

# The Hidden Importance of Requirements Management

In a software development world dominated by agile methodologies, requirements management often comes second to other tools and techniques. But the experience of many teams and organizations over the past decade has proven that good requirements management is vital for successful software projects.

By definition, requirements management is identifying, documenting, and tracking project requirements. In the opening phases of a project, requirements management ensures that teams work on the correct initial feature set. If you've worked on a large software project, you know from experience that changes made late in a project are far more costly than planning the features correctly early on.

In ongoing projects, a good requirements management process adeptly handles change requests from stakeholders, analyzes the impact of those changes, and approves or rejects them based on their effects on the project's goals.

However, the need for requirements management isn't always obvious. Let's take a closer look at why it matters.

## Why is Requirements Management Important?

Requirements management fosters improved communication among stakeholders, reduces defects and rework, and increases project visibility and consistency. It also provides a well-defined process for making decisions about the project. These factors lead to higher quality on your first attempt, giving you an advantage over competitors who don't take requirements management seriously.

Without a requirements management process, it would be difficult to determine which features to add, when to add them, and how to prioritize different project requirements. In other words, requirements management is essential for ensuring that a project stays on track, on time, and within budget and meets the needs of the business.

## Modern Requirements Management Tools

Modern distributed software teams need modern software to manage project requirements effectively. The good news is that requirements management doesn't have to be complicated.

Atlassian offers some of the industry's best tools to make requirements management a breeze, from initial planning to development, validation, and deployment.

In the early stages of a software product or feature, stakeholders need a place to meet and discuss their goals and needs. [Confluence](#) is an ideal place to make this happen. As a collaborative workspace, Confluence offers teams a place to come together, share ideas, and make plans. It even has built-in templates for [requirements management](#) and other essential software project needs.

Next, [Jira Software](#) lets you turn your high-level features and plans in Confluence into concrete tasks that software teams can use to plan and track the development of each feature.

Using Jira Software, you can estimate the time required for each task, schedule the tasks' completion order, and track overall project progress. If you're working on a large project spanning multiple development teams, you can use [Jira Align](#) to coordinate and manage their work.

Then, using [Bitbucket](#), software teams can tie code commits back to a task in Jira, making it easy to see how much work was needed to fulfill each requirement. An additional benefit to this feature is that this helps improve the accuracy of future estimates.

Concurrently, [Jira Work Management](#) can help coordinate the non-development tasks needed to meet project requirements. Software projects don't exist in a vacuum. They require planning critical peripheral functions like marketing, documentation, and support.

Finally, [Jira Service Management](#) (JSM) helps IT and DevOps teams manage the last-mile requirement fulfillment tasks, such as deployments and problem management.

The best part is that none of these tools operate in isolation. They're built to integrate seamlessly with each other, so you can easily link code in Bitbucket with tasks and tickets across multiple types of Jira and, in turn, link those Jira work items back to initial requirements in Confluence.

## Benefits of Requirements Management

Now that we've covered the why and how of requirements management, let's take a deeper look at some benefits it can bring to your organization.

### Ensures Preparedness

One of the main benefits of requirements management is that it helps eliminate mistakes early on by ensuring that all teams adequately prepare for their work to fulfill each requirement.

By providing a clear and concise view of what needs doing and what is already approved, it's easier to catch errors before they become costly problems. Additionally, tracking changes and understanding the impact of those changes maximizes the chance of successful task completion.

Requirements management is an essential tool for preparedness. Ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that software and DevOps teams make changes in a controlled manner helps to eliminate mistakes and gives each task the best chance to succeed – ultimately leading to the delivery of better products and services.

And as discussed in the previous section, Jira and Confluence working together can play a key role in ensuring all stakeholders are well-prepared and help ensure there are no surprises as a project unfolds.

## Paper Trail

Requirements management also provides a virtual paper trail stakeholders can follow to track progress over time and ensure that all development teams meet the project's requirements.

Some industries need this paper trail for regulatory, compliance, and audit purposes. But even if you're not in a regulated industry, you'll still find the paper trail valuable.

Some tasks go very well in large projects, while others are inevitably more difficult than expected. A digital paper trail can help you learn from both the highs and the lows by showing the individual actions that led to success or failure.

The Atlassian tools we've discussed have a built-in audit trail, making it easy to track the entire history of all project requirements and progress.

## Understanding Expectations

Requirements management ensures all project stakeholders understand the project by making sure everyone knows the goal and how to get there so that the team meets expectations.

By keeping track of all project requirements – both current and future – in a central location, project stakeholders can ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding the project's objectives and deliverables.

Furthermore, by maintaining an up-to-date requirements list, project stakeholders can avoid scope creep and other potential problems arising from project requirements changes.

With Confluence, Jira, and Bitbucket working together, everyone involved in the project can view the expectations from a perspective that makes sense for them.

For instance, product managers might look primarily at Confluence. In contrast, development teams and engineering managers might spend their time in Jira Software, and DevOps teams might only use Jira Service Management. But due to the strong integration between each project, everyone understands what is expected from them to move the entire project forward.

## Requirements Management in Agile Projects

The advent of agile software development made many developers wonder if requirements management was obsolete. But most teams find requirements management more critical than ever in agile software projects.

Agile project practices don't make requirements obsolete. Instead, they emphasize the importance of having clearly defined requirements.

In an agile project, requirements are constantly evolving, so it's essential to have a process to manage them effectively. It would be challenging to track and manage changes frequently occurring in an agile project without requirements management.

Some of the ways that requirements management helps agile software and IT projects include:

- **Sprint planning** – Planning agile sprints requires an up-to-date list of the remaining features needed to complete a project or feature. Requirements management helps provide this list so the team can plan each sprint effectively.
- **Change management** – Requirements management also helps manage and control changes, which frequently occur as an agile project evolves. It would be tough to track and control changes without effective requirements management, resulting in project delays or failure.
- **Quality assurance** – Requirements must be constantly verified and validated in an agile project where changes are frequent. Requirements management helps tech teams maintain high quality throughout the entire project.
- **Communication** – In an agile project, requirements management helps ensure that all stakeholders are kept up-to-date with the latest changes and developments, which is essential for ensuring smooth communication and collaboration between all team members.

Requirements management is a vital part of agile projects – and fortunately, Jira, Bitbucket, and Confluence have built-in support for Scrum, Kanban, and other agile development methodologies.

## Conclusion

Requirements management is critical to the success of software projects. By managing requirements well, project teams can ensure that the right features are delivered to meet customer needs.

A modern requirements management process gives all stakeholders a clear understanding of a project's goals and deliverables. This process can help reduce the risks associated with changes and increase visibility into project progress. Ultimately, this leads to a high-quality final product.

However, setting up a requirements management practice from scratch can be daunting. Fortunately, you don't have to go it alone. [Methoda](#) is an Atlassian Platinum Solution Partner offering expert consulting services in requirements management, agile development, DevOps, and more. So, when you're ready to get up and running with requirements management on the Atlassian platform – whether that's with Jira Software, Jira Service Management, Jira Work Management, Jira Align, Confluence, Bitbucket, or any combination of your choice – we're here to help.