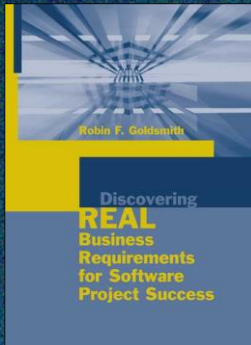


# Writing the Right User Stories Right



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## Objectives

- Reveal common complexity traps often hidden by or even due to user stories' seeming simplicity
- Distinguish REAL business requirements *whats* that provide REAL value when satisfied from product feature requirements *ways how* to satisfy them
- Practice appropriately documenting REAL business requirements *whats* in user stories
  - Getting the content right
  - In suitable format

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## Bob Crews

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- CEO/Co-founder of Checkpoint Technologies, Inc. solutions provider founded in 2003, assisting organization deliver higher quality applications and systems to market faster with Quality Assurance, software testing, and IT operations
- President of TBQAA (Tampa Bay Quality Assurance Association) since 2008
- Community Director of Vivit Board (Micro Focus' Independent User Group)
- Authorized trainer of QAI's CSTE & CAST certification exam prep courses
- In IT since 1989...previously a developer, systems programmer/DBA/QA, and project leader
- Have consulted and mentored for 260+ organizations including: FBI., Harvard University, JP Morgan Chase, Bon Secours Health System Inc, Gap Inc, to name just a few
- Bachelor of Science Degree, CIS, University of Southern New Hampshire, Manchester, NH.
- Author of numerous blogs and whitepapers on focused on topics such as test automation & automation frameworks, risk analysis, effective test planning, and team development
- Frequent session and keynote speaker at leading professional conferences
- Additionally provide Mastermind sessions, seminars and training on leadership and team development

## Getting the Right User Stories Right Relation to Transformation

- Transformation = (significant) change
- Truly valuable transformation needs conscious correct identification of
  - Right business problem to solve
  - Quantified value of solving it
  - Key relevant causes

**Right User Stories** • Business deliverables that will reasonably solve the problem and provide needed value

## Special Info about this Session

- User stories' very simplicity can create all sorts of complexities that trip up project teams, often without anyone realizing what actually is happening or why.
- Typical Agile training seems to focus on mechanics of managing user stories in backlogs more than on correctly defining the user stories content.
- In this *very interactive true workshop*, participants do the bulk of the work, actively identifying, writing, and evaluating user story content and format.

## Requirements in Agile Generally Are Considered to Be User Stories

As a <type of user>  
I <want/can/am able to/need  
to/etc.>  
so that <some reason>

Mike Cohn

“User Stories, Epics and Themes”

<http://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/blog/stories-epics-and-themes>

## Exercise: User Story

Your team is assisting your local TCQAA Chapter to improve its performance. *Working together in your group, quickly write a user story for the TCQAA Chapter's main requirement.*

**As a** .  
**I want** .  
**so that** .

## Exercise: User Story

Your team is assisting your TCQAA Chapter to improve its performance. *Working together in your group of 4, quickly write a user story for the TCQAA Chapter's main requirement.*

**As a** BA  
**I want** my chapter to mirror QAI Worldwide  
**so that** I get more value out of attending

**As a** local chapter member  
**I want** better speakers  
**so that** I can increase my BA s skills and knowledge and bring excellence to my company

**As a** TCQAA chapter registration volunteer  
**I want** an efficient way to identify registrants without barcodes  
**so that** I can keep check in time to less than one minute

## Is This Similar to How User Stories Often Are Defined? Any Issues?

- Somebody who supposedly knows, states them
- Full group identified many different ones
- Ordinarily, how many of the full group's user stories requirements would be missed?
- Could any of these stated user stories requirements actually not be correct?
- Even with so many, how many correct requirements probably still are missed?

**So  
what?**

## Stakeholders Are Source of All Requirements

- A *User* is anyone who uses the product
- A *Customer* is anyone (internal or external) who uses or is affected by my work or work product
- A *Stakeholder* is anyone whose opinion of my work or work product matters

***All Users are Customers,  
but there can be Customers who are not Users.  
All Customers are Stakeholders,  
but there can be Stakeholders who are not Customers.***

## Exercise: Identifying Stakeholders

***Who (by role, not name) are the stakeholders who could have requirements for your TCQAA Chapter?***

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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## Exercise: Identifying Stakeholders

***Who (by role) are the stakeholders who could have requirements for your local TCQAA Chapter?***

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Members           | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiters     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BAs prospects     | <input type="checkbox"/> Vendors        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Officers          | <input type="checkbox"/> Educators      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> QAI Worldwide     | <input type="checkbox"/> Students       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsors          | <input type="checkbox"/> Venues         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area corporations | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employers         | <input type="checkbox"/> Family members |

## □ Two Types of Requirements:

### Business/User/Customer

- Business/user/stakeholder/customer language & view, conceptual; *exist* within the business environment
- Serves business objectives
- ***What*** business results must be delivered to solve a business need (problem, opportunity, or challenge) and provide value when delivered/satisfied/met

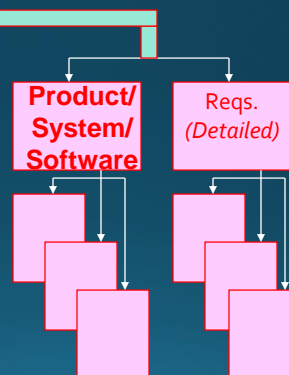
Many possible ways to accomplish

### Product/System/Software

- Language & view of a *human-defined product/system*
- **One of the possible ways** ***How*** (design) presumably to accomplish the presumed business requirements
- Often phrased in terms of features/external functions each piece of the product/system must perform to work as designed (Non/Functional Specifications)

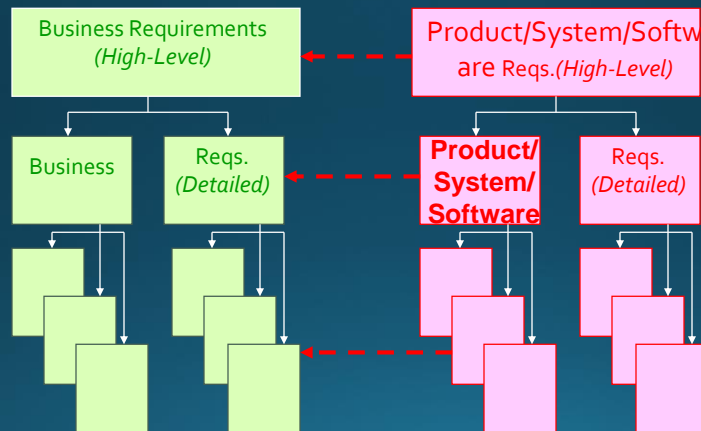
## Even Requirements “Experts” Think the Difference Is Just Level of Detail

Business Requirements  
(High-Level, Vague)

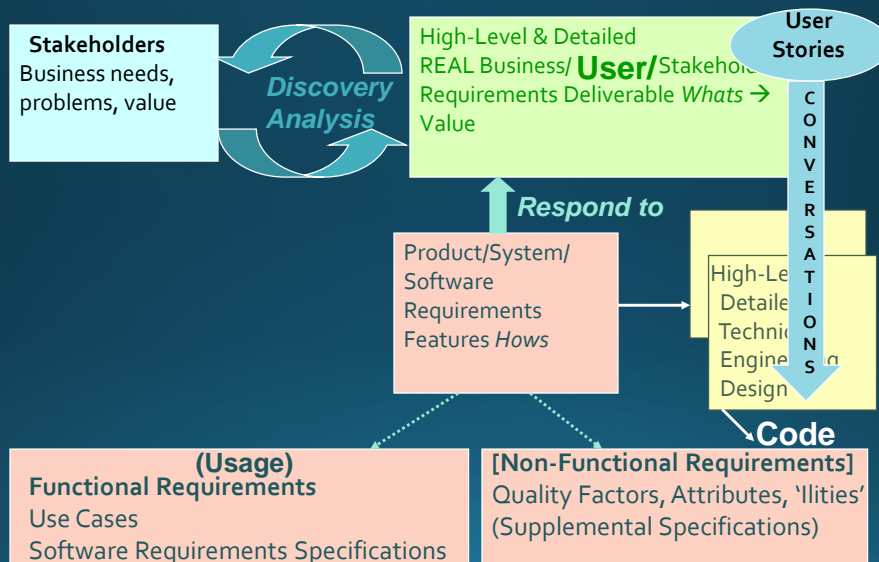


BABOK® v3 2.3 p. 26  
“Business requirements: statements of goals, objectives, and outcomes that describe why a change has been initiated.”

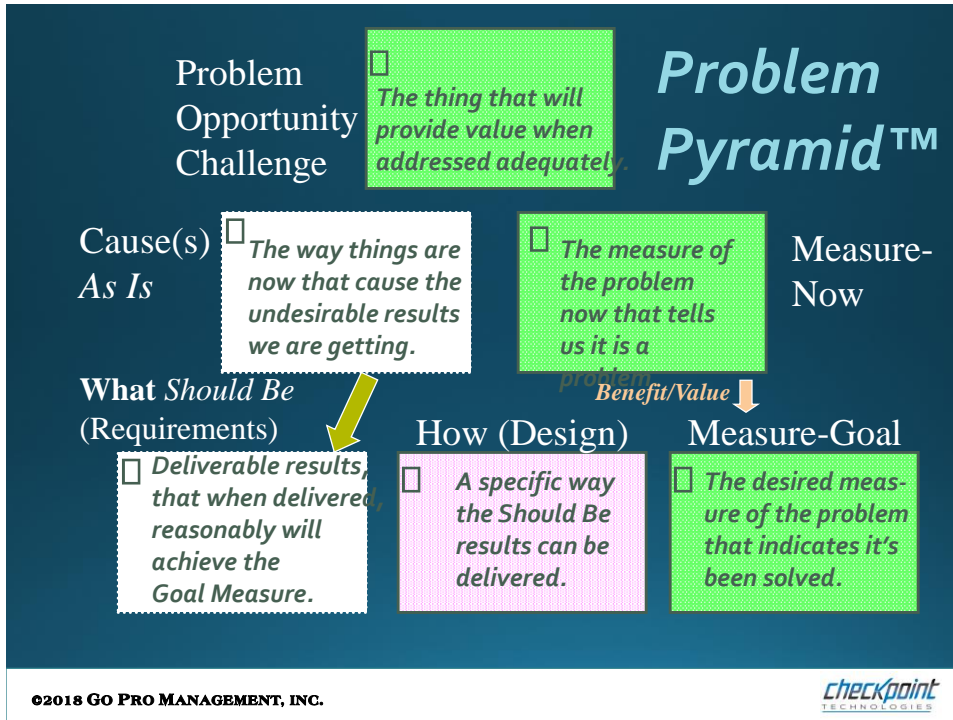
# When Business/User Requirements Are Detailed First, Creep Is Reduced



# Requirements Overview







## The Five “Whys”

- Iterative technique used to explore cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem
- Primary goal - Determine root cause of a problem by repeating the question . (Identify the REAL problem)
- Just keep asking “WHY?”

# The 5 Whys - Example

**Problem:** One of the monuments in Washington D.C. is deteriorating

1. *Why?* Because harsh chemicals are frequently used to clean the monument.
2. *Why?* To clean off the large number of bird droppings on the monument.
3. *Why?* Because the large population of spiders in and around the monument are a food source to the local birds
4. *Why?* Because vast swarms of insects, on which the spiders feed, are drawn to the monument at dusk.
5. *Why?* Because lighting of the monument in the evening attracts local insects.

**Solution:** Change how the monument is illuminated in the evening to prevent attraction of swarming insects.

# A Bad Joke...But Great Example!



## Real-World Issue / Great Example

### FBI NCIC 2000 Re-engineering initiative

- Objective - Increase NCIC utilization by law enforcement agencies by making:
  - Real-time
  - More intuitive UI
  - More accessible (mobile devices)
- Considerations
  - Orig version – heavy back-end processing
  - Intensive messaging and formatting
  - Rapid response time **critical**
- Initial result
  - Slower than desired (not acceptable)
- Problem
  - Redundant edit checks and validation
- Solution
  - Remove edit checks from either back-end or front-end



## Are We in a Different and Better Place than Our Initial User Stories?

- Overlooked stakeholders are biggest reason for overlooked requirements—can better identify up-front
  - Usually still become aware of others during discovery too
- User stories should be REAL business requirements—business deliverable *whats* that provide value when satisfied by product *hows*
- Problem Pyramid™ can guide discovery
  - Need significant data gathering and analysis with all key stakeholders to identify needed set of stories/epics*
  - Will need to break up these (epics) into smaller user stories*



## Discussion, Ideas, & Questions

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# Thank you!

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Upcoming  
events

**STPCon**  
Arlington, VA  
Oct 22 – Oct 25

**Key note: Games & Puzzles to Improve Testing Skills!**

**Session: Why Are You NOT Performing Risk Analysis to Improve Your Testing**

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