



# Discovery Workshops

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## Summary

Before a software project can start, the design and development team must understand what they're building. That's why Cuttlesoft takes the time to conduct what we call a "discovery workshop", and we do this with almost every client. This ensures that each team member is on the same page about what the product is and what it does, and aligned with the client's vision. Our process includes conducting a thorough requirements gathering, facilitating the discovery phase, and mapping user stories.

## Requirements Gathering

In short, *requirements* are the things a software product should do. They're commonly referred to as features. Requirements establish the user's need, or a problem to be solved. Making sure that all of the software requirements are laid out at the beginning of a project is crucial, and is the only way a team can accurately map out a development plan.

Cuttlesoft works closely with clients to identify and define their product's requirements. We then produce a comprehensive Software Requirements Specification, or SRS. The SRS is a document that articulates in great detail exactly what the software will do, how it will do it, who will use it, and how to test it.

To create a complete SRS, our team looks at 3 things:

- a. The business goals associated with a project, or problem to be solved
- b. Any existing software, assets, or related content to be used in the application
- c. What similar solutions or competitors already exist in the marketplace

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## Discovery Workshops

Once broad requirements for a project are defined, it's time to examine the details of how an application will work, and how users will interact with it. We call this process a Discovery Workshop.

This is the time that we ask all necessary questions and work with clients together in determining the best ways of achieving the product's business goals. These can be questions regarding user-interface and design, specific feature functionality, growth and scaling models, and other unique aspects of the software being developed.

Part of this discovery is done through guided workshop consultations, and the other half is done through "user story mapping."



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## User Story Mapping

A user story map is a visual diagram displaying each potential page or view in an application. The diagram also dictates how they will navigate through the various features within an application. For example, in a mobile app, we might start with a signup screen and walkthrough how a user will register and then login to the app. It may seem simple, but following a user story allows us to fully define it, and ask questions that peek at scaling, user retention, and many other important metrics.

We work to prioritize which features are part of an application's "core" functionality, and what might make more sense as an add-on later. This helps us define a product roadmap and provides the client with valuable tools to help inform budgetary decisions, and marketing.

The result is a detailed diagram or wireframe that shows how an application's interface will work, and how users will move through it. This is an essential part of both development timeline planning and cost estimation.





## Why Workshop?

Now that you know what a Discover Workshop is, you can begin to see the value. The more information a development team has at the start of a project, the more successful the development of the project will be. Think about it like building a house. Would you start construction without a detailed blueprint of what the house will look like and how it will be built? We would hope not.

Workshopping and conducting a detailed requirements gathering helps ensure that our team has the information they need to succeed, and that the finished product looks exactly the way everyone imagine. Ultimately, creating a "shared understanding" of a software project's goals, features, timeline, deliverables, and design can eliminate a lot of headaches for both client and developer.

If you're interested in learning more or working with the team at Cuttlesoft: call: 1 (888) 534-1844, or visit [www.cuttlesoft.com](http://www.cuttlesoft.com)

