The section in Chapter 7 about defining attributes had a few aspects that stuck out to me from my own experience. One of the key aspects is that it takes ‘considerable discussion with the client’ (Watson, 2018). I think a key to remember is the various forms that a ‘client’ can take. Of course the client could be someone you are trying to sell some system or process to but it could also be someone downstream in the same company or even other co-workers in the same group. Each client will have different objectives from the data model so it is crucial that these attributes get sorted out early before it is too late and changes can become more difficult.

This is why in the same section Watson talks about including all attributes that are likely to be required in the future as well. Many times data models are set up in such a way that they are rushed through and may solve one problem but are nearly useless for all other situations. This means that one must take care that the model isn’t too complicated and others can pick it up without needing too much time to translate what you had previously done. If the modeler makes attributes that they understand but make no sense to anyone else then the model probably won’t be useful to other users. Well defined attributes are crucial to the data models success.

References

Watson, Richard T. “Managing Data.” *Data Management: Databases and Organizations*, Prospect Press, 2018, pp. 145-146.