

# Analysts Anonymous

Informed comment for the BA and Business Change Community







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Issue **18**

## A note from the editor

“After the rather dismal performance of England’s football team at the World Cup it’s good to be among a group of people who know how to succeed through hard work – the Business Analyst community.

We have some meaty material in this edition. There’s an article on the personal skills that are vital for any BA, and some tips on what to do when you inherit a team that might resemble the Addams family. In between we have two pieces looking at Agile development techniques and the role of the BA.

As always, I’d like to hear your thoughts on any article or the newsletter as a whole. Enjoy the read and whatever’s left of the recent warm weather.

**Anthony Madigan**  
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## Get the Audience You Deserve

Philippa Thomas and Razza Zar give some valuable tips on how to improve your personal impact.

Years ago, Business Analysis was defined as a role to bridge the gap between business and IT, two different functions and cultures within the same organisation – a bit like England & Wales, you could say! However, today’s organisations are often infinitely complex: we may have a three or four-way bridge which also incorporates outsourced or offshored functions. The BA must then be the facilitator for these functions to collaborate effectively in the project (in many cases the BA is also the project manager).

As a result, for the 21st Century BA, personal skills are of premium importance. You must be a great communicator, tactful diplomat, problem solver, thinker, facilitator and analyst - with the ability to understand and respond positively to ever-changing business needs.

So it goes without saying that you should be paying as much attention to developing your personal skills as you do to your professional skills. But you may be wondering where to start. Given the skills list above, it may feel like a tall order! The worries which BAs regularly express to us in the training room about their personal skills include:

- “Dealing with senior teams makes me nervous”
- “I think I am quietly spoken and am not taken as seriously as a result”
- “How can I manage others’ expectations of me as a BA? Do I simply need to tell them what they want to hear?”

- “Giving bad news is often difficult”
- “Dealing with abrasive personalities in the business rubs me up the wrong way”
- “I don’t like the idea of having to stand and deliver my findings”
- “I am not a natural public speaker”
- “Generating interest around subject matter that is often seen as ‘dry’ can be difficult”
- Do some of these comments resonate with you? Well, we’re pleased to say that help is at hand.

In our experience, understanding how you’re perceived by others, then using a few simple techniques to fine-tune your verbal and non-verbal communication skills, can bring rapid improvements to both your personal impact and credibility and how well the solutions which you recommend to the business are received.

We’re now going to share with you our TOP TIPS for maximising your personal impact. They are tried and tested. BAs who’ve attended our personal skills courses have commented that following their training: “I sound more articulate, credible, and confident”; “I get critical messages across with out the filler language”; “I can get key stakeholders to play an integral role in generating interest and getting buy-in from others”; “I feel more equipped to do my job”.

## TIP 1: Create a Positive Mental State.

Your audience (whether it's just one person or a group of 200) will immediately sense how you're feeling, as your emotional state will be evident from the behaviours you demonstrate, both consciously and unconsciously. The very first step in improving your personal impact is to address your 'self-limiting beliefs'.

Beliefs are statements that we hold to be true but which are not necessarily based on truth, merely on a decision that we made at one time in our life. Our beliefs can limit us or empower us. To begin making the changes you desire to your personal impact you will need to become aware of how you maintain your limiting beliefs. This may be through some internal dialogue, or possibly an image or a feeling. Be aware of the language you use that indicates a self limitation e.g. "I'm not very good at presenting my recommendations", "I'm not a natural presenter" or "people don't take me seriously".

Focus on replacing this limiting belief with one that will enable you to achieve what you want to achieve. Here are three methods that you can use.

- » **Use affirmations.** These are statements such as "I believe that my recommendations are the right ones to solve this problem". You can use affirmations at any time although the most effective time is first thing in the morning as you surface from sleep and last thing at night as you are settling down to sleep. Your brain is more receptive to reprogramming at these times.
- » **Search for a time when this belief wasn't true.** Ask yourself "Has there ever been a time when I did do a great presentation?". It might have been a best man/woman's speech at a friend's wedding. When you find an example where the belief wasn't true, this will begin to weaken that belief and allow you to install a more empowering belief in its place.
- » **Act "As If".** Think of an empowering belief you would like to hold and act 'as if' you already hold it. It can be useful to find someone who is achieving what you want and explore with them what beliefs they hold - then try them on for yourself.

## TIP 2: First Impressions Count!

Sad perhaps, but true. We all make judgements about people's personalities, based on their appearance. According to new research by psychologists Laura Naumann of Sonoma State University and Sam Gosling

of The University of Texas at Austin (published Dec 2009), first impressions not only count, but they are pretty accurate too!

In this first-ever scientific study of the accuracy of first impressions, observers viewed full-body photographs of 123 people they had never met before, in both controlled and naturalistic poses.

Even when viewing the targets in the controlled pose, the observers could accurately judge some major personality traits, including extraversion and self-esteem. But most traits proved hard to detect under these conditions. When observers saw naturally expressive behaviour (such as a smiling expression or energetic stance), their judgments were accurate for **9 of the 10 personality traits**. The 10 traits were extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness, likability, self-esteem, loneliness, religiosity and political orientation.

"We have long known that people jump to conclusions about others on the basis of very little information," says Gosling, "but what's striking about these findings is how many of the impressions have a kernel of truth to them, even on the basis of something as simple as a single photograph."

With this kind of knowledge, individuals can choose to alter their appearance in specific ways....to shape others' impressions of them.

So, what steps can you take to ensure that people form a great (accurate?!) impression of you from the first. Here are our top tips:

- » **Your Smile:** use your face not just your mouth. Anything less just looks false.
- » **Your Breath:** halitosis is just NOT okay under ANY circumstances. Pop in a Tic-Tac or Polo Mint before that important meeting
- » **Your Handshake:** Avoid the bone-crusher and limp fish. Grip firmly, but don't squeeze. Make eye contact and hold their hand for no longer than 3 seconds.
- » **Your Clothes:** An emotional subject. We're no Trinny & Susannah (well, only at weekends), but here are



a few general points on what makes for a good business style:

- **Men**
  - » Dark colours with light colours create a powerful and assertive look
  - » Subtle/muted shades are more restful and make the wearer seem more approachable
  - » Single-breasted suits are more slimming
- **Women** (not that you'll need our advice!)
  - » Avoid high fashion. Choose classics with a 'twist'
  - » Pay attention to good fit. Sit down in a skirt to make sure it doesn't ride up.
  - » Lined clothes hang better and last longer
  - » Your Cologne: keep it subtle, no-one likes to choke
  - » Your Grooming: sew on that missing button and always, always, clean your shoes.

### TIP 3: Build Instant Rapport with your Audience

You may have heard the expression 'you get the audience you deserve'. What is never in doubt is that you WILL definitely get a reaction from your audience – the skill lies in getting the one you want! This is a very big topic in the field of human communications psychology. However, what we are really talking about here is building an immediate rapport – empathy – with your audience, which is critical to getting our messages accepted and understood.



Before we look at how we build rapport we need to think about the process of communication and how our message is delivered and received. In a study of communication at the University of Pennsylvania in 1970 ('Inference of Attitudes from Non-verbal Communication is Two Channels' - Mehrabian and Ferris) research showed that 55% of our communication was received from our physiology, 38% from our voice and 7% from our language.

Is this true? Well, take a moment to consider what you consciously pay attention to when someone is communicating to you. The words? Just think of how many ways you can say the word 'hello' and deliver quite different meanings through changes in your physiology and voice tone!

So, how do you go about building rapport when language is only 7% of your communication? You build rapport through a skill called PACING, achieved through matching the communication channels of the person you are communicating with. This means MATCHING (sometimes called 'mirroring') their physiology, their voice and their language.

At an unconscious level this 'matching' sends the other person a very powerful series of messages that you acknowledge them, you understand them, you accept them, you respect them and thus creates the relationship of trust between you. So, how do you match the audience you are communicating with? You can match their Physiology, Voice and Language. Matching needs to be subtle, sensitive and used with respect. It is not mimicry, exaggerated or offensive. It is almost as if you are entering into a dance with your audience.

Matching PHYSIOLOGY means that if a person is gesturing with their right hand, you gesture with your right hand. If they have their left leg crossed over their right, then you have your left leg crossed over your right. Try matching:

- Body Posture - upper body, spine curvature, head tilt, distribution of body weight.
- Body Movements - head, body, hands.
- Gestures - match subtly and only when you are speaking.
- Facial expression - smiling, laughter.
- Breathing - rhythm, depth, speed, channel, volume.
- Shoulders - notice position and any tension.

In order to match VOICE, you should aim to match rhythm and inflection but NOT accent (which would be inappropriate and potentially offensive). You can try to match the following:

- Tone - pitch
- Tempo - speed
- Timbre - quality
- Rhythm - cadence
- Volume - loudness

Have you ever noticed how people use certain words or phrases to describe their experiences? How they have a preference for certain types of language? Phrases like 'let's touch base', 'gut reaction', 'see the light', 'the big picture', 'sounds right', 'rings a bell'. To match LANGUAGE you can match the following:

- Content and form
- Organisational words
- Professional words
- Sensory language

#### **TIP 4: Plan, Prepare and Practice Your Communication**

People who have great personal impact create their success by creating compelling goals or outcomes to ensure they get what they want from their communications. The clearer your outcomes, the more you will get what you want. So, when considering how to achieve the impact you want from an important communication, first spend a little time getting clarity on the Outcomes you want to achieve. You'll find the following questions of help:

- » WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT? State this in positive terms.
- » HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'VE GOT IT? What you & others will see, hear, feel
- » WHERE, WHEN AND WITH WHOM DO YOU WANT IT?
- » WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU NEED TO GET IT?
- » WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU GET IT?
- » HOW WILL GETTING IT BENEFIT YOU?

Once you've written down your outcomes, think about how you're going to deliver your important communication. When planning and preparing for an important communication, most people concentrate on WHAT to say rather than on HOW to say it. Consider the following three elements when looking at the overall impression you make as a communicator.

You may THINK you come across in a certain way, it could be you believe it's the way you WANT to come across, but it can be very different from how you ACTUALLY come across to other people and how they feel. To check this situation out we all need FEEDBACK.

You can solicit feedback in several ways:

- » Ask a trusted colleague to let you know how you make them feel
- » Record yourself when speaking. Listen carefully, then ask yourself whether or not you wish to change how you sound – pace, tone, inflection, volume.
- » Record yourself when presenting. Pay particular attention to your body language, especially eye contact.

Then, follow our 8 step plan to help you prepare the content of your communication:

- » Step 1  
**THE MESSAGE**  
One message at a time. Emphasise key words.
- » Step 2  
**THE PERSON**  
Treat them as you would like to be treated
- » Step 3  
**ATTENTION**  
Maintain eye contact. Use the person's name.
- » Step 4  
**DELIVERY**  
Volume, projection, energy, interest, body language
- » Step 5  
**LISTENING**  
Concentrate. And don't interrupt!
- » Step 6  
**UNDERSTANDING**  
Reflect back.
- » Step 7  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**  
Builds trust. Use a simple 'thank you'.
- » Step 8  
**REACTION**  
You will get one! So remind yourself of the one you want.

We hope you try out at least one or two of these tips when you next have something important to communicate. Remember, practice makes perfect! Good luck and let us know how you get on.

**Philippa Thomas and Razza Zar**  
**John Matchett Ltd**  
**A Wilmington Group Company**

**Philippa Thomas, Managing Director, John Matchett Limited**

Prior to joining Matchett as MD, Philippa worked in the IT industry for 18 years as a project manager and business analyst, before heading up an outsourced services division for a major UK plc. She is passionate that behaviours are as important as technical knowledge for today's professional and also believes that every senior executive would benefit from developing skills in Business Analysis.

**Razza Zar,**  
**Principal Consultant,**  
**John Matchett Limited**



Razza has extensive experience of training consultancy gained over 16 years in the business. His specialism is the design and delivery of communication skills programmes for a broad range of blue-chip clients. He has been the training manager for global telemarketing company and a team manager responsible for 80 sales and marketing staff.

## The BA role on Agile teams

Allan Kelly guides us through Agile development and the part that BAs can play in this fast-moving environment.

Over the last couple of years I have met a number of Business Analysts who have been keen to know more about the BA role on Agile software development teams. In fact, I would say there is a genuine hunger in the BA community to know more about how Business Analysis and the BA role fit into Agile software development.

This is quite natural; Agile software development is changing the face of software development and BAs want to be part of the change while fulfilling their responsibilities to the best of their ability. While there is a lot of literature on the role of software developers on Agile teams the same is not true of the BA role. To date the BA role has been more than a little neglected.

### The name of the role

The first thing that strikes a BA reading about the two best known Agile methods is: where is the BA? Extreme Programming (XP) has a Customer role while the even more popular Scrum has a Product Owner role. In fact both roles may be filled by a BA.

Many Agile teams like to work directly with a customer as described in XP. While this certainly can work it is far from guaranteed. For a start, in many corporate environments there is not one customer but several stakeholders who may have different, even conflicting, demands on a system

Nor do stakeholders necessarily know what they want. Sometimes a description of needs is actually a description of a solution which may, or may not, meet the underlying need. Sometimes needs are over-stated, perhaps innocently or perhaps as a bargaining tool. And sometimes the end-users who know what the system needs to do don't want the system at all. Someone elsewhere in the company, who doesn't necessarily understand what the system needs to do, has decided a new system is necessary, perhaps to create process change.

Experienced BAs can certainly add to this list but there is one more issue that needs highlighting: time. A customer working with an Agile team needs to have the time to take part in planning meetings, to answer questions, assist with test criteria, even with testing itself, and generally be available for the team to reach peak performance. Doing

this while continuing with their usual role is a lot to ask.

BAs can help play the role of proxy-customer, representing the customer(s) to the team and helping the team know what is next. In fact, on the first XP team - the Chrysler C3 project - the customer role was filled by two BAs in succession.

While XP appeared in corporate IT, Scrum's roots are in product development. Consequently the Product Owner role has its origins in the Product Manager role found in most successful software product companies. The Product Manager role is a close cousin of the BA role, utilising similar skills of analysis, but is also very different.

BAs typically exist within corporate IT departments, or companies supplying corporates with services; Product Managers exist within companies which produce software products, e.g. Microsoft, Oracle, etc. BAs look inside their organisation (or their client's organisation) to determine need. Conversely Product Managers look outside their organisation to existing and potential customers, competitors and the wider market to determine need. These different perspectives lead to very different approaches to requirements gathering.

When Scrum is transplanted into the corporate IT setting it is natural for the Product Owner role to be filled by a BA. As a rule of thumb, the Product Owner title can be considered as an alias. The alias is used when discussing the composition of a Scrum or other Agile team. When that team exists within a software product company the Product Owner is a Product Manager, and when in a corporate environment the role falls to a BA.

## From big requirements to just in time

It is a mistake to say that Agile development does not need requirements, and it is also a mistake to say that Agile teams forego documentation. However it is true that both differ from what might be the case on more traditional projects.

Every Agile development should have a business case and a goal which will result in the creation of business value. Certainly these should be created before a project starts, and if they don't exist for work in progress it is worth creating them now.

But what Agile projects don't have (or at least don't need) is a big up-front shopping list of requirements. As the software is created, shown to users and feedback incor-

porated, the requirements and needs emerge, all directed by the goal. Requirements analysis is not a separate project but part of the same project.

Starting a project with a shopping list of requirements assumes accurate analysis, plentiful up-front knowledge of the domain, a stable commercial environment and an unchanging business strategy. Few businesses in the 21st Century meet these criteria.

Instead, Agile projects are goal-directed with the requirements for meeting that goal emerging as work progresses. Over time a shopping list of possible features will emerge - which Scrum calls the product backlog. Many, if not most, of these items will never be implemented. Regular reprioritisation, usually based on business value or risk, aims to deliver the 20% of work which results in 80% of the value.

Teams in transition from traditional to Agile often start off with a requirements shopping list because developers are usually the first to adopt Agile practices. In such situations Product Owners should regard the requirements document as an authoritative source, but not the only source and a source that needs constant revalidation. Maximising the business value delivered requires continual review of what needs doing.

## Embedded BAs

One reason Agile teams succeed is because they shorten and accelerate the feedback cycle. Automatic tests are run many times a day; demonstrations are shown to users/customers every couple of weeks and retrospectives held regularly. BAs can help shorten the cycles by being part of the development team, breaking down organisation and physical barriers so they can communicate directly with developers. Think one team, one goal, one project.

True, the BA may spend a lot of time visiting users, analysing needs and taking part in governance meetings but they also need to be available to the people who are cutting the code. When a Developer has a question about how the system should work, the BA is the natural go-to person. A delay in getting an answer slows development; worse still, guessing an answer may result in rework.

Nor is it just the Developers the BA works with. Testers too need to be embedded, and in many cases the BA will spend more time with Testers discussing acceptance criteria and test scenarios than with Developers.

The days when a Tester would ask a Developer “how should it work?” are at an end. The person the Tester needs to ask is the BA.

## Business value

To date, discussion of Agile methods has focused on how they make Developers more effective. Following closely behind Developer effectiveness have been the changes to project management required to manage the new ways of working.

This is understandable for two reasons. First Agile methods started at the “code-face” where Developers found better ways of working. Second, our industry is desperate for both effective development and reliable development. Anything that promises such is bound to get attention.

Consequently there has been less attention paid to ensuring business value is delivered. Now we can deliver software reliably, attention is turning from the how to the what. Furthermore there is a need for this rebalancing to happen now.

Consider for a moment a development team which adopts Agile and consequently doubles productivity. Yes it produces more, but actually the marginal value of what it is producing is likely to fall. It is reasonable to assume that when very little was being delivered infrequently, what was being delivered was very high value. Double the output and it is likely that the extra items delivered, while still valuable, will have a lower value than the first.

BAs need to respond to this challenge in three ways. Firstly by ensuring that only work which can demonstrate business value is done. (This is not a license to stop Test-Driven Development and Refactoring; these are essential Developer practises that keep the source code malleable and enhance productivity.)

Secondly, by ensuring that complementary changes also happen. Research has shown again and again that maximising the value of IT requires complementary changes outside of IT systems: processes, staff training and empowerment, organisation design, reward structures and more.

Third, BAs are the best people to follow up on business value: was the value recognised? Were changes made?

Ultimately, measuring the business value that’s been

delivered feeds into another decision the BA needs to be involved in: to continue or not. Agile projects don’t start with requirements shopping-lists, so knowing when they are “complete” isn’t as simple as ticking off what has been done. Governance is not based on stage gates or percentage completion but on value delivered and the potential to deliver more.

Agile projects should stop when either they can no longer demonstrate a positive return on investment, i.e. the cost of running the team is greater than the business value it can deliver, or when other work can demonstrate a higher return on investment, and resources can be redeployed.

## It’s the maturity model, stupid

From the above description it should be obvious that the BA role on an Agile project will change. Rather than being a requirements gatherer who produces a thick document prior to development and then moves to the next project, the BA is fully engaged for the lifetime of the project, embedded as part of one team, seeking to deliver the highest business value and ensuring the work is guided by the business goal.

If that starts to sound familiar it is because similar ideas lie behind the Business Analysis Maturity Model. As authority increases so does the scope of the work, from point solutions and system improvement at the low end to business improvement and process change at the high end. In so doing, the BA role changes from requirements gatherer to internal consultant seeking ways to improve the business.

## Summary

The BA role on an Agile team is not always obvious but it does exist, hiding behind an alias like Product Owner or Customer. The role is essential in allowing the team to meet business goals and maximise business value.

Paradoxically perhaps, on Agile teams the BA can expect to be more involved in the nitty-gritty work with the Developers and Testers and to have greater responsibility in representing the business need as well as deciding how to meet that need.

**Allan Kelly**

**Allan Kelly has held just about every job in the software world, from systems administration to development manager. Today he provides training and coaching to teams in the use of Agile and Lean**

techniques. He is the author of “Changing Software Development: Learning to become Agile”, numerous journal articles and is currently working on a book of Business Strategy Patterns.

## Agile and the role of the Business Analyst

Earlier this year, Debbie Paul and Paul Turner of AssistKD ran two seminars, one facilitated by AssistKD, the other for the BA Managers Forum, looking at the Agile philosophy and its effect on business analysis.

Each seminar looked at two specific propositions:

- What does an Agile approach offer a business analyst?
- What is the role of the business analyst in an Agile environment?

The seminar began with a group exercise designed to illustrate how teams are formed and can operate quickly and effectively. Each group was then asked to consider what the term Agile meant to them. Figure 1 shows the ideas put forward.

The group then looked at the history of Agile and some of the fundamental principles set out in the Agile Manifesto (<http://www.agilealliance.org/>). These are concerned with uncovering better ways of developing software, with a higher value placed on aspects such as:

- working software over comprehensive documentation
- customer collaboration over contract negotiation.

Following this, there was a discussion about the nature of business analysis and how the Agile philosophy can be interpreted in the wider context of business analysis activities. We looked at some of the underlying principles of business analysis, summarised in the four-view model in figure 2 on the following page.

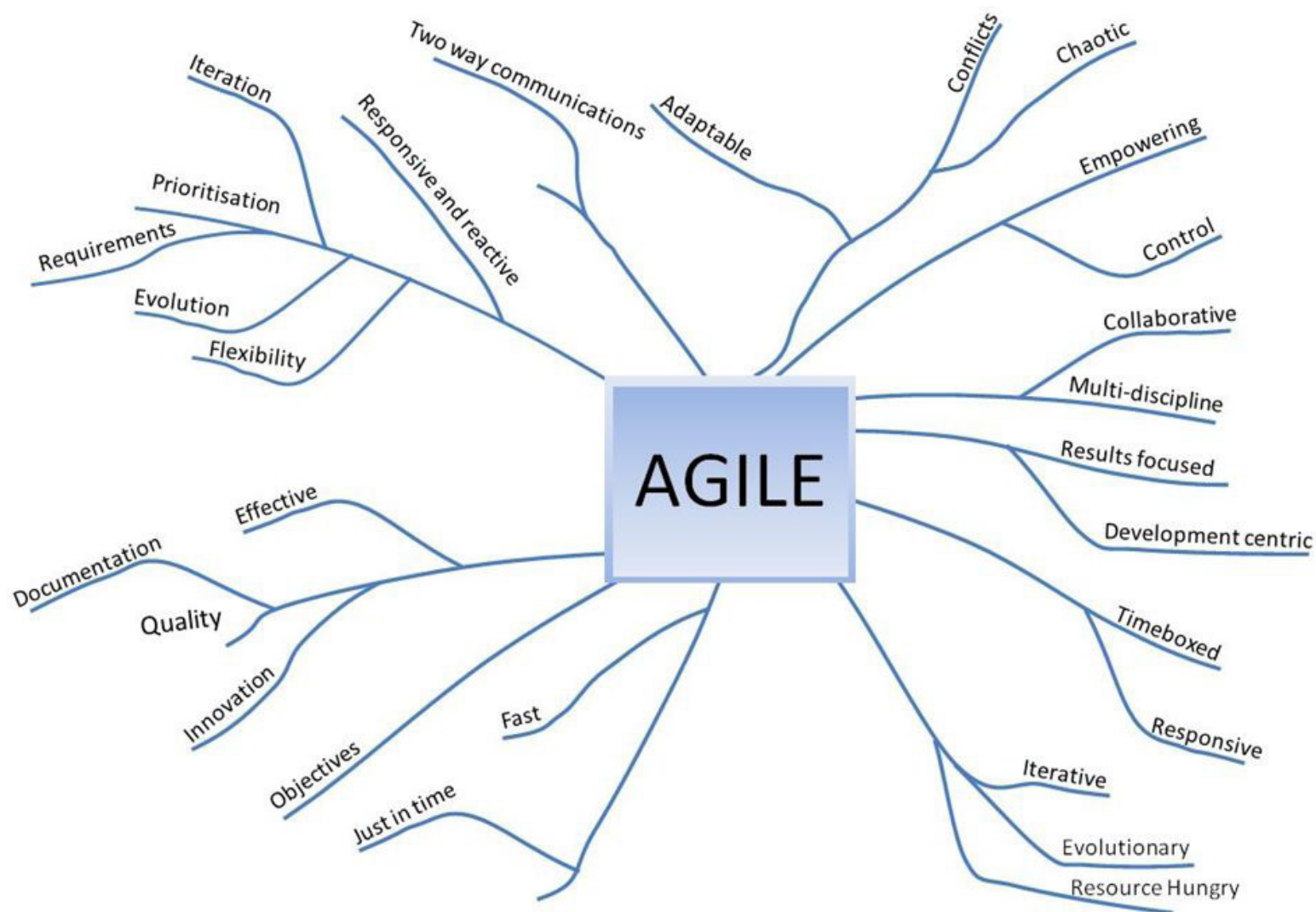
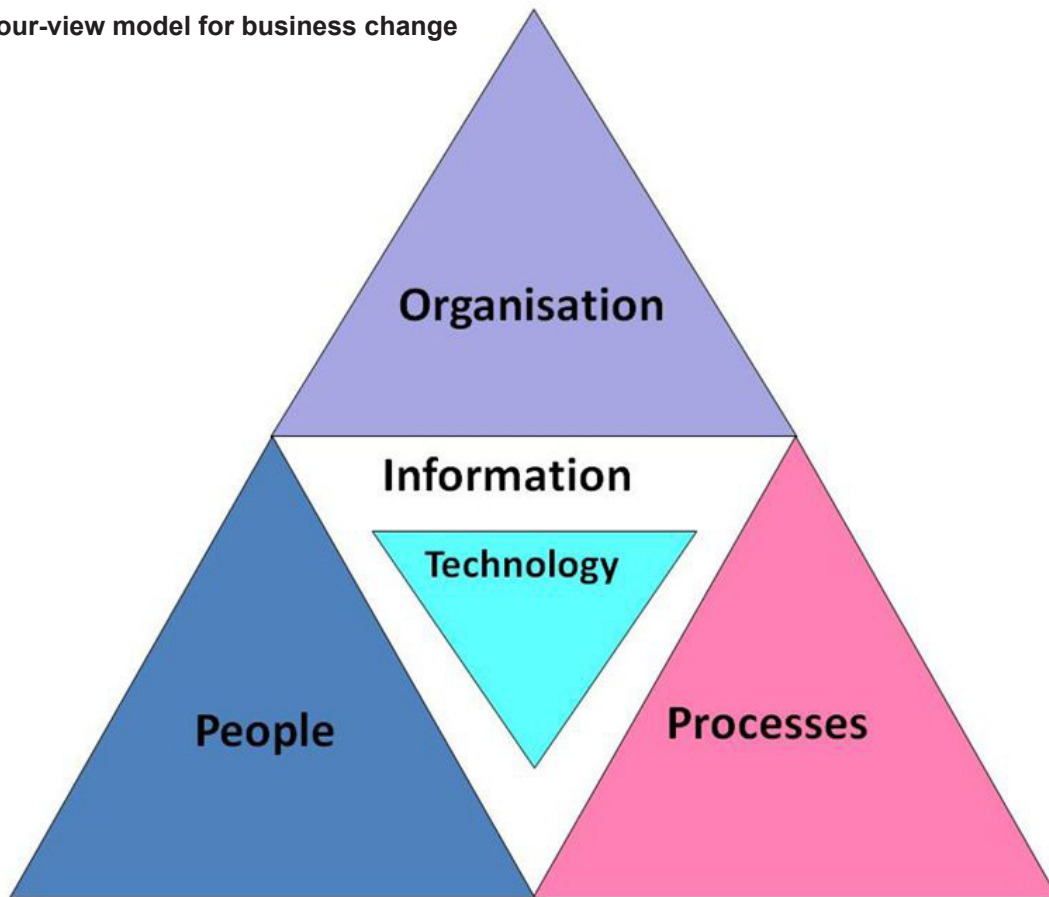


Figure 1: What does ‘Agile’ mean to us?

**Figure 2: the four-view model for business change**



One of the key tenets of business analysis - the importance of holistic thinking – was discussed. In essence, holistic thinking means that business analysts have to think about all aspects of a business problem and develop relevant, creative solutions. This is the opposite of delivering pre-defined solutions that only address one aspect of a problem. It is vital that business analysts look for creative options that support business agility. Where the Agile manifesto focuses upon software development, business analysts usually need to look beyond the scope of IT - for other possibilities that might address the business need more efficiently and to identify the other areas of business impact. This is where real agility can be explored within organisations.

To achieve this, the business analyst needs to develop a toolkit of techniques and skills that can enable analytical thinking and effective problem-solving. As described in the recent BCS publication Business Analysis Techniques , there is an extensive range of techniques available to the business analyst, many from the Agile world. Building competency in selecting and applying such techniques is important if the BA capability is to be recognised, valued and fully utilised by organisations.

This part of the seminar ended with consideration of a set of guiding principles for business analysis. These principles explored the need to:

- Find root causes rather than focusing on symptoms
- Improve the business not just the IT systems
- Identify creative options not pre-defined solutions
- Assess the feasibility of requirements rather than accept them as business needs
- Consider the entire business change lifecycle not just the definition of requirements
- Negotiate consensus rather than avoiding conflicts
- Strive for business agility not business perfection.

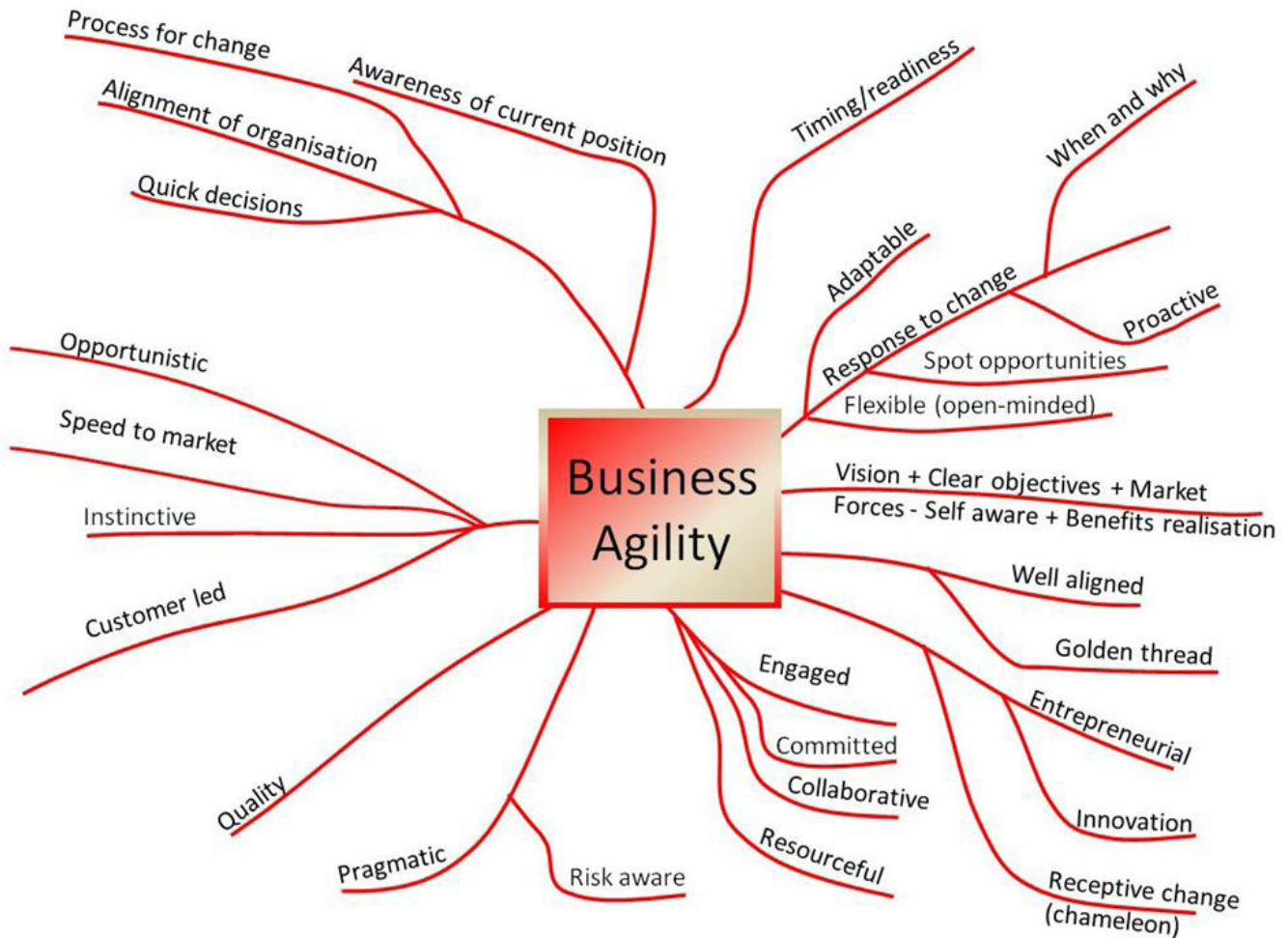
The second part of the seminar began with an exercise to consider what the term 'business agility' meant to delegates. The results are shown in figure 3 on the following page.

In the discussion following this exercise it was noticeable that, while many similar ideas emerged, there were some additional suggestions that reflected a more strategic business need rather than solely a focus on software development.

The seminar then moved on to exploring some of the key features of the Agile approach. This included points such as:

- Flexibility of requirements within a baselined scope
- Iterative development using evolutionary prototyping

Figure 3: What does 'Business Agility' mean to us?



- Incremental delivery using MSCW prioritisation
- Business representation in the development team
- Timeboxing and cashboxing
- Continuous testing
- A suitability filter to help determine appropriate projects
- Guidance on Project and Configuration Management

The seminar explored the possibilities of applying these principles to business improvement projects, not just those focused on software development. For example, a process improvement project could apply these principles equally well. The seminar concluded with an examination of one of the key Agile approaches, DSDM Atern, (<http://www.dsdm.org/>) and the role of the business analyst in a DSDM Atern environment.

Some of the key messages from the seminar were that the terms Agile and Business Agility result in very similar outcomes – organisations that are responsive and flexible with a focus on their customer. The business analyst needs to be able to support these aims by being adaptable, analytical and by possessing a toolkit of techniques that can clarify and address a wide range of problem

situations. The group agreed that the business analyst can bring real value to organisations by adopting this approach.

Many thanks to the highly participative seminar attendees; it wouldn't have been as much fun without you!

*Inna Dalton, Natasha Kobrak, Rob Ellis, Carl Speltinckx, Beejal Raja, Jo Sowden, SP Santospirito, Aseem Daga, Stephen Donne, Zoe Baird, Natasha Crowe, Jillian Snowden, Paul Pavlou, Sam Whiting, Rachael Chada, Dave Brown, Sandhya Sachan, Remy Schneider, Liz Gowan, Valerie Renaud, Steven Olds, Stephen Mather, Carl Wright, Shona Kidd, Aysen Utting, Jane Eastwood, Paul Burditt, Chris Burton, Symon Cusack, Lawrence Darvill, Melanie Green, Glenn Hook, Ian Huke, John Ingham, Richard Knight, Susan Liverman, David Pearce, Jonathan Mallett, Jeremy Paduano, Jenna Prout, Bruce Rodgers, Craig Rollason, Ryan David, Michelle Shakesheff, Mike Shaul, Mark Mckluskey, Sarah Sparey, Corinne Thomas, Gareth Tupper, Steve Westcott, Philip Wheating.*

**Debbie Paul and Paul Turner, AssistKD.**

## Inheriting a Team – Is it the Addams family?

Ray Watson identifies a useful checklist for those just moving into a BA team leadership role.

You have been appointed to a role which includes the management of an established team of Business Analysts. What are your priorities and what's worth keeping in mind in those early days and weeks?

If you are lucky the team will consist of committed, competent, enthusiastic individuals with a good track record in delivery, communication and interpersonal skills. At the other extreme, it could be the Addams family with attitude – incompetent prima donnas, distrusted and disliked by all. Knowing where you are starting from is vital.

It may be that you've come from another part of the company, bringing with you some knowledge of the company culture, structures and procedures. If not, make a point of filling this gap, a little each day.

Clearly, the key has to be the needs of the business, complemented with the information you gained from your interview. Every effort should be made to get to know your customers and their expectations. Time spent with your line manager will help determine priorities and may provide some insight into the dynamics of your team, key individuals and the broader management team. The third component is to get to know your team collectively and individually: their functions, roles, achievements, frustrations using regular team and one-to-one meetings. A basic SWOT analysis of the team will help match demand and supply, or at least highlight areas for development.

Make an effort to get to know what work is currently in hand and recently completed, and check for feedback against plans and from stakeholders – especially for any relating to members of your team. Check the organisation's expectations for the BAs regarding their roles, careers and progression plans, and see if any promises have been made. See how this aligns with their own plans and aspirations - try using the 'Watson model' (copy on the website). And don't forget to make yourself familiar with the organisation's performance management processes as well as HR policy and procedures on grievance, incompetence and disciplinary.

You won't be able to do all things at the same time, so plan as if it were a project with key milestones and check-points. Check the details, plans and controls associated



with current and planned initiatives against resource allocations, issues and achievements. If you also have responsibility for business as usual, don't lose sight of this as the two areas may overlap. (The problems of managing a business while changing it are at the core of something called 'Structuration Theory'. If you are interested, look it up on Wikipedia or see Ray's article on [www.watwil.co.uk](http://www.watwil.co.uk) - Ed )

And remember, don't be afraid to say you are new to a process or don't understand something. Perhaps preface a question with 'this might be a daft question but...', and encourage others to help and support you.

Changing team dynamics, working practices and behaviours will take time and should be a continuous process. It is worth checking with HR for training and development material, and looking at the experiences of other parts of the business.

Finally, remember you are dealing with people who have feelings, self respect, dignity and perhaps family or other commitments. Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself – good manners and courteousness cost nothing.

A quality team will be motivated, happy, respected by peers and sought after by your customers. It's worth the effort.

Good luck.

*Ray Watson is the founder of WatWil Ltd, an independent interim and management consultancy specialising in business improvement ([www.watwil.com](http://www.watwil.com))*

# Business Analyst of the Year 2010

You still have time to enter, but please be quick!

Applications are still open (but will be **closing on 23rd July 2010**) for entry for the Business Analyst of the Year award 2010. Entry is free and the 5 shortlisted finalists will receive free entry to the BA Conference on 27-29 September 2010, where the winner will be announced. The BA conference is organised by the UK Chapter of the IIBA and will provide three days of tutorial sessions and presentations by thought leaders in Business Analysis and experienced BA practitioners.

Enter today. To receive your BA of the Year 2010 application form by email please contact **Chris Martin** at AssistKD on **01844 211665** or [chris.martin@assistkd.com](mailto:chris.martin@assistkd.com).

## Upcoming BA Events

All Events can be tracked through the IIBA Chapter at [uk.theiiba.org](http://uk.theiiba.org)



### Thursday July 27th – Business Analysis at Mars.

Slough 6. 30pm

In this event, hosted by Mars, there will be presentations by a Mars Business Analyst and by James Cadle, co-author of the Business Analysis Techniques book, who will review key business analysis techniques .

### 27-29 September – Business Analysis Conference Europe 2010

London

Brings together business analysis specialists from across Europe and beyond, providing a platform for promoting the BA profession and opportunities for BAs personal development. The main themes are:

- Shaping the Future of Business Analysis
- Business Analysis Tools and Techniques
- Business Agility and Business Analysis

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