

# Expectations and Responsibilities

Delivering high quality products and services through high quality  
customer-team relationships

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## Abstract.

Some time ago, I heard a radio discussion about medical care, and "rights" and "responsibilities." Almost everyone talked about "rights"; almost nobody talked about responsibilities. It felt unbalanced to me; something was missing.

I remembered something I read by Steve McConnell<sup>1</sup>, about the "rights" of Customers and Project Teams. And I thought to myself, "what about the responsibilities that go with the rights?"

After consulting the dictionary, I started thinking again about how the idea of "rights" and "responsibilities" applies to software projects, how they affect quality, and why it is imperative upon us to think about both "rights" and "responsibilities."

This paper covers:

- The Customer's Bill of Rights - introducing the "Customer's Bill of Rights," (which I will call "expectations") as defined by Steve McConnell
- General Responsibilities - indicating some fundamental responsibilities I have, as a Customer, based on the Customer's List of Expectations
- One Example - demonstrating how I can exercise my Customer Expectations and Responsibilities in an effective - or ineffective - manner ... and the impact it has on quality

This paper concludes with challenges for each of us, and two appendices, each structured to help you determine how effectively you are implementing your own responsibilities as a Customer.

## Rights and Responsibilities.

I consulted The Macquarie Dictionary, 1991, the national dictionary of Australia; and noted the relevant definitions.

**Right:** 24. that which is ethically good and proper and in conformity with the moral law.  
25. that which accords with fact, reason, or propriety.

**Responsibility:** 1. the state or fact of being responsible.

**Responsible:** 1. answerable or accountable, as for something within one's power, control, or management.

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<sup>1</sup> Steve McConnell, *Software Project Survival Guide*, 1998, Microsoft Press. I first encountered these lists of Customer Rights and Project Team Rights when I was teaching a Software Project Management course to university undergraduates, and I felt it was something I must teach/discuss with the students. These lists of rights demonstrated to the students that the techie-bits are not the only part of real-world software development.

Thinking back to the radio show, each Australian has a "right" to a certain level of health care. In addition to being morally right (definition #24), there are laws and a Medicare system that define what is provided (definition #25). But what level of "responsibility" does each Australian have, to ensure that those rights are exercised reasonably, and that the limited health care funds are spent wisely? A question that often arises when talking about Medicare is: should a person who chooses an unhealthy life style (e.g., the person smokes, eats excessively, drinks to excess, does not exercise, etc) be entitled to the same rights as a person who genuinely tries to live a healthy life style?

Then I started thinking again about how the idea of "rights" and "responsibilities" applies to software projects, how they affect quality, and why it is imperative upon us to think about both "rights" and "responsibilities."

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows:

- The Customer's Bill of Rights  
In this section, I introduce the "Customer's Bill of Rights," as defined by Steve McConnell. I suggest that these are more appropriately "expectations" versus "rights."
- General Responsibilities  
In this section, I indicate some fundamental responsibilities I have, as a Customer, based on the Customer's List of Expectations. One key responsibility is to communicate effectively, and I introduce some of the key indicators of effective communication.
- One Example  
Here, through a scenario, I demonstrate how I can exercise my Customer Expectations and Responsibilities in an effective - or ineffective - manner. I indicate how I have a positive impact on quality (the quality of the products/services and the quality of my relationship with the Project Team) when I exercise my Customer Responsibilities effectively.
- Part 2, Summary, and a Challenge  
In this section, I introduce Part 2 of this article, summarise some of the key themes, and offer a challenge to anyone who is or ever has been a Customer of a Project Team.
- Appendix 1, Customer Responsibilities Associated with Each Expectation  
This appendix lists several responsibilities that enhance the likelihood of meeting each Customer Expectation. I describe these responsibilities in an "operational" manner, so we can appraise our effectiveness against them.
- Appendix 2, A Customer Effectiveness Model  
This appendix introduces one model of Customer Effectiveness. This model can be used as one way to characterise how effectively we are implementing our Customer Responsibilities.

## **The Customer's Bill of Rights.**

McConnell describes the following as the "Customer's Bill of Rights":<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Steve McConnell's "rights" focus on Customers and Project Teams. I assert that these "rights" can be adapted to the "Customer" and "Service Provider" or "Customer" and "Operations Team" relationship. That is the topic for another paper.

I have the right:

- (1) To set objectives for the project and have them followed
- (2) To know how long the software project will take and how much it will cost
- (3) To decide which features are in and which are out of the software
- (4) To make reasonable changes to requirements throughout the course of the project and to know the costs of making those changes
- (5) To know the project's status clearly and confidently
- (6) To be apprised regularly of risks that could affect cost, schedule, or quality and to be provided with options for addressing potential problems
- (7) To have ready access to project deliverables throughout the project

Some of my reviewers were uncomfortable calling these "rights," as they have a much weaker derivation from ethics and morality than other rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. After consulting the Macquarie dictionary further, "expectations" seems to be a more appropriate term:

**Expectation:** 1. the act of expecting.

**Expect:** 1. to look forward to; regard as likely to happen; anticipate the occurrence or the coming of ... 2. to look for with reason or justification ...

So, throughout this article, I use the term "expectations," and not "rights."

As a Customer, I can see how these expectations apply in the situation where software products/services are provided by a supplier to my specification, whether developed under formal contract or by agreement. That is the focus of this paper. I am not discussing my purchase of shrink-wrap software or an off-the-shelf product.

As a Customer, I may be the manager of a business unit getting our business processes automated; I may be the person who installs/maintains the software; I may be the one who purchases the hardware/network configuration on which the software runs; I may be the typical "end user" - the employee who uses the software for day-to-day business operations. In this paper, I use "Customer" to mean all people on the customer-side of the software products/services.

These expectations seem completely reasonable to me as a Customer ... I look forward to having them; I believe they will happen. And, as a Customer, I certainly could assert these; I could write them into a contract, for example, and provide an explicit justification that they should occur.

But, as a Customer ... what about my part of the deal ... my responsibilities, to be "answerable and accountable"?

### General Responsibilities.

I firmly believe that, as a Customer, my first, foremost, and on-going responsibility is to be answerable and accountable. I need to be answerable and accountable to all my stakeholders, including:

- Myself
- My management (e.g., if I am procuring a system on their behalf)
- My users
- Those installing and servicing the software product/service
- The Project Team - this is the primary focus of this article

To do this, I must take time, thought, and care to identify my stakeholders and to understand their needs. I must then determine my needs, wants, desires, worries, concerns, check (and possibly negotiate) them with my stakeholders, and communicate them to the Project Team. I must not expect the Project Team to have the capability of reading my mind, any more than I can read theirs.

### *Effective Communication - A Core Responsibility.*

I must communicate effectively; I must check that my communication is understood. I must use the appropriate communication medium - whether it is Email, formal correspondence, face-to-face meetings, etc. I must use language, terminology, and vocabulary that will be understood by those with whom I am communicating. I must communicate the specific information needed, versus using sweeping generalities. I must respond within a specified or reasonable time.

I must be fully present when I communicate. I must put off interruptions, or defer communication until I can find some uninterrupted time. I must be comfortable when I am communicating. If I am upset, tired, ill, or otherwise "off," the likelihood of my communicating effectively drops significantly.

I must be mindful of how my responses may be interpreted. I need to consider that as I formulate my communication. I must check that my communication was received as I intended. It is my responsibility to ensure that what I mean is what is received.

### **One Example.**

For example, when I am presented with prototype of a user interface and asked for feedback within two weeks, I am not being responsible when I:

- Send Email stating, "This is a load of rubbish."
- Keep the request in my to-do pile for three weeks.
- Scream and yell and blame others for something that happened months ago.
- Do not say anything because everything is just fine.

I am being responsible when I:

- Send Email stating, "The design standards upon which we agreed have not been followed in these three situations."
- Inform the Project Team that I am not able to respond until after their desired due date.
- Share whatever displeasure I may have in a timely, specific, and even-handed manner, and talk about the impact/significance of the problem.
- Provide feedback stating that this meets the needs of the users, as we had documented, and how well those needs are met.

It is fairly simple to see how each of the "responsible" actions affirms my responsibility to be answerable and accountable in the general sense. And each of the responsible actions contributes to increased Quality - of the final product/service and of the relationship between me, the Customer, and the Project Team ... which can only benefit the final product/service provided to me.

Because "Quality" has many different definitions, I use the following definition in this article, from Jerry Weinberg:<sup>3</sup>

Quality is value to some person.

Let's revisit the responsible actions again, and look at some Quality Impacts:

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<sup>3</sup> Gerald M Weinberg, *Quality Software Management, Volume 1, Systems Thinking*, 1991, Dorset House Publishing.

- Send Email stating, "The design standards upon which we agreed have not been followed in these three situations."

Quality Impact: I have provided objective, specific feedback that there are problems with the prototype. We now have some choices, including:

- Fix the prototype so it matches the standards and remind ourselves of the agreed-upon standards.
- Adjust the standards because the prototype is so much better, and get consistency throughout the final product.

In either situation, the product quality is improved; the product is closer to providing value to me, the Customer. And, because the feedback is objective, specific, and focuses clearly on the product, there is a much lower chance that feelings will be hurt - and so the quality of the Customer/Project Team relationship is strengthened - or, at least, not weakened.

- Inform the Project Team that I am not able to respond until after their desired due date.

Quality Impact: I have let the Project Team know that I am not ignoring them, just that I am not able to meet their due-date. We now have some choices, including:

- Find someone other than myself to do the review, to keep me informed, and to respond to the Project Team.
- Determine that this is a critical review for both me and the Project Team, and reschedule some of my conflicting activities.
- Determine that this is a critical review for both me and the Project Team, and defer additional project work until I can do the review.
- Determine that the risk of the Project Team continuing is not great, and the delay of my review comments, while risky, is not anticipated to have major impact (and, if it does have a larger impact than expected, we had time to anticipate responses to this risk).

In any situation, the quality of the product remains a focus for both me, the Customer, and the Project Team. We review the current situation, competing priorities, alternatives, risks, and determine how to proceed with minimal impact on the overall quality of the project activities and the product. Moreover, by letting the Project Team know there will be a delay, the Project Team knows that I am interested in the team as human beings, and that I am focused on project/product success.

- Share whatever displeasure I may have in a timely, specific, and even-handed manner, and talk about the impact/significance of the problem.

Quality Impact: I have identified a specific problem to the Project Team; I have done it while there is still time to address the issue; and I have focused on the problem, not the people. We now have only one reasonable choice:

- Roll up our sleeves and address the problem - now.

The problem may be one that affects the quality of the product. Having timely information allows us to make corrections earlier - when there are more options open to us, rather than later - when there are fewer options open to us, and when they are typically far more costly than had we addressed them earlier. Having specific information allows us to focus on the problem and the product quality, rather than assigning blame. Understanding the impact the problem has on product quality allows us to assess how severe that impact is, and how drastic our corrective action may need to be.

Or, the problem may be one that affects the quality of the relationship. These are often more difficult to address than those with the product, because "people issues" are involved. I, as the Customer, am setting a positive tone by not assigning blame; by owning up to the part of the problem that I contribute; by focusing on results, not people; and by "naming that problem" when there is still an opportunity to address it with minimal impact. And, when the quality of the Customer/Project Team relationship is nurtured, morale improves - or at least it does not decline. And when morale is nurtured, product quality is not threatened.

- Provide feedback stating that this meets the needs of the users, as we had documented, and how well those needs are met.

Quality Impact: By providing feedback to the Project Team, we have new information at this point in the project, including:

- The overall Customer needs are being met, and being met well. The Project Team can celebrate the quality of the product, and do a retrospective and use the results to plan how to continue or improve providing a quality product.
- We have confirmed that the documented user needs are an accurate reflection of the actual user needs, at least to this point. This increases our confidence in the likelihood that we have captured the right requirements for the user interface, especially if the prototype captured the most risky, unclear part of the user interface.
- I, as the Customer, am providing positive feedback (not just negative feedback). I am recognising the Project Team as human beings, and acknowledging their success.

All of these contribute to a higher quality relationship between me, the Customer, and the Project Team. Each one of these highlights, in some way, that the "right things" are being produced, and the Project Team should continue this way. Positive feedback reinforces positive behaviours, and increases the likelihood that the Project Team will remain motivated and focused on producing quality products that the Customers can use.

## Part 2, Summary, and a Challenge.

Part 2 of this article will examine the Project Team's expectations in much the same manner as we have examined the Customer's expectations. Part 2 will introduce a Project Team Responsibility Effectiveness model as well, and asks Project Team members how we would rate ourselves.

I like the expectations captured in Steve McConnell's "Customer's Bill of Rights." As a Customer, I can commit to them; these are things that seem entirely reasonable to me. If I were a Project Team member, I would want to support these expectations for my project Customer.

Still, going further, I believe I have a set of responsibilities as a Customer that come with - and, sometimes, even before - those expectations. Responsibilities such as nurturing a safe environment, being clear about what I know and do not know, communicating effectively, and treating people humanely - these are just examples of responsibilities that pervade any Customer Expectations I may have. If I cannot implement the Customer Responsibilities, perhaps I should not expect the Customer Expectations.

And here is my challenge to you ... whatever product or service you acquire or provide ... The next time you enter into a relationship as a Customer, think about these Customer Expectations. Consider making these expectations a part of the contract for the project. Review, tailor, adapt each Customer Responsibility list for the specifics of your project and your environment as a Customer.

Monitor and review your own effectiveness against these Customer Responsibilities, and find ways to get information from your Project Team about how effective they believe you are. Make improvements; continue to enhance your effectiveness.

You will achieve higher quality products/services from the Project Team, and a higher quality relationship with the Project Team - I will take my professional reputation on it! I look forward to hearing about your insights and your successes.

## APPENDIX 1. Customer Responsibilities Associated with Each Expectation.

There are many actions that a responsible Customer may take for each item in the Customer's List of Expectations. Each of these affirms the fact that the Customer is answerable, accountable, and accepting control of what is in the Customer's ability to control. The following pages list several key responsibilities associated with each Customer Expectation - i.e., specific ways a responsible Customer can "operationalise" the likelihood of meeting those expectations.

Think about each responsibility as you read through the lists - whether you are a Customer or a member of a Project Team. Do these Customer Responsibilities seem reasonable to you? If you are a Customer, are you doing these? If you are a Project Team member, are you asking your Customer to do these things?

If you are a Customer, how would you rate your overall effectiveness in ensuring that your expectations are met? In what areas would you like to improve? If you are a Project Team member, how would you rate your Customer? In what areas would you like to ask your Customer to improve?

### *Responsibilities for Expectation (1)*

#### *To set objectives for the project and have them followed*

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Be clear to myself about what I know, and equally clear about what I do not know
- Be clear to others about what I know, and equally clear about what I do not know
- Be comfortable saying "I do not know" and "Let me check that out and get back with you" ... and then getting back as promised
- Ensure the project objectives represent the real users - all the real users - not just my personal pet ideas
- Ensure the project objectives cover budget, time-to-market, functionality, quality, and other critical success factors (e.g., speed/performance, capacity, safety, security, reliability, international use, multiple access mechanisms, privacy, legal requirements, etc)
- Establish clear priorities among the project objectives - that is, what is a core objective versus nice-to-have; what is needed "now" versus what could be deferred to "later"
- Ensure, as much as possible, that the project objectives satisfy the 5Cs - that is, they are Complete, Consistent, Clear, Correct, and Concise
- Ensure, as much as possible, that the project objectives are SMART - that is, they are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Trackable
- Communicate, to the Project Team, all project objectives - during proposal-time, project start-up, throughout the life of the project, at project close-out (as part of the project retrospective)
- Communicate, to the Project Team, the business context in which the project objectives are framed (e.g., the concept of operations, the stakeholders, the urgency, the impacts of not having the products/services, expected business benefits, etc)
- Be willing to negotiate, drop, defer project objectives when project resources are insufficient to provide all of them
- Provide early warning when project objectives may change, and allocate sufficient time for changes to be considered mindfully



- Ensure my stakeholders have accurate and timely information about the project objectives and project status to make decisions whether or not to continue with the project toward its current objectives, change project objectives, or terminate the project
- Stay aware of the world around me and the marketplace, and monitor situations that may affect/cause-to-change project objectives, and keep the Project Team informed
- Be willing to defer or terminate the project when business priorities and/or market-oriented direction changes (versus using a project to build a personal empire)

### ***Responsibilities for Expectation (2)***

***To know how long the software project will take and how much it will cost***

I would extend this "expectation" as:

***To know how long the software project will take, how much it will cost, the resultant quality of the products/services provided, and features that will be included***

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Be as clear as possible about the project objectives (see Responsibilities (1)) - both with myself and with my Project Team
- Understand what is expected of me, and provide it in a timely manner, in order to help achieve cost, schedule, functionality, and quality targets
- Provide appropriate resources as needed (e.g., timely reviews and responses, available time with users for requirements elicitation, customer-furnished equipment of the needed amount and quality)
- Review estimates of cost, schedule, functionality, and quality, and project plans at key milestones or as triggered throughout the life of the project
- Expect to pay a reasonable price for the functionality and quality of the products/services I am obtaining, and provide a reasonable timeframe for providing those products/services
- Understand that a project is a unique undertaking, and, as such, is to some degree unprecedented, and, as such, has an inherent amount of risk and uncertainty associated with it
- Recognise that any estimate I get is just that - an estimate - and it comes with assumptions, risks, and constraints, and a context that is "stable" only at the moment the estimate is created
- Do everything in my control to prevent, avoid, eliminate barriers to the Project Team's ability to achieve their cost, schedule, and quality goals
- Allow the Project Team to make a fair profit - financially, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually
- Treat the Project Team with humanity (inhumane treatment of Project Teams does not cause projects to complete on-time or within budget, contrary to what some literature would ask you to believe)
- Understand that the more I change the project objectives, the more uncertainty there is in cost, schedule, functionality, and quality estimates, the more time that has to be spent on re-negotiation and re-commitment, and the less the likelihood of achieving the original targets
- Understand the key parameters to the estimates and their values, and how probable each value is

- Get estimates for cost, schedule, functionality, and quality that are based on real, historical data and real, anticipated staff capability and availability (or rationale why historical data were not used)
- Get estimates that identify clearly the likelihood associated with them, and the source of that likelihood (e.g., most optimistic (and what must go right), most pessimistic (and what might go wrong), and most likely (and source of those data))
- Get estimates that identify clearly the assumptions, risks, and constraints behind them, and provide sufficient information to monitor, evaluate, respond to each
- Get, review, and understand the bases-of-estimate if I need them in order to understand the estimates
- Understand how the estimates relate to the project plans that are based on them
- Define customer-oriented variances/ranges in cost, schedule, functionality, and quality estimates within which project performance is acceptable, and other customer-/market-oriented triggers the Project Team should heed for re-planning
- Ask for a re-plan, if the actual project performance deviates significantly from the plans, and the Project Team has not done that automatically
- Define and monitor other customer-/market-oriented triggers that might impact the cost, schedule, functionality, and quality of the products/services being provided, and communicate this to the Project Team in a timely manner
- Be aware of relevant benchmarks for productivity and quality, and do not expect the Project Team to exceed those, unless they have data that demonstrate their ability to achieve higher productivity and quality
- Recognise that there is a limit to what people can accomplish during a normal working day
- Be aware that overly optimistic cost/schedule estimates (e.g., excessively high productivity or how many extra hours team members can work) leads the Project Team toward failure

### ***Responsibilities for Expectation (3)***

#### ***To decide which features are in and which are out of the software***

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Be as clear as possible about the project objectives (see Responsibilities (1))
- Make decisions with knowledge and conviction, and stick to those decisions, unless something changes significantly and causes a re-visit of that decision
- Accept responsibility for the decisions I make (e.g., do not blame the Project Team)
- Accept the impacts of decisions I make, when determining what features to include and the priorities of those features (e.g., perhaps a cost or schedule increase), and what features to defer/drop (e.g., perhaps some unhappy users)
- Remain flexible; I may not be the only Customer the Project Team is serving, nor the highest priority Customer
- Represent the needs of all stakeholders fairly, versus just focusing on my pet features
- Understand how the features enable achieving business benefits, and ensure they remain consistent
- Understand how the features support the project objectives, and ensure they remain consistent

- Understand any change proposal to the set of features, and the analysis of the impacts thereof, whether the change proposal comes from me, the Customer, or from the Project Team - including impacts on business values and project objectives
- Monitor the status (e.g., cost, schedule, and quality) of the features and plans for their inclusion in the products/services
- Communicate to the Project Team how the features help achieve the business benefits and support the project objectives
- Define clear, consistent priorities among the various features that could be provided by the products/services, and ensure the Project Team understands them
- Communicate any changes to these priorities and rationale for the changes to the Project Team clearly, completely and in a timely manner
- Be clear about what is driving the inclusion/phasing/exclusion of certain features (e.g., core capability needs to be provided for a trade show, responding to a request from a high-priority user)
- Respond completely, clearly, and in a timely manner to any request for clarification of the features by the Project Team
- Listen/read, respectfully, to recommendations made by the Project Team about the features to be included, and the order they will be provided
- Listen/read, respectfully, to requests from the Project Team to defer or drop features from the products/services
- Ensure the presence of a mechanism to manage the set of features to be provided by the products/services, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, activities, decisions, and timelines (e.g., a feature change control process)
- Include, in the feature change control process, what I need to see for any feature the Project Team proposes to defer to a later release/phase or to drop entirely from the products/services
- Ensure the feature change control process is understood, accepted, and followed by myself and by the Project Team
- Monitor changes in the business environment that would affect changes to the project objectives or features provided by the products/services, and keep the Project Team informed

#### ***Responsibilities for Expectation (4)***

***To make reasonable changes to requirements throughout the course of the project and to know the costs of making those changes***

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Be as clear as possible about the features (see Responsibilities (3))
- Represent the needs of all stakeholders fairly, versus just focusing on my pet requirements
- Understand how the requirements satisfy the features, and ensure they remain consistent
- Accept the inevitability that "life happens," and things change
- Accept the inevitability that even with everybody's best efforts, the likelihood of everything going exactly as planned is about zero
- Be flexible, and accept the inevitable changes that will happen
- Recognise what is a reasonable change, and what is not, and act accordingly

- Recognise what is a reasonable time for requesting a change, and what is not, and act accordingly
- Recognise that not all my requested changes can be made as and when I request them to be made
- Recognise that project cost, schedule, functionality, and quality are interconnected, and when I make changes to requirements in any of those dimensions, trade-offs will have to be made in other dimensions (e.g., earlier delivery of more functionality may incur higher cost and lower quality)
- Accept the price - to one or more of cost, schedule, functionality, quality - associated with changes I request
- Understand the analyses behind the changes, or ask for clarification
- Understand the estimated costs (time, resources, money, other trade-offs) of the changes, and the context (assumptions, risks, constraints) upon which those estimates are based, or ask for clarification
- Assess the costs versus the benefits of making proposed changes, and approve changes that benefit stakeholders overall, even if it has a negative impact on the project
- Prepare thoroughly for requirements reviews, including documenting issues clearly, consistently, and completely
- Communicate to the Project Team how the requirements satisfy the features that achieve business benefits and support the project objectives
- Establish, with the Project Team, periodic requirements reviews in which I will participate
- Establish, with the Project Team, criteria within which I may request changes to project requirements and expect no impact to cost, schedule, or quality
- Establish, with the Project Team, timeframes when I may request changes to project requirements and expect them to be considered
- Indicate to the Project Team, during project start-up, those areas that are more likely to change, and those that are less likely to change, and the level of confidence I have in those assessments
- Indicate to the Project Team, during project start-up, those areas of the requirements where I want their feedback, input, analysis, and clarification
- Participate actively and mindfully in requirements reviews throughout the course of the project
- Ensure the presence of a mechanism to manage the requirements to be provided by the products/services, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, activities, decisions, and timelines (e.g., a requirements change control process) (see related responsibilities in Responsibilities (3))
- Monitor changes in the business environment that would affect changes to the business benefits, project objectives, features, or requirements provided by the products/services, and keep the Project Team informed

### ***Responsibilities for Expectation (5)***

#### ***To know the project's status clearly and confidently***

I would extend this "expectation" as:

#### ***To know the project's status clearly, confidently, completely, accurately, and in a timely manner***

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Create, nurture, maintain an environment where everybody - stakeholders and Project Team members - knows that it is safe to report the project's status clearly, confidently, completely, and accurately
- Identify clearly and completely the information I require to know the project's status; the likelihood that the project will meet cost, schedule, functionality, and quality targets; the likelihood that the project will meet its objectives
- Request subjective information (e.g., who did an exceptional job) and objective information (e.g., milestones complete, quantitative data) to get a true sense of the Project Team (i.e., how the team is feeling as well as what the team is doing)
- Identify clearly and completely when and how I want to receive information about the project's status
- Define how I will use the status information reported to me, including the decisions I will make, or may need to make, based on that status information
- Understand how the project's status, as reported, relates to achieving the project's plans, requirements, features, objectives, and business benefits; or ask for clarification until I do
- Use status information in a way that helps meet overall project objectives and achieve business benefits
- Recognise that having status information does not give me permission to micro-manage the project
- Prevent mis-use of any status information provided to me
- Prevent, whenever possible, dissemination of any status information that could be mis-understood or mis-used
- Accept bad news, and focus on solving problems (versus "shooting the messenger")
- Accept good news, and celebrate success
- Define, with the Project Team, what and how the project's status is to be communicated to me
- Define, with the Project Team, the frequency for communicating the project's status (e.g., based on project characteristics, such as: size/duration, visibility/criticality, Project Team capability, other business requirements; and on management characteristics, such as: lead time that I, as the Customer, may need for taking action)
- Be clear to the Project Team what I will - and will not - do with the project's status provided to me
- Be clear to the Project Team which other stakeholders will see the project's status provided to me
- Review and analyse the project's status, and provide feedback to the Project Team (e.g., praise, additional questions, offers of assistance)
- Take action on those items that are under my control or influence, as requested by the Project Team
- Follow-through on actions/issues assigned to me completely and in a timely manner, and inform the Project Team if I am unable to do so
- Communicate the project's status accurately to those who depend on me to keep them informed (e.g., do not "hide bad news" and blame someone else later)

- Never, ever, "shoot the messenger"; ensure "messengers" are never "shot" by others (even if that means protecting them with my professional reputation)

#### ***Responsibilities for Expectation (6)***

***To be apprised regularly of risks that could affect cost, schedule, or quality and to be provided with options for addressing potential problems***

I would extend this "expectation" as:

***To be apprised regularly of risks that could affect cost, schedule, functionality, or quality and to be provided with options for addressing potential problems***

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Create, nurture, maintain an environment where everybody - stakeholders and Project Team members - knows that it is safe to identify and report risks and to suggest strategies to address those risks
- Understand the project's business benefits, objectives, plans, features, requirements, and status (see all previous Responsibilities)
- Understand the likelihood that the project will achieve its business benefits and objectives based on the current status
- Understand the current project context (assumptions, risks, constraints)
- Participate with the Project Team in initial and on-going risk identification, analysis, and review, as appropriate to my role as the Customer
- Understand the following about each risk identified by the Project Team: what it is, what triggers it, the likelihood that the risk will become a real problem, the exposure if the risk becomes a real problem, the impact the risk/problem would have on cost, schedule, functionality, and/or quality, the project objectives or success criteria that would be impacted negatively
- Understand the various strategies proposed to address each risk (e.g., accept, avoid, ignore, mitigate, share), and the impacts (e.g., cost, schedule, functionality, quality) of each
- Make decisions, as appropriate, clearly and in a and timely manner when selecting the risk strategy or strategies to be implemented
- Communicate risks, analyses, actions, and status to the stakeholders who need this information
- Implement all risk strategies for which I have responsibility, monitor them, and report the results to the Project Team
- Monitor the results of all risk strategies implemented by the Project Team
- Use risk information in a way that helps meet overall project objectives
- Monitor changes in the business environment that would change the risk profile of the project, and keep the Project Team informed
- Never, ever, "shoot the messenger"; ensure "messengers" are never "shot" by others (even if that means protecting them with my professional reputation)

#### ***Responsibilities for Expectation (7)***

***To have ready access to project deliverables throughout the project***

As a responsible Customer, to ensure that my expectations are met, I must:

- Recognise that having access to project deliverables does not give me permission to meddle in their production

- Understand the current state of whatever project deliverable I am accessing, and all limitations/caveats associated with it (e.g., a "draft" document versus final; prototype of a subset of functionality, versus code that is production-quality)
- Admit when I do not have the expertise needed to provide an effective review of any project deliverable, and find someone with the appropriate expertise to do so
- Provide, at the beginning of the project, any and all standards, guidelines, conventions, and quality criteria applicable to any project deliverable that I choose to impose on the Project Team, and the rationale behind my imposing them
- Review - with the Project Team, periodically throughout the project - all applicable standards, guidelines, conventions, and quality criteria, to ensure they remain relevant and contribute to achieving business benefits and project objectives; modify, delete, add as appropriate
- Establish, with the Project Team, which project deliverables will be available, when, and how
- Establish, with the Project Team, those reviews of project deliverables in which I will participate
- Access project deliverables in a way and at a time that is non-intrusive to the Project Team
- Participate actively and mindfully in reviews of project deliverables throughout the course of the project
- Provide review comments clearly, completely, without disruption, and in a timely manner
- Provide feedback - positive as well as corrective - specifically and in a timely manner

## APPENDIX 2. A Customer Effectiveness Model.

In the introduction to Appendix 1, the lists of responsibilities associated with each of the seven Customer Expectations, I asked a question:

*If you are a Customer, how would you rate your overall effectiveness in ensuring that your expectations are met? In what areas would you like to improve?*

To provide some sort of objective measure of Customer Effectiveness, I offer the following model of "Customer Responsibility Effectiveness," based on the maturity grid of Phil Crosby.<sup>4</sup>

I like Crosby's model, because it mirrors the natural evolution of awareness and growth through which each of us passes, as we grow and mature in wisdom and in age.

Crosby's initial model of "maturity" begins with uncertainty (unawareness, ignorance), and moves through various stages of awakening, unto certainty. Here is a brief description of some of the essential transition points as we evolve through the stages of maturity.

- The transition into **awakening** occurs when we become aware of our own immediate environment. We manipulate that environment, noting cause and effect, and gain control over it. We build a sort of stability for ourselves. Within that self-oriented, stable environment, we begin to accept accountability for our actions.
- The transition into **enlightenment** occurs when we engage with our next outer environment. Because we understand our immediate environment, we are able to reach out to others with the likelihood that we will not de-stabilise our own environment. Thus, we are able to build effective relationships with other individuals and teams, make commitments to others, and meet them more predictably.
- The transition into **wisdom** occurs when we are able to understand the "system" of environments in which we live. We recognise that the systems, within which our partnership exists, shape and influence the nature of that partnership. We try to characterise and quantify these relationships, and increase our understanding of how to enhance stability and predictability. We are increasingly able to predict what commitments we can make and keep, which we cannot keep (and why not).
- The transition into **certainty** occurs, oddly enough, when we realise just how much uncertainty there is in our environments. Thus, we are able to select those opportunities where it is sensible to invest our stabilising efforts, and to recognise that which is beyond our control, and why it is beyond our control. We recognise that the key invariant in all this uncertainty is adding value through our work and our relationships. We focus on identifying those small-to-large, tactical-or-strategic opportunities to enrich our work and our relationships, with all elements of the systems within which we work (and live).

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<sup>4</sup> Phil Crosby, *Quality is Free*, 1979, McGraw-Hill Inc.



*Customer Effectiveness Model*

<i>Degree of Effectiveness (from lowest to highest)</i>	<i>Customer Behaviours</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having all the expectations without doing any of the responsibilities</li> <li>• Acting based on fear, ignorance, uncertainty, and discomfort, in most situations</li> <li>• Blaming the Project Team or the undefined "them" for most things that go wrong</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awakening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercising the responsibilities that focus on the needs of the Customer</li> <li>• Beginning to awaken to what is/ not under the Customer's control, and, thus, for what she/he may be answerable</li> <li>• Accepting accountability for things the Customer believes is under her/his control</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlightenment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercising the responsibilities that focus on the needs of the Customer and of the Project Team</li> <li>• Beginning to adopt a more enlightened view of "we" and "us," and acting based on that view</li> <li>• Creating a safer environment in which "we" and "us" can accept responsibility and accountability without fear</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisdom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercising the responsibilities congruently</li> <li>• Focusing appropriately on the Customer's own needs, the needs of each Project Team member, the needs of the business</li> <li>• Using feedback mechanisms and analysis to monitor how well project objectives are being met</li> <li>• Ensuring the project environment is safe</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certainty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercising the responsibilities congruently</li> <li>• Focusing appropriately on the Customer's own needs, the needs of each Project Team member, the needs of the business</li> <li>• Using feedback mechanisms and analysis to maximise meeting the needs of all stakeholders</li> <li>• Looking for and implementing ways to improve the value each project adds to all stakeholders (e.g., each Customer, each Project Team member, each business unit)</li> <li>• Enhancing the relationships to meet even more Customer, Project Team Member, business needs, in longer-term, strategic ways</li> </ul>