From: Ellen Gottesdiener
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Ellen Gottesdiener, Publisher

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Helping your business and technical teams get product requirements right so their projects start smart and deliver the right product at the right time

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Success with Requirements

Forward to a Colleague

Welcome to our Newsletter!

Hi, Ellen - I hope you are well and enjoying your spring (northern hemisphere readers) or fall (southern hemisphere readers)! Welcome to our April edition of EBG's eNewsletter, *Success with Requirements*.

Please add ellen@ebgconsulting.com to your address book to be sure you receive *Success with Requirements* (otherwise it might go into your junk mail folder).

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I hope you find this issue useful. Please contact me with your suggestions and feedback.

Ellen Gottesdiener,
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Free Webinar

We are pleased to announce Ellen Gottesdiener will be delivering a free Webinar, "Practical Techniques to Elicit Requirements -While Building Trust", on May 24 at 2:00 - 3:00 EST. This webinar is sponsored by Compuware in conjunction with The Requirements Network Group.

We will send you a separate email in a few weeks with webinar registration details.

Collaboration Conumdrum: Getting Them to Show Up

"We want to use more facilitated requirements workshops, but we can't get our business customers to attend!"

~ Common IT complaint

You know facilitated workshops are an effective way to elicit requirements. But getting business customers to invest the time to attend multiple workshops lasting hours or even days is a major challenge. What are some time-tested techniques to get business folks genuinely commit to the process?

1. Sponsor kickoff: arrange for whoever has the financial and political authority to be present at the beginning of the workshop and, in the first 10 minutes (no more!) of your workshop, conduct a start-up presentation. **The sponsor should be prepared to share**:

- the purpose of the workshop and **how it links to the project**;
- **why the project is important** to the business or organization;
- **appreciation for participation** (and a reminder to stay fully engaged throughout the workshop);
- **how she or he will support the outcomes** of the workshop.

A sponsors presence at the start of a workshop demonstrates the importance of the project to the organization, the essential role that getting correct requirements plays in project success, and the value of the workshop process to the achieving project goals. Let participants know the sponsor will be there (on time) to kick-off the first session. Participants are likely to also value workshops and be on time themselves when the sponsor demonstrates commitment to the process in this way.

2. Planning team: organize a team consisting of at least one business person and one technical personaside from the facilitatorwho help plan and design the workshop. The planning teams responsibilities include:

- **Identifying the workshop purpose, participants, and products**;
- **Suggesting who specifically the facilitator should interview** prior to the workshop to get a good perspective of the project;
- **Creating or reviewing draft workshop requirements models** such as context diagram, list of use cases, process models. The facilitator will use the models to jumpstart the workshop;
- **Consulting with the facilitator during the workshop** (what I call "huddles") when the process needs to be adjusted.

Engaging one business and one IT stakeholder in designing the workshop helps everyone get some skin in the game. When participants see a colleague actively engaged in planning the event, they are more likely to recognize their time will be well-spent.

3. Pre-work: devise requirements models, workshop tools, and any other asset that will enable participants to work effectively together. Having draft models as a starting point even knowing they are incomplete or insufficient enables participants to "get in the game" quickly and actually shortens the time needed.
Pre-work depends on the state of your requirements. For example, if you want to run a requirements scoping workshop, pre-work artifacts might include a draft vision statement, text extracted from a project proposal or business case, future state scenarios, or data culled from analysis of

competitive products. These are distributed to participants ahead of time, allowing participants time to incubate on the requirements before participating in the workshop event.

Utilize workshop tools, another category of pre-work, to establish a sound infrastructure for a productive workshop. These can include**:**

- **instructions** for small group activities;
- **checklists** to test the completeness and correctness of requirements information generated in an activity (such as use cases, business rules, context diagram);
- **templates** to ensure deliverables incorporate all the elements needed.

4. Show-and-tell: arrange for key stakeholders (e.g. sponsor, champions) to come to the workshop room for a closing "show-and-tell". During this informal presentation, participants impart what they learned, what they delivered, issues and next steps. Senior-level stakeholderswho often do not have detail knowledge of the issuesfind these informal presentations by workshop participants (which include question and answer time) golden opportunities to get to the bottom of real project issues and needs.

Often, during show-and-tells, participants "tell the truth without blame or judgment" to senior management in a group settingsafely and transparently. The show-and-tell helps participants begin their own mini retrospective process about the workshop event because preparing for the show-and-tell allows them to review and evaluate their work.

5. "Meta" the process: always **conduct retrospectives** at the end of each workshop to learn what worked, what needs improvement, what still puzzles us, and what we will do differently next time we have a collaborative workshop. These findings, even if they are in the form of simple "plus/delta" lists should include the effectiveness of customer involvement in the workshop.

Make it So

Once you are begin to employ workshops for requirements elicitation, **start capturing metrics so you can demonstrate your actual return-on-investment for workshops**. Data should compare the lapse time, person time and defects originating from requirements both before and after workshops were used on projects.

Share this data with sponsors, champions, subject matter experts and other stakeholders whose commitment is crucial for workshop success. **Ask senior managers to become advocates of workshops** and the need for business participation to achieve return on investment in workshops. They can share data, along with their own workshop experiences, with colleagues. Hearing this from trusted colleagues goes a long way to **build crediblity in the process**.

Setting the stage for a successful collaborative event with appropriate planning and design, and making the process transparent before, during and after is likely to increase your chances of participants being there and wanting to be part of it. And don't forget to include food and snacks in your workshoppeople like to eat and theyll be there!

What are your thoughts on "getting the right people to show up" to facilitated requirements workshops? Send me an email (ellen@ebgconsulting.com).

~ ellen

If you want to learn more on how to design and facilitate requirements workshops, you can click to try my book *Requirements by Collaboration*. You will also find assets associated with the book (e.g. templates, checklists) on our website.

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Ellen Gottesdiener, "Collaboration Conundrum: Getting Them to Show Up", *Success with Requirements*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 2007).

eLearning Pilot Findings

Thanks to those nine volunteers who participated in the pilot of "*Analysis Modeling: The Road to Success*", our blended eLearning offering now in development. We also appreciate the many others who volunteered but did not get to participate in this pilot. We selected participants based on availability and getting a good mix of roles and experience with analysis modeling.

We learned by conducting our pilot that the content is solid and our delivery mode is effective. We also learned that we need to tweat with the navigation within the eLearning environment. We are now working on this and will update you in future eNewsletters.

Meanwhile, EBG Consulting's additional eLearning offering, "*Roadmap to Successful Requirements eLearning*" (our self-paced eLearning course), is progressing. We anticipate seeking beta test volunteers in the next month or so. Stay tuned!

Upcoming Events

1. **Mary Gorman, EBG Consulting's Senior Associate will present** "*Start Smart with Scope Modeling: Leveraging the Requirements Roadmap and the IIBA BABOK*" at the Rhode Island chapter of the IIBA (International Association of Business Analysts) on May 3rd.

2. **Both Mary and Ellen Gottesdiener will present** workshops and track sessions at Project World & World Congress for Business Analysts-Boston, the week of June 18th. For a speaker discount from EBG Consulting, register using Discount Code SPKRM1910EG.

3. Ellen Gottesdiener will conduct a tutorial on **agile requirements workshops** at Agile 2007 Conference-Washington, D.C. the week of August 13th.

4. Consider **sharing your expertise and experiences** as a business analyst or project manager this November with your colleagues at Project World & World Congress for Business Analysts-Anaheim, California.

Resources of Interest

Each month well provide a few resources we think are worthwhile. We welcome you comments and suggestions for future issues!

- Read the original paper describing how to understand and categorize business rules
- An interesting read is "*Five Things IT Manager's Should Know about Software Requirements*" from a recent online issue of CIO Magazine. It includes some ideas and quotes from Ellen Gottesdiener, too (on pages 2, 3, and 5 of the online article).

New Course Offering

We are pleased to announce our latest instructor-led course:

Event Modeling: A Power Vehicle for Navigating Requirements.

This **half-day course** teaches you how to save time and energy by using *events* to scope your project, clarify boundaries, and trace iterations. Find out more by *visiting our website*.

Archive Issue

Visit our archive to read our prior issue

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