



Requirements Writing

for non-technical entrepreneurs



About this course

This course is aimed at non-technical entrepreneurs who are writing requirements (aka brief or specifications) to get a web- or mobile- based product built by a developer.

If you have an idea and have validated it as a good business proposition, then this course will help you to convert that idea into a defined product, which will feed into the requirements for your development project.



About this course

It will allow you to:

- learn about requirements and why they are important
- define your minimal viable product
- understand the software development process
- know what to look for when writing requirements
- define the key functions and processes that will make up your product
- write and finalise your requirements

What do all of these terms mean?!

We'll cover all of that too!



About this course

This course has been divided into 10 units:

- Unit 1 (this one) is an introduction to the course.
- Unit 2 gives you an overview of developing software and products.
- Units 3 to 9 will take you through our 8-step process for requirements writing
- Unit 10 provides a glimpse into what happens next

By the end of this course, you will have gone from having an idea to a set of finalised requirements that is ready to be built into a product.

Why you should take this course



Building an online web or mobile product can be a daunting prospect for those that have never been involved in developing technical products.

The same applies to any new experience but for some reason, software development can be particularly troublesome.

The gap between what you know and what your developers know can cause huge frustration – but more importantly, it can delay your project and cost you money.

Why you should take this course



The good news is that you don't have to learn how to code to bridge this gap.

As a business owner, you have to be a leader in the development process, so you can control how your software development project will run.

By learning about the software development process and understanding the expectations of your developers, you will be able to give them the information they need to successfully build your product.

Why you should take this course



This course focuses on the beginning of the software development process – defining your product requirements. We will provide you with the tools, knowledge and skills required for writing requirements to get your product built.

When developing software, a common complaint of developers is poorly written requirements and the hardest thing for non-technical entrepreneurs to do is to write requirements for software development. Let's start by bridging this first gap.

Why you should take this course



After you have completed this course, you will be able to clearly communicate what you want your developer to build because you will know what they are expecting and you will be able to provide them with the information that they need to build your product.

Have questions? We're here to help.

Please send us an email at:

info@greatproductsconsulting.com

Why you should take this course



Building and growing an app is a journey and it helps to get support along the way.

Join our free Facebook group to get support for this course and to find additional resources for building your app:

<https://www.facebook.com/greatproductsconsulting>



Unit I

Introduction



Overview

In this unit, we will:

- Define what a requirement is
- Tell you why requirements are so important
- Introduce you to our 8-step requirements writing process



Products vs Services

In this course, we will use the term “product” to include both “products” and “services”. The processes and information that we provide apply to all digital products and services that require some sort of software to be coded in order to deliver it.

Products

are tangible goods that are an output of a production process and have passed through a distribution channel before being consumed.

These also include digital downloads.*

Services

are intangible and perishable, cannot be stored or transported, and come into existence when they are bought and consumed.*



What is a requirement?

A requirement describes what you want your product to do

- It defines the features, functions and processes that make the product work the way you want it to.
- It also outlines what the product should look like and how it should perform.



What is a requirement?

Let's think about requirements in terms of building a house. What are some of the first things that you might think about?

- Number of bedrooms?
- Number of bathrooms?
- Built with brick?
- Number of floors?
- Garage or carport?
- Swimming pool?

Seems simple
doesn't it?
Until you dig a
little deeper.



What is a requirement?

If we think about a single bedroom in your house, what would your requirements be? There are some high level things like:

- How many windows?
- How many power outlets?
- Would you like carpets or floor boards?
- What size bed do you want to fit in it?
- Do you want a walk-in wardrobe?



What is a requirement?

Then you can get into even more detail about one part of the bedroom – the wardrobe:

- How many shelves do you need?
- What about a railing to hang long coats? Or one to hang shirts?
- Do you need somewhere to put your shoes?
- How many pairs of shoes do you have?

The list of requirements can go on and on.



What is a requirement?

When we talk about software, a requirement communicates what you want to be built.

- They can be high-level – “I want to be able to create an account”
- Or detailed – “I want to be able to create an account to capture and store a customer’s credit card information so that they don’t have to re-enter it when making another purchase”

The key is to provide enough information for someone to build your product the way you want.

Why are requirements so important?



Getting your requirements right is a key element in successfully building or enhancing a product.

If you cannot define and communicate what you want, it is very difficult for developers to build it to your expectations – resulting in a lot of stress and frustration for both parties.

Imagine you asked for “an easy way to add a new customer”. Your definition of “easy” will be different from a developer’s – resulting in a product that doesn’t meet your expectations.

Why are requirements so important?



Badly-written requirements can result in cost and schedule overruns as time is spent clarifying what is needed, additional requirements need to be added or work needs to be re-done.

If you are starting from scratch, imagine the number of requirements needed to define your product – can you see where you might spend a lot of time clarifying what you want? Or even worse, getting something built that doesn't do what you want it to do!

Our 8-step requirements process



We've developed an 8-step requirements writing process to help you create requirements that can be understood by a developer.

Did you know that sitting down to write your requirements is not the first thing you should do? It's actually easier to do when you've done some preparation.

In fact – in our 8-step process, you won't write your first requirement until Step 6!

Our 8-step requirements process



Follow our 8-step process and we'll get you from an idea to a set of finalised requirements that are ready for development.

At a high-level, here's what it looks like:



Our 8-step requirements process



In the next few slides, we'll summarise the requirements writing process and unpack them in more detail throughout this course.

We'll describe each step and then provide you with the templates and activities to apply the process to your business.



8-step requirements process

Step 1: Define what you want to do

- Take your idea and flush out all of the components needed to make it a reality
- You will identify what are the core and surround components that will form your minimal viable product (MVP)

1. Define what you want to do

Activities:

- At a high-level, identify functions and processes that make up your product

Outputs:

- Initial core and surrounds diagram

8-step requirements process



Step 2: Identify your customer

- Talk to people to understand who is going to buy your product
- You will create a profile of your ideal customer

2. Identify your customer

Activities:

- Conduct interviews
- Identify the needs, goals, behaviours and characteristics of your ideal customer

Outputs:

- Customer persona



8-step requirements process

Step 3: Identify other users

- Other than your customer, discover who else will interact with your product (e.g. other users)
- You will create a list of all of the people that will use your product and identify what they will need from it

3. Identify other users

Activities:

- Identify other users that will access the product

Outputs:

- User list with responsibilities, needs and goals

8-step requirements process



Step 4: Define your processes

- Look at all of the things that you want your product to do and define how people will interact with it
- You will draw out the processes required for your product and your business

4. Define your processes

Activities:

- Determine how your customer and users will interact with your product

Outputs:

- Workflow diagrams

8-step requirements process



Step 5: Define your product

- Use your workflow diagrams to identify the functions and processes that will make your product work
- You will update your core and surrounds diagram and create a list of topics to include in your requirements
- This will be your project scope

5. Define your product

Activities:

- Identify all of the functions and process that make up your product

Outputs:

- Updated core and surrounds diagram
- High-level topics list

8-step requirements process



Step 6: Write your requirements

- Document your requirements at a high-level and then work to flush out the details
- You may also create some wireframes to capture the screens for your product

6. Write your requirements

Activities:

- Document high-level requirements
- Flush out the details for your requirements

Outputs:

- High-level and detailed requirements
- Low-fidelity wireframes

8-step requirements process



Step 7: Get feedback

- You're not done yet! Now, you need to validate your requirements with your target customer
- Update your requirements to reflect their feedback

7. Get feedback

Activities:

- Conduct additional interviews
- Update requirements and templates based on feedback

Outputs:

- Updated requirements and templates

8-step requirements process



Step 8: Prioritise your requirements

- Last step! You need to tell your developers which requirements are the most important and which are not as important
- This is useful at various stages throughout the development process

8. Prioritise your requirements

Activities:

- Prioritise your requirements

Outputs:

- Prioritised requirements

8-step requirements process



And there you have it – 8 steps to get you from an idea to having requirements ready for development:





Recap

In this unit, we have:

- Defined “requirements”
- Highlighted why they are so important
- Summarised our 8-step process for requirements writing

In the next unit, we will provide you with some background on the software and product development process so that you know what to expect when building your product.