

# Liz Keogh's Blog

Software, Training, Coaching, Writing.

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## Clients value changing their minds too

A few years back, I met Chris Parsons when he gave a talk about a topic I was hugely interested in. Chris was the CEO of Eden Development, a little software house down in Winchester. Meeting him resulted in us both appreciating offering options in real life.

After the talk Chris and I exchanged ideas about some questions he'd had difficulty answering. He seemed impressed and suggested I should come and coach his team for a day or two. I like small companies; they're usually fun and easy to coach. So, I offered him a fairly low rate and Chris replied promptly and said, "Come down on Monday." "Hmmm, you said, 'A day or two,'" I reminded him. "You see, Winchester's two and a half hours by train, each way, and I don't really feel like travelling for five hours only to do it again the next day, so I have a proposal."

I offered Chris the option for my help on the second day, at the same low rate. Chris could buy this option for the price of a hotel and a meal. If he paid for my hotel, I'd stay there regardless. This way I would have a nice relaxed time instead of trying to travel there and back in one day, and if Chris wanted me back for the second day all he needed to do was let me know before I left on the first day.

Chris loved the idea. I booked the hotel, and towards the end of the first day, I shared the idea of Feature Injection, which Chris Matts had taught me - pulling out work items from an initial project vision by considering the different stakeholders of a project, their goals, and the capabilities the system would need to meet them.

Chris Parsons was so pleased with the results on the first day that he asked me to come back on the second day - he used the option. When I came back in, Chris said, "I've spoken to our client and asked him to keep a prioritized list of the things he wants. We only need to know the top six things he wants us to work on. This allows us to help him focus on the stakeholder goals more effectively. We'll chat with him once a week to get more. Now... how do we make this work?"

When I called back a few months later to see how things were going, they had reduced the limit to three items, talking to their client twice a week. It turned out their client loved having the option to change his mind too!