

How to Write a Release Note

Phase 1: Introduction

Writing release notes is both formulaic and a bit of an art. Release notes are different from the ticket write up because it's intended for a non-technical audience to understand why a coding change was needed.

Release notes are often assumed to be client-facing. But for many companies, release notes are applicable to employees of a company. The example in this case represents a release note needed to inform those who configure the software for external clients to understand changes that may impact the build process. Sometimes it's necessary to communicate internally so that client-facing employees, those who support clients, have an understanding of what their clients will see.

The following case will help you to gain skills in how to think about a release note and how it's wording differs from a technical ticket written to document the issue for developers to code.

Phase 2: A Sample Ticket

Ticket Details

Summary Title

Retiree MIP – Dashes

User Story – Description

As a system, I want to not save MBI numbers with the dashes in it so exports don't have to be coded to strip out the dashes.

What's the “so what” of the release? Why is it important to people?

Who is most impacted by the change?

What questions do you have about the ticket? What would you ask the Business Analyst about this change?

Phase 3: Write the Release Note

Main area of system impacted

Title of the Release

Description of What's New?

Explanation of why the change was needed?

Which audience(s) are most Impacted?

Anything else others should know?

Will you include a screenshot? If yes, describe what that screen shot looks like.

Phase 4: Compare Yours to Experts

Yours	Experts
	<p data-bbox="849 260 1419 344">Exporting Medicare Members' MBI Numbers to Carriers</p> <p data-bbox="849 375 1036 413">What New?</p> <p data-bbox="849 436 1433 594">Like a SSN#, Benefitsolver stores the MBI number (Medicare Beneficiary Identifier) without dashes but displays the number to users with dashes.</p> <ul data-bbox="849 611 1419 894" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="849 611 1419 758">▶ When an MBI number is entered with the dashes (eg. 1EG4-TE5-MK73), the system will display the MBI with the dashes.<li data-bbox="849 783 1419 894">▶ However, when the number is saved, the system will store the MBI without the dashes. <p data-bbox="849 936 1338 974">Why was the change needed?</p> <p data-bbox="849 997 1433 1197">Previously, the MBI was saved with the dashes, which affected some carrier exports. Saving without dashes will ensure exports with the number send carriers in a correct format.</p> <p data-bbox="849 1228 1268 1266">What else should I know?</p> <p data-bbox="849 1289 1455 1404">The database will be updated to remove any dashes from MBI previously entered and saved with dashes.</p>

Phase 5: How did you do?

How your Release Note was similar to the Expert version

How your version was different?

Why will you think about differently the next time you write a release note?