

## Requirements Workshops

**What is it?**

A requirements workshop is a structured, facilitated event in which a carefully selected group of stakeholders work together to discover, create, verify, and document predefined requirements deliverables, or work products. The group is comprised a balanced mix of business and IT people and is led by a neutral facilitator.

The most successful workshops are collaborative. This means that the group joins together to create work products designed to achieve their common goal. These workshop participants are productive because collectively they have the right mix of skills and knowledge to create the work products. Members of the group act interdependently, relying on one other’s knowledge, experience, skills, and perspectives – they are motivated to act together.

The use of facilitated workshops for software development projects has its roots in Joint Application Design – JAD™ – an acronym coined by IBM in the 1980s. EBG Consulting specializes in a modern day variant of JAD, called Requirements Workshops.

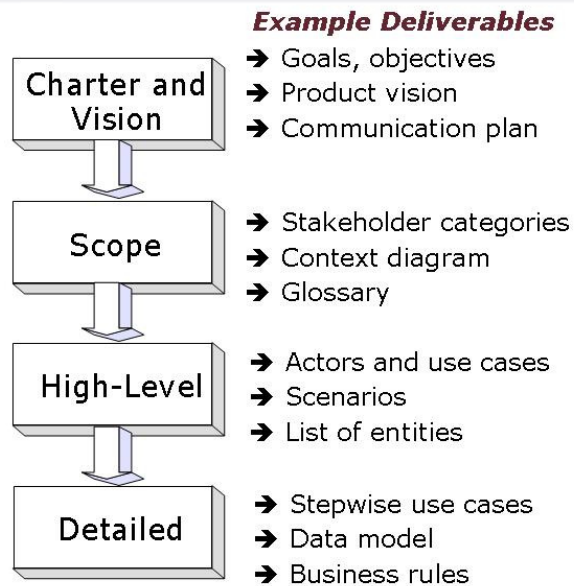
**What happens in a workshop?**

Team members create, review and complete important requirements deliverables. The facilitator manages the group’s process and dynamics. The recorder documents the group’s work as it proceeds.

**When is it useful?**

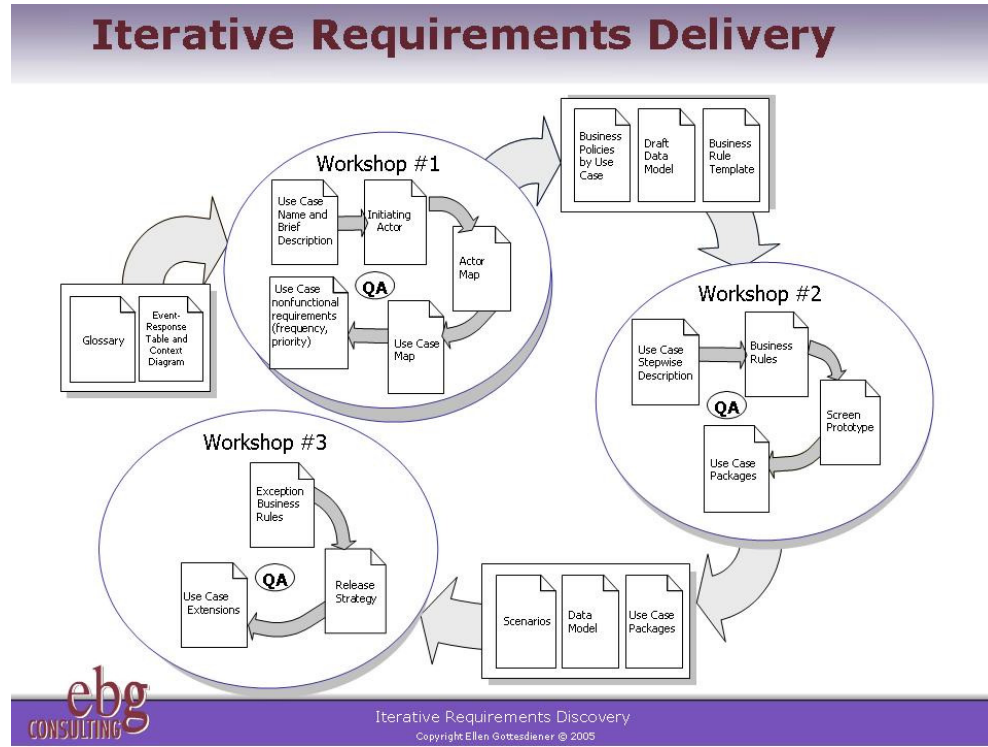
Multiple types of workshops deliver the requirements for traditional development (Note: for more on agile requirement workshops [read this article](#))

### Example Workshop Hierarchy



**What timing is effective?**

Depending on customer availability, the time allotted to delivering requirements, and scheduling needs, most projects find it faster and more productive to conduct multiple short requirements workshops over a period of weeks.



**Who should participate?**

**Sponsor:** may not attend each workshop event but might kick-off the initial workshop or return for a “show and tell”.

**Content Participants:** Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and representative users.

**Facilitator:** neutral, skilled person who designs and leads the workshops.

**Recorder(s):** impartial person experienced in documenting the specific work products and skilled in the team’s tools. This role could be filled by an analyst, developer, tester, project manager.

**Observers:** (if any): attend to learn about content and process – could be testers, developers, tech writers, business analyst from related projects.

**Planning Team:** a minimum of three people – a content participant, a technical member (such as the analyst) and the facilitator.

**Why use a requirements workshop?**

The benefits of using facilitated requirements workshops produce significant improvements to the quality and speed of delivering requirements specifications.

- 20-50% reduction in overall product defects
- Scope creep reduced from 80% to 10%
- Scope creep reduced even further, from 80% to less than 5%, when requirements workshops are combined with prototyping
- 5-15% time and effort savings over the whole lifecycle