



Stefan Sturm
COO, IREB GmbH

Q: How did your adventure in Requirements Engineering (RE) get started?

A: In fact quite late. In my first employment we did no RE at all. We just asked the customer what they wanted. Also, while running my own company for more than 10 years, we did no proper RE, just interviews. Although we were quite successful with our projects, we had some bad experiences where we did not meet customers' expectations. Only when I came in touch with IREB as an external project manager did I learn that there is so much more to RE than doing interviews! I should have known much earlier!

Q: What are the most important lessons you've learned about business, leadership, and RE?

A: Quite simple, but often not done well: It's all about communication. Talk to each other! Knowing techniques and methods from RE helps you very much in facilitating communication and achieving shared understanding - which is key!

Q: Which person/work experience in the field has personally changed the way you see RE?

A: Not a single person, but an organization: IREB! Digging through the IREB documents was an eye-opening journey...

Q: Why do you think companies need Requirements Engineers?

A: That relates to my first answer. Many people (like me in the past) are gathering Requirements without having a clue about the available techniques and methods, just doing interviews. That definitely leads to a rather low level of requirements quality and thus to sub-optimal software systems. Companies can deliver so much more value when doing RE properly - and that needs well-skilled RE professionals.

Q: What advice do you have for someone getting started as a Requirements Engineer?

A: Get any kind of education, self-study or training in RE. Of course, going for a CPRE Foundation Level is a good start, but these are the basics only. One needs to practice, reflect, improve and probably go for some advanced education as well.

Q: What are the biggest challenges a Requirements Engineer faces daily?

A: The un-reflected usage of AI. Prompting an LLM and taking the results without a proper quality-check is something we see a lot now. REs need to understand how LLMs (and other AI) work and where the pitfalls are. Then they need to learn how they can use AI to support their RE work and how to use it beneficially. IREB will come along with some guidance on that (AI4RE) in December 2025. Stay tuned!