

Using Storyboards to Get the Big Picture

Marsha Hughes, PMP, CSM, Watermark Learning, Inc.

Industry Article

Watermark Learning

7300 Metro Blvd, Suite 207
Minneapolis, MN 55439

Phone: 1(800)646-9362

Website: www.watermarklearning.com

Watermark Learning

ENHANCED PERFORMANCE. ENDURING RESULTS.

Using Storyboards to Get the Big Picture

By Marsha Hughes, PMP, CSM, Watermark Learning, Inc.

A shortcoming of written requirements in any format (user stories, use cases, SRS, etc.) is that it is often difficult to **visualize** the process described or proposed by the requirements. This shortcoming can lead to unanticipated problems in the business processes once the system is implemented. Storyboards can be an effective method for visualizing a process, and uncovering problems with the proposed approach.

For example, in the case study for Watermark's Agile Requirements with User Stories class, the fictional Great Outdoors Company is implementing a customer loyalty program. Customers who sign up for the program will get rewards points for purchases and discounts. Customers can sign up on the web, but if they are in a store and want to sign up, the plan is for them to use a computer in the store which is used for web site orders. Let's look at a storyboard which describes this process.



Shopper approaches store clerk to make a purchase in a store.



Store clerk asks the shopper if she is member of the rewards program.



Shopper says no. Store clerk explains program. Shopper wants to sign up.



Store clerk directs shopper to store computer where shopper signs up.



Shopper returns to clerk to make purchase and get reward points.

The storyboard surfaces questions about how the sign up process will work – what if the store is really busy? Will the shopper want to have to return to the clerk to make her purchase after signing up? Will her membership become available right away on the Point of Sale system so she will be able to get points for her purchase? What if the shopper is not familiar with computers – will the store clerk have to help her sign up? The storyboard may make us rethink the planned approach due to the problems it could create.

You don't have to be an artist to create storyboards – clip art is amazingly versatile! You can also use flowcharts and other methods to describe processes, but since storyboards are pictorial, I have found they are more effective for “getting the big picture”, and they make it easier for people to imagine how a process might work for them.

About Watermark Learning

Watermark Learning helps improve project success with outstanding project management and business analysis training and mentoring. We foster results through our unique blend of industry best practices, a practical approach, and an engaging delivery. We convey retainable real-world skills, to motivate and enhance staff performance, adding up to enduring results.

With our academic partner, Auburn University, Watermark Learning provides Masters Certificate Programs to help organizations be more productive, and assist individuals in their professional growth. Watermark is a PMI Global Registered Education Provider, and an IIBA Endorsed Education Provider.

Contact us at **800-646-9362** or at www.watermarklearning.com.