



Requirements by Collaboration: Workshops for Defining Needs

By Ellen Gottesdiener

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“I spend much time helping organizations capture requirements and even more time helping them recover from not capturing requirements. Many of them have gone through some motions regarding requirements as if they were sleepworking. It’s time to wake up and do it right—and this book is going to be their alarm clock.”

—**Jerry Weinberg**, author of numerous books on productivity enhancement
“In today’s complex, fast-paced software development environment, collaboration—the intense peer-to-peer conversations that result in products, decisions, and knowledge sharing—is absolutely essential to success. But all too often, attempts to collaborate degenerate into agonizing meetings or ineffectual bull sessions. Ellen’s wonderful book will help you bridge the gap—turning the agony of meetings into the ecstasy of effective collaboration.”

—**Jim Highsmith**, a pioneer in adaptive software development methods
“*Requirements by Collaboration* presents a wealth of practical tools and techniques for facilitating requirements development workshops. It is suitable—no, essential reading—for requirements workshop facilitators. It will help both technical people and customer representatives participate in these critical contributions to software success.”

—**Karl Wiegers**, Principal Consultant, Process Impact, author of *Software Requirements*

“The need for this particular book, at this particular time, is crystal clear. We have entered a new age where software development must be viewed as a form of business problem solving. That means direct user participation in developing ‘requirements,’ or more accurately, in jointly working the business problem. That, in turn, means facilitated sessions. In this book, Ellen Gottesdiener provides a wealth of practical ideas for ensuring that you have exactly the right stuff for this all-important area of professional art.”

—**Ronald G. Ross**, Principal, Business Rule Solutions, LLC, Executive Editor, www.BRCommunity.com

“Gottesdiener’s years of software development experience coupled with her straight-forward writing style make her book a perfect choice for either a senior

developer or a midlevel project manager. In addition to her technical experience, her knowledge of group dynamics balance the book by educating the reader on how to manage conflict and personality differences within a requirements team—something that is missing from most requirements textbooks...It is a required ‘handbook’ that will be referred to again and again.”

—**Kay Christian**, ebusiness Consultant, Conifer, Colorado

“*Requirements by Collaboration* is a ‘must read’ for any system stakeholder. End users and system analysts will learn the significant value they can add to the systems development process. Management will learn the tremendous return they may receive from making a modest time/people investment in facilitated sessions. Facilitators will discover ways to glean an amazing amount of high-quality information in a relatively brief time.”

—**Russ Schwartz**, Computer System Quality Consultant, Global Biotechnology Firm

“In addition to showing how requirements are identified, evaluated, and confirmed, Ellen provides important guidance based on her own real-world experience for creating and managing the workshop environment in which requirements are generated. This book is an engaging and invaluable resource for project teams and sponsors, both business and IT, who are committed to achieving results in the most productive manner possible.”

—**Hal Thilmony**, Senior Manager, Business Process Improvement (Finance), CiscoSystems, Inc.

“Project managers should read this book for assistance with planning the requirements process. Experienced facilitators will enrich their knowledge. New facilitators can use this book to get them up to speed and become more effective in less time.”

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—**Bill Bird**, Aera Energy LLC

“*Requirements by Collaboration* is absolutely full of guidance on the most effective ways to use workshops in requirements capture. This book will help workshop owners and facilitators to determine and gain agreement on a sound set of requirements, which will form a solid foundation for the development work that is to follow.”

—**Jennifer Stapleton**, Software Process Consultant and author of *DSDM: The Method in Practice*

“This book provides an array of techniques within a clear, structured process, along with excellent examples of how and when to use them. It’s an excellent, practical, and really useful handbook written by a very experienced author!”

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—**Jo Nelson**, Principal, ICA Associates, Inc., Chair, IAF (2001-2002)

Requirements by Collaboration: Workshops for Defining Needs focuses on the human side of software development--how well we work with our customers and teammates. Experience shows that the quality and degree of participation, communication, respect, and trust among all the stakeholders in a project can strongly influence its success or failure. Ellen Gottesdiener points out that such qualities are especially important when defining user requirements and she shows in this book exactly what to do about that fact.

Gottesdiener shows specifically how to plan and conduct requirements workshops. These carefully organized and facilitated meetings bring business managers, technical staff, customers, and users into a setting where, together, they can discover, evolve, validate, verify, and agree upon their product needs. Not only are their requirements more effectively defined through this collaboration, but the foundation is laid for good teamwork throughout the entire project.

Other books focus on how to build the product right. **Requirements by Collaboration** focuses instead on what must come first--the right product to build.

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Samuel Brown:

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