Business Use-Case Description Template

The following is a suggested template to be used in creating a business use-case description (referred to in RUP as a *business use-case specification*). Please note that there are many different styles in use for this template; the template that follows contains an extensive list of sections to be taken into consideration—though not necessarily completed—when describing a use case.

1. **Business Use-Case Name:** *(The business use-case name as it appears on business use-case diagrams. Name the goal of the primary actor for this use case.)*

   Level: *(Specify the level of business service or process described by the business use case. For example: high-level = end-to-end business process; mid-level = mid-level business process with subprocesses; low-level = business process with no smaller sub-processes. If the level is unspecified, a high-level [end-to-end] business process is assumed.)*

   Type: *(Base use case/extending/included/generalized/specialized)*

   1.1 Business Context

   1.1.1 Brief Description

   (Briefly describe the use case in approximately one paragraph.)

   1.1.2 Business Goals and Benefits

   (Briefly describe the business rationale for the use case.)

   1.1.3 Business Area

   (Name the business area being modeled, for example, Incident Management.)

   1.2 Actors

   1.2.1 Primary Business Actor

   (Identify the entity [or entities] outside the business area that may initiate the business use case.)

   1.2.2 Other Actors

   (Identify other actors directly involved in achieving the use-case goal. You may classify other actors as shown below.)

   1.2.2.1 Secondary Business Actors (Table 6.11)

   (List entities, such as Supplier, that lie outside the business area but participate in the process once the use case has been triggered.)

   1.2.2.2 Workers (Table 6.12)

   (List internal workers—such as Customer Service Representatives—who execute steps in the business process once the use case has been triggered.)

Table 6.11 Secondary Business Actors

Secondary Business Actor	Responsibility

Table 6.12 Workers

Worker	Responsibility

1.2.3 Off-Stage Stakeholders[3] (Table 6.13)

(Identify non-participating stakeholders who have interests in this use case.)

Table 6.13 Off-Stage Stakeholders

Off-Stage Stakeholder	Interest

1.3 Triggers

(Describe the event or condition that kick-starts the use case, such as "Application Received." If the trigger is time-driven, describe the temporal condition, such as end-of-month.)

1.4 Pre-Conditions

(List conditions that must be true before the use case begins. However, if the condition forces the use case to start, do not list it here; rather, list it as a trigger.)

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[3]The term is used by Alistair Cockburn in *Writing Effective Use Cases* (Addison-Wesley Professional, 2000).

1.5   Post-Conditions

(Post-conditions are guaranteed outcomes of the use case. Any post-condition is guaranteed to be true after the use case ends. The subsections of post-conditions distinguish between outcomes that are guaranteed only when the use case ends successfully and outcomes that are guaranteed in all cases.)

1.5.1   Post-Conditions on Success

(Describe outcomes that are guaranteed for every interaction that ends in success, that is, where the goal of the use case is achieved. Post-conditions on Success are additional to any guarantees listed in Guaranteed Post-Conditions.)

1.5.2   Guaranteed Post-Conditions

(Describe outcomes that are guaranteed for every interaction—regardless of whether the use case ends in success or failure.)

1.6   Extension Points

(An extension point is a feature of a use case that identifies a point where the behaviour of a use case can be augmented with elements of another [extending] use case.[4] The extension takes place at one or more specific extension points defined in the extended base use case.[5] [UML 2] In this subsection of the template, name and describe points at which other [extending] use cases may extend this use case.[6] [Alternatively, you may define extension points graphically, in the lower half of the oval symbol used for the base use case.[7]] Your extension-point declaration may resemble the following. In the example, the extension point, "Preferred Customer," refers to any points within the range of steps 2.5 through 2.9 in this use case. The implication is that while a scenario is executing steps 2.5 through 2.9, if the condition attached to an extension that uses this point becomes true, the extending use case is activated.)

1.6.1   Preferred Customer: Steps 2.5-2.9

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[4]Unified Modeling Language Superstructure, V2.1.2, OMG, 2007, p. 591.

[5]Unified Modeling Language Superstructure, V2.1.2, OMG, 2007, p. 589.

[6]The UML states that extension points are a feature of the base use case and are defined within it, an approach consistent with that used in the template. However, some contend that Jacobson's view—that the extended use case should have no knowledge of whether or not it is extended—argues for the extension points to be declared elsewhere. Also, note that just because an extension point is declared for a base use case does not mean it will necessarily be used by all extending use cases. The extension points that are used by a particular extending use case may be indicated in a note attached to the extend relationship.

[7]Unified Modeling Language Superstructure, V2.1.2, OMG, 2007, p. 591.

1.7 Local View Business Use-Case Diagram

(A Local View use-case diagram indicates the use case in question and all its direct relationships. Include a business use-case diagram showing this business use case, all of its relationships [includes, extends, and generalizes] with other business use cases and its associations with actors.

The priority and status of the use case should be tracked elsewhere, ideally, in a requirements or project-management tool, such as ReqPro or MS Project. If it is not, add sections here for priority and status.

2. Flow of Events

Basic Flow

2.1 Insert Basic Flow Steps, starting from 2.1, following with 2.2, 2.3, and so on.

Alternate Flows[8]

Xa Alternate Flow Name

(The flow name should describe the condition that triggers the alternate flow. In the Cockburn numbering system used here, "X" is the step number where the interruption occurs. For example, the first alternate flow that diverges from step 2.5 is named 2.5a; the second is named 2.5b, etc. Describe the steps in paragraph or point form. The last step in the flow should either direct the reader to a step in another flow [Basic or Alternate], or, if the use case ends at that point, should identify whether the use case ends in success or failure. Guaranteed Post-Conditions apply regardless of how the use case ends; Post-Conditions on Success are guaranteed only when the use case ends in success.)

Your alternate flow header might resemble the following example, triggered at step 2.5 in the basic flow.

2.5a Product Not Available

3. Special Requirements

(List any special requirements or constraints that apply specifically to this use case.)

3.1 Business Service Level (Non-Functional) Requirements

(List requirements from the business area that do not pertain directly to workflow. List only those that are particular to this use case; list across-the-board non-functional requirements in the Business Service Level [Non-Functional] Requirements [external to this use case]. Sample subsections follow. For a more complete list of subsections, refer to the Service Level Requirements Template in this chapter.)

3.1.1 Business Usability Requirements

3.1.2 Business Reliability Requirements

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[8]The term *alternate flow* is used because of its popularity; however, the correct term would be *alternative flow*.

3.1.3   Business Performance Requirements

3.1.4   Business Supportability Requirements

3.1.5   Business Security Requirements

3.1.6   Legal and Regulatory Requirements

3.2   Constraints

(List technological, architectural, and other constraints on the use case.)

4. Activity Diagram

(If the flows in this business use case connect to each other in complex ways, include an activity diagram showing workflow for this use case or for select parts of the use case.)

5. Process Artifacts

(Initially, include description/prototypes/sample layouts of artifacts used as input to or created by the business use case to help the reader visualize the interaction, but not to constrain the design. Later, provide links to design artifacts.)

6. Domain (Business Entity) Diagrams

(Include class diagrams depicting business entity classes, relationships, and multiplicities of all objects participating in this use case.)

7. Open Issues

(List any assumptions, notes, and questions that need to be verified with stakeholders. Make sure all of these items have been addressed and removed from this section before final sign-off.)

8. Information Items

(Include a link or reference to documentation describing rules for data items that relate to this use case. Documentation of this sort is often found in a data dictionary.)

9. Prompts and Messages

(Any prompts or messages should only be referenced in the use-case flows. The details of the prompt or message should be included here or in a message catalogue.)

10. Business Rules

(This section of the use-case documentation should provide links or references to the specific business rules that are active during the use case. An example of a business rule for an airline package is, "Airplane weight must never exceed the maximum allowed for its aircraft type." Organizations often keep such rules in an automated business rules engine or manually in a binder.)

11. Related Artifacts

(Include references to other artifacts such as decision tables, complex algorithms, and so on.)