

# Elicitation Basics and Planning Concepts

# Elicitation Basics

Requirement elicitation is...

# Elicitation Basics

Requirement elicitation is not...



# Elicitation Basics

## Eliciting vs Gathering

# Introduction to Requirement Elicitation





# Brainstorming: What is it?

Solve problems



Generate ideas



Create consensus



# Brainstorming: Types

- Individual
  - Project team member creates a list of ideas
- Open
  - Participants call out ideas that are captured by scribe
- Structured
  - Participants write down their ideas
  - Facilitator goes participant to participant to have them share on idea each
  - Continue sharing process until all ideas are exhausted



# Brainstorming: Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
Generates multiple ideas quickly	Ideas are not discussed/explored
Involves multiple perspectives	True meaning may be ambiguous or misunderstood
Promotes equal participation	

# Brainstorming: Best Practices

- Determine type of brainstorming meeting ahead of time
- Publish an agenda prior to the brainstorming session
- Clearly state the objective of the meeting
- Create environment to encourage participation
- Establish ground rules
  - Do not discuss ideas during the brainstorming session - only questions to clarify
  - Do not dismiss or discount an idea or person
  - Do build on others' suggestions and ideas
  - Do have fun

# Brainstorming: Best Practices (*continued*)

- Establish roles
  - Timekeeper
  - Scribe
  - Facilitator
- Create process for combining, categorizing, and summarizing like ideas
- If complex, create multiple meetings to keep meeting fatigue low
- Schedule follow-up meetings
- Prioritize final ideas to plan further analysis
  - Allow votes for top ideas



# Requirement Workshops



# Requirement Workshop: What is it?

- Structured meetings that involve
  - End-users
  - Subject Matter Experts
  - Project Manager
  - Business
  - IT reps
- Generally is used for projects with multiple business units
- Works to define, clarify, and complete requirements
- Starts at broad level and dives into functions and processes as the workshop moves forward

# Requirement Workshop: Types

- Formal Requirements Workshops
  - Highly structured and formal
  - Carefully selected group of stakeholders
  - Define, create, refine, and reach closure on business requirements
- Business Process Improvement Workshops
  - Semi-formal
  - Analyzes existing business processes
  - Identify and agree upon solutions implement process improvements
- Agile Requirement Workshops
  - Generally more unstructured and informal
  - Used generally to document the scope of the requirements



# Requirement Workshop: Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
Effective at getting real requirements instead of perceived requirements	Difficult to get appropriate stakeholders in one room at same time
Greater chance of obtaining consensus because issues and questions are asked in real-time	Increased number of global projects poses logistic difficulties and adds complexity
Confirmation of requirement accuracy is immediate	Success of the session is highly dependent on the expertise of the facilitator
Successfully gather requirements from a large group in a short period of time	Can be expensive
Documentation is completed within hours of the session and provided quickly back to participants for review	

# Requirement Workshop: Best Practices

- Determine the type of requirement workshop ahead of time
- Be clear on what the session will deliver
- Utilize modeling tools to visualize the processes and requirements
- Facilitator should be experienced
- Limit the meeting to the key project participants
  - Include end-users, subject matter experts, developers, and senior management
- Remember that you are an analyst, not just a scribe/facilitator





# Interviewing



# Interviewing: What is it?

- Systematic discussion to drive out accurate requirements quickly
- Gain understanding of high-level needs, constraints, and assumptions
- Reduces misunderstanding due to cultural differences, lack of openness, and acronyms/vocabulary
- One on one or with a small group
- Can be formal or informal
- See the process or requirements from interviewee's perspective

# Interviewing: Types

- Personal interviews
  - Scripted questions - interviewee's answers are documented
  - Exploratory questions to clarify and validate requirements, while removing assumptions
- Job shadowing
  - Walk through a work day with a user or user group observing them
- Customer site visits
  - Understand operational environment to discover prerequisites for job success
- Task analysis
  - Ask end-users to walk through their current jobs
  - Show as-is process in order to identify essential and frequent tasks
  - Interviewer asks questions to understand what works well and what doesn't

# Interviewing: Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
Promote interactive discussions to explore detailed information	Require access and commitment of stakeholders
Identify conflicts or discrepancies about stated needs or requirements	Creation of scripted interview questions can be time consuming
Encourage participation and build relationships by establishing rapport with the stakeholder	Stakeholders have difficulty describing their future needs, so the focus is usually focused on what they do currently
Enable observations of nonverbal behavior	Resulting documentation is subject to interpretation of the interviewer
Allow immediate follow-up to ensure understanding	Transcription and analysis of interview data can be complex and expensive



# Interviewing: Best Practices

- Determine the best interview type to accomplish your goals
- Appropriately prepare for the interview
- Schedule interviews ahead of time
- Respect the person by being on time and display interest in the subject
- Match the pace of the interviewee
  - If they are cautious, talk slow. If they are in a hurry, talk quickly
- Check understanding often
- Let interviewee know what will be done with the information
- One person conducts interview while the other documents the answers. If not possible, record the interview.

# Interviewing: Best Practices (*continued*)

- Ask for examples of their issues and document screen shots
- Interview two to three users for each user category you are targeting
- Be sure to interview end-users, not just senior management who think they know how the process/system is used
- Create thank-you email appreciating their time and how the information will help create quality requirements - (sent with interview invite)
- Create a follow-up email telling the person how the information will be used and the next steps for the project - (sent after interview)
- Allow time in the schedule to debrief and finish documentation after each interview



# Interviewing: Interview Questions

- Make questions open-ended
  - If they could answer the question with a yes or no, reword it
- Avoid questions that may present judgement or a conclusion
- Allow the questions to flow naturally so they can be put into conversation rather than a survey



# Interviewing: Create Interview Document

Interview document generally contains:

- Name of interviewee
- Role of person and their primary responsibilities
- Open-ended questions
- Space for answers
- Space for interviewers' insights
- Action item box for flagging key pieces of information
  - Requirement, new requirement risk, assumption, or constraint

# Interviewing: Sample Interview Questions

- What are other ways you accomplish this goal?
- Tell me about your frustrations with this process
- What makes a good day? A bad day?
- If you could wave your magic wand and make it different, what would the process look like?
- What standards or regulations should we be aware of?
- What purpose is accomplished by using the product or process?
- What equipment, tools, templates, and inputs do people need to use it?
- How long should tasks take?
- What people do you share information with?
- What failures cause the organization the most pain?
- What didn't I ask that I should have?
- If we could only change one thing in the process, what should it be?



A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a clipboard. The person is holding a black pen in their right hand and the clipboard in their left hand. The clipboard has a white sheet of paper with some faint, illegible text. The background is a blurred view of a city or office building through a window. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the word "Surveys" in white text.

# Surveys



# Surveys: What is it?

Questions to stakeholders  
to quantify their thoughts



Review of quantifiable  
data already available



# Surveys: Types

- Open-ended questions
  - Gives respondents an opportunity to answer in their own words
  - Useful, but very time consuming to interpret and catalogue
- Closed-ended questions
  - Finite set of answers for each question
  - Lends itself to statistical analysis
  - Tough to create questions that are not leading or need an “Other” answer
  - Questions can vary
    - Ranking from “not very important” to “extremely important”
    - Ranking from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”
    - Rank order a list of items
    - Multiple choice question



# Surveys: Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
Require limited stakeholder's time	Relatively low response rate
Effective at reaching geographically dispersed stakeholders	Poorly word questions may provide inaccurate information
Scalable for large audiences	Use of open-ended questions requirements more analysis by the business analyst
Relatively fast and inexpensive to administer	Require both instrument training and problem or business domain experience
Supplement more subjective information, such as opinions gained through interviews	Incentives for responding might be expensive



# Surveys: Best Practices

- Focus your questions on high-priority risks that have been identified
- Identify user satisfaction levels with existing systems to set a baseline
- Questions should be direct and unambiguous
- Save complex questions for later in the survey
- Save demographic information for last
- Create rewards for participating
- Create the survey with inexpensive online tools
- Notify the participants when the survey is available and continue to remind them to participate

# Documentation Review





# Documentation Review: What is it?

- Review existing documentation
  - User guides
  - Prior system implementation documentation, including lessons learned
  - Technical documentation
  - Lessons learned after completion of latest project
- Formulates context for understanding the scope of the project



# Documentation Review: Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
Current process documentation provides a starting point	Existing documents may be old and out-of-date
	The reviewer needs domain and technical expertise to determine if existing
	Can be time consuming, and may not provide the desired payback

# Documentation Review: Best Practices

- Know the purpose for reviewing
- Set self-imposed time limits
- Create a glossary of terms from former project documentation



Analyzing Interfaces



# Analyzing Interfaces: What is it?

- Reviewing the system, people, and process linkages
- Determine needs for input, output, and the medium
- Describes manual and automated processes

# Analyzing Interfaces: Types

- Customer review meetings
  - Identify formal requirements to link information, people, and processes
  - Drives a robust, complete, and accurate solution
- Developer review meetings
  - Happen early on
  - Review high-level requirements and system models
  - Identify interfaces, regulations, or technical standards

# Analyzing Interfaces: Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
Discovers missed interfaces and their purposes	Not useful as standalone elicitation activity
Determines regulations or interface standards	Can begin to focus on many technical details
Provides missed requirements	Can be redundant with modeling activities
Uncovers areas of project risk	