



Getting well written requirements and user stories from your Business Analysts (Agile's unsung heroes!)

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Presentation Structure

- Introductions
- The basics about agile and requirements
- The harsh reality about requirements
- 7 top tips for writing good requirements
- A classic user story!
- Training and certifications
- Further information / Next steps
- Close and questions.



Introductions

- agileKRC is a pioneering training and consultancy company
- Specialising in all things Agile
- Focusing on improving Agile capability at scale
- Keith Richards
 - 15 years experience in agile methods
 - Wide range of Business Analysis experience
 - Author of ‘Agile Project Management’ (TSO)
 - Voted ‘Most Valuable Agile Player’ UK Agile Awards 2011.



Agile and requirements - the basics

- Agile is new way of thinking:
 - ✓ iterative, incremental, managing scope
- Agile has highlighted several new techniques:
 - ✓ burndown charts, estimation games, user stories
- Agile needs certain conditions:
 - ✓ collaboration, prioritisation, business engagement.



The User Story - have we struck gold?

As a <role> I want to <action> so that <benefit>

- Is that it?
- Is it all down hill from here?



Unfortunately the answer is no. We have a good technique and a good structure. The secret is all about what you put into the user story.



Sausages and GIGO

- GIGO stands for ‘Garbage in, Garbage out’
- User Stories work in the same way as a sausage machine
- The sausages are as good as the ingredients that you put in.





Getting real - what really happens?

What do you get when you ask for people's requirements?

- I want the project completed for less than 200K
- I want it user friendly
- I want it fast and reliable
- I want to email the customer when their DVD is dispatched
- I want to update a person's contact details.





How do we get good requirements and user stories?

- Stick with best practice but remember that best practice is always evolving
- A lot of traditional thinking still works
- User stories have ‘raised the bar’
- The need to excel in this area is now vital





Tip No. 1: Keep saying why!

- Is being a BA the easiest job in the world?
- A three year old kid could do it perhaps?
- ...only kidding - it is a skill that takes time to learn
- Get to the REAL requirement not just the first impression.





Tip No. 2: Build on the User Story structure

- Feel free to adapt it
- Include acceptance criteria
- This makes a big difference
- Check out INVEST - it's OK but not brilliant!
 - independent
 - negotiable
 - valuable
 - estimable
 - small
 - testable.





Tip No. 3: Go for purity; avoid the solution

- It is relatively easy to build the solution
- The hard part is knowing what the problem is
- Remove anything that looks like a solution
- Don't be lazy, no matter how tempting it may be
- You will be amazed how
useful a comments column is.





Tip No. 4: Interact!

- A user story is defined as a ‘token for a conversation’
- That conversation needs to happen
- Assess the ‘golden ratio’
 - how much time is spent writing the user story?
 - how much time is spent discussing the user story
 - the ratio should be 10:90.





Tip No. 5: Start with the end in mind

- Scope creep is very rarely scope creep!
- User stories do not exist in a vacuum
- What is the primary goal?
- What are we trying to achieve?
- Everything maps onto this
- MoSCoW fits in well here.





Tip No. 6: Beware the role of the Product Owner!

- Potentially this can be disastrous
- A lot of agile focuses on the PO
- But how far can a PO go?
- Our advice is to create a partnership
- The BA and the PO bring different things to the party.





Tip No. 7: Move centre stage; become pivotal

- The BA is not a 'walk on' part
- Stop the techies getting carried away
- Get under the skin of the business
- Add value - hence the word 'analyst'
- A bit like copywriting perhaps?





My favourite ever User Story

- As a club manager
- I want to manage my club
- So that my club is managed effectively



Just remember to think ‘sausages’.



Training options

- Business Analysis Practice (3 day course)
- Requirements Engineering (3 day course)
- Core modules towards the BCS Diploma in Business Analysis
- Regular public courses in London, Leeds and Cardiff.



In summary

Don't forget about the sausages!





Further Information / Next Steps

- agileKRC offers accredited agile courses, in-house training and coaching.
- Would you like an agile assessment or a project health check?
- Email us at info@agileKRC.com to find out how we can help you on your agile journey.



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Thank you!

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