



WHITE PAPER

10 Signs You've Outgrown Your Requirements Management Tool

Many companies continue to manage requirements with Microsoft Office applications such as Excel, Word, and Outlook. Others are using single-purpose issue tracking tools, such as Jira, to define requirements – a function it wasn't designed to serve.

Small teams may be able to get away with this for a while. But, as teams grow or project complexities increase, communication issues and inefficiencies arise. Soon there are missed deadlines, blown budgets, poor quality, unmet customer expectations, lost reputations, and low morale.

A requirements management (RM) solution that adapts to your growing needs can help you avoid these potential project roadblocks. And linking an enterprise-grade RM solution to Jira or a similar issue tracker gives you better coverage and visibility of your development lifecycle.

How do you know when it's time to upgrade to a modern RM solution? From our experience, project managers and development teams share ten common signs that they've outgrown their requirements management tool.

Do You Recognize These 10 Signs?

If more than a few of these sound familiar, it's time to look for a dedicated requirements management solution.

1. You have to manually merge changes because only one person can work on a requirements document at a time.

Sounds like you're still using Microsoft Word and Excel to manage your requirements. An RM solution would let you centralize requirements and break free of single-owner constraints. You'd also be able to organize (and reorganize) the hierarchy of requirements — just like a document, but everyone shares in real time.

2. You can't access the latest version of the requirements document because it's on the project manager's hard drive. She's in a meeting.

Or worse, she's on vacation for two weeks. With a dedicated RM solution, you can organize and manage critical information in a centralized location. Then everyone works from a single, accessible source of truth for all requirements data.

3. Some days it seems like all you do is review documents.

And you can't tell what changed since the last time you read the document, so each one takes forever to review. It would go faster if you had an RM solution that let you:

- Quickly see what changed since your last review.
- Control official requirement document versions with a comprehensive audit trail and change history.
- Receive email notifications showing changes.
- Know who changed a requirement and when.
- Determine the impact of a requirement change and how it affects other requirements and related items.

A collaborative RM solution keeps all project team members in agreement on precisely what requirements need to be delivered and by when. At the same time, it informs team members when requirements change, why they changed, and whether they are justified.

4. Stakeholders and customers complain that the finished product is not what they wanted.

Makes you wonder if they even read the requirements, doesn't it? What likely happened is that a requirement change wasn't communicated to the team. A collaborative RM solution keeps all project team members in agreement on precisely what requirements need to be delivered and by when. At the same time, it informs team members when requirements change, why they changed, and whether they are justified. Some RM solutions can be configured to show whether or not the changes are budgeted.

5. Customers find bugs in a new feature because developers and testers had old information about how the feature was supposed to work.

Bugs in your release are the worst — but aren't they an issue management problem? Not always. When you can't manage changes to requirements, you end up missing deadlines, doing costly rework, and releasing buggy software.

A complete RM solution can help you control change efficiently and systematically, so your team learns of changes when they happen — not when it's too late.

6. The development team implemented a lower-priority feature instead of a higher-priority feature.

And now the release date is slipping because there's not enough time to implement the must-have features. Strong RM keeps all project team members and stakeholders in agreement on precisely what requirements need to be delivered and by when. At the same

time, it keeps team members informed when requirements change, why they changed, whether they are justified, and if the changes are budgeted.

7. You gave up on requirements traceability.

It takes too long to maintain the relationships in a spreadsheet and the information is always out of date anyway, right? The thing is, traceability is an essential activity in requirements management. It allows you to track the life of a requirement and provides forward and backward traceability between associated requirements. It also allows you to answer the who, why, what, how, and when of a requirements change.

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8. You spend lots of time writing emails to clarify how things should work, but these details don't seem to make it out of your inbox and into your requirements.

Wouldn't it be great if your RM solution tracked email conversations and added them to the relevant requirement? A full-featured solution can do just that — and a host of

other capabilities that let you solve complex problems faster, create new software products sooner, and consistently complete projects on time and within budget.

9. You can't track related information, like diagrams, models, videos, presentations, and older documents.

It doesn't matter that those artifacts are stored in other tools; you need that information to be linked to your requirements. A strong RM solution will integrate with other application lifecycle management tools, such as:

- Issue management.
- Test case management.
- Source code management.
- Automated testing tools.

Effective RM solutions link requirements with every downstream development work product.

10. It takes most of the day to gather data and prepare requirements status information.

The data gathering and reporting process for today's complex projects can be overwhelming. Automating reporting tasks helps streamline project management, and keeps you focused on decision-making. The reporting capabilities in a modern RM solution can make it easy to stay on top of requirements management.

Adopting a Better Solution

You no longer have to be hampered by the limitations of using a spreadsheet, document, or single-purpose tool to manage requirements. A number of professional RM tools are available, with various features and functions. So how do you know which one is best for you?

The right solution will support and simplify your existing requirements management process and reduce your risk of project failure.

The right solution will support and simplify your existing requirements management process and reduce your risk of project failure. It will empower you to perform team-based collaboration, control change, provide traceability, automate workflows, and better manage other critical aspects of your process.

Following are the key tasks that a requirements management solution should help you with, so you can deliver quality software on time, on budget, and to specification:

- Centralize, organize, and prioritize requirements data
- Facilitate collaboration
- Control change
- Provide end-to-end traceability
- Automate your workflows
- Enforce regulatory compliance
- Protect sensitive information
- Generate detailed reports
- Integrate with your other development tools, such as issue and test management and source control

In other words, an RM solution should save you time, eliminate stress, and reduce risk.

It should streamline your development process and make it more structured and efficient.

It should manage change and include features that enhance collaboration, automate workflows, provide end-to-end traceability, and generate detailed analytics and reports.

Is Helix RM the Right Solution?

Helix RM is a full-featured, modern solution that delivers strong requirements management. With Helix RM, you can easily collaborate with multiple stakeholders, capture requirements, perform reviews, know what's approved, and stay on top of changes.

Helix RM is even more powerful when integrated with the rest of the Helix ALM suite, automatically maintaining forward and backward traceability without costly manual steps, verifying the test coverage of requirements, and even tracing requirements to source code changes.

[Visit Perforce.com](https://www.perforce.com) and check out Helix RM's full feature set to see if it's the right RM tool for you.

About Perforce

Enterprises across the globe rely on Perforce to build and deliver digital products faster and with higher quality. Perforce offers complete developer collaboration and agile project management tools to accelerate delivery cycles - from agile planning tools to requirements, issues and test management, which then link to all source code, binary assets and artifacts for full build and release tracking and visibility. The company's version control solutions are well known for securely managing change across all digital content - source code, art files, video files, images, libraries - while supporting the developer and build tools your teams need to be productive, such as Git, Visual Studio, Jenkins, Adobe, Maya and many others. Perforce is trusted by the world's most innovative brands, including NVIDIA, Pixar, Scania, Ubisoft, and VMware. The company has offices in Minneapolis, MN, Alameda, CA, Mason, OH, the United Kingdom, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and Australia, and sales partners around the globe. For more information, please visit www.perforce.com