



Top Tips for Running a Requirements Gathering Workshop

Workshops can be time consuming, difficult to coordinate and tiresome. However, when run effectively they are very beneficial. There are many different approaches and methods that can be used to elicit requirements during workshops, these range from typical Q&A sessions to scribbling on the walls, but for all workshops it is important that you get the basics right.

Here are our top tips for running a requirements gathering workshop.

Attendees

One of the challenges with organising a workshop is getting the right people in one room at the same time. Successful workshops create buy in and allow people the opportunity to justify their views to a larger group of stakeholders.

It is important to get decision makers and individuals who can actively contribute at that stage of the project involved in your workshop. A good mix of stakeholders may include Project Managers, SMEs, Business Analysts and Project Owners. For example, it may be too early for developers, testers etc. to attend and could lead to discussions going off track.

Try to keep the group as relevant as possible to ensure that you can achieve

the goals of the workshop.

Consider the personality types of the stakeholders, if there is someone who can be quite overbearing and forceful, it may be a good idea to hold a smaller session or 1 on 1 to ensure that one individual does not overpower the meeting.

Stick to the Agenda – sort of...

Ensure that the agenda is set out and circulated to all attendees before the workshop. This will mean that everyone has the chance to prepare and raise any concerns beforehand. Should you need to carry out any interviews to gain more information regarding the subject matter, these should be completed before the workshop. The agenda should support and cover the objectives of the workshop. You are facilitating the workshop, so you can control the flow a lot easier if there is a set agenda.

Set out the agenda at the start of the meeting but understand that this is a requirements gathering workshop and it will be driven by the attendees so allow discussions to flow freely. However be aware of creeping off topic.

Documentation

Document and take notes on all items discussed and decided upon. It is a good idea to have someone else to do this so you can focus on engaging with the group. Any requirements that are discussed, any decisions, concerns and alternatives should be noted. This will help further down the line in the project if there are any queries regarding requirements.

It is also important to note who has made the decision and if there were any objections.

Wrap up and Follow up

Thank everyone for their time and contributions at the end of the workshop. Send each attendee the minutes and list of actions that were agreed upon and track these until completion.

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