A Business Requirements Litmus Test for Project Managers

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About Us

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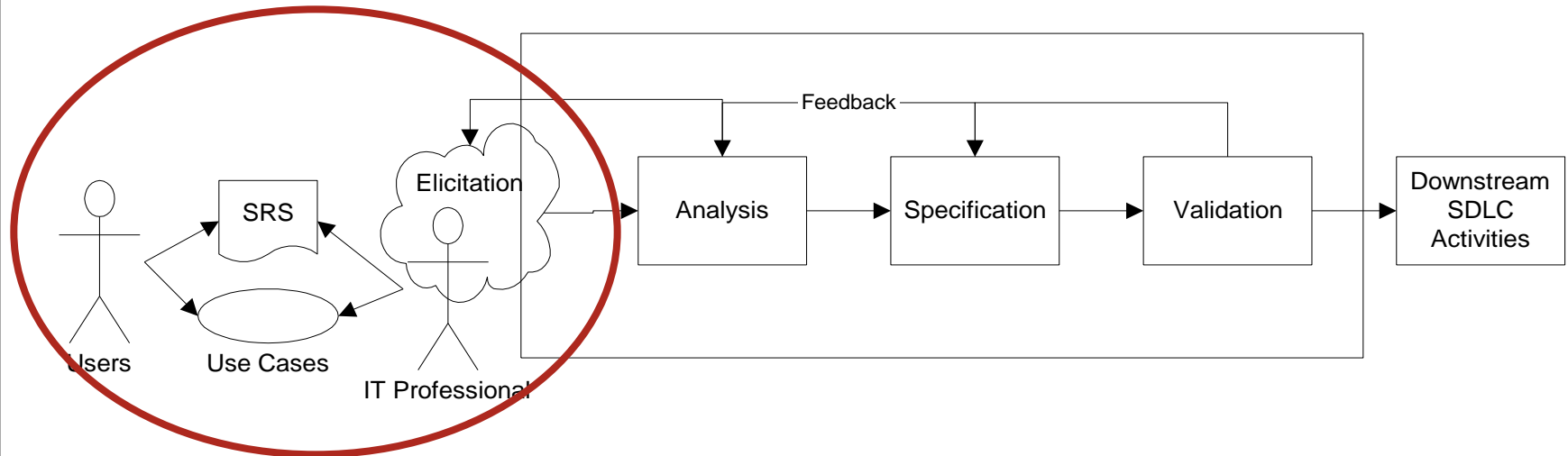- Developer & Database Management
- Entrepreneur

A Quick Overview of Business Requirements

What is a Business Requirement?

A business requirement describes an organization's desired future-state to be achieved through the deployment of new or improved technology

Requirements Process

Elicitation ⇨ Analysis ⇨ Specification ⇨ Validation ⇨ Requirements Management
⇦ Feedback   ⇦ Feedback   ⇦ Feedback   ⇦ Feedback

Requirements Elicitation

- Stakeholder Interviews

- "Do it yourself" Templates

- Workflow Analysis

- Domain Analysis

Developing?

Discovering?

Gathering?

Eliciting?

A Quick Survey

A Quick Survey

Business requirements are _____ to the success of my organization's projects.

A. Nominally Important

B. Very Important

C. Critically Important

Our survey says…

A. 5%

B. 40%

C. 55%

A Quick Survey

My organization provides…

    A.   No training on requirements

    B.   Some training on requirements

    C.   Extensive training on requirements

Our survey says…

A. 70%

B. 25%

C.   5%

A Quick Survey

Who is responsible for business requirements in your organization?

A.   Customer (Internal or External)

B.   IT Staff (e.g. role of business analyst)

C.   Project Manager

Our survey says…

A. 80%

B. 15%

C.   5%

A Quick Survey

What is the most frequently identified problem with Business Requirements in your organization?

A. Inadequate understanding of needs of the business

B. Insufficient participation of all stakeholders

C. Inexperience with requirements

D. Inter-team communications

E. Other

Our survey says…

A. 35%

B. 30%

C. 20%

D.   5%

E. 10%

A Quick Survey

Of the following, which causes the most pain?

    A.   Missing requirements

    B.   Incorrect requirements

    C.   Vague / ambiguous requirements

    D.   Other

Our survey says…

A. 45%

B. 15%

C. 30%

D. 10%

A Quick Survey

What is the primary way of documenting requirements?

    A.   Free-form narrative provided by customer (e.g. email)

    B.   "Do it yourself" word processing template

    C.   Requirements management system

    D.   Technical documentation (created by IT)

Our survey says…

A. 15%

B. 40%

C. 10%

D. 35%

A Business Requirements Litmus Test for Project Managers

A Litmus Test

- Opportunity for the Project Manager to provide value-added service by correctly handling project information

- A few simple questions can add a lot of clarity
  - When would this be in effect?
  - What must occur for this to be addressed successfully?
  - Is the proposed information "something else" other than a business requirement? If so, then what is it?

(Examples that follow are based on a recent consultation with a project team.)

A Litmus Test

Proposed BR: "Controls will be in place at time of conversion to identify and correct out of sync account-level conditions."

Question: Does the information describe something that should happen during the course of the project?

If "YES", then the information is probably a project task or activity.

A Litmus Test

Proposed BR: "The business rules for the new application are available in the source code of the legacy system."

Question: Does the information point to some other persons, places or things for the actual requirement?

If "YES", then the information is probably an instruction or assignment.

A Litmus Test

Proposed BR: "Ideally, external customers must participate in testing of the daily notification report."

Question: Does the information describe a concern of the business regarding the outcome of the project?

If "YES", then a risk or issue may have been identified.

A Litmus Test

Proposed BR: "The system will be managed in production by IT and the business organization so that errors are handled expeditiously."

Question: Does the information describe the way that the business and IT will work together to support the technology after it is in production?

If "YES", then the information may describe an operational requirement or a preference regarding a an ongoing management process.

A Litmus Test

Proposed BR: "The business unit will be able to monitor transactions with errors within 15 minutes of posting."

Question: Does the information describe the way that a business unit should operate, or function, after the project is over?

If "YES", then it is likely that part of a functional requirement has been identified.

A Litmus Test

Proposed BR: "All end-of-month adjustments will post to the primary customer account after close of business of the first business day of the following month."

Question: Is the organization's desired future-state described in a way that would necessitate the implementation of new or improved technology?

If "YES", then a business requirement probably has been identified.

A Litmus Test

With the first draft of business requirements in hand and looking at the project's timeline, evaluate the information that has been provided…

	People	Places	Things
During the Project	Project tasks, issues, risks, etc.		
During Implementation			
In Production	User Requirement?	Functional Requirement?	Business Requirement?

Note: This is proposed as an "experimental" concept.

Questions / Comments

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