# XP Requirement Negotiation Workshop

Co-Located with XP2001 – the Second International Conference on eXtreme Programming and Agile Processes in Software Engineering

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## Workshop Log

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## Participants

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## 1. Introduction by Steven

The plan is first to do an introduction with positions + interests and then to perform a visioning exercise.

## 2. Positions

*Steven:* interest in XP in corporate environments, especially in large corporations and geographically dispersed environment.

Interest in soft issues, communications, organizations. No interest in actual software development. Process is important, but do not mention it to people. XP is about results and not about process, and requirement negotiations are about results and not about theory.

Two people in an 18 people company. Co-located.
Markus: went to IT because it fascinates him. Started as tester and found that documents are dangerous, because they can be misleading. Then moved to Quality. Problem with change requests and hidden/not well understood requirements.

Nick: XP seems to be most related to customer relationships or internal relationships. They have customers that do not want to (a) trade off between features “I need all of them” and (b) do not want to prioritize “you pick up” (c) …

Two developers + customers.

Three days a week co-located in their own site. Two days a week co-located @ clients labs.

Christian: from a small company in Hamburg. In the last project they tried XP and failed. Reasons: No acceptance test – supposed to be done by the customer. They did not want to break down the activities.

The customers kept adding features; they did not understand the impact. They wrote bad stories. There was a story called just “PayBox.” No specs attached. Upon request they said “Do it as a credit card.” But then they found that it was not the case.

The schedule was not met and the customers were not able to stay with them. Then Christian found that the deadlines by the customers were not as hard as they initially believed.

The team was of three people, plus two or three people from a subcontracting company. Two locations of development plus a third location from the customers.

Olaf: Same company/project as Christian. Problem of supposed “hard deadlines.” Due or dye for the customer apparently. However, it turned out to be different. For instance, given the due or dye approach the test was done by hand. But then, they moved it.

Legacy system to replace.

In the business since 1993. The last one for the first XP project.

Betty: from Edmonton, AB. 24 years of experience. Working for IBM. Now project director. 8 projects reporting to her, of about 10 people. Custom-based SW in Java/Visual Age. She likes to let the team pick up the methodology they want. Mixed teams of IBM people and contractors. One project done with 4 practices. But it was not possible to have customers on site. The teams are co-located. Most projects for Alberta Healthcare.

Aldo: works for a company organizing clinical trials for pharmaceutical companies. Only IT person in a company. New to XP. Since he has an incoming project looking hard to get requirements from, he is interested in trying with XP. In the business since 1996.

Massimo: normally the customer is the bank, IT sector. Started with XP in the last year, only few rules applied. Hard to gather stories, as they work with standards and interfaces. Want to learn how to translate standards and specifications in this way. The group is about 10 people.

Marc: Works in a Swedish consulting company. Has experience from applying some of the XP practices not relating to the customer. Will if possible form and train an XP-team ready to put in on a suitable project.

Giancarlo: Work in University. Research in understanding the added value of each requirement, and in measurement and evaluation.

Kevan: Using the FCT process, very similar to XP. Used in the last 8 months. Gathering requirements and cycles one step ahead.
Chris: 6 years of experience. He is working very hard on the German side. They are again facing opposition to XP. Now he is familiar with XP. He deals with different, not homogenous stakeholders. Cannot get customers on site.

Claudia, Lucas: Customer-relationships management. Product manager playing the role of on-site customer. 8 people in the team. Forced to use two frameworks, a GUI framework and a process engine. So they cannot choose the technology. The framework is heavy.

Marco: PhD student on market modeling.

Giampiero: from Cagliari, a beginner in development. FST. C++ on documents with digital signatures. Project done with pair programming and refactoring. 6 people in 2 groups of 3 people.

Erik: Developer of software industry, 20 years of experience, free lance, based in Swedish.

3. Expectations
Steven: learn, network and have fun.

Marcus, Nick: Hear from other people. Dealing with multiple customers.

Christian, Olaf: Learn more about good requirements, so at the end the customer is satisfied and they are satisfied. Olaf: thinking about requirements as docs OK, but even more important to understand requirements as acceptance tests.

Betty: since her people are interested in doing projects with XP, she would like to know more about them. Also, she interested in the hard problem of requirement negotiations.

Aldo: see if there are success patterns in requirements extraction, and determine upfront what may go wrong. Dealing with non-IT customers, not able to write acceptance tests.

Massimo: ideas in dealing with requirements in his environment.

Marc: want to hear experience.

Giancarlo: get experience, network with people.

Kevin: How other people manage to get requirements from customers.

Chris: How to deal with situation of customers not on site.

Claudia, Lucas: Learn more on customer management

Marco: Learn.

Giampiero: Learn.

4. Stories
1. Customers prioritize requirements after they have been evaluated by the development team.
2. Stories at development site, copies at customer site, customer management wanted formal business plan.
3. Customers are allowed to choose only one priority story at a time.
4. System built on stories did not do what expected given to missing stories.
5. Off-site customers deliver very high level stories, do not show up at meeting, phone calls, etc.
6. Customers can change priorities for requirements not inside the current iteration. But cannot change the ones within one iteration.
7. No subset of stories have business value—all or nothing.
8. Customers find defects/small enhancement needs—often is just a 5’-30’ to do
9. Customers focus on prototype deficiencies of prototypes rather than using prototypes to get more requirements.
10. On site customers write real stories, with priority.
11. “Fake” time pressure requirements
12. Situation of no customers so developers create the user stories
13. Development team extracts test-cases from specification
14. Customers have no cash to pay for gold-plated requirements.
15. Development team chooses features/requirements for a pilot project.
16. Stories are written on cards but are not specific enough.
17. Role of customers defined in contract. Team of 3 people.
18. IT manager wrote specifications for the application
19. Interviews with customers translated to stories
20. Customers know when they see it – complex, expensive, impossible to implement, …
21. Customers used the product together with the developer to define usability requirements – contextually enquiry.
22. Test-first programming feels like become an industry standard
23. Customer is unhappy about technical stories –70% of the stories were NOT related to the business value. Related to #24.
24. Technology constraints requirements. Related to #23
25. Requirements gathered from distributed customers on a round-robin basis by passing the requirements document.
26. People with different skill levels can hardly ever get together –people with more experience tend to get the keyboard all the time
27. Requirements mining is done by members of the development teams on customers’ site.
28. Customers do not write/specify acceptance tests.
29. Using open-source, third party software leads to “legal-requirements”
30. Customers are not empowered to make decisions. Upper management overrides them.

5. Top two things that effective and top two things that are ineffective in the current status

5.1 Effective
1+. On site customers write real stories
2+. One user scenario that has business value per iteration
3+. It is a real story!
4+. On site customers provide real business value weighted scenarios that can be mapped to iterations based on priority of needs
5+. Development seems to move to a world of shorter time iterations. Thus empowering objective judgment of evolving. Being agile makes us able to measure as we go and target the ongoing requirements.
6+. Customers and developers works tightly together to provide business value
7+. Flexible adaptable requirement gathering
8+. Implicit requirements are made explicit

5.2 Ineffective
1-. Customer focused too much on defects of the application, rather than providing feedback
2-. Confused customers, customers need to be educated!
3-. Customers upper management overrides customers
4-. Dominance of political reasons vs. business value
5-. Developers/customers lack skills in communicating requirements and process doesn’t help
6-. (Onsite) customers that do not have the power of decision making
7-. Development depends more than it did from collaborating customers; if they do not …
8-. Technical constraints, “political” decisions & other influences external to XP-projects
9-. Lack of understanding on the part of the customer, of responsibilities
10-. They know it only if they see it (makes it impossible to make estimates)
11. Customer has only a slight idea of what she/he wants.

6. Visioning exercise
6.1 Questions
- What will a world with effective requirement negotiations look like?
- What is an achievable goal for one year from now?
- How do we get there?

6.2 Brainstorming
- Extreme customer teams
- Customers choose developers. Do developers also choose customers?
- Access to CEO if they have influence on development
- Pair of project managers, one focusing on development and one on business
- When you build a complex application you need to have all the user roles represented in the customer teams
- Often in a project we have many developers and one customer. Also we refer to the person giving the $$ also as customer. Better terms? User vs. goal owner vs. gold owner.
- There is a spectrum. On one side there is a business value and on the other all the technical development problems.
- 20% of the time, dealing with customers end up saying: “change the company: this is not a problem of the SW but a problem of the data/process/information you have in place in your company.”
- “Hire” customer within the contract. So the cost of the customer is built-in the actual project costs.
- In XP you not only ask customers for $$s but also for time.
- The customer asked “Make me happy!” and this is a key issue, as this determines the commitment of the customer.
- Customer time is not free
- Environment, feelings, soft factors are very important.
- The product manager can be the customer proxy, as sometimes there are not already well identified.
- Communication is a key issue.
- There are courses on communication. A lot of communication is about attitude. Co-location is ideal. However, if there is a person on the phone always available for answering the call at any time, that is fine. On the other side, if a person is co-located but does not want to be interrupted, this is not going to work!
- There are skills in product management that are needed by customers.
- In 15 years, people who are computer illiterate will retire. So some of the current problems will disappear.
- It is difficult to deal with a customer who is not a computer literate. It is also difficult to deal with customers who are computer literate—they tend to interfere with the work. However, the former is harder to deal than the latter.
- The business analysis job does not go away with XP.
- The customer is not an enemy.
- For XP you need better customers.
- XP mature the customers.
- Provide help to make the customer more mature.
- Risk management. Is it fear management, opportunity management, or what else?
- A way to mitigate the risk of XP is to use a mature customer

6.3 Question 1: What will a world with effective requirement negotiations look like?
- Customer teams.
- Hire a customer! S/he is not free.
  - Different pricing for different commitments
- Selection of customers. Developers should be ready to reject some deals, if, for instance, they are not ready to provide time for a suitable requirement extraction.
  - Assessment of customers
  - Qualification of customers
  - Being competent buyer – Swedish term.
• Communications is a key skill.
• Still in the XP arena there will be a role for a business analyst role

6.4 Question 2: What is an achievable goal for one year from now?
• No Time

6.5 Question 3: How do we get there?
• No Time

7. Open discussion
7.1 Is analysis dead?
• No Time

7.2 Does someone have solutions for some of the stated problems?
• No Time

7.3 What’s next?
• No Time

8. What have we got out of this?
Assessment of the WS:
⊙ No dealing with multi-customers, no IT customers.
⊙ No on acceptance test
⊙ How to get customers involved
⊙ We learnt
⊙ We did not understand requirement translations
⊙ Patterns in requirement translation
⊙ Get customers more involved
⊙ “Make me happy!!”
⊙ Experience
⊙ Learn, network and have fun

For next year:
• More time for solutions, less on analysis
• Address problems directly
• Rather than focusing on developers, qualify the customers and do not use XP when customers are not ready (customer qualification)
• This WS confirms that it is hard to deal with customers. However, there are new ways to deal with it.
• Problem of conference, as there was no difference between absolute beginners and people who have already installed XP. Here the group was small, and this is really good to talk about problems. This was not possible at the WSs, as there were too many people.
• Is the option “No to the customer!” or “No to XP!”? Or is it a problem of hiding XP? There might be other methodologies that, with the same (very low) commitment of customer, may provide the solution.
• Good ideas on how to get around with customers with limited time.
• Like the format of the WS.

9. What’s next?
See you at XP2002!