



7 Tips for Writing **Software Requirements** for Your SMB's App Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Finding Your Audience5

Solving a Problem 6

Defining Success, One Project at a Time 7

What is Everyone Else Doing? 8

The Timeline 9

The Budget 9

App Development is a Collaborative Medium 10

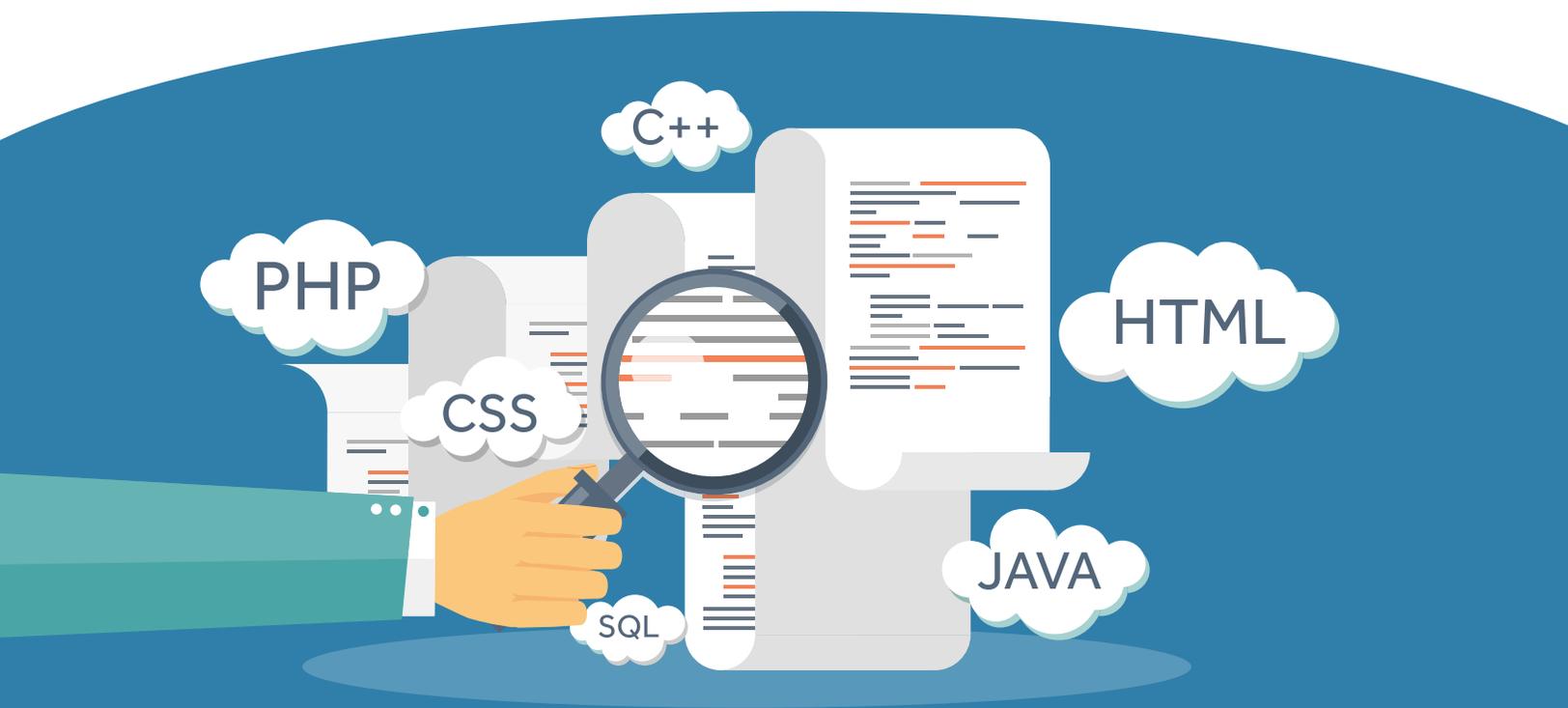
Conclusion 11

Introduction

If you're a small to mid-sized business, software development always begins with a vision. You have an idea in your head of what a product needs to accomplish - your job is now to take that idea and make it a reality.

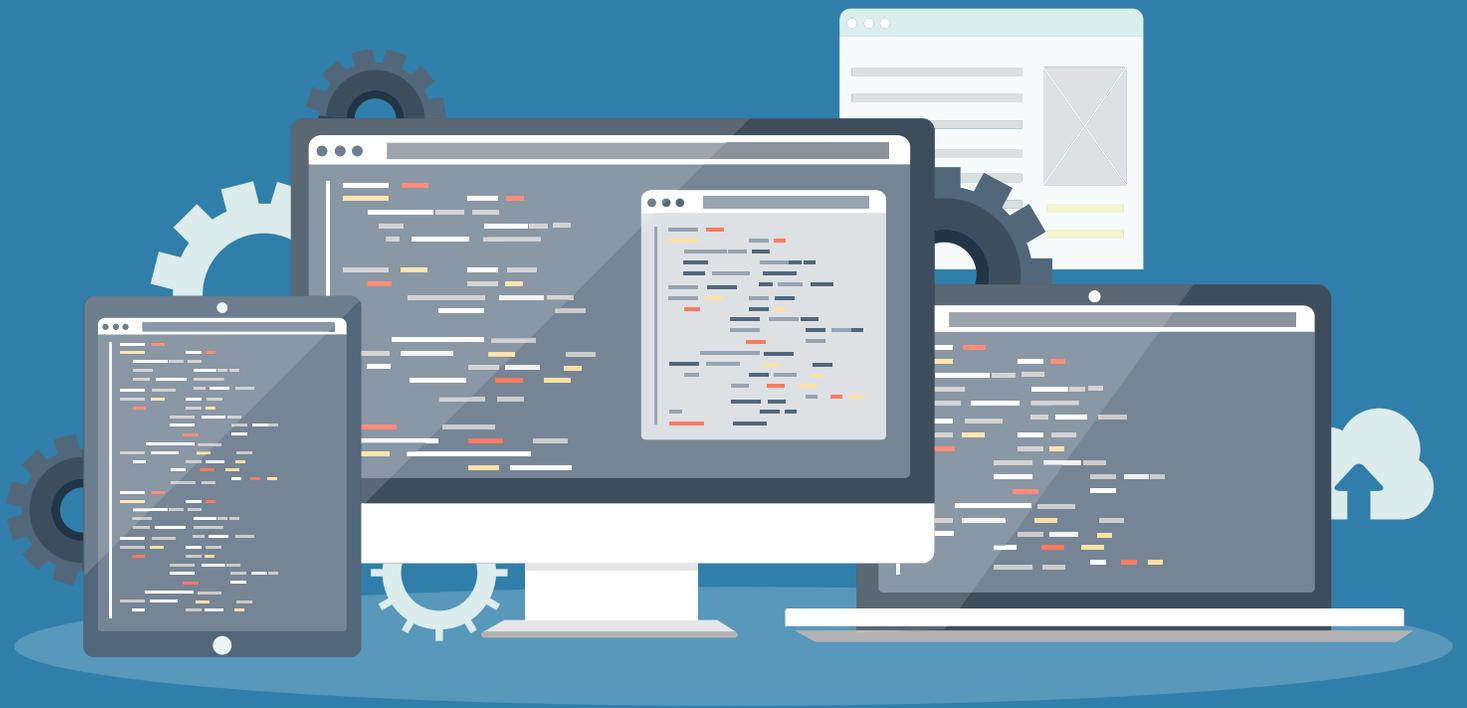
However, it is entirely possible for you to start out with a perfect vision in mind and STILL not quite achieve the results that you're after. In order to increase probability of success in this regard, you need a solid foundation to start with. This will help you build the type of thoughtful, actionable approach that you can then utilize to execute that vision in the best possible way.

In other words, you'll need to sit down and create a set of software requirements BEFORE you start hiring the team that will eventually develop your product.



Hiring a team and **THEN** documenting requirements sets yourself up for a situation where your selected development staff may not be the best people to handle the job. This requirement document doesn't need to be a 50 page document outlining every single feature of your application in great detail. But, it should highlight the key technical needs and business needs involved with your project.

Throughout this eBook we explain 7 key tips to easily write software requirements for small to medium-sized businesses'.



1. Finding Your Audience

If you made a list of every high quality application you've ever used, they will all have at least one thing in common: they were developed from the ground up with the end user in mind. They didn't just offer features – they tried to address challenges and solve problems that real people had up until that point. As a result, a key part of your SMBs app development process needs to involve determining who is going to be buying your product BEFORE you do anything else.

User discovery is the key to making sure you deliver something that not only is attractive and easy to use, but actually performs a valuable function in the lives of your end user.

- Who are these people?
- What do they like?
- What do they dislike?
- What types of apps do they regularly download?
- How long do they use them before looking for another solution?

These are all things you need to think about before you proceed. A few ways you can perform user discovery include: online surveys, focus groups, observation, and more.

2. Solving a Problem

Once you've gone through the user discovery process and have properly identified your end user, you can then proceed answering what needs this product has to fulfill to be successful.

- What problems do your end users have that only you can solve?
- Are they looking for something to increase productivity by allowing for an easier sharing of documents over an in-house intranet?
- Are they looking for something that deepens the level of collaboration possible when multiple users work on the same project?

Once you identify your customer's pain points, you can then proceed to properly addressing them.



3. Defining Success, One Project at a Time

Next, you'll need to figure out exactly which product attributes are CRITICAL to the success of the product. If you put out a product that you claim does X, Y and Z, but it really focuses on A, B and C, you're setting yourself up for disaster. Those features may be valuable in their own right, but they don't necessarily solve the user's problem that you've identified. Make a list of the features your app NEEDS to have in order to help you reach your goal to help create something truly valuable for the user.

A useful tool for prioritizing features is the 'must, should, could' model.

“Must” – I have to have these features in order for my product to provide value.

“Should” – These features would be good to have but aren't necessary for the product to function.

“Could” – A wish list that would be great to have, but if they were pushed back to future phases, it wouldn't compromise the essence of your software.

4. What is Everyone Else Doing?

If you want to gain a competitive advantage with your application, one great way to see where you stand is to compare your product with competing offerings.

- What does a competitor's product currently do better than your product does?
- What do you do better than they do?

This type of comparison will help you determine what makes your product truly unique, which will therefore provide insight on how you should be marketing it to end users moving forward.



5. The Timeline

At this stage, you can begin to determine a timeline for completing this project. Simply put, when will you be able to have something functional into the hands of your end users? Remember to be realistic – writing software is like a building a home, you can encounter unforeseen challenges.

In the first stage of development, your business should be focusing on the MVP (Minimum Viable Product), getting it into users hands quickly, and then refining the application. This will help keep initial costs low, but still give you a useable piece of enterprise software or product in the market.

6. The Budget

Along the same lines, set a reasonable and realistic budget for completing your project based on what you're trying to do and exactly how long it will take you to do it.

REMEMBER

ALWAYS be conservative and remember that at this point, your budget is just an estimate.

7. App Development is a Collaborative Medium

When documenting software requirements, one of the most important things to consider is the voice of others within your organization.

- Who do you need to get input from in order to properly write these requirements?
- Would it be helpful to speak to a designer, for example?
- What about project managers?
- Will the marketing department have anything to say?

Making sure that everyone has a chance to give input is a perfect way to make sure that your software requirements are actionable and can be easily followed.



Conclusion

In truth, these are just a few of the key tips that small and medium-sized business owners need to utilize when it comes to writing software requirements for their app development processes. By first determining who is going to be buying your product, you then create the type of foundation from which to successfully build moving forward.

You can then address the specific needs a product must service, figure out which attributes are critical to the success of the product, determine your timeline and budget and more. Provided you start with these core ideas, however, you'll create the tproject where success is no longer a question of "if," but "when."



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Brian is a true believer in the Agile process. He often assists the development process by performing the product owner role. In addition to his technical background, he is an experienced account manager with a background in sales and customer service, as well as graphic design and marketing. Brian's role at AndPlus ranges from marketing to sales and everything in between. Brian brings 10+ years of graphic design, marketing and account management experience to AndPlus.



The AndPlus Approach

Ready to discuss the next steps after documenting your software requirements?

Schedule a FREE consultation with an AndPlus expert to help you plan the next course of action you need to carry your business into a bold new future, – contact us today.

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