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Quality results through
focused teamwork

WISDM Corporation

The Requirements Document

A requirements document is a model of the future. It can be a model of an entire business, a business process, a product or service, or an application system. The WISDM Requirements Process has helped clients create models of new subsidiaries, large multi-organizational scientific programs, materials handling and manufacturing processes, computer products, insurance services, and countless application systems. Each of these entities began as a document – a logical blueprint – that was ultimately put into practice.

Each requirements document defines *for whom* the product, process or application exists, *what* it must do, and *how well* it must perform. Requirements do not specify how the product, process or application will be carried out – that is the role of the design process.

There is no universally accepted definition of what a requirements document should contain or represent. Because of this, they vary from simple lists of objectives and features to thousand-page specifications. Which is correct?

A simple list of objectives communicates intent and desired results, but does not provide insight into the functionality of a product, process or application. A list of features provides some understanding of functionality, but does not provide insight into who will use the product, who will work within the business process, or who will use the application.

A good requirements document presents a complete vision and description of all necessary components, and presents those components both individually and as an integrated whole. This is the nature of the WISDM requirements document. It is a representation of business concepts that:

- Can be validated
- Can be checked for completeness and correctness
- Captures and communicate ideas
- Is changeable
- Facilitates “what if” scenarios

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A WISDM requirements document includes not only a model of the future state, but a specification for the changes an organization must make to move from the present to the future state. In addition, it includes acceptance criteria for developing test cases to ensure the future state meets its requirements, a trace-ability matrix, and requirements for an information system that gathers, records, processes, and disseminates information about the operation of the future state. Developing these change specifications, acceptance criteria, trace-ability matrices, and information system specifications ensures that the requirements team spends enough time studying the current environment and analyzing the future. This essential work lets the organization move forward with its eyes wide open.

The WISDM Requirements Process offers a document template that can be used as is, or tailored to specific client needs. The WISDM template contains the following sections:

- Customer and User Requirements
- Output Requirements
- Logical Operations Model (of product, service, process, or system)
- Internal Function Requirements
- Internal Function Interactions
- Input Requirements and Input Sources
- General Requirements
- Future Requirements
- Change Specifications
- Acceptance Criteria
- Trace-ability Matrix
- Information System Requirements

When completed, the WISDM requirements document is ready to use for presenting the future state to all affected stakeholders and for vendor selection, design, assessing operational readiness, and planning the next activities of the project. This blueprint for the future is placed under configuration control, and becomes one of the project's greatest assets.