WHITE PAPER

Proven Practices for SharePoint Requirements Development
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A common challenge when implementing SharePoint is clearly defining why the technology is being rolled out in the first place. When you ask ten people what SharePoint is, you’ll likely receive ten different answers, and all of them can be “correct.” To be successful, it is important that SharePoint project stakeholders are on the same page from the beginning. This includes uniting decision makers and users from both IT and business groups.

What if you were told that the numbers above are arranged in alphabetical order? Eight, Five, Four, Nine One, Seven, Six, Three, Two, Zero. Now we’re on the same page. In a similar fashion, prior to deploying SharePoint, a clear definition and understanding of the business value SharePoint brings to your organization is necessary. This can be achieved by assessing and prioritizing business needs and properly developing requirements for SharePoint projects.
Assessing & Prioritizing Business Needs

“How do you like your SharePoint? Combo 1, 2, or 3? 
Next in line …”

Taking a generalized, fast food order-taking approach to a SharePoint implementation is not effective in meeting business needs, yet countless IT departments frequently make this fundamental mistake. That’s why in a lot of organizations, business users often end up viewing SharePoint as nothing more than a glorified network share.

The key to meeting business needs is to first engage with the business users, understand their pain points, and identify how SharePoint can provide the solution to address these business-specific needs. You do not want to throw a set of solutions at business users and then tell them to go look for a problem to solve.

Two organizational challenges must be overcome if SharePoint is to be truly implemented to meet business needs:

- The lack of proper skill sets to understand the organization, identify its business needs, and map those needs to a SharePoint solution that will address them.

  A SharePoint business analyst is a key role that every SharePoint team should have. This individual is assumed to have general knowledge about SharePoint from a technical perspective but, more importantly, should also be able to develop business requirements, perform a business process analysis, and engage with the business to draw out key business challenges which can then be mapped to a business-specific SharePoint solution.

- Not assessing and prioritizing the relative importance of various business needs within various business groups to determine which business-specific solutions should be delivered first, based on available IT capacity.

  The typical approach of IT is to deploy SharePoint as if it is like any other technology being deployed in an organization (i.e., email, database servers, etc.). The lack of early engagement with the business limits IT from understanding who in the business will gain the most from leveraging SharePoint.

  For example, a corporate intranet would be a typical initial deployment of SharePoint within an organization. Once this is in place, IT has to take the next step in understanding the business needs of various groups (i.e., HR, project managers, finance, etc.) to identify business-specific SharePoint solutions that can be provided. Next, prioritizing which business-specific solution to deliver can greatly help IT evaluate and prepare for capacity in terms of human resources, technical resources, and support requirements IT has to have to successfully implement and maintain SharePoint for the enterprise.

  Why is this important? In addition to the strategic advantages such as technology platform consolidation and better integration with existing Microsoft-based tools, SharePoint also supports the collaboration needs
of an organization. The benefits of SharePoint can be maximized if the technology is used to solve the pain points that the business struggles with day in and day out.

Here are three steps for how you can effectively assess and prioritize business needs and deliver SharePoint-based solutions to meet them:

1. Educate and collaboratively engineer a business solution.
2. Map business solution to SharePoint capabilities
3. Identify priority, effort, and organizational impact.

Educate and Collaboratively Engineer a Business Solution

It’s critical for IT to help business users leverage SharePoint as a business enablement platform that can help them improve communications, automate business processes, provide project transparency, etc.

Deploying SharePoint enterprise-wide as a collaboration platform is a great first step. Next, it is helpful to engage with various business groups and jointly develop business-specific SharePoint solutions. Ultimately this will create a much larger opportunity for SharePoint solutions to be developed. Asking the business what technical features they want in SharePoint is not an effective way to develop these business-specific solutions because they may not know how to put into words what they need. Instead of asking the business what technical requirements they want, ask them questions that will help uncover their pain points and business needs.

A practical technique is to educate the business users about SharePoint with a focus on how it might address key business needs. In addition, analyzing the business processes they employ can help in collaboratively engineering relevant business-specific SharePoint solution(s) for them.

An HR Example

When engaging with the Human Resources (HR) department, ask them how their processes are being executed. Poke around and find out if these processes sometimes fail to meet their needs because they use inefficient collaboration tools such as email. The HR group of a customer Innovative-e worked with reported their frustration regarding several instances where a new hire reported for work but wasn’t able to do anything for a week because a desk and their corporate Windows login was not provisioned on time. The on-boarding process was unreliable because the “New Employee Provisioning” form was stuck in someone’s email inbox. The process was not adequately automated.

In this scenario, my Innovative-e colleague explained how HR could automate the transference of this form through a series of people by using SharePoint workflows. Even better, someone in HR can implement an automated on-boarding workflow that will resolve this problem without writing custom code. They don’t have to rely on IT to have a custom “On-boarding System” built. Hence, it is possible to collaboratively engineer a SharePoint solution that addresses a business pain point without resorting to custom-coded solutions.

To put it into practice, here’s how you can educate and collaboratively engineer business solutions with business users in your organization:

1. Conduct a brief educational session on the business value of SharePoint with business users.
2. Meet with specific business groups and identify business “pain points.”
3. Define a high-level, business-specific SharePoint-based solution for each business group.
Map Business Solution to SharePoint Capabilities

After engaging with the business and identifying a solution at a high-level with the HR group (as described in the example above), map it to what SharePoint can provide. Identify if it requires out-of-the-box technology, third-party tools, or custom development with SharePoint Designer or Visual Studio.

For example, after meeting with various business groups in a large enterprise, we found that the operations department wanted to improve their premium payment process. Previously, when managers needed to request a premium payment approval, they had to fill out a Word document-based “premium pay” form found in their network share. Once this form was filled out, it was then emailed to the procurement department for review. As a part of the review process, the procurement department would then append information to the form. It was then sent via email to the finance department for final approval. Even though the system technically worked, there were quite a few instances where the process would stall because the premium payment request “got lost” in the shuffle.

As the business user is describing their challenge, document the proposed business solution in a Feature Mapping Spreadsheet (see attached spreadsheet). It specifies the business group, the business solution that they need, and which specific SharePoint capability can address the business solution.

For example, as identified in the table below, a custom list and custom workflow is needed to develop the Premium Pay Request business solution for the operations department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Business Solutions</th>
<th>SharePoint Capabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPS</td>
<td>Premium Pay Request</td>
<td>Custom List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPS</td>
<td>Premium Pay Request</td>
<td>Custom Workflows with SharePoint Designer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify Priority, Effort, and Organizational Impact

Once the business solutions for various groups have been identified, including which SharePoint capabilities will be utilized to support these business solutions, it will become evident that all of these business solutions cannot be delivered at once.

The next step is to take a strategic evaluation and assessment. The goal is to prioritize which one of the business solutions to deliver first, how much effort it will take to deliver, and what the organizational impact will be. Some questions that need to be addressed are:

- How important is it to the business?
- How much effort is necessary to implement and support it?
- What are the initial and incremental costs?
- What is the impact to the organization and IT?

A pragmatic approach to prioritizing these business solutions is to list the SharePoint capabilities for the proposed business solutions for each business group in a spreadsheet (this is a part of the Feature Mapping Spreadsheet).
Spreadsheet). The example below lists all the SharePoint capabilities that will support proposed business solutions for the operations department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>1-5 Priority</th>
<th>1-3 LMH Size of Effort &amp; Impact</th>
<th>1-3 LMH Reuse &amp; Impact</th>
<th>Value Total</th>
<th>IT Impl. Impact</th>
<th>1-3 LMH Support Impact</th>
<th>1-3 LMH Training Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lists</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Management</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alerts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Tracking</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workflow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashboards</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI Integration (system feeds)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this spreadsheet, we evaluate both the business and IT impact of implementing various business solutions:

- **1-5 Priority** – Measures how important the SharePoint capability is to the business solution(s) that the business group needs, with "5" being very important.

- **1-3 LMH Size of Effort** – Measures the effort needed to implement a specific SharePoint capability. This can draw better estimates. The numbers used to measure have a predefined value. For example, "1" means 20-30 hours, "2" means 31-50 hours, and "3" means 51-70 hours.

- **1-3 LMH Impact** – Measures the business impact of the SharePoint capability to the business. Depending upon your organization, business impact can mean cost savings, revenue generation, productivity gains, and/or process improvement. For example, "1" means 10% time savings, "2" means 20% time savings, and "3" means 50% time savings.

- **1-3 LMH Reuse** – Measures how reusable the SharePoint capability is once implemented. For example, "1" means it's not reusable, "2" means it can only be reused within the business group, and "3" means it can be reused enterprise-wide.

- **Value Total** – Measures the total business value of the SharePoint capability. This is derived from (Priority + Impact + Reuse) – Size of Effort.

- **Release Phases** – Identifies which SharePoint capability will be released in order of phases. These features support specific business solution(s). For example, Phase 1 release includes the "premium payment" request business solution, which requires the SharePoint capabilities specified in the spreadsheet.

- **IT Impl Impact** – Measures the IT implementation impact of the SharePoint capability. For example, "1" means it requires 20 hours, "2" means 40 hours, and "3" means 80 hours.
• 1-3 LMH Support Impact – Measures the IT support impact of the SharePoint capability after implementation. For example, “1” means it requires two hours/week, “2” means five hours/week, and “3” means 10 hours/week.

• 1-3 LMH Training Impact – Measures the IT training impact of the SharePoint capability after implementation. For example, “1” means it requires one hour/user, “2” means two hours/user, and “3” means three hours/user.

Based on this analysis, we can then quantify the priority of the various business needs and present it to the customer or management who is asking the hard question, “How much expansion can we truly accomplish?” Based on the prioritization of the business needs and considering IT’s capability, we can clearly identify which business need to address first. Taking this approach creates a much more realistic view of what is possible given all the constraints, including the organizations’ SharePoint maturity and readiness.
Business Process Gap Analysis

One thing that Innovative-e has discovered is that many business units within an organization lack relevant business processes and rely too much on tools like SharePoint to be the silver bullet. I recall one group of managers we engaged with who wanted a “Project Dashboard” in SharePoint. They wanted the dashboard to show the status of projects currently active in their company. First, we asked them what their project management process was, and what standards they had in place. We found out that they didn’t have a process in place and they were adamant that it was not important to define such a process.

So we took a different approach, and asked them what they wanted in their dashboard. In unison, four executives shouted “Red, Amber, Green” stoplights. Then we asked, “What does red mean?” Again, everybody shouted “When projects are late!” Okay, our next question was “What does late mean?” One executive said, “two weeks.” Another said, “one month,” and yet another executive said “six weeks.” We stepped aside as all hell broke loose and watched them bicker and argue what the dashboard should represent. Finally, they recognized the importance of having these standards in place prior to deploying a tool.

Whether you like it or not, part of helping the business to define a business-specific SharePoint-based solution may involve handholding the business in defining relevant processes. In order to do this, it is important to identify existing gaps.

Gap Analysis

Gap analysis is a technique that allows the comparison of the current state with the desired state, revealing any gaps. At its core are two questions: “Where are we?” and “Where do we want to be?” This technique provides a structured method for:

- Looking at the quantifiable difference (the gap) between the current state and the desired state.
- Deriving new processes to eliminate or minimize the gap.
- Assessing and deriving the new capabilities that are required.
- Obtaining agreement from users to use the new capabilities that SharePoint provides.

Below are four practical steps on how to perform the gap analysis technique:

1. List all of the agreed upon business goals and identify tangible and measurable results to be achieved.
2. Define the gap between the stated goal and the current situation.
3. Identify the new capabilities/processes required to eliminate or minimize each gap.
4. Validate your findings with the involved users.
If we revisit our example of developing a “Project Dashboard” where the group of executives didn’t initially agree on what late means, here’s how we can apply the four steps:

### Goals | Current State | Gap | Capabilities/Processes to Reduce or Eliminate Gap
---|---|---|---
Provide real-time project status reporting to management | Status reports are created manually and delivered bi-monthly. Project data comes from various sources. It’s a time-consuming exercise to generate these reports. | Project management standards don’t exist and metrics are inconsistent (i.e., Late may mean two weeks for one project and four weeks for another). | 1. Define a basic project management process.  
2. Categorize core project types.  
3. Define key metrics around project performance (i.e., schedule, scope, finance).

#### Process Mapping

Now that we have capabilities or processes identified to reduce or eliminate gaps, the next step is to create process maps. Process maps show the process as a sequence of tasks, as well as identify who performs them. This is also known as a workflow diagram.

For example, if we defined the process map for a basic project management process, it would look like the following figure:

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As a result of creating this map, process components that might not have been evident before are now highlighted and provide better clarity on key roles and responsibilities.

A good friend told me that SharePoint is indeed the silver bullet. However, in order to use it effectively, we need a gun, which is represented by the relevant business processes. You don’t want to use the silver bullet without a gun and just throw it with your bare hands — it won’t work the way it’s intended.
Define Measurable and Traceable Requirements

“Since you’re a system administrator, why don’t you go ahead and learn SharePoint? I’d like you to deploy it within three months to the whole organization, OK?”

Sound familiar? An admin with limited SharePoint experience is given the responsibility of deploying SharePoint for the organization without requirements having been clearly defined at a business and/or technical level. Halfway through the implementation, the admin realizes SharePoint is such a multi-faceted platform that it’s hard to pinpoint how the organization will benefit.

Realize that by definition, requirements are:

- Formally documented and written statements
- Capabilities needed to solve a problem
- Conditions of a delivered system, services, product, or process
- Constraints on the system, service, product, or process

Focus on the Business First

Having the technical requirements defined for a SharePoint project is great; however, this should not be the first step in your requirements development process. There are three related focus areas of requirements development for every project you engage in:

- Business requirements describe and justify the high-level business functionality that is needed. Sometimes this is also known as a business case.

- User requirements identify what is needed from the user’s perspective. These can be things that the system or product must do.

- System requirements define desired characteristics of the system and properties that the system or product must have.
A common situation that we encounter is that requirements development for SharePoint implementations is often focused at the system requirements or technical level instead of addressing business needs. In the diagram below, notice that the three categories of requirements map to each other. System requirements address the user requirements, which address the business requirements identified. Keep in mind that the business requirements lay the foundation for the resulting solution.

Making Requirements Traceable and Testable

Prior to defining a business requirement, a business need or “pain point” should be identified. Ideally, a highly skilled business analyst should work with the customer and be responsible for identifying what the business requirements are.

Let’s say a productivity study on your organization found that over an average eight-hour workday, an employee spends 45 minutes a day looking for information. For example, when asked by a client to retrieve a specific status report, a project manager had to look for it on the network share, her email inbox, on the project folder of her computer, and she even had to call up another colleague to help her find it. This typical mode of searching took up time, which could have been spent on something more productive.

Forty-five minutes may not sound like a lot to you, but when we look at the bigger picture, it essentially meant that a team of 20 people wastes 900 minutes a day. In a three-month period, that is 54,000 minutes or roughly 38 person days. How much does this cost the organization? Well, depending on whom you’re evaluating, 45 minutes/day might cost $15/day for an intern or $250/day for a technical contractor.

Bottom line — time and money are not being well spent. What if an employee can regain just seven of those 45 minutes wasted each day? That is a 15% increase in productivity. SharePoint Search can be used to fulfill this goal. Based on this business case, a business requirement for this project can be:

“SharePoint shall increase user productivity by 15%.”

It would be great if the business analyst is well versed in the capabilities of SharePoint. Once the business requirements are identified, he/she can start thinking about high-level solutions that SharePoint can provide to meet the business needs. One of the ways to fulfill user productivity increases is to allow users to have a single location to look for information. We can take advantage of SharePoint’s out-of-the-box search capability by connecting it to relevant content sources. This clearly supports the business requirement.
The next step is to identify user requirements around searching. A user requirement for the search results capability might be:

“The user shall be able to retrieve search results within five seconds of submitting a search request to a system that can support a maximum of 10,000 simultaneous search requests.”

Why do you think that the user requirement definition is so specific? Two reasons:

• Every user requirement must support a business requirement. In this case, the five seconds response time is tied to the 15% increase in productivity.

• Every user requirement must be testable. A test case typically takes a single requirement and builds a highly controlled environment around the requirement and identifies an expected behavior. Without requirements, what are you going to test? This way, expectations are clear as to what the solution will or will not do. This will avoid situations where users will aimlessly "test" SharePoint and ask for a feature that’s not there or complain about existing features (i.e., "We don’t like how it looks!").

Once user requirements have been defined, these can be turned over to your technical folks to define system requirements. Based on the user requirement for search results, a system requirement might be:

“SharePoint Server shall have two Web front-ends and a dedicated SQL Server which has at least dual processors.”

By approaching requirements development in this manner, you can trace and measure how a specific system requirement is linked to a business requirement. It’s critical to clearly define early on what the requirements are from the business, user, and system perspective because you want to make sure SharePoint will address your business needs effectively.
Key Steps to Develop Requirements

Prioritize business needs and make sure that business, user and system/technical considerations are addressed. Developing requirements involves these four key steps:

1. Requirements Elicitation
2. Analyzing Requirements
3. Validating Requirement
4. Documenting Requirements

Requirements Elicitation

Requirements Elicitation is the process of gathering and understanding what stakeholders and users need. This is performed both at an organizational (business) level, as well as at a more detailed user level. Elicitation is a human-based activity; it entails face time and interaction between the customer and a SharePoint business analyst.

A SharePoint business analyst is not just an order taker from the customer. The analyst needs to find out business pain points regarding operational collaboration (i.e., meeting management, sharing files, etc.), business processes (i.e., employee onboarding) and reporting (i.e., monthly sales reports). The goal is to find out not only what the customer wants/needs, but also to identify existing pain points that can be easily addressed with SharePoint, helping them do their jobs more efficiently. During this process, the analyst is responsible for:

- Determining requirements sources — specific people, focus groups, industry research.
- Deciding how to gather information — surveys, interview, focus groups.
- Understanding business-level context and framework.
- Investigating how the end users do their jobs.

Essentially, the analyst would have to address the following questions during requirements elicitation:

- What do we need to know?
- Where do we get this information?
- Does the information make sense?
- Do we have enough information?

Remember, the goal is to identify a business solution and not to showcase SharePoint's whiz-bang features. You also have to consider how to promote better adoption once the solution is in place. That's why minimal disruption or change to their technical habit/routine is important.

After all, you wouldn't give your customer a Lamborghini Diablo if they've only just learned how to ride a bike.

Analyzing Requirements

Requirements analysis takes convoluted information and makes sense of it. The goal is to identify the real requirements.

For example, a client's marketing department was faced with the challenge of managing events that are held for their partners around the world. Traditionally, the department relied on emails, spreadsheets and Web-based tools to organize, communicate and manage these events. Their pain point? It was really hard to assess, track, and report the value that these events were bringing to the business. An ample amount of data about each event were collected, including how many people registered and attended the event, how many partners attend multiple events, increases in product purchases after each event, etc.; however, all of the data was managed and analyzed manually.
After eliciting the requirements, the first step in analyzing their needs is to profile users: understand who they are, why they came up with the requirement and what will make them happy. Knowing that the marketing team, executive management, and their customers would be the benefactors of the SharePoint solution, we initially identified the following key needs:

- Automation of key events management process.
- Real-time reporting capabilities.
- Self-service features for registration, support, and historical data lookup.

Next, it is critical to model stated requirements. This can be achieved in various ways (i.e., process mapping and use case diagrams). One of the most effective techniques is to create a process flow diagram:

With this type of diagram, we asked the customer to walk us through their events management process to find out who is involved and what other dependencies exist. As a result of doing this, we identified gaps (i.e., the payment process during event registration) and had to go back and elicit more requirements (Is the iterative process starting to kick in?)

At this point, hopefully, you’ve analyzed the requirements you’ve elicited. Review them with the customer and make sure the gaps have been addressed. This is the last step towards identifying the real requirements.
Validating Requirements

Now that you’ve analyzed the requirements, you’ll more than likely have a long list of requirements that don’t seem realistic to deliver all at the same time. This is the part where you go back to the customer and validate:

- If the real requirements derived after requirements analysis are still valid.
- The relative priority of these real requirements.

Requirements validation is essential to identify the resources needed to implement the SharePoint solution. This paves the way to identify a realistic, high-level budget, schedule, and SharePoint skill-sets.

Documenting Requirements

Once the priorities are in place, it’s time to formalize your requirements by documenting them. A requirements document formally communicates:

- Overall quantitative and qualitative characteristics.
- Functionality of the desired end result or outcome.

It should include:

- Requirement Statements
- Process Diagrams
- Prioritization Matrix
- Traceability Matrix

* See attached sample requirements document
Effectively Writing Requirements

In conclusion to this paper on effective SharePoint requirements development, I’d like to share a pragmatic approach to documenting requirements with six guidelines for writing SharePoint requirements:

1. The requirement specifies a subject, a single capability, and a criterion.
   Every requirement has three key parts:
   - Subject is the person, place, or thing who performs the action.
   - Capability is a single verb that describes an action taken by the subject.
   - Criterion is an optional quantitative or qualitative limit, range, or boundary condition.

   For example, a user requirement for the search results capability can be written as:
   “The user (subject) shall be able to retrieve search results (capability) within five seconds of submitting a search request that can support a maximum of 10,000 simultaneous search request/queries. (criterion).”

2. The format of the requirement is standardized.
   When writing business, user, or technical requirements, having a standardized format/template can provide consistency and readability. The standard format can be as simple as:
   - `<Subject>` shall be able to `<capability>` within `<criterion>`.
   - `<Subject>` shall be able to `<capability>` (Where criterion is assumed to be 100 percent of the stated capability).

   Some examples:
   - The user (subject) shall be able to locate a specific SharePoint site (capability) within three clicks (criterion).
   - Project managers (subject) can be able to synchronize their Microsoft Project schedule to a project task list in a SharePoint site (capability).
   - Executives (subject) can be able to take SharePoint site content offline (capability).
   - Financially-related information in spreadsheets (subject) must be accessible (capability) for seven years (criterion).

3. The requirement uses the appropriate focus word.
   Here are six common focus words:
   - Shall: Indicates a mandatory requirement to be met. Implies “is required to.”
   - Should: Indicates the preferred possibility of several recommended options. Implies “is recommended that.”
   - May: Indicates a permissible course of action. Implies “is permitted.”
   - Can: Used for statements of possibility and capability. Implies “is able to.”
   - Must: Not to be used as an alternative to “shall.” Used only to describe unavoidable situations like legal compliance.
   - Will: Used in statements of fact. Not in the actual requirements.

4. The requirement is written in active voice.
   With active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action of the verb. It focuses on the performer of the action within the sentence. For example: “The customer shall provide current billing and shipping addresses as part of their customer records.”

   It is used to:
   - Emphasize the performer of the action.
   - Express the sentence content with greater impact.

Conversely, requirements can be written with a passive voice where the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb. The performer of the action often disappears in this structure.
example: “Current billing and shipping addresses shall be provided by the customer as part of their customer records.”

It is used to:
- Emphasize the receiver of the action.
- Minimize the importance of the performer of the action.

Which technique do you prefer?

5. The requirement does not use ambiguous wording.
   Can a requirement be interpreted in more than one way? If so, it is ambiguous. Choosing the right word is not always easy. For example, the word “bug” can mean:
   - Any small insect.
   - A concealed microphone.
   - A faulty piece of software.

   Where terms have multiple meanings, make sure you define each word based on document audience, scenario, and purpose. A glossary in your requirements document is a standard way of including these definitions.

   Clearly defining key words used in SharePoint requirements is very important. Terms such as lists, content types, terms store, site collection, and Web application are often misunderstood.

6. The requirement does not contain grammar or spelling errors.
   Make sure you review your requirement statement for any grammatical or typographical errors.

It’s All About Getting on the Same Page

SharePoint is such a flexible and powerful platform that it is critical to get stakeholders on the same page early on. As I have demonstrated, investing in a pragmatic approach to requirements development for SharePoint projects will minimize inconsistent expectations at the outset.
Resources

Watch the recorded presentation, “Best Practices in Developing SharePoint Requirements”: http://innovative-e.com/spreq

Contact Innovative-e to get 15% off our SharePoint empowerment programs around:
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- SharePoint EASY

About Dux Raymond Sy, PMP, SharePoint MVP, Innovative-e

As a thought-leader in maximizing project team collaboration, Dux Raymond Sy is the author of SharePoint for Project Management. He is a managing partner of Innovative-e, a Microsoft partner, passionate about helping organizations reap the business benefits of SharePoint.

Dux is a Microsoft SharePoint MVP, focused on empowering organizations to leverage the benefits of SharePoint technologies with quantifiable goals, such as increasing productivity and efficiency, decreasing collaboration redundancies, and streamlining electronic communications.

A sought-after speaker, Dux is also a Project Management Professional (PMP) and has presented in various Microsoft and Project Management Institute (PMI) events worldwide. He is very much involved in the greater SharePoint and Project Management community.

Dux’s blog can be found at http://meetdux.com, and you can follow him on Twitter: @meetdux

About Bamboo Solutions

Bamboo Solutions, a Microsoft Gold-certified partner, is a leading provider of software that helps organizations achieve business value leveraging Microsoft SharePoint. Bamboo offers its extensive library of Web Parts and tools and applications for SharePoint for use on-premises, or as on-demand applications. Over 8,000 organizations worldwide have chosen to implement solutions using Bamboo software. Bamboo Solutions is headquartered in Reston, Virginia, USA with offices in San Mateo, California, Amsterdam, Netherlands, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. For more information or to browse Bamboo’s interactive catalog of SharePoint technologies, please visit www.bamboosolutions.com.