction improved by 4% for certifiable courses</p> <p>Professional Training: 9.7% improvement in commercial proposal efficiency, resulting in greater close rate than last year</p> <p>Positive customer references and referrals</p> <p>Recognition of Training Services excellence in Latin America</p>
	<p>Consulting Services: Improve customer satisfaction score 2%, with a range of 4.66 to 5</p> <p>Scale: 1–5 (minimum–maximum)</p>	<p>Avantare improved Customer Satisfaction by an average of 51% on all phase of consulting projects!</p> <p>Before improvement: CSAT for consulting projects qualification was 4.76 of 5</p>	<p>After improvement: Customer satisfaction qualification by project: 4.88 (average)</p>	<p>Rate of recurring corporate customers improved</p> <p>Customer satisfaction improved by 51% for Consulting Services within the last improvement cycle</p> <p>Measurable results that demonstrate superiority of consulting services offers</p> <p>Improved focus on customer targets</p>

Select Avantare Clients





Key Performance Goals Achieved (con't)

Target Business Objectives	Target Measurement	Actual Measurement Results	Post Improvement Results	Summary of Quantifiable Organizational Benefits
 <p>Improve perception of service quality through the application of agile and innovative techniques in consulting services and professional training that are focused on generating a culture of tangible improvement through the implementation of KPIs in each service</p> 	<p>Professional Services: Improve rejection rate of candidate profiles to less than 5% within specification limits of 0%-79.13%</p> <p>Decrease time spent between customer staffing request and presentation of candidates by 5%, within specification limits 0–34.9 days</p>	<p>Avantare improved candidate acceptance rate by 66%, by improving their hiring process and developing a specific module on recruitment in their CRM system</p> <p>Avantare decreased length of time between customer staffing request and presentation of candidate resumes by 49% on average!</p> <p>Before improvement the average candidate rejection rate was 17.3%</p>	<p>After improvement: Rejection rate is only 6% of every vacancy</p> <p>Average time to present a resume for every staffing request is 4 days (on average)</p>	<p>Avantare was recognized by their customer, MetLife México, as one of top 10 best qualified providers for Professional Services, including an enhanced contract renewal</p> <p>Positive customer references and referrals</p> <p>Improved perception of Professional Services</p> <p>Reduced re-work by 23% through implementing an automated process for recruitment and hiring</p> <p>Improved the efficiency in recruitment and hiring by implementing a well-defined approval workflow</p> <p>Improved control of customer candidate requests improved average time of candidate presentation</p> <p>Dramatically improved vacancy substitution rate by 61%! (to 3 days)</p> <p>Improved new customer placement vacancy rate by 38% (from 11 to 5 days)</p>

“Looking back at the 2020 assessment, one of the things that so impressed us was Avantare’s governance, both in terms of identifying expectations and communication. Each business leader throughout the organization has been empowered to be accountable and make agile decisions that best serve the organization. This is a mighty achievement for a small organization.”

**Giuseppe Magnani, Certified CMMI Leader
Business Strategy**



Lessons Learned

As a result of their journey with CMMI over time, Avantare believes that they are more organized and standardized in the way that they provide and manage services. They have developed several unique intellectual property assets to help them provide services in a more efficient and repeatable manner. It has also given them added clarity on their internal decision-making process and how to best transition to the complex process of the digital delivery of services to customers. Avantare also achieved measurable and visible success by focusing on improving specific critical capabilities, and not just on their Maturity Level.

They are an organization committed to continuous learning and improvement, including owning up to and learning from their mistakes. For example, because of the challenges associated with remote working due to the pandemic, they realized that they needed to adapt some of their communication practices. Process changes did not always trickle down to the organization as clearly and efficiently as it would have in person, resulting in some additional re-training on new processes. They also discovered that remote discussions in training courses, particularly if the topic is complicated, needed additional attention, as not all participants felt fully immersed.

Avantare has always been committed to the quality of the services they provide and have had support from management from the start. As a smaller organization, they were concerned that applying CMMI Services might be a challenge, but those concerns were unfounded. And, as an organization dedicated to continuous improvement, they knew they needed to apply those same principles to themselves to grow and succeed. Particularly, identifying the key areas for improvement and the key performance metrics to measure that success, helped convince their board to approve the investment in CMMI. Avantare also invested in an external certified CMMI Lead Appraiser to help keep them on track and focused. This helped them to uncover several “aha” moments: seeing the power of applying an innovation using statistical data to determine the most critical variables to measure and seeing increased customer satisfaction in the quality of services provided.

By focusing on their own process improvement, Avantare learned some valuable insights that helped them better serve their customers, providing more empathy and focus as they lived through the process themselves, demonstrating a true commitment to their customers’ success. They also clearly demonstrated that the CMMI methodology works on organizations large and small, as they have experienced significant improvements themselves, and on behalf of their own consulting clients.



For more than 50 years, ISACA® (www.isaca.org) has advanced the best talent, expertise and learning in technology. ISACA equips individuals with knowledge, credentials, education and community to progress their careers and transform their organizations, and enables enterprises to train and build quality teams. ISACA is a global professional association and learning organization that leverages the expertise of its 145,000 members who work in information security, governance, assurance, risk and privacy to drive innovation through technology. It has a presence in 188 countries, including more than 220 chapters worldwide.

ISACA’s CMMI enables organizations to elevate and benchmark performance across a range of critical business capabilities, including product development, service excellence, workforce management, data management, supplier management, and cybersecurity. For more than 25 years, thousands of high-performing organizations have achieved sustainable business success through CMMI adoption and demonstrated their ability as capable business partners and suppliers.