

Proactively managing requirements

getting the best results
for the business

If you can drive out explicitly what the business really needs and wants from its systems, then you have an excellent chance of success. This means capturing the requirements for a system in the right way to ensure that they will provide a sound basis for systems development. It may sound easy and should be common best practice but most organisations find it hard to make this scenario a reality.

This can be for a number of reasons:

- The business is not engaged enough to understand its importance
- The organisational structure does not lend itself to good communication and decision making across functions
- IT wants to start coding quickly before the requirements are properly captured
- Ignorance within the business of how change delivery works and the impact of its phases
- Business change can be driven by technology so there is an attempt to make it fit
- People think that defects and errors can be caught at UAT

There is often a discrepancy between what is "wanted" by the users; what is "understood" by the systems designers and what is then "developed" by developers. This can result in a gap between what the users want and what goes on to be delivered to them.

It makes sense to address defect prevention and avoid change requests later in the lifecycle by ensuring that the requirements meet with pre-defined acceptance criteria.

The benefits of strong requirements management

- The whole project team including the business is engaged and is focussing on quality from the start
- We can identify and prevent potential defects right at the beginning of the lifecycle
- It reduces development cost and project delays as it is much easier to change a document or input to a toolset than to change the system further down the track
- Managing both project and product risk helps us to understand the risk profile of the project
- It helps us to plan testing at the right time and focus on getting the right coverage

The benefits of Capita's approach

Capita's assurance and testing arm has experienced consultants who can demonstrate the benefits of getting projects and programmes right first time - which can make a huge difference to the outcome and cost. Our rigorous approach will drive out any items that are not really essential and this will compel you to really think through requirements in a logical way and force clarification.

Only the business can say what it needs and wants, but Capita can help you to make sure that the capture of requirements is complete, correct, unambiguous, related to the solution which will deliver the business outcome, modifiable and testable. We can work with you in a number of different ways, depending on your working culture as much as which tools or methodology you use.

We work closely with Business Analysts right from the start of the project to ensure the quality and testability of your requirements. This is just one of the ways we engage with the business, and our clients can clearly see the benefits that we can bring. For example, a large insurer was able to see that they were able to avoid 21.6 days of man effort for every 1 day of testing which was undertaken when they launched a new platform.

Figure 1 shows the typical minimum cost of identifying and rectifying defects during the development lifecycle based on real data.

Capita is able to assist you by providing an opportunity to make sure that requirements are correct and complete when you hand over to a supplier. We will also use a specific static test to examine the relationship between different requirements so it is clear what impact they will have on one another and we will point out any changes that may be required.

Cost of identifying and rectifying defects during the lifecycle

If the scope changes we will need to undertake this process for additional requirements and examine how they interact.

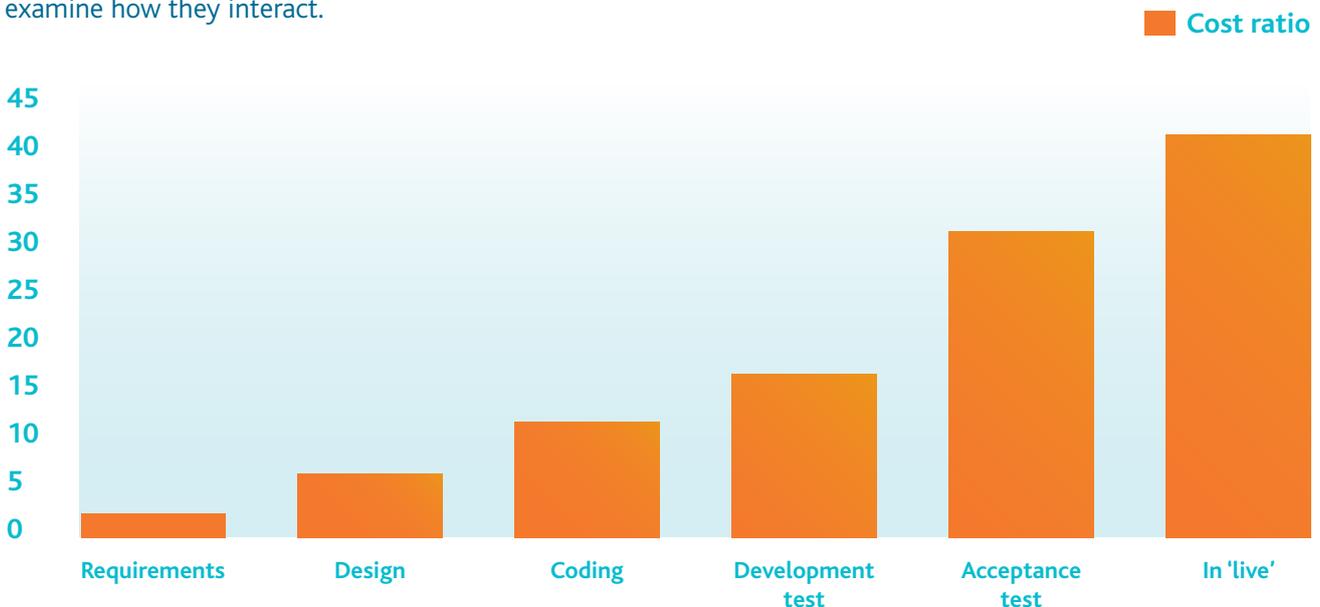


Figure1

Requirements management services

We offer a range of requirements management services which together really give you confidence that your programme or project will provide the business with what it requires. These include requirements quality reviews, requirements traceability and requirements risk analysis.



Requirements quality reviews

Requirements traceability

Requirements risk analysis

Correct requirements

Complete requirements

Common requirements

Supplier oversight

Risk based testing

Defect management

Figure 2

Faster delivery, improved quality

Requirements quality review

We undertake a quality review of your requirements to ensure they are complete, unambiguous, traceable and verifiable. This means they should be uniquely identifiable and on delivery it should be possible to prove that they have been achieved.

Once the review has been undertaken, the requirements can be appropriately amended and metrics produced to demonstrate that the improvements have been made. This gives us confidence in the capture of the requirements and shows us that we are ready to develop the solution based on these requirements. In our approach this is the start of the acceptance process.

Requirements traceability

The review allows us to prove that requirements are complete and demonstrates business process and systems test coverage as well as providing a common set of requirements for system test and UAT. This saves time in creating test cases while also removing unintended duplication between test phases. It also ensures the right test coverage at the right time and that it can be related back to the original requirements.

Requirements risk analysis

This process establishes the level of risk attached to a requirement by asking a number of questions to determine the business impact of failure and the probability of any failure occurring. We provide a matrix to demonstrate the risk profile of the project overall and the detail for requirement. This provides the basis for planning risk based testing and helps to articulate testing risks to the business framed in their own terms.

For further information about these services please contact:

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