Requirements Workshops

- Benefits of Req.s Workshops
- Preparing for the Workshop
- Running the Workshop

Requirements Workshops

- **key stakeholders** of the project gather **together for a short, intensive period** (typically ≤ 2 days) **to**
  - **encourage consensus on the requirements** of the application, and
  - **gain rapid agreement on a course of action**, in short time.

- The workshop is **facilitated by a team member or,** better yet, by **an experienced outside facilitator**
- It **focuses on the creation or review of the high-level features** to be delivered by the new application.

Benefits of Requirements Workshop

- It assists in building an effective team, committed to one common purpose: the success of this project.

- All stakeholders get their say; no one is left out.

- It creates an agreement between the stakeholders and the development team as to what the application must do.

- It can expose and resolve political issues that are interfering with project success.

- The output (a preliminary definitions of the system features) is available immediately.

Preparing for the Workshop

- Proper preparation is the key to a successful workshop .... How?

1. Selling the Concept: It may be necessary to sell the concept inside the organization by communicating the benefits of the workshop approach to prospective members of the team.

2. Ensuring the Participation of the Right Stakeholders: Identifying stakeholders who can contribute to the process and whose needs must be met in order to ensure a successful outcome.

Preparing for the Workshop

3. **Attending to Logistics:** Logistics involve everything from structuring the proper invitation to travel arrangements to the lighting in the workshop meeting room.

4. **Providing Warm-Up Materials:** Send materials out in advance of the workshop to prepare the attendees and also to increase productivity at the workshop session.
   - Two types of warm-up materials:
     - Project-specific information
     - Out-of-the-box thinking preparation
   - Do not send the data out too far in advance

Preparing for the Workshop

5. **Choosing the Facilitator:** If possible, have a facilitator who is not a team member to run the workshop.

   - It could be facilitated by a team member if the person:
     - Has received some training in the process
     - Has demonstrated solid consensus-building or team-building skills
     - Is personable and well respected by both the internal and external team members
     - Is strong enough to chair what could be a challenging meeting
   - If the workshop is to be facilitated by a team member, that person must not contribute to the ideas and issues at the meeting.

Responsibilities of the Facilitator

1. Establish a professional and objective tone for the meeting.
2. Start and stop the meeting on time.
3. Establish and enforce the "rules" for the meeting.
4. Introduce the goals and agenda for the meeting.
5. Manage the meeting and keep the team "on track."
6. Facilitate a process of decision and consensus making, but avoid participating in the content.

Responsibilities of the Facilitator

7. Manage any facilities and logistics issues to ensure that the focus remains on the agenda.

8. Make certain that all stakeholders participate and have their input heard.

9. Control disruptive or unproductive behavior.

Setting the Agenda

- The agenda for the workshop will be based on
  - the needs of the particular project and
  - the content that has to be developed at the workshop.

Example

Time	Agenda Item	Description
8:00–8:30	Introduction	Review agenda, facilities, and rules
8:30–10:00	Context	Present project status, market needs, results of user interviews, and so on
10:00–12:00	Brainstorming	Brainstorm features of the application
12:00–1:00	Lunch	Work through lunch to avoid loss of momentum
1:00–2:00	Brainstorming	Continue brainstorming
2:00–3:00	Feature definition	Write out two- or three-sentence definitions for features
3:00–4:00	Idea reduction and prioritization	Prioritize features
4:00–5:00	Wrap-up	Summarize and assign action items, address "parking lot" items

Running the Workshop

- **Brainstorming and idea reduction:**
  - The most important part of the workshop.
  - Ideally suited for the workshop setting, and it encourages a creative and positive atmosphere and gets input from all stakeholders.

Idea Reduction

1. Pruning Ideas
2. Grouping Ideas
3. Defining Features
4. Prioritizing Ideas

Running the Workshop

- Production and follow-up:
  - The facilitator distributes the minutes from the meeting and records any other outputs (his job now is finished).
  - The responsibility for success is again in the hands of the development team.
  - The project leader has the responsibility to follow up on any open action items that were recorded at the meeting.
  - The output of the meeting will be a simple list of ideas or suggested product features.
  - In some cases, additional workshops with other stakeholders will be scheduled.

Key Points

- The requirements workshop may be the most powerful technique for eliciting requirements.

- It gathers all key stakeholders together for a short but intensely focused period.

- The use of an outside facilitator experienced in requirements management can help ensure the success of the workshop.

- Brainstorming is the most important part of the workshop.