

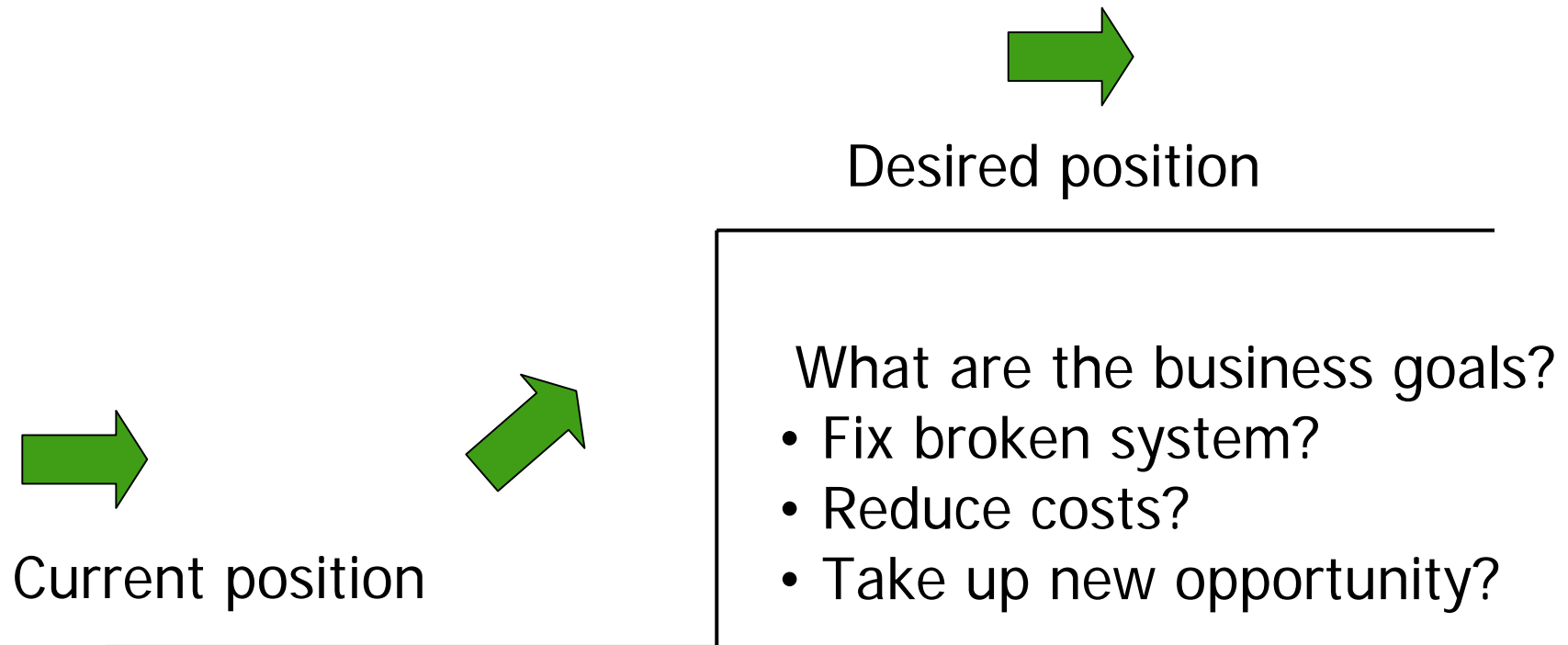
Using business requirements for project success

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Agenda

- How do content management projects start?
- The use of feature lists for requirements
- Problems with feature lists
- What are business requirements?
- Benefits of business requirements
- Conclusions

What is the problem?



Ingredients of change solution

- Understanding of the problem
- Support from management
- Money (budget)
- Support from users & other key stakeholders
- Solution plan
- Someone to execute the plan (developer or vendor)

Birth of a project – One approach

The feature list.

“The system must have: ...”

- Long list of features, usually with little or no reference to the real business issues or other context information.

Problems with feature lists

- How do you build internal support?
- How do you get a budget for the project?
- How do you tell vendors what you really want?
- How do you separate the vendors?
(many will just tick all boxes)
- May provide useful requirements in proper context.
- How do you measure success?

Example business oriented questions

1. General description of the software that the documentation supports.
2. What kinds of documentation do you provide (reference manuals, user guides, training etc.)?
3. Who are the documentation users?
4. How do the software users expect to access documentation?
5. How many languages & how is content for each language created?
6. How do you create and publish documentation now?
7. What problems, if any, do your customers have with the current documentation?
8. What improvements, if any, to documentation do you want to give to your customers?
9. What problems do you have internally in producing documentation?
10. What improvements do you want to make to your production processes?

Example statement of objectives

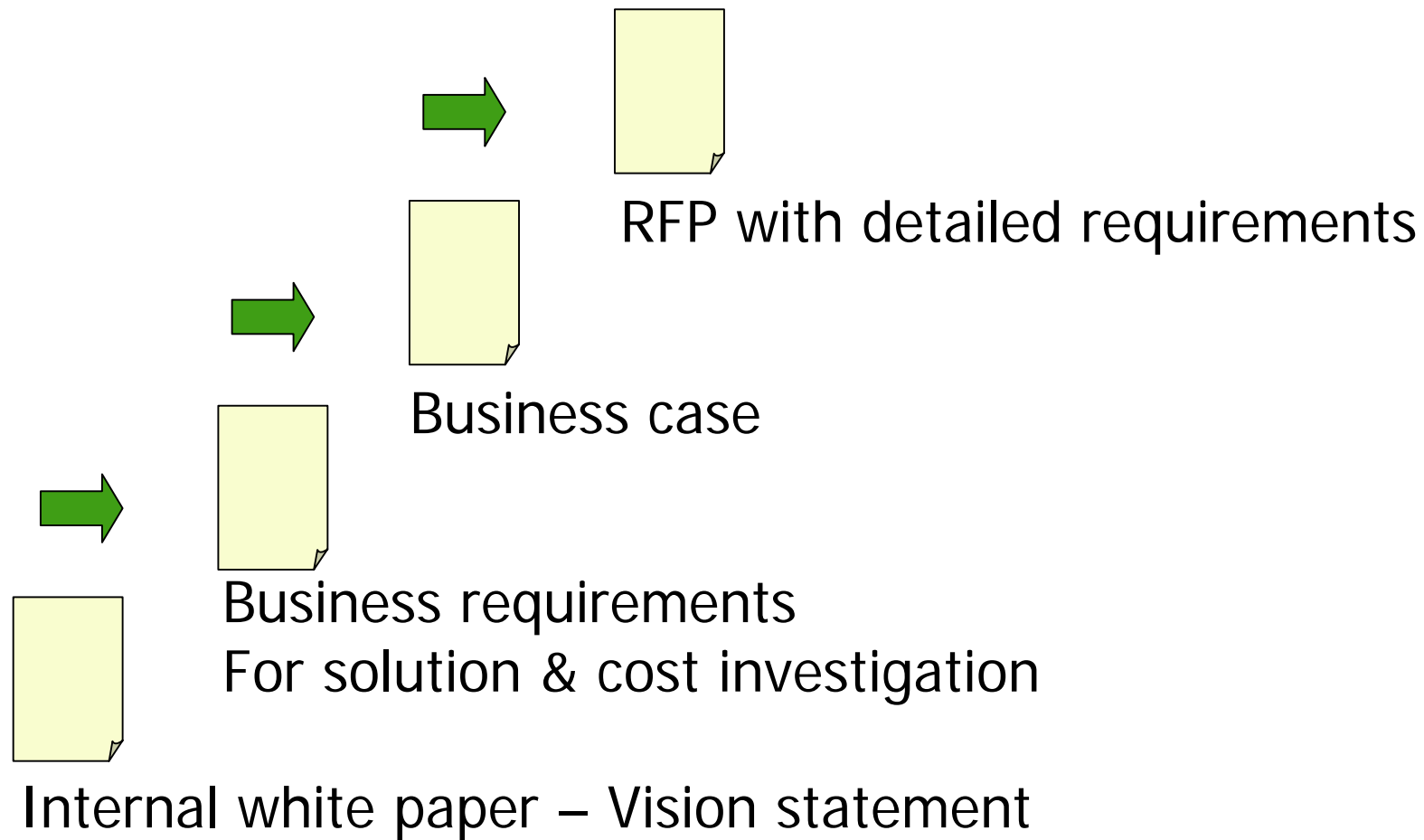
[Description of current operations and problems]

Company expects to substantially re-write documentation for Software over the next 18 months and wishes to establish a common platform that will enable it to improve the structure of the documentation for users and make it easier to maintain and publish documentation from all company offices in multiple languages.

Key objectives are:

- (a) Move from WinHelp to a format supported in Windows Vista such as HTML Help (.chm) or HTML web help.
- (b) Improve translations, make it practicable to support additional languages, make it easier to manage the translation process and minimize the cost of translation.
- (c) Avoid the need to manually manage file movements and versions by letting writers to work in a common application in their choice of either English or Japanese.
- (d) Simplify and improve current production workflows by reducing duplication and avoiding the need to manually transfer content between different software formats.
- (e) Acquire the capability for context sensitive help etc. to improve the marketing of Software and to minimize training and support costs.

Using business requirements



Conclusions

- It is essential to define the problems & the desired solution as soon as possible.
- Product features are not solutions.
- Problem definition permits cost benefit assessment – essential for business case.
- Without a business case, adequate funding is unlikely.
- Problem definition lets everyone work to a common problem.
- Problem definition helps you to define success measures.

Thank you

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