

Mastering Business Analysis

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Overview

Business analysis provides the foundation for almost every kind of business change. The craft of business analysis is to investigate the business, to find its problem hot spots and recommend ways to improve them. Business analysis is a combination of modelling, systemic thinking, innovating, communicating, root cause analysis, persuasion and several other analytical skills. In short, business analysis is about understanding the real business and providing ways to make it better. The business analyst is a modeller and a communicator. Models are used to understand the processes, information and behaviours that make up the business. This understanding is not superficial, but a knowledge of the real, underlying business policy, and the root cause of any problems within this business. Further, the analyst must communicate this understanding so that all stakeholders arrive at the same view of their business. The analyst understands what people do, not what they say they do if he or she is to help bring the enterprise to its optimal state.

Learning Objectives

- Discover real business needs, not just the most talked-about ones.
- Improve the business processes by applying automation or other means.
- Define the most beneficial scope for the analysis project.
- Use models to understand and communicate the business processes, and ensure stakeholders also understand.
- Understand how to employ business events as a way of partitioning the business for easier understanding.
- Be better at interpersonal communication.
- Think systemically, and find truly the best way to improve your client's business.
- Be a better business analyst

Seminar & Workshop Outline

Business Analysis - What are we trying to do?

Business analysis is about improving your business. To do this, business analyst studies the enterprise and establishes the difference between the business as it is, and as it wants to be, or should be. The business analyst employs systems thinking to see past the technological bias of the current way of doing things, and see the ideal business—what should be happening. This involves looking at a wide scope of business processes, seeing the essence of the business, and ultimately delivering a model of the desired future state. The desired future state takes advantage of business opportunities discovered along the way, as well as fits with the management's goals for the enterprise.

Modelling Business Processes – Techniques for studying the business's response to the event

The business analyst may use a variety of modelling tools to arrive at a complete and agreed understanding of what the business is currently doing. We use Business Process Modelling Notation (BPMN) as a standard way of modelling the process. We also look at alternative ways of modelling, each having its own advantages. Scenarios are perhaps the most "business friendly" way for the business analyst to show the stakeholders what their business is doing, and what it is supposed to be doing. UML models are also popular. Data models show the information used by the business. In discovering the stored information, the business analyst uncovers almost all of the business policy.

Business Events – Organising my analysis

Business events are things that happen outside of the business, but are significant in that the business must respond to the event. By discovering the business events, the business analyst sees the actual triggers that make the business function. Business analysis is concerned with modelling the response to the business event. This response is known as a business use case or BUC, and is the basis for the subsequent investigation of the business processes. The response to the event is modelled as an end-to-end process. This gives the analyst the advantage of seeing the big picture, as well as finding more and better opportunities for process improvement.

Systems Thinking – Not getting carried away with solutions, but seeing the essence of the business

The essence of the business – or the real business – is quite different from the current solution, and indeed different from the proposed solution. The essence is not a solution at all, but the underlying business seen without the burden of technology. By discovering the essence of the problem, the business analyst avoids the age-old problem of developing what is asked for, only to find that it is not what is needed. The essence is an abstract statement of the business; one that is free of technological bias. By gaining this pure statement of the business, the business analyst ensures that any system built is the right one, and one that lasts longer than any current technological fad. Systems thinking means looking at the business as a whole, not just

one small part of it, or one business user and his software system. The systemic-thinking analyst is concerned about the effect of one part of the enterprise on another, and the detrimental impacts of changes.

The Human Element – Interviewing, resolving conflicts, facilitating workshops, communication skills

The business analyst is above all a communicator. He or she is charged with understanding a piece of the business using information collected from the people in that business. Clearly, the needed skill is an ability to talk to people, listen to them, and then ensure that both parties arrive at the same understanding of the enterprise. Moreover, the business analyst frequently has to facilitate workshops, and to use communication skills to bring the sometimes disparate viewpoints to a consensus.

Delivering – Now that you understand the business, here's how to bring about the changes to improve it

A thorough understanding of the enterprise means that the business analyst is able to identify the most beneficial changes to the business. Usually, this means developing software systems, but sometimes it means updating and changing the business processes to be more effective. The business analyst is also charged with identifying the high-value projects. These are the ones that give the greatest advantage for the cost and effort expended, and the ones that result in the most beneficial changes to the enterprise.

We also find Users and Software Customers benefit from learning state-of-the-art business analysis techniques, and how they can contribute to this vital activity.

Business Analysis Series

Building and Using a Business Process Architecture
22-24 November 2010, London

Working with Business Processes
25-26 November 2010, London

Business Rules and Decision Analysis Masterclass
18-19 November 2010, London

Mastering the Requirements Process
13-15 September 2010, London

Mastering Business Analysis
16-17 September 2010, London

Series Discounts

Attend more than one seminar in this series and you will be entitled to the following discounts:

2nd course	10%
3rd course	15%
4th course	20%
5th course	25%

Group Booking Discounts

20% discount for 5 or more registrations made at the same time. We regret that this offer cannot be used in conjunction with the Series Discount or any other discount.

"Very interesting and confirmed my beliefs of what a BA should be doing."

Kelly Newnham, Business Analyst, Scottish & Southern Energy

"Very good explanations when questions aired. Lots of real life examples too."

Claire Pearson, Business Process Analyst, AQA

Presenters



James Robertson is a consultant, teacher and author whose area of expertise is the determination of the requirements

that best support the business process, and the contribution that requirements make to successful projects. He is co-author of the books Mastering the Requirements Process and Requirements-Led Project Management.



James Archer is a practicing Business Analyst and Project Manager working for the Royal Borough of Kensington and

Chelsea. James has 20 years ICT experience mainly in the public sector. He speaks and teaches on various aspects of Business Analysis to organisations across the UK including running popular workshops at the Government IT Profession Conference. He is a co-founder of the Business Change Special Interest Group of the BCS. In 2009 James was awarded 'The Business Analyst of the Year' IT Industry Award.

Audience

- Business Analyst
- Systems Analyst
- Project Leader
- Requirements Engineer
- Product or Program Manager or similar titles.

Business Analysis Conference Europe 2010 co-located with the Business Process Management Conference Europe 2010
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