Boeing C-17 Awarded Highest CMMI Rating

Boeing [NYSE:BA] has reached an unprecedented level of achievement on its C-17 program in all four areas of integration and improvement processes as established by the nationally recognized Software Engineering Institute.

The Boeing C-17 Globemaster III is a high-wing, four-engine, T-tailed aircraft with a rear-loading ramp that carries large combat equipment and troops or humanitarian aid across international distances directly to small austere airfields anywhere in the world.

The Software Engineering Institute's Standard CMMI Appraisal Methodology for Process Improvement evaluates an organization's process maturity against what is known as Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI). The C-17 program, headquartered in Long Beach, Calif., achieved the highest rating, level five, of the CMMI rating system in all of the process areas: systems engineering; software engineering; integrated product and process development, and supplier sourcing. The achievement also recognizes the C-17 program's maturing integrated product teaming culture.

To date, only 13 organizations had achieved a rating of level three or higher with two having more than 1,000 people, one of which is Boeing. In September 2003, the Boeing facility in Anaheim, Calif., received Level 3 in all four areas of assessment.

CMMI is an integrated approach to continuous improvement. It is a systematic approach to product development that achieves a timely collaboration of relevant stakeholders throughout the product life cycle to better satisfy customer needs.

Approximately 100 organizations have gone through the official Standard CMMI Appraisal Methodology for Process Improvement assessment. Of those, 54 are in the United States, and only four have been assessed against the full CMMI model.

CMMI covers several facets of product development processes including Integrated Product and Process Development (IPPD), Systems Engineering, Software Engineering, and Supplier Sourcing.

As defined by the Software Engineering Institute CMMI Version 1.1 requirements, the appraisal was led by a third party, The Process Company, with participation of Boeing and Defense Contractor Management Agency personnel. The CMMI model is recognized throughout government and industry as a set of best practices for development process integration and improvement.

The Boeing C-17 program becomes the largest program worldwide with a level five rating. With nearly 8,000 people, the C-17 is among the first to successfully be appraised on all four disciplines of CMMI. Through third-party appraisals the resulting evaluation, expressed as "maturity levels," provides insight as to the ability of the company to execute on proposed projects, thereby reducing risk and required oversight on behalf of the customer.

"Pursuing this rating in addition to the Malcolm Baldrige and State quality awards lets our customers know our commitment to continuous improvement remains very high," said David Bowman, vice president and C-17 program manager, for Boeing. "Achieving level five across all four disciplines underscores our guiding principle that continuous improvement is a journey, not a destination. We have achieved a significant position in this important process improvement model"

A unit of The Boeing Company, Integrated Defense Systems is one the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $25 billion business. It provides systems solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.

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