Requirements Management Tips from Wisereach

Ten golden rules of requirements management

Writing requirements is both an art and a science. It needs experience and skill. It requires understanding of what is wanted, and what is achievable within whatever constraints are imposed on the project – time and budget usually combine to make sure that the "ideal" solution is a far off business dream.

So make sure your requirements are shaped by an experienced requirements analyst or business analyst – or on small projects, by an experienced project manager – preferably someone who has felt the pain of having to deliver against poorly written, poorly negotiated, or non-existent requirements.

Below are our ten golden rules for getting your requirements management right.

Write down analysed requirements, not what people said

Always write down the requirements in a way that you know can be delivered (don't cut and paste from any old document) and play back 1 by 1 to the business and explain how they will be delivered – write that down as well!

Park requirements that you can't agree on and revisit later

The aim is to get 80% agreement so that you can start on the design & build (assuming you want to meet your timescales!)

Always negotiate priorities

Assign and agree priorities to your requirements with the business, eg, Must Have; Should Have; Could Have and where necessary "Won't Have". You will always have more requirements than you can satisfy in your project timescales, so make sure prioritisation in embedded into your requirements management process.

One testable requirement per statement

Don't add too much to each individual requirement – it's going to make things really difficult for prioritisation and testing. Make sure that there is only 1 testable requirement per requirements statement.

No ambiguity

Make sure that the stated requirement is not ambiguous. Difficult in the English language, but try to use clear, simple language that has less chance of being mis-interpreted. Where possible, use diagrams and models to put your point across.

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| No duplicates | Make sure that there are no duplicate requirements – if you see requirements that are similar, ask yourself if you have analysed the source requirements properly – it may be the same requirement expressed in a different way. |

Don't assume requirements are already covered

Beware of requirements that are assumed to be delivered by an off-the-shelf product, or just require "configuration". It's still a requirement that needs to be tested by the business, even if it doesn't need to be built.

Documenting requirements is just the start

Don't assume that writing the requirements catalogue is the end of the process – keep engaged with the business; keep negotiating and identifying change requirements as early as possible – the business doesn't stand still because they're getting an IT system.

Start your solution design early

Don't wait until you've written all the requirements before you start the design which will spark new ideas and knowledge of what is achievable

Confirm requirements are met when you're nearly there

As soon as you think you have delivered a requirement (or 80% of it) check again with the business – don't wait until UAT.

For more tips and templates visit us at wisereach.co.uk