

6 Finding the Voice of the User

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Guide

- **Customer involvement** is a critical factor in delivering excellent software.
 - Identify the different classes of users.
 - Select and work with individuals who represent each user class and other stakeholder groups.
 - Agree on who the requirements decision makers are.
 - * If the developers build *exactly* what customers initially request, they'll probably have to build it again
 - because customers often don't know what they really need.

1 User classes

- Most products of any size appeal to a diversity of users with different expectations and goals.

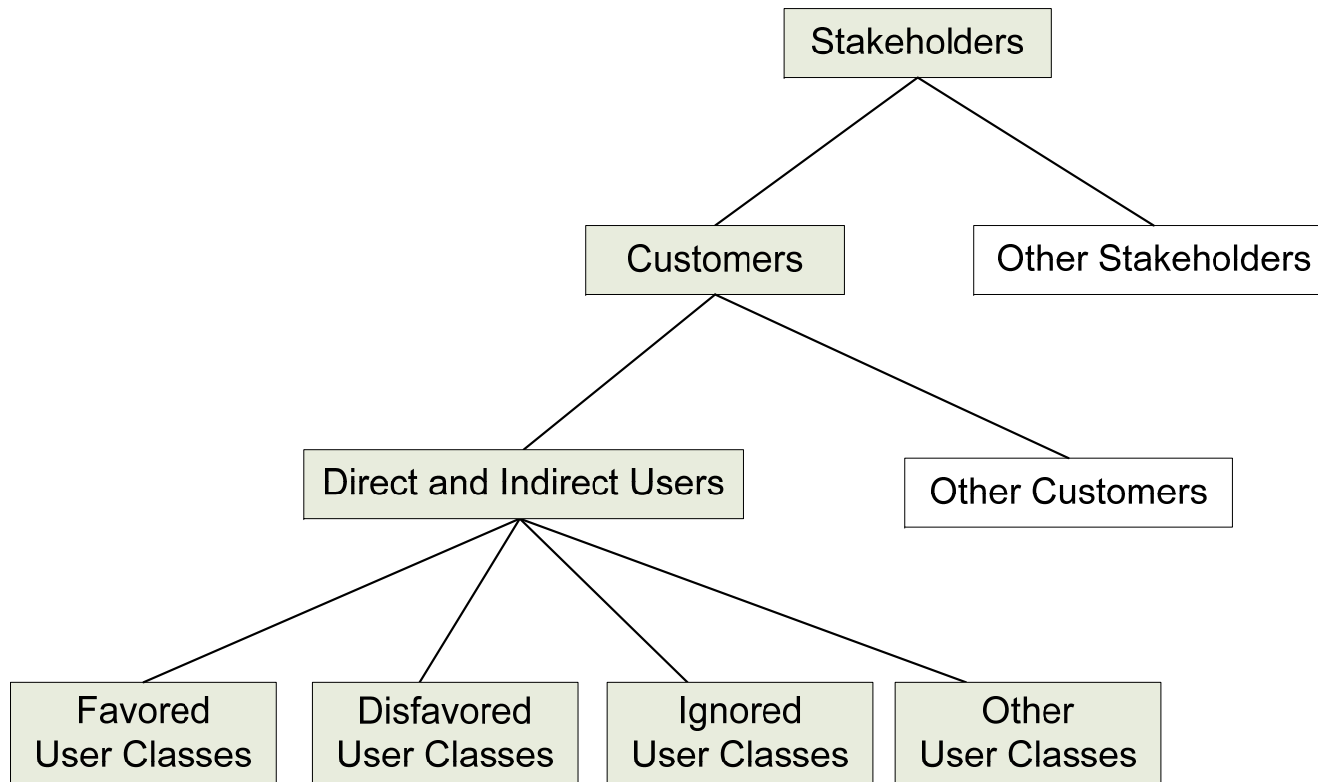


Figure 6-1

Classifying users

- Customers
 - Funding the projects or purchasing the products
- Direct users
 - The main users of the system
- Indirect users
 - Through indirect relationship with the system, such as those using the system's result data
- Other customers
 - External application or hardware components associated with the system

User levels

- Set different user levels
 - **Favored users**
 - such users are vital to the success of the follow-up products, must give this users' requirements a high priority.
 - **Disfavored users**
 - They use the product, but their views on the product does not affect long-term success.
 - **Ignored users**
 - This user has the lowest priority, including the less frequently used, unauthorized users and non-appropriate skills, as well as misuse of the product users.

- Setting up focus groups
 - Relatively fixed
 - Fully reflect the needs of users
 - Functional requirements
 - Non-functional requirements
 - Pay attention to the members' background
 - Be representative
 - Consider the typical user
 - Industry experts, professional managers, professional technicians
 - Long-term users of the similar products
 - Participation throughout the overall development process

2 Finding user representatives

- They are advocates of the different user classes
- They should be involved in the entire software development life cycle
- They can fully reflect the real needs of the system.

- You should determine the user classes and the corresponding representatives as soon as possible
- You should take into account the different professional levels of user requirements class

- Highly successful projects use more kinds of communication links and more direct ones, *but* some of the intervening layers add value, though, as when a skilled requirements analyst to collect, evaluate, refine, and organize users' input. ([See Fig. 6-3](#))

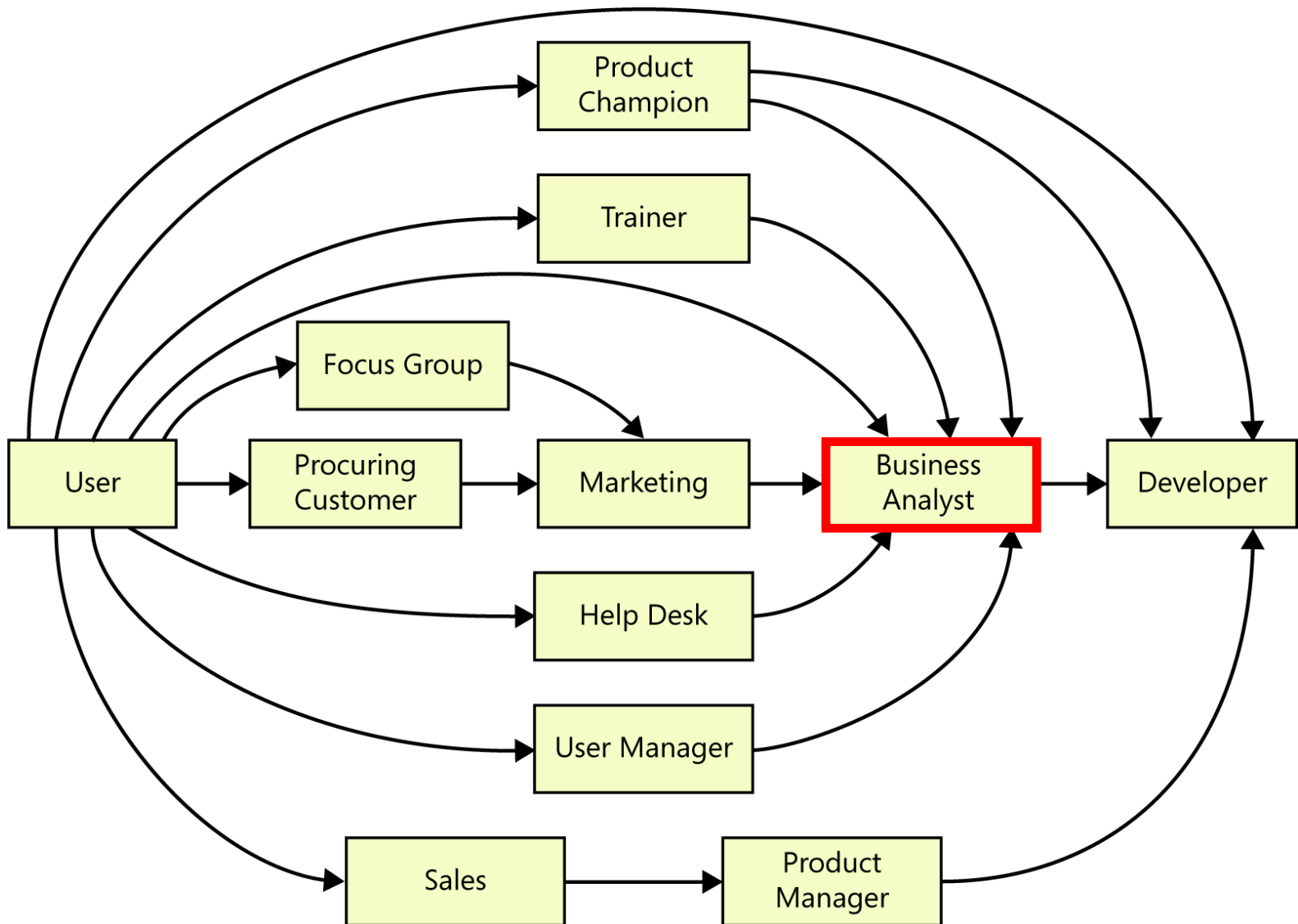


Fig 6-3 Some possible communication pathways between the user and the developer

3 Product Champions

- Select **product champions** (ie. user representatives)
 - What is a product champion?
 - Not the project development team members
 - A champion should be an actual user
 - From relevant user groups, to provide customer needs
 - Formal and structured relationship between customers and developers
 - Who can be the product champions?
 - Each product champion represents a specific user class
 - Acting as the coordinator/message broker between the class of users and the developers
 - External Product Champions
 - They are helpful, and sometimes necessary/indispensable.
 - You might give them economic incentives for their participation.
 - Offer them public reward and recognition for their contributions.

- Product champion expectations
 - Document what you expect your champions to do. Tell him/her.
 - Planning
 - Requirements
 - Validation and verification
 - User aids
 - Change management
 - [See Table 6-2](#)

- Multiple product champions
 - One person can rarely describe the needs for all user classes, thus you may need multiple champions
 - Every requirement analyst may communicate with one or more product champions
 - One analyst assembled all the input into a single SRS.
 - You may set up **a backup team** of a champion for a large user class
 - See Fig. 6-4
 - Don't forget **voiceless** user class

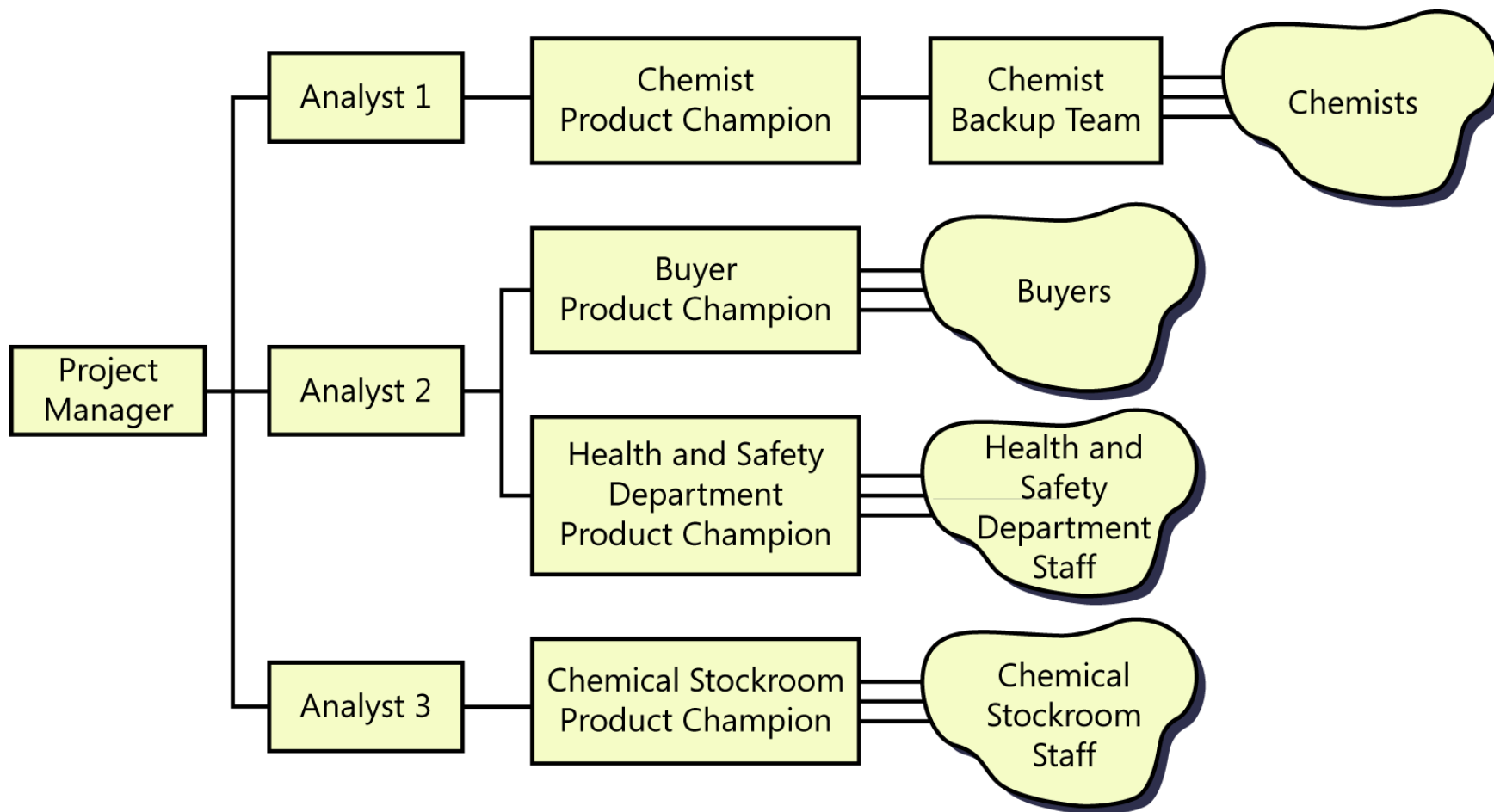


Fig 6-4 Product champion model for the Chemical Tracking System

- Product champion **traps to avoid**
 - Some managers override the decisions that a champion makes.
 - A champion forgets that he is representing other customers and presents only his own requirements.
 - A champion might lack a clear mental image of the new system and defer important decisions to the analyst.
 - A senior user might nominate a less experienced user as champion because he doesn't have time to do the job, but still wishes to strongly influence the project.
 - A champion might speak for a user class to which he doesn't belong.

4 Resolving conflicting requirements

- Who makes the decisions?
 - Someone must resolve the conflicting requirements from different user classes.
 - Sorry, there is **no globally correct answer**. ☹
 - Decisions should be made as low in the organization's hierarchy as possible by people who are close to the issues and well informed about them.
 - The project leaders need to determine who will decide.
 - The product champions decide.
 - The most favored user class decide.
 - See Table 6-3 for further suggestions (next page)
 - The customer is *not* always right. *
- **SE, esp. SRE, is very difficult and complicated because it concerns dealing with people.**

Table 6-3. Suggestions for resolving requirements disputes

Disagreement between	How to resolve
Individual users	Product champion or product owner decides
User classes	Favored user class gets preference
Market segments	Segment with greatest impact on business success gets preference
Corporate customers	Business objectives dictate direction
Users and user managers	Product owner or product champion for the user class decides
Development and customers	Customers get preference, but in alignment with business objectives
Development and marketing	Marketing gets preference