Exercise: Assessing Customer Needs
The Digital Home Case Study

Needs Assessment Exercise

Scenario

In August of 2010 HomeOwner Inc. (the largest national retail chain serving the needs of home owners) established a new DigitalHomeOwner division that was set up to explore the opportunities for equipping and serving "smart houses" (dwellings that integrate smart technology into every aspect of home living). In August and September of 2010, the Marketing Division of HomeOwner conducted a needs assessment for a DigitalHome product that would provide the computer and communication infrastructure for managing and controlling the "smart" devices into a home to best meet the needs and desires of homeowners. The Marketing Division produced two documents: the *DH Customer Need Statement* and the *DH High Level Requirements Definition* (HLRD).

Using the documents developed by marketing, DigitalHomeOwner has just launched a pilot project (called the DH project) to examine and assess the technical and developmental issues of the smart house concept. A five person team was assembled for the project in early September 2010 and started a "project launch".

During the launch of the DH Project, Disha Chandra, the DH team leader, asked Jorge Ortiz, the DigitalHomeOwner Director, if he could set up a meeting with someone in the HomeOwner Marketing Division to discuss the questions the DHS Team had about the HLRD. Jorge contacted the Marketing Division Head and set up a meeting between the DH Team and Karen Mullen, the lead for the DH needs assessment effort.

On the Friday before the meeting with Karen, the DH team meets to plan its interaction with Karen.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this exercise students will have increased ability to:
*   Analyze a customer need statement and the initial set of requirements for a system.
*   Acquire additional information from a customer about his/her needs.
*   Work effectively as part of a team.

Reading Assignment

Read the below Case Study Artifacts:
*   DH Customer Need Statement
*   DH High Level Requirements Definition (HLRD)
*   DH Background Scenario
*   DH Team Bios
*   DH Launch Scenario

Exercise Description

1. As preparation for the case module, read the Case Study Artifacts listed above.
2. You will be assigned to a small development team (like the DH team).
3. Your team is to take on the role of the DH Team and prepare for a meeting with Karen Mullen. The team should carry out the following tasks:
   a. Analyze the DH HLRD and discuss any problems or concerns about their understanding of the HLRD.
   b. Formulate objectives for the meeting with Karen.
   c. Make up a set of questions the team would like answered, prior to commencement of project planning and software requirements analysis.
   d. Assign individual roles for the meeting (e.g., meeting facilitator, taking notes, asking questions, etc.).
   e. Make up an agenda for the meeting.
   f. Complete the meeting preparation form, on the next page.

Note: Recall that the HLRD does not represent all of the needs – but a subset, because of time constraints.

Meeting Preparation Form

Meeting Date & Time	
Meeting Purpose	
Meeting Participants and their Roles	
Meeting Agenda	
Questions 1	
2	
3	
4	
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