

Gathering Requirements for Effective Dimensional Modeling

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Dec 17, 2003



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“Definitive Source for the Dimensional Approach”

Consulting

***Project assessments and
strategy***

Requirements analysis

***Dimensional modeling and
design reviews***

Technical architecture

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Education

Public and on-site classes

Dimensional Modeling

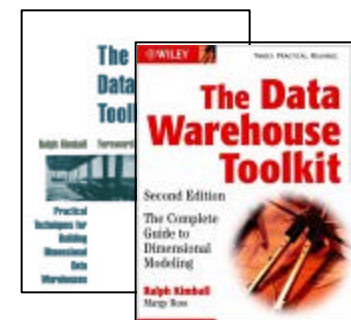
***Data Warehousing
Lifecycle***

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Reference Materials

□ Course materials adapted from...

- *The Data Warehouse Lifecycle Toolkit*
 - ➔ *R. Kimball, L. Reeves, M. Ross, W. Thornthwaite (Wiley 1998)*
- *The Data Warehouse Toolkit, 2nd Edition*
 - ➔ *R. Kimball, M. Ross (Wiley 2002)*
- *Kimball University*
 - ➔ *Design Tips*
 - ➔ *Intelligent Enterprise articles*
 - ➔ *www.KimballUniversity.com*



Session Agenda and Goals

□ Agenda:

- *Introductions*
- *Lifecycle Approach*
- *Dimensional Model Overview*
- *Gathering Requirements for Dimensional Modeling*

□ Today's Goals:

- *Learn proven approach for gathering data warehouse business requirements*
- *Learn specific concepts and practical techniques*

Top 10 Reasons Data Warehouses Miss the Mark

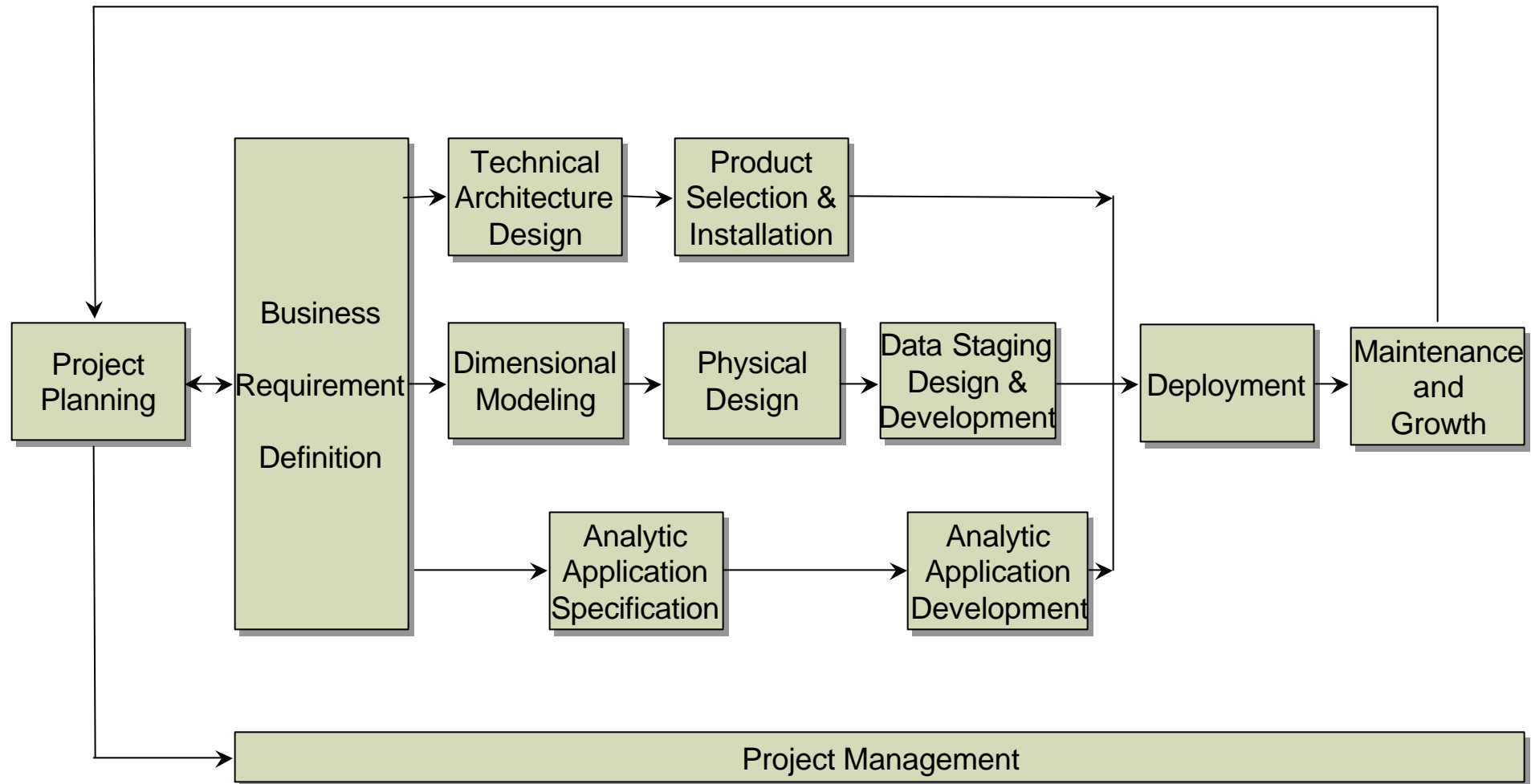
- Focus on technology and data rather than business requirements and goals.**
- Fail to secure business sponsorship.**
- Pursue all-or-nothing approach rather than compelling iterations.**
- Spend time and energy building normalized data foundation, with nothing left for presentation.**
- Concentrate on operational performance and development rather than query performance and ease of use.**

Top 10 Reasons Data Warehouses Miss the Mark

- Make the user view of the data too complex.**
- Build isolated data silos (marts or warehouses).**
- Only load summarized data into the user presentation area.**
- Presume business requirements are static.**
- Fail to recognize that the data warehouse's success is tied directly to user acceptance.**

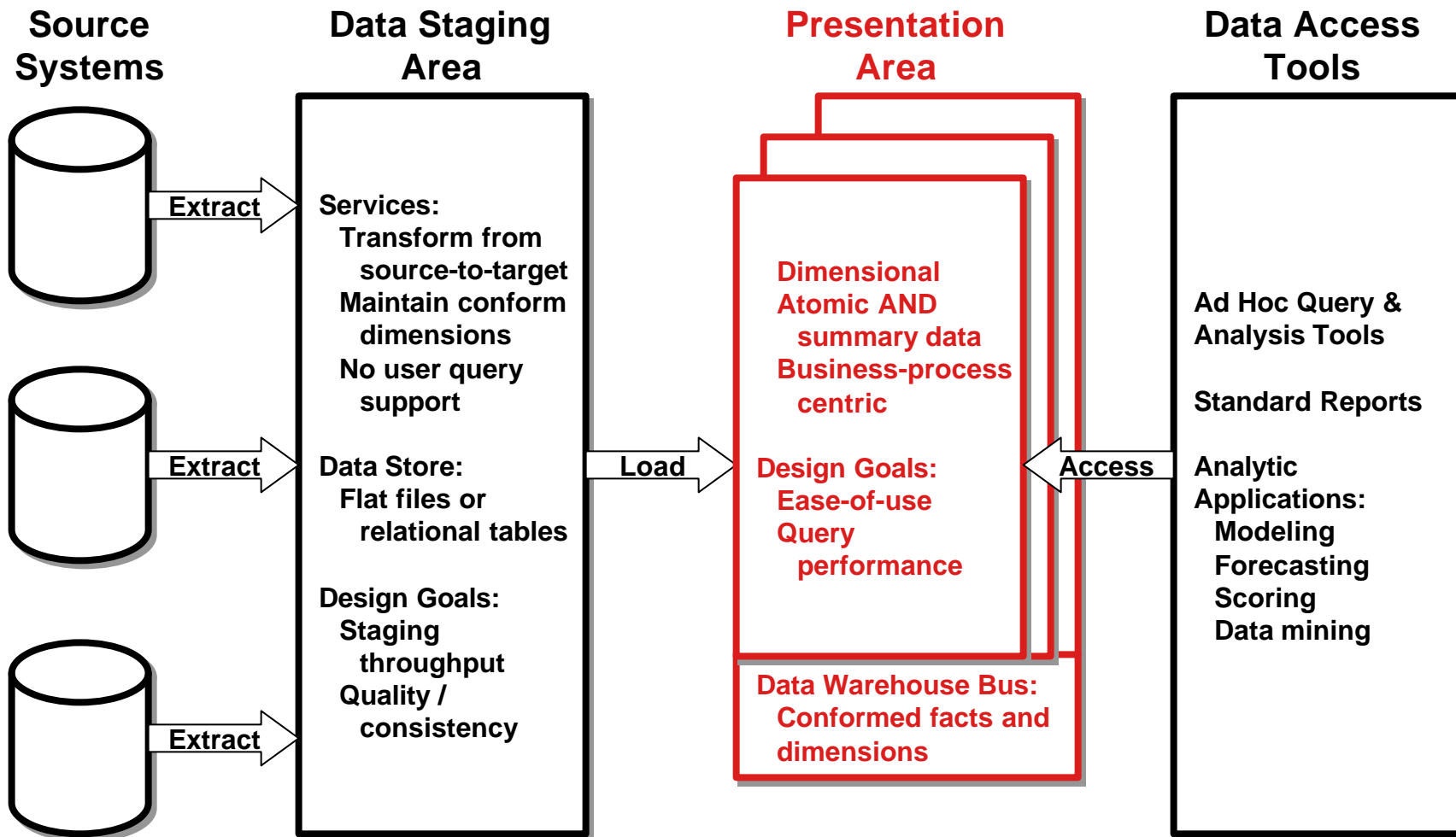
Business Dimensional Lifecycle Approach

Business Dimensional Lifecycle



Dimensional Modeling Concepts

Simplified Elements of Data Warehouse



Terminology: Dimensions

- ❑ **Set of attributes (columns) related to a subject/object**
 - *Who, what, when, where, why, how*
 - *Product, Customer, Date, Patient, Vendor, Facility, ...*
- ❑ **Each dimension row is a unique occurrence**
 - *One row per product, customer, day, ...*
- ❑ **Dimension attributes:**
 - *Report labels and query constraints*
 - *“By” words and “where” clauses*
 - *Verbose descriptive attributes, in addition to codes*
 - *Hierarchical relationships*

PRODUCT KEY

Product Desc.
SKU #
Size
Brand Desc.
Class Desc.

Terminology: Facts

- **Result from a business process or business event**
 - *Facts are usually numeric and additive*
- **Granularity/grain**
 - *Identifies the fact level of detail*
 - *One row per sale, one row per service call, one row per claim, ...*
 - *Atomic grain is most flexible*

DATE KEY
PRODUCT KEY
STORE KEY
PROMOTION KEY

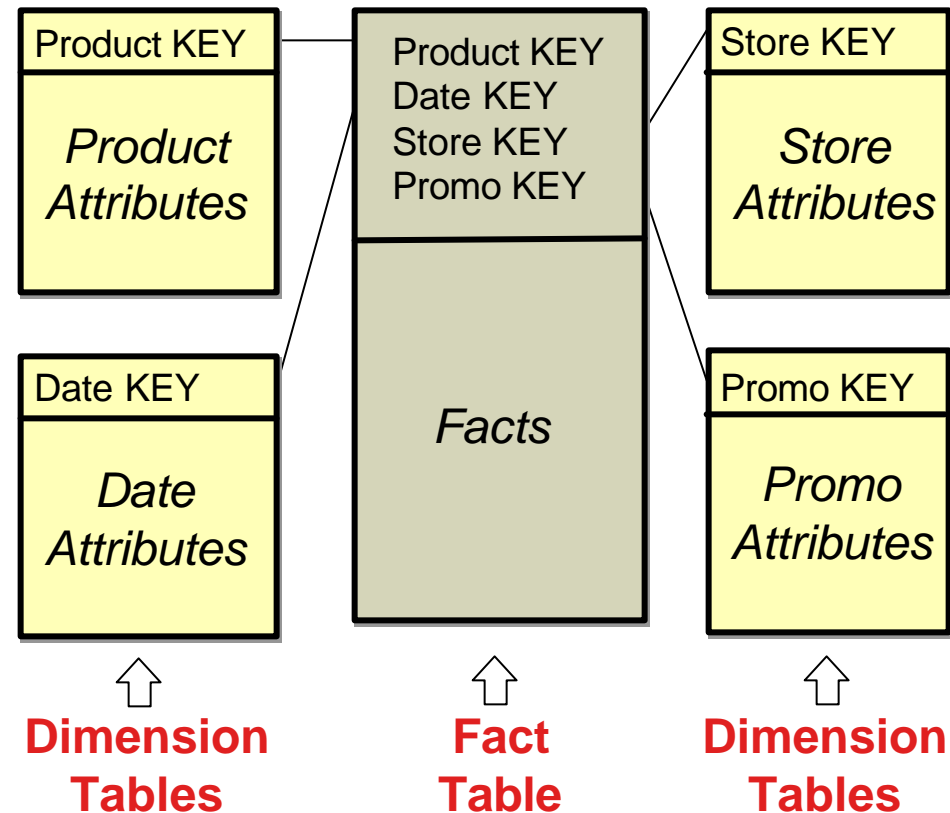
\$ Sales
Unit Sales

Terminology: Dimensional Model or Star Schema

❑ Fact table per business process / event, plus relevant dimensions

❑ Benefits:

- *Easier to understand*
- *Better performance from fewer joins*
- *Extensible to handle change*



Sample Report Translation of Dimensional Model

Sales Rep Performance Report Central Region		
	Jan 2003	Feb 2003
	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
Chicago District		
Adams	990	999
Brown	900	999
Frederickson	990	999
Minneapolis District		
Andersen	950	999
Smith	950	999
Central Region Total	4,780	4,995



“Dimensions”

Report, row and column headings

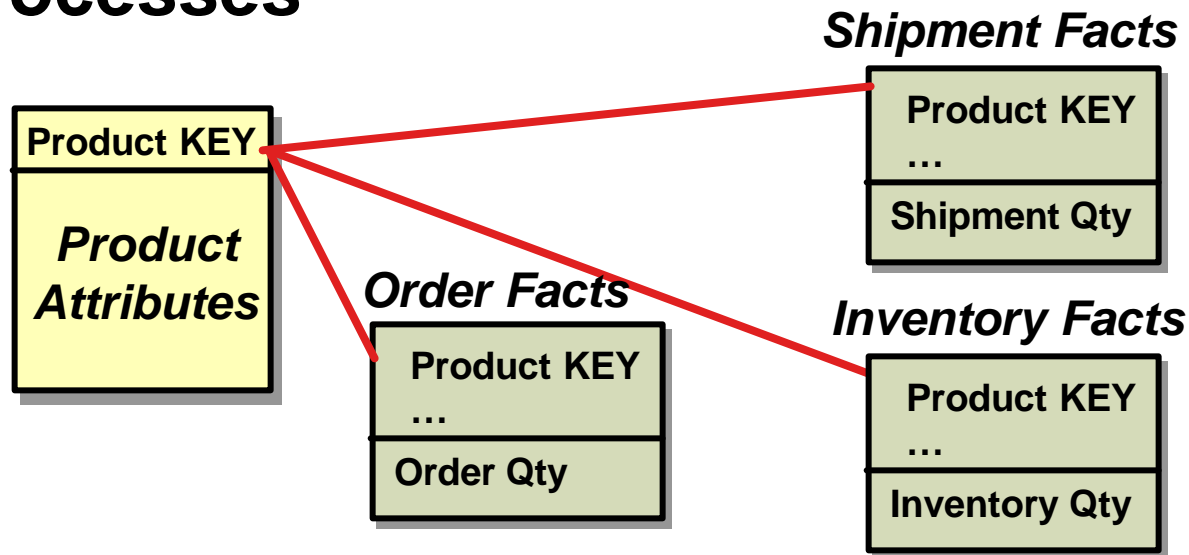


“Facts”

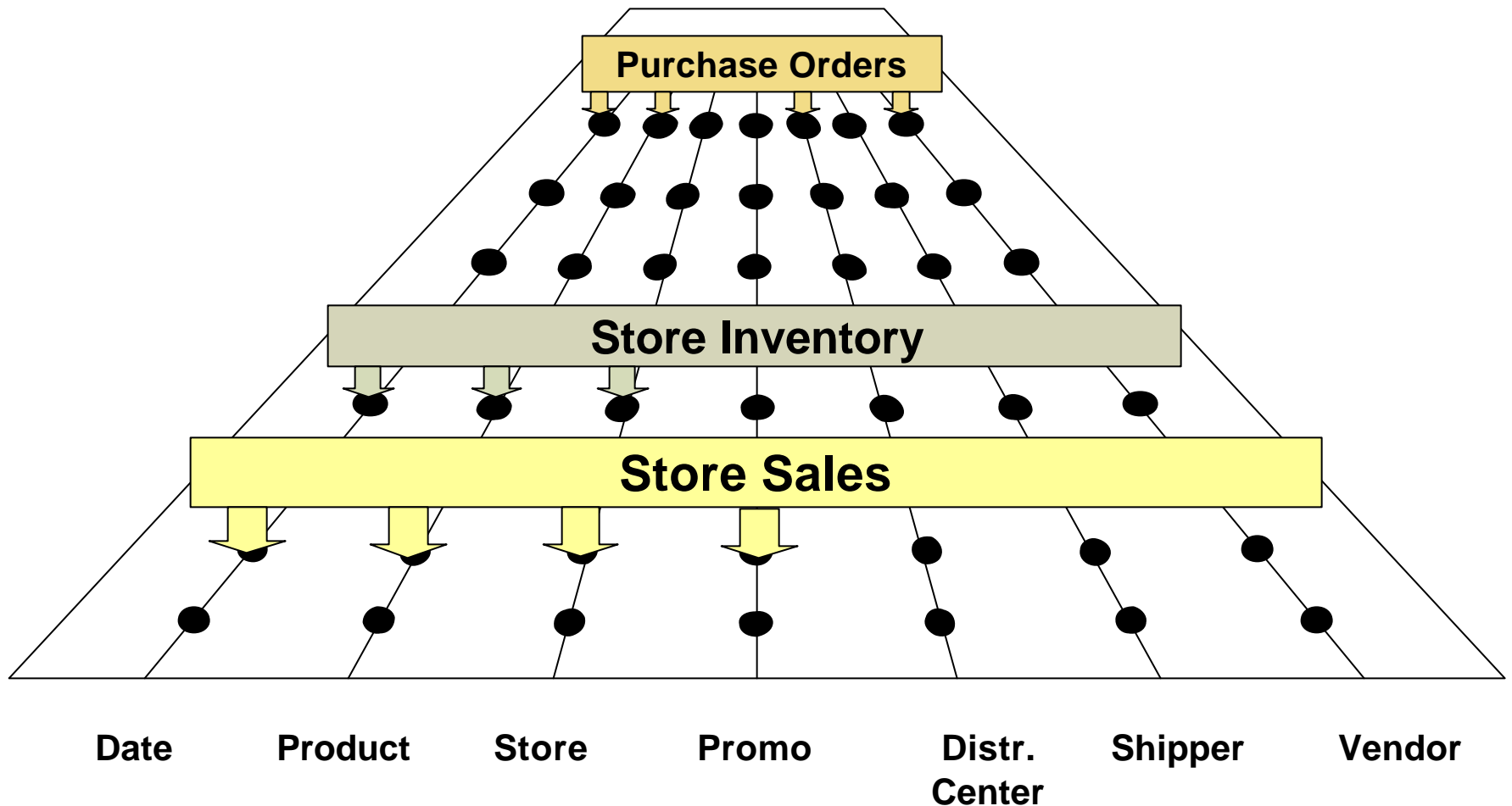
Numeric report values

Terminology: Conformed Dimensions

- ❑ One row for each instance of a business subject or object (product, customer, etc.)
- ❑ All fact tables use same standard dimensions
 - *Established via Bus Matrix, enforced in ETL*
- ❑ Consistent – applies to apples across processes



Terminology: Enterprise Data Warehouse Bus Architecture



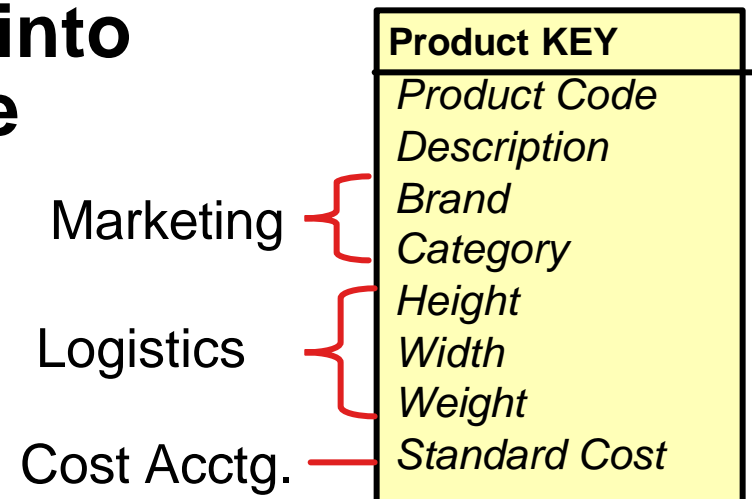
Terminology: Data Warehouse Bus Matrix

- ❑ Rows = Business processes
- ❑ Columns = Conformed dimensions

	Date	Product	Store	Promo	Dist Ctr	Shipper	Vendor
Store Sales							
Store Inventory							
Store Deliveries							
Dist Ctr Inventory							
Dist Ctr Delivery							
Purchase Orders							

Creating Conformed Dimensions

- ❑ **Assign surrogate key to every dimension row**
 - *Buffer the DW from operational system changes*
 - *Integrate data from multiple sources*
 - *Query performance advantages*
 - *Prerequisite for slowly changing dimension*
- ❑ **Combine all attributes into Master dimension table**
- ❑ **Use the Master to map surrogate keys to fact rows**

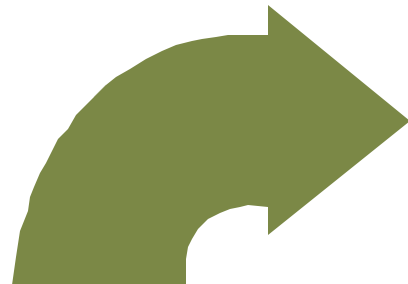
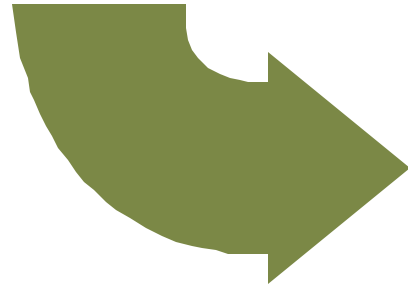


Dimensional Modeling Process

- Develop the Data Warehouse Bus matrix
- Follow the 4-step method
 - *Step 1: Identify the business process (matrix row)*
- Research data sources, including direct data exploration
- Complete the 4-step method
 - *Step 2: Declare the grain*
 - *Step 3: Identify the dimensions*
 - *Step 4: Identify the facts*
- Diagram the dimensional model

Key Input to Dimensional Model

***Business
Requirements***



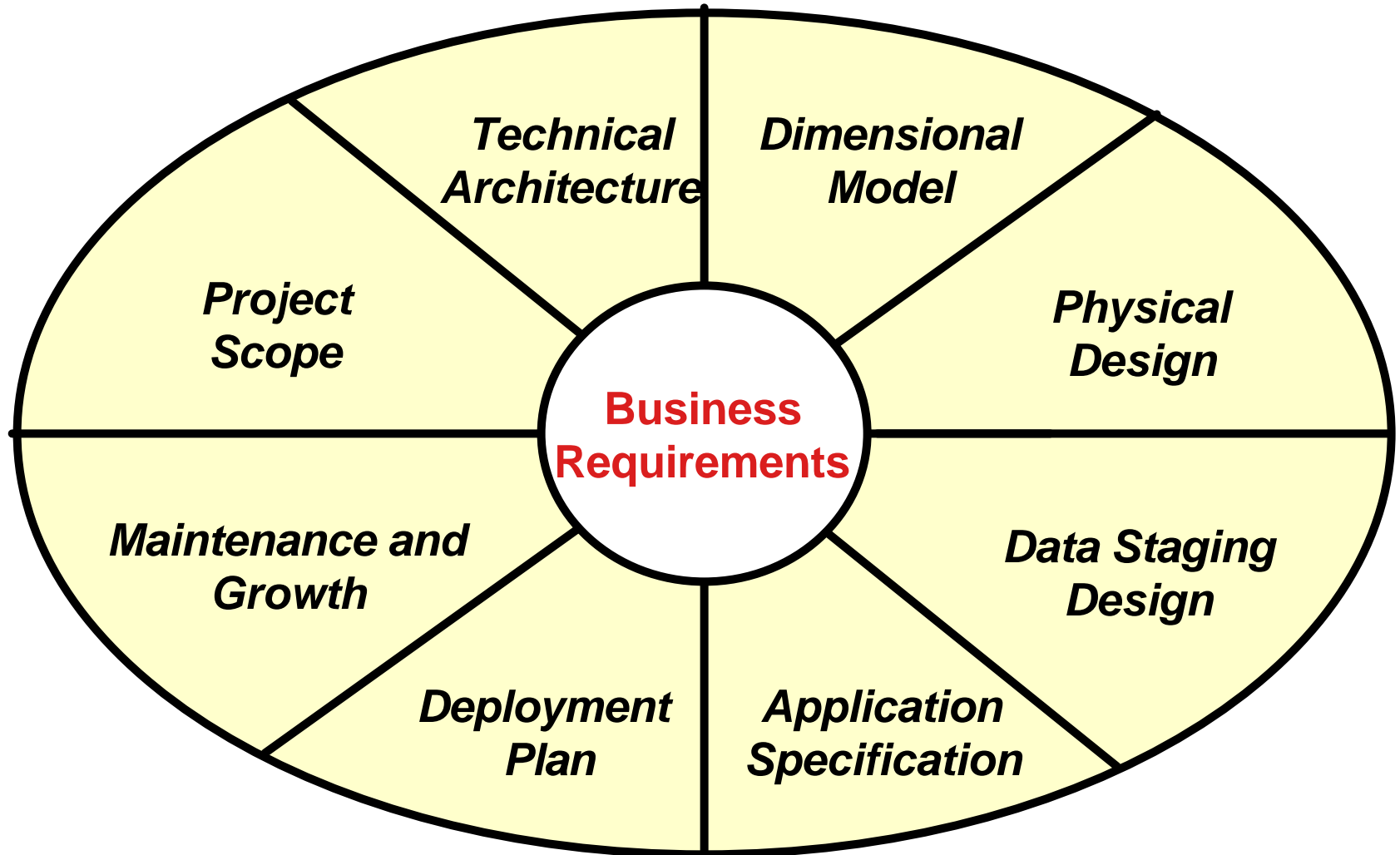
***Data
Realities***

**Dimensional
Model:**

***Business Process
Grain
Dimensions
Facts***

Gathering Business Requirements

Importance of Business Requirements



Recommended Approach for Uncovering Requirements

- ❑ **Start with business users to understand...**
 - *Business objectives*
 - *Information/analysis themes*
 - *Decision-making process*

- ❑ **Interweave data “reality” meetings with source system experts or DBAs**
 - *Ability to support user themes*
 - *Data gotchas*

Techniques for Uncovering Requirements

Interviews

- + *All voices heard*
- + *Less interviewee time required*

Facilitated Group Sessions

- + *Less elapsed time, but more participant time*
- *Limited # participants*
- + *Brainstorming, consensus and issue resolution*

Interviews AND Facilitated Groups

Preparation: Research and Team Roles/Tools

- ❑ **Don't presume you already know it all**
 - *Research available resources*
 - ➔ *Annual report, marketing literature, web content*
 - *Organization chart*
 - *Previous warehousing initiatives*
- ❑ **Identify interview team roles**
 - *Lead interviewer, scribe and observers*
- ❑ **Prepare interview questionnaire**
 - *Specific to interviewee level and function*
 - *1-page fallback device, not script*

Preparation: Select Interviewees

- **Horizontal user representation (breadth)**
 - *Understand common vocabulary and data across core functions*
 - *Critical to Data Warehouse Bus framework*

- **Vertical user representation (depth)**
 - *Vision → tactics; full perspective in target area*
 - *Executives, managers and analysts*

- **Preliminary IT representatives**
 - *Source experts, DBAs, IT liaisons and IT mgmt*

Preparation: Schedule/Prepare Interviewees

☐ Scheduling logistics:

- *Solicit administrative help*
- *Individual sessions for execs*
- *Individual or small groups for others*
 - ➔ *Max 2 - 3 people; homogeneous; < 2 levels*
- *Maximum 3 - 4 interviews per day*
 - ➔ *One hour for individuals; 1 1/2 hour for groups*
 - ➔ *Minimum 1/2 hour between interviews*

☐ Prepare users:

- *Conduct User Kick-off Meeting - “ownership”*
- *Follow-up with pre-interview letter*
 - ➔ *Bring copies of key analyses*

Interview Flow: Introduce the Interview

- ❑ **Set the stage...**
 - *Review project and interview objectives*
 - *Introduce team players and roles*
 - *Confirm time*

- ❑ **Establish overall tone**
 - *Practice in advance*
 - *No technical jargon; No phones or pagers*

- ❑ **Get users to talk about what they do**
 - *Job responsibilities and organizational fit?*

Business Executive Interview Content

□ Big-picture understanding and vision

- *Objectives of your organization? What are you trying to accomplish?*
- *How do you measure success? How do you know doing well? How often measured?*
 - ➔ *Identify key business processes and facts*
- *Key business issues? Vision for organization?*
- *Opportunities to better leverage information within organization? Impact on business?*
 - ➔ *Identify expectations and business benefits*

Business Manager/Analyst Interview Content

- **Similar to Business Exec, but more detailed**
 - *Objectives of your department? How measure success? Key metrics? How often?*
 - *Identify key business processes and facts*
 - *How distinguish between products? Natural way categorize products? How narrow list of products?*
 - *Identify dimension attributes and hierarchies*
 - *Types of routine/ad hoc analysis performed? How often? Improvements to current methods?*
 - *Identify data access tool requirements & application templates*
 - *Opportunity to impact business with improved access to information? Financial impact?*

Business Analyst Report / Spreadsheet Review

- **Understand current analyses and opportunities for improvement**
 - *What data on the report is important?*
 - *How do they use the report today?*
 - *If report were dynamic, what's different?*

- **Remember: Designing analytic environment, not reporting system** 
 - *Resist temptation to focus on top five reports*

IT Data Audit Interview Content

- ❑ **Feasibility of supporting requirements**
 - *Overview key operational source system*
 - *Update frequency? Availability of historical data?*
 - *Known data caveats or quality issues?*
 - ➔ *Identify data availability and gotchas*

- ❑ **Dig until confident that core data exists**
 - *More detailed data analysis will follow for dimensional modeling*
 - *Beware of classic “profitability” data trap*

Interview Flow: Wrap-Up

Ask about project success criteria

- *What is the #1 thing the project must accomplish to be deemed successful?*
 - *Identify measurable success criteria*

Review next steps

- *General disclaimer to manage expectations*
- *Deliverables and next feedback opportunity*

Thank for participation

Interview Flow: Ground Rules

- ❑ Remember interview role
 - *Do LISTEN; don't defend, sell, try to impress, etc.*
- ❑ Establish peer basis
 - *Use their vocabulary*
 - *Don't dive too quickly*
- ❑ Strive for conversational flow
- ❑ Verify communication
 - *Capture terminology precisely*
- ❑ Maintain interview schedule flexibility
 - *Can add new folks, but avoid interview burn-out*

Post-Interview: Review Interview Results

- **Informally debrief with team**
 - *Common themes*
 - *Do-ability*
 - *Areas requiring clarification*
 - *User analytical / technical sophistication*

- **Fill-in rough interview notes**
 - *Highlight key points and vocabulary*

Post-Interview: Publish Deliverables

- ❑ Don't overlook formal documentation
 - *Validation*
 - *Reference material*

- ❑ Individual interview write-ups
 - *Summary, not transcript*
 - ➔ *Business Objectives*
 - ➔ *Analytic and Info Requirements*
 - ➔ *Project Success Criteria*

- ❑ Consolidated findings document

Post-Interview: Publish Deliverables cont'd

Consolidated Requirements Findings

- *Executive Overview*
- *Project Overview*
- *Business Requirements*
 - *Business Process Opportunities (matrix rows)*
 - *Description*
 - *Typical questions*
 - *Data feasibility*
- *Preliminary Data Warehouse Bus Matrix*
- *Success Criteria*

Post-Interview: Facilitation for Next Steps

☐ Session with Business and IT management

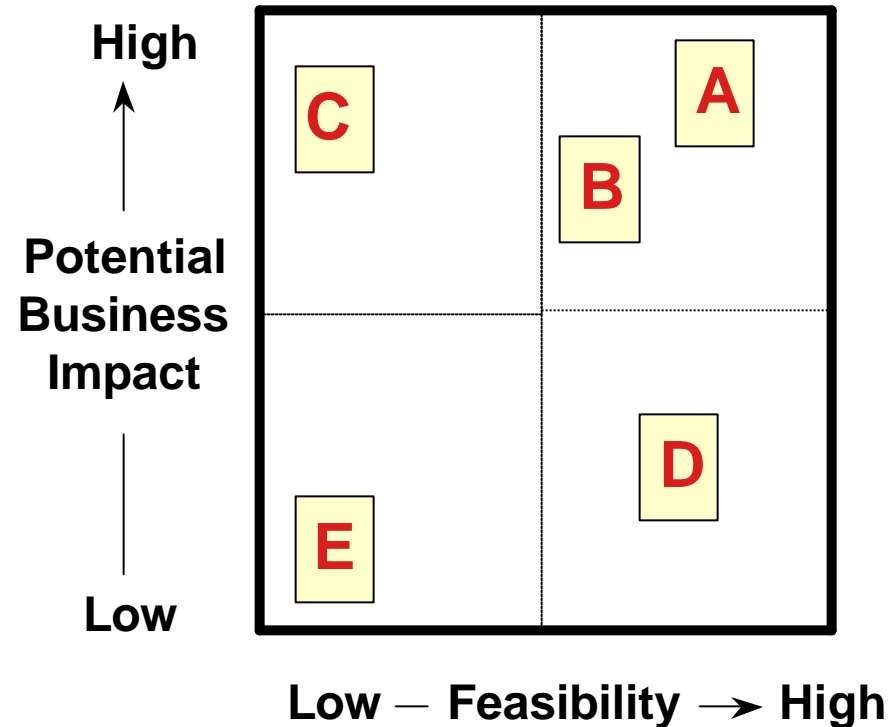
- *Confirm findings*
- *Get commitment*
- *Prioritize*

☐ For each requirement

- *Business impact / value*
- *Feasibility*

☐ Outcomes:

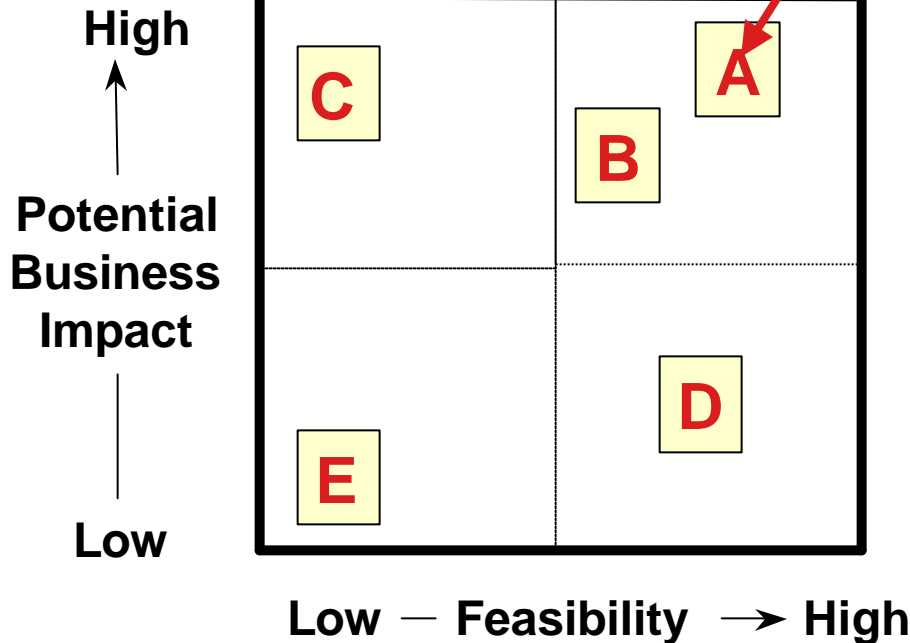
- *“Right” opportunities*
- *Consensus*
- *Ownership*
- *Roadmap for growth*



Linking Data Warehouse Bus Matrix and Prioritization Grid

Data Warehouse Bus Matrix

	Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5
Biz Proc A					
Biz Proc B					
Biz Proc C					
Biz Proc D					
Biz Proc E					



Tips for Handling Obstacles

- “Abused User”** ➔ **Review documentation**
“Validate” earlier input
Use alternative forum
- “Overbooked User”** ➔ **Get sponsor’s help**
Defer, if prevalent
- “Comatose User”** ➔ **Don’t prolong agony**
Find replacement
- “Overzealous User”** ➔ **Assess homogeneity**
Reschedule sessions
- “Non-Existent User”** ➔ **Typically fatal - STOP!**

Business Requirements Warning Signs

- ***“We already understand the requirements -- better than the users do.”***
- ***“We’ll send out a survey.”***
- ***“We’ll just look at their current reports and data files to understand users’ requirements.”***
- ***“Since each interview lasts one hour, we’ve scheduled 2 days of interviews with 8 interviews per day.”***
- ***“We don’t have time to document the interviews.”***

Business Requirements Summary



- Understanding business requirements is **CRITICAL** to successful data warehousing
- Don't overlook the up-front preparation
- Focus on listening
- Document what you've heard
- Close the loop following requirements