

Estimating Techniques for IT Projects - Simply Put!

Get Better Up-front Estimates before Committing Project Resources

Instructor-Led, Onsite or Online Duration 1 day

Overview

Your Estimate is Right – the Problem is Reality!

"How long will it take you?" is one of the scariest questions that business analysts have to answer. Decision makers pose this question before you know what you are going to have to do to analyze the requirements, meaning you have not yet done the analysis upon which to base your answer. Given that uncertainty, it is no wonder that whatever answer you come up with will be off, leading to a missed delivery date and unhappy customers.

This workshop introduces methods that improve early estimates and the communication of the factors that affect them. We cover foundation approaches for state-of-the-practice in early project estimating based on business and stakeholder requirements, story points, and other relevant techniques. We discuss factors that affect estimating accuracy and you apply them in a case study. Included in the class materials is an individual, time-limited license for our estimating tool, Quest For Better Estimates®.

Target Audience

Anyone involved in estimating the effort required to develop business and stakeholder requirements for IT projects, including (but not limited to):

Business Analysts	Subject Matter Experts
Agile Product Owners	Product Leaders and Managers
Line Managers	Systems Analysts
Software Testers	Solution Architects
AND "anyone wearing the business analysis hat"	

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this training, successful attendees will:

- Identify natural estimating points and the most useful methods for early estimating
- Base initial, early project estimates on the appropriate level of requirements to communicate risks
- Use simplified standard deviations to improve the reliability of your estimate
- List 6 estimating approaches and present the pros and cons of each
- Distinguish between single- and multi-point estimating approaches
- Defend the need for and limitations of requirements-based estimating
- Apply multiple estimating approaches for forecasting effort required to complete a project
- Discuss Function Point Estimating and its usability in early project estimating
- Plan to incorporate selected techniques to improve your performance on the job



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1 Introducing Early Project Estimating

The Estimating Enigma

- Estimating Overview
- Common Estimating Techniques
- Why Estimate?
- Exercise: The Realities of Estimating
- Early Project Estimating Techniques
- When Do You Estimate?
- The Early Estimating Challenge

2 Simple Estimating Ideas that Work

Estimating based on Statistics

- What Is an Estimate?
- Every Estimate Is a Statistical Guess
- Estimating and Margins-of-Error
- Discussion: IT and Uncertainty
- Exercise: Flat Tire Estimate
- Statistical Estimating Principles
- Estimates and the Bell Curve
- A Perspective on Statistics
- Exercise: Three-Point Estimating
- Increasing Detail Decreases the Margin-of-Error

The 20 Questions of Estimating

- What Are You Estimating?
- Exercise: What Questions Should You Ask?
- Asking the Right Questions: The Critical First Step
- The Top Twenty Cost Drivers

“Swagging” It

- The SWAG Estimate
- Exercise: Case Study 3: SWAG
- Exercise: Case Study 4, Consensus Estimating
- Quest for Better Estimates
- Recap: How to Improve Your Estimating Ability

3 Estimating Based on Experience

Expert Guesswork

- The Expert Estimator

Units of Estimating

- Exercise: Comparison Estimating 2
- Requirements Impact Estimates
- COCOMO II Cost Factors
- Quest/SWAG and COCOMO Cost

The Finer Points of Estimating

- Using “Points” for Estimating
- Points as Sizing Parameters
- Estimating Poker in Agile and Beyond
- A Quick Reality Check
- Iterations, Increments & Releases
- Backing into Duration
- Making Points
- Function Point Estimating
- Profiles of Successful Projects
- Summary: Experience-Based Estimating

4 Improving Your Estimating Practices

Implementing Lessons Learned

- Summary
- Implement Better Estimating
- Management Issues
- In-House Estimating Experts
- Keeping History Databases
- Providing Software Support
- Avoiding Management Malpractice
- Understanding the Learning Curve
- Exercise: My Techniques
- My Personal Implementation Plan

5 From Showtime to Go Time!

Personal Improvement Plan

- Understanding the Learning Curve
- Exercise: My Techniques
- My Personal Implementation Plan