

Analysts Anonymous

Presented in conjunction with:



A note from the editor

Welcome to the Late Winter edition of Analysts Anonymous.

This newsletter would have been with you earlier had everything gone according to plan, but as we know that's not always how things go. It is perhaps not surprising then that the articles that follow spend some time looking at how BAs play a significant role responding to, and if possible preventing, the issues that derail the best-laid plans.

As well as a host of useful tips and insights, there are also details of the latest Certes Excellence in Business Analysis seminar. To be held in London in May, the seminar is an opportunity to meet your colleagues and peers and hear some thought-provoking presentations. Hope to see you there.

As ever, any comments or suggestions for future editions are really appreciated: aa-editor@writethetalk.com

Anthony Madigan

Inside this issue:

Business Analyst - Friend or Foe	1
Getting it Right First Time	5
Certes Analysis Resources presents its latest "Excellence in Business Analysis" seminar	8
Adding Value to Projects - A Case Study	9
Closing the Gap	13

Business Analyst – Friend or Foe?

In a climate of increasing cost reduction, outsourcing, mergers/acquisitions and global corporations, has the role of the Business Analyst lost its way? Anne-Marie Hyslop, Director of Matthews Craig Consulting, provides some answers.

There are a number of large, well established companies that feel that the Business Analyst is at best a 'nice to have' and at worst actually slows the project process down. So what can analysts do to ensure that they not only add value but also, more importantly, are seen to be adding value?

Challenges

Often analysts are restricted in the value they can add by a number of factors:

- They are their own worst enemy in

describing what they do.

- They sit in the wrong part of the organisation.
- They don't have the remit to truly analyse end to end.
- They are very operationally focused with little or no exposure to commercial issues.
- They can lack exposure to more strategic issues.
- They don't always have the right skills.
- The Business Analyst profile is not high - the Project Manager often gets the kudos.

Talk the Talk

In my experience, analysts can be their own worst enemy when describing to people what they do. Saying you write requirements will not impress a business manager who already feels

that they know what they want. But talking in terms of ensuring success of their project, reducing significant risk and making sure the solution chosen is exactly what they want, should hit the mark.

The Organisation

Analysts can sit in a number of areas within an organisation: IT, a business unit, or at corporate level for example. The significance of where they sit becomes clear in the remit their role is given. For example, Business Analysts who sit firmly in IT are likely to have a more technical/solution focus and are less likely to be involved in end-to-end business transformation projects. Alternatively, those that sit within the business often sit with one foot firmly in the operation and can remain as functional subject matter experts, not gaining the

broader experience that would benefit them.

Sitting at a corporate level should provide the opportunity for the broadest role, but also has its dangers. It can dilute the analyst's business knowledge and move the role into a far more strategic position, looking at viability of change rather than delivery.

End to End Process

For analysts to have the greatest chance of success, they need to be given the remit to work end-to-end across the project - this is illustrated below.

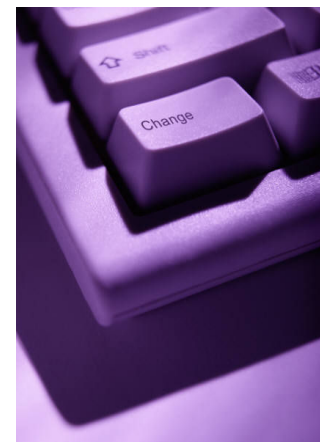
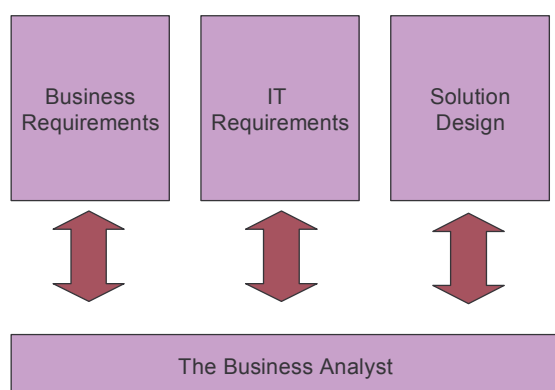


Figure 1: Working End-to-End



In this way, the analyst can ensure that all requirements are captured, challenged and support the end-to-end process. They are then in a far better position to validate the design solution against coherent requirements. A hidden benefit of this model is that the analyst also acts as a key facilitator of what could otherwise be three disparate groups of people, each with a different view of the final picture. Strong communication is a vital part of the analyst's role to ensure consistent understanding across a project.

Operational Focus

If we explore how businesses typically measure value or success, it is often very target or task driven: customer surveys,

number of sales, number of installations and so on. The project world is no different, with an importance placed on projects completed, dates being hit, and budgets being met. In some respects this is at odds with what the analyst is trying to achieve in terms of reducing risk and ensuring quality. As a result, in some cases, the BA role has fallen in line with existing performance indicators and become very operational. The whole analysis process then becomes a set of standard deliverables that need to be produced within a timeframe often dictated by the Project Manager.

Little time is given to whether the initial business proposal is viable or profitable

"If we explore how businesses typically measure value or success, it is often very target or task driven: customer surveys, number of sales, number of installations and so on. The project world is no different, with an importance placed on projects completed, dates being hit, and budgets being met."



and how it will help improve the Company's bottom line. The business case is largely ignored or becomes a paper exercise to get the project approved, rather than the reason for doing the project in the first place. It is into this space that the analyst must boldly go if they want to add true value. The further towards the front end of the process, including inceptions of new ideas, the more the analyst can add. The word of caution I would add is that they must have or develop the skills and competencies to do this: commercial awareness, big picture thinking, influencing and so on.

The Business Architect

Increasingly, businesses are examining or re-examining their core operating processes, initially to simply define them, or in other cases to look for further streamlining or cost savings. This has resulted in an upsurge of Six Sigma specialists and the birth of the Business Architect. Working at a far more strategic level within an organisation, the Architect really sits at the hub of the business, helping define and maintain its core

operating model.

As with any new role at its inception the Architect is a lucrative skillset, with scarce experience being spread thinly across the UK market. It is certainly worth BA managers considering bringing some of these more strategic, process-driven skills in-house, hopefully to begin to fill the initial skills gap. It also offers that sometimes elusive next career step for the more experienced analyst, hoping to move into a more senior position. Whether the Business Architect is a new breed of analyst is difficult to say at this stage, but it's certainly a move away from the operational, delivery-focused analyst that is prominent today.

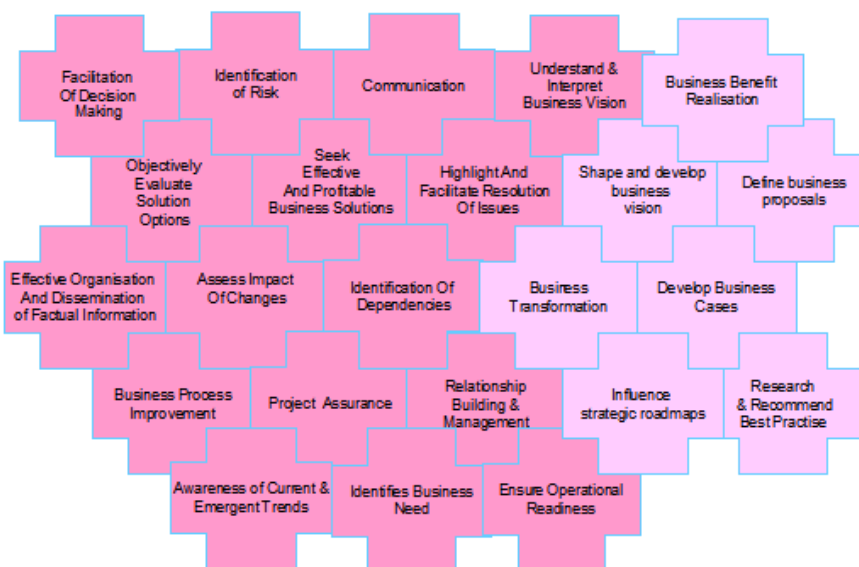
The right skills

To determine whether you have the right skills, you need to answer the question about your role and its remit. As discussed, the analyst can at one level perform a very operational role, or at the other level have strategic responsibilities. In reality you may want to opt for something in between.



“This has resulted in an upsurge of Six Sigma specialists and the birth of the Business Architect. Working at a far more strategic level within an organisation, the Architect really sits at the hub of the business, helping define and maintain its core operating model.”

Figure 2: The Range of Analyst Activity



The Profile of the Business Analyst

Here's a great quote I heard recently from an experienced Project Manager: "I still don't know what a BA does, but my projects work better with them." His experience of analysts was they seemed to do a lot of work, but their profile was often not high.

This comes to my point about not just adding value but being seen to add value. I have listed below some useful things for analysts to do that will help in increasing their profile on a project and also their perceived value:

- Attend key steering group meetings - be prepared.
- Always present back your own work - don't let others do it for you.
- Talk to your customers - you should have a relationship with them too.
- Ask your key stakeholders how they want to be communicated with.
- Think about how you present your deliverables. A face-to-face walk through of a requirements specification is an ideal forum to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise.

Understand your stakeholders and have a plan of how you will deal with them.

In Summary

In my experience, the Business Analyst role is one of the most crucial roles, not just within a project but for the whole organisation. Done well it can be the difference between delivering

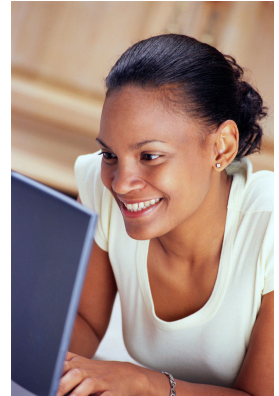
real and sustainable growth or poor quality and high cost solutions that the business does not need.

And Finally

We should remember that any role will evolve over a period of time, and we should always question its value and relevance in the environment and organisation in which it sits. For each operational activity an analyst is required to undertake, the BA manager needs to have the vision to look for the strategic relevance and to plan ahead, attempting to anticipate the future. In this way, the team will be comfortable with self-examination, question its contribution and continue to grow.

"One of the well-established characteristics of an effective team is self-assessment." (Parker, 1990, McGregor, 1960).

Anne-Marie Hyslop
Director, Matthews Craig Consulting
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"In my experience, the Business Analyst role is one of the most crucial roles, not just within a project but for the whole organisation."



Getting It Right First Time

Caroline Horsley, a Senior Business Analyst at a large media company, looks at the importance of beginnings.

Getting it right first time is a difficult challenge for anyone, particularly in an environment that has high expectations of timescales and benefits. How can an analyst help the business make the right decisions?

The role of the Business Analyst isn't just about writing a good requirements document, it is also about asking the right questions.

This article contains a summary of some of the key areas an analyst needs to look at when introduced to a project and some of the questions they need to ask themselves and the project team.

Project Objectives

- Are the objectives clear, consistent?
- Do they conflict with each other?
- Is there a diverse range of objectives?
- Are they in line with strategic objectives or are they purely tactical?
- Is there a mixture of both?
- Is it clear from the objectives what benefit the business is planning to achieve?
- Do other projects have conflicting or similar objectives?

Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

- Lack of strategy from the business - is this one of a number of projects the business is initiating in the hope that one will strike gold?
- Is there just one deliverable?
- Should the project be phased or split into a number of different projects?
- Has the business thought about the benefit in a realistic way, and do the benefits match the objectives?
- If other projects have similar objectives, and are planning to achieve them using the same resource, should the projects be aligned?

Scope

- Is the project scope consistent with the objectives?
- Has the scope been documented and agreed?
- Is the scope going to deliver a change that will be operational, and will it deliver the desired benefits?

Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

- If the scope isn't consistent with the objectives, either there are additional objectives or the objectives as stated are incorrect.
- Not communicating what is in and out of scope can lead to much confusion.
- If scope isn't formally communicated, it gives the opportunity for stakeholders to add in what they think should be in scope
- If the scope isn't right, the project may struggle with numerous change requests, delays, and political positioning. If not addressed, it may end up a white elephant. Make sure the impact of the scope on the business is thoroughly understood by the sponsors as it will impact the benefit which can be delivered.

Stakeholders

- Are all the stakeholder groups engaged and represented on the project?
- Do the senior management team of all impacted groups have an awareness of the project and its objectives?
- Do the stakeholder groups have different objectives?



“The role of the Business Analyst isn't just about writing a good requirements document, it is also about asking the right questions.”



Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

- If all stakeholders are not engaged, the project may not have the right skills or commitment levels to resource the project to meet timescales.
- Lack of understanding of departmental strategies and how the project aligns with these strategies could result if not all senior managers are aware of the project.
- Stakeholders from different departments having different objectives - if this is the case, resource commitment may not be forthcoming, design options may not be given full consideration, achieving sign off at milestones will be difficult, and a lot of time and effort will be spent managing expectations at the senior management level.

Requirements

- Is there already a documented set of requirements? Who wrote them, and how long ago? Are they at an appropriate level of detail for the current phase, and how complex are they?
- Have all stakeholder and supplier groups reviewed and understood the requirements?
- Are the requirements in line with the project objectives and scope?
- Do the requirements conflict with each other, or with requirements from other projects?
- Do the requirements overlap with those from other projects?

Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

- If the requirements have been written for some time they need to be reviewed and revisited, as the environment in which they will be implemented may have

changed. Other projects may have delivered the requirements.

- Depending on who wrote the requirements, there may have been no review, and no understanding of impact, complexity or consensus of different views.
- It may not be feasible to deliver the requirements, or they may not be in line with supplier group strategies.

Timescales

- What are the expectations in terms of live dates?
- Are they being driven by the need for the business to stay competitive?

Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

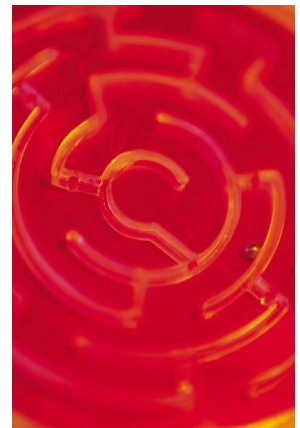
- Depending on the complexity of the requirements and solutions to deliver the objectives, it may not be realistic to deliver to expected timescales.
- To remain competitive, the quality of solution may be compromised in order to retain competitive advantage.

Collaboration and Communication

- What resource is required to represent stakeholder and supplier groups?
- What skills are needed to make the project a success?
- Do all groups understand the objectives of the project, and have they received all the information?
- Do supplier groups have conflicting objectives?

Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

- Without full representation the project could fail for a number of reasons. These could include the availability of resource with the appropriate skills, lack of buy-in and subsequent support for the



delivered solution.

- Without the appropriate skills or a common understanding of the project, incorrect decisions regarding solutions and solution design may result.
- Conflicting objectives will result in lack of teamwork and an inability to make decisions

Decision Making Information

- What is the objective of the current project phase?
- What information are the stakeholders interested in? What does the analyst need to supply to the decision-making process?

Potential pitfalls the analyst is highlighting:

- If the right question isn't answered or the approach doesn't put into context the information which will allow stakeholders to make informed decisions, the project may well fail due to unrealistic expectations.

The analyst will develop an approach and plan to highlight the risk areas and raise them to the project team and stakeholder groups. A project may fall into one of the categories highlighted above, but this does not mean the project is a failure, it just means the potential problem areas for the project in its current form have been highlighted and the project can be adapted or put on the right course. The analyst is often seen as slowing a project or blocking delivery, but it is common sense to ask and act on the questions raised above.

Caroline Horsley



“...this does not mean the project is a failure, it just means the potential problem areas for the project in its current form have been highlighted and the project can be adapted or put on the right course.”



Certes Analysis Resources presents its latest “Excellence in Business Analysis” seminar

Date: Friday 18th May 2007 Location: Institute of Directors – Pall Mall London.

Agenda	
9.30	Welcome Coffee and Introductions
9.45	<p>"The Bigger Picture of IT enabled business change" – Dr. Sharm Manwani</p> <p>Dr Manwani will address the shift the business analyst makes when they take a far broader view of the organisation. The widening BA role is well documented in general terms but Dr Manwani will examine how the business analyst can impact on the change life cycle at five key stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align Business and IT Goals - Define Business Improvement - Design Business Change - Implement Business Change - Deliver Business Benefits <p>Increasing the impact a BA makes raises immediate questions on the skills gap and Dr Manwani will go on to examine a new qualification targeted at this area. He will also place this new qualification in the context of other available training and qualification options. (Sharm is back by popular demand after describing his experiences on the journey 'From BA to CIO' linked to some practical advice for BAs)</p> <p>Dr Sharm Manwani worked through the business analyst role to reach CIO status with companies such as Electrolux and Diageo. He is now an Associate Professor at Henley Management College where he runs workshops in IT enabled business change and is a Fellow of the BCS where he has had a key role in the Professionalism in IT programme. Sharm also consults with leading organisations and mentors people in these areas.</p>
10.45	Coffee Break
11.15	<p>"Business analysis is for softies" - Anne Marie Hyslop- (Matthews Craig Consulting). In this session Anne-Marie examines how greater depth to your soft skills can make for increased delivery. The session will assess the key competencies required to realise change and how the softer skills, often overlooked during recruitment and training initiatives, can be the key to career and business development. Anne-Marie will draw on her view of the changing role of the business analyst.</p> <p>Before moving into consultancy Anne-Marie was Head of Business Analysis at Telewest Communications, having created the Business Analysis capability in that Company, from scratch. As part of a larger Programme Management Group, delivering projects collectively budgeted at 230 million per annum, she was instrumental in defining the Business Analysis methodology for the company, setting up a central programme office function, leading the quality project assurance process work and acting as a senior consultant, from an analysis perspective, on major projects and programmes.</p>
12.15	Lunch A chance to eat and network. A full buffet lunch will be supplied including vegetarian options
1.30	<p>"The Problem of Requirements" - Malcolm Eva (Eva Business Learning). Surveys have shown that most errors in Information Systems projects occur during the requirements gathering stage rather than the build. In this session Malcolm will evaluate various techniques for eliciting business requirements in order to adopt the most suitable for a given situation.</p> <p>As well as eliciting the business requirements, analysts need to choose how to model them such that they can be understood and approved by the business and implemented by the developers. The second part of the session will look at various approaches to modelling requirements, and assess their suitability.</p> <p>Malcolm Eva has been a systems and business analyst since 1985. He has worked in that role for the MoD and BT. Since 2000 Malcolm has trained as a consultant in the areas of business analysis and requirements engineering. He is the author of "SSADM v4, A User's Guide" (1994), co-author with Steve Skidmore of "Introducing Systems Development" (2003) and contributor to "Business Analysis", Eds D Paul and D Yeates (2006)</p>
2.45	Summary of the day and follow-up actions.
3.00	Approx close

If you have any queries regarding the event please call Lawrence Darvill on 01675 468 930, or alternatively 07817 709 803.

Adding Value to Projects

BA Ian Partridge presents a case study of how Business Analysts can overcome the odds and make a real difference.

I'm sure there must be a thesis somewhere on this question – how do you know whether a specific decision or action definitely influences the actual event? I like football analogies – in a pre-World Cup friendly against Argentina, Sven-Goran Eriksson was praised for his tactical decision to bring on Peter Crouch and the 3-2 victory that resulted. Yet Eriksson was slated for poor substitution decisions during the actual tournament when they did not lead to a more positive outcome. In truth, can you really prove these decisions have either a positive or negative outcome? England may have beaten Argentina without the introduction of Crouch and during the World Cup the outcome of the games could have been even worse if the substitutions hadn't been made!

I would like to think deliberate decisions and actions can influence a positive outcome, and I especially believe this is the case when Business Analysts work on projects and have the remit to play an effective role.

Too often, I have experienced misunderstanding of what the BA role is and what it can add to a project. This article is a case study of how BA activity can have a massive impact on the outcome of a change programme.

Context and Challenges

Following an earlier company acquisition, a leading Telecommunication company initiated an IT project to decommission a legacy billing and customer care system and migrate to the company's strategic systems.

Similar projects in the past had taken at least eighteen months to complete, were poorly managed, and had run over time and budget. This particular project had been initiated twice before, had not progressed, and there was no documented output.

However, expectations had been set in the business by IT that the project would complete in five months!

Contractual arrangements with the vendors of both legacy and target systems were driving accelerated delivery timescales, and a staff rationalisation programme was underway in the impacted business area in preparation for the new system.

No resource had been allocated to the project – apart from me, the lead BA.

I am a strong advocate of best practice; however proven methodologies, training and technical skills very rarely provide a ready guide for dealing with challenges such as these.

Scope of project

The company's project methodology was to undertake an initial feasibility phase, or in this case, an unfeasibility phase. There was a view among senior management that the changes would impact about 5000 customers and involve manually keying customer details from one system to another. In fact, this was a business transformation project, migrating systems that were at the very heart of the acquired company and involving very significant change:

- 100,000 customers would be impacted – nearly every interaction they had with the business would change: changes to bills and billing dates; the company brand they were familiar with; changes to the TV channels they received; and other services gained or lost
- The opportunity to adopt a standard operating model – based on virtual contact centres, centres of excellence and consistent national processes.



“Too often, I have experienced misunderstanding of what the BA role is and what it can add to a project.”



Managing expectations ... or trying

At a meeting to discuss the way forward, involving senior stakeholders and the recently appointed Project Manager, I highlighted the issues regarding scope, risks regarding previous projects of this type, and the opportunities the project provided. Although the stakeholders took the issues on-board, the time constraints remained, and it was agreed to undertake a five-week impact analysis.

It would be nice to recount that the BA view was readily accepted – but this wasn't the case. I believe the task-focussed, PM view of implementation often conflicts with the BA objective of a quality implementation that delivers value and business benefit. This was the case here. Again best practice would say that success factors would be agreed and defined at initiation, yet this had been ignored. The first two bastions of project management - time and cost - were being pushed hard with little consideration being given to the third.

With BA resource increased to three and a remit to engage technical staff, a framework was agreed to carry out a gap analysis between target and source systems.

An aggressive schedule of workshops was planned, and senior managers were consulted across the business to ensure the project scope fully addressed the benefit opportunities and business goals. This also provided the chance to get commitment from areas supplying subject matter experts (SMEs) to the project, as well as re-setting expectations around required activity and timescales.

A key success for the gap analysis was fully engaging the SMEs attending workshops. The approach we took was to be clear about:

- o the drivers of the project
- o why we were doing this work in a tight timescale

why we needed their involvement.

Simple, often overlooked, but with immediate benefits: contact centre staff were surprised that the cost of extending the support of the legacy billing system was £1m – they thought the

motive for the change was headcount reduction. Involving staff in the decision-making reduced resistance to change and led to more motivation and commitment.

The output of the gap analysis highlighted two things:

1. The impact of replacing these legacy systems was extremely broad and deep. Over 100 sub-systems and interfaces would need to be changed or decommissioned. No simple keying of customer details! The work could take ten months to complete.

Business Requirements and Detailed Analysis

I'm still surprised that in many organisations, and on many projects, the benefit of doing analysis and undertaking requirements is not better understood. I won't go into the pros and cons of various techniques other than recommending that the activity needs to be

- fit-for-purpose
- appropriate to the organisation
- communicated, in terms of its value, to relevant stakeholders.

The output of doing this work on a major project is undoubtedly documentation. There were two main concerns we had to counter: the perceived lack of value of the analysis, and that this was seen as the reason to extend the project timescale by five months. I have often seen on projects that tight timescales lead to under-analysis – business managers sometimes prefer 'doing' to understanding the 'what' and the 'how'. I'm sure many people have experienced solutions to problems that weren't properly understood, or delays due to extensive change requests. Moving to 'doing' too quickly only creates a false sense of progress. With good analysis I believe you reap what you sow.

The concerns were addressed by briefing the main project stakeholders on what we were doing and why, covering all of the detail that would underpin the project plan and providing visibility of the work to be carried out. We also highlighted how independent research supported the



link between clearly understood requirements and success – especially for complex projects.

Documentation

We couldn't avoid the fact that a reasonable amount of documentation would be produced due to the breadth of work. To try and make this as pragmatic as possible a document template was defined from scratch – the aims being to ensure only the relevant information was captured; that it was easy to populate; would be consistent and easy to read. The format was agreed with major stakeholders ensuring expectations were managed and avoiding resistance to receiving documents.

As for the gap analysis, we were to engage many SMEs and would need to cover a fair degree of technical input. The work was divided into workstreams, each assigned a lead BA and a lead technical analyst (TA) with my role as an overarching lead. Excellent relationships were fostered between the BAs and TAs, helped by the co-dependence of our roles to make the work a success and agreeing demarcation and overlaps.

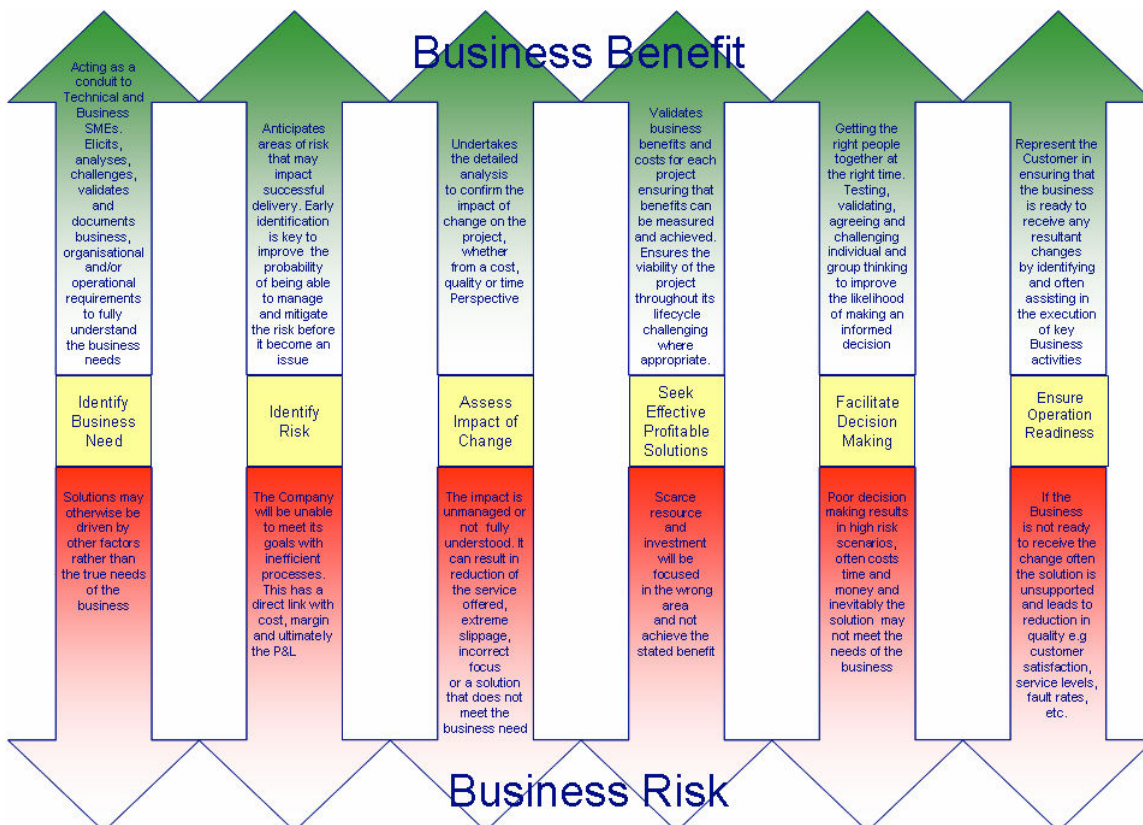
Relationships

I have always believed the softer skills are a far greater asset to a BA than the more technical ones. Interpersonal skills make the difference when resolving issues, managing conflict, communicating, influencing etc.

Active relationship building proved really effective. Just as engaging workshop attendees had encouraged participation, and two-way communication helped address resistance to change, good relationships with TAs helped gain more buy-in from SMEs. In the end over 100 SMEs contributed to this phase of the project. I have seen situations where BAs and TAs do not work well together and have even heard a TA accuse BAs of “sucking out what we know and then documenting it”. This is perhaps a little extreme, though there is some truth in it when you consider what BAs do in terms of facilitating understanding.

The lead TAs on the project had joint responsibility and authorship of documents produced – this was not only to address the workload but also resulted in them feeling fully bought into the analysis work and championing the output. As well as being another benefit of having a clearly agreed and pragmatic template, this also really helped in achieving sign-off for the work.

Figure 3: How BAs Add Value (Adapted from BA Capability v Risk by Greg Parsons)



Sign-Off

Whilst communicating the template and approach for documenting the analysis, I also defined and gained acceptance for a sign-off process from the managers who were acting as operational sponsors. They were the people who would be committing their resource to the project, would be receiving the change into their areas and their approval would be the measure as to whether the analysis was fit for purpose and a success. Attitude to formal sign-off can vary greatly within organisations, even where this is part of the internal governance of project methodologies and frameworks. I really believe that without proper sign-off you don't have commitment, true buy-in, or a proper baseline to manage further change by.

Reviewing the sign-off process led to a better understanding of the issues faced by sponsors, principle of which was the appearance of large documents in their inboxes, with no real clarity of what they were really being asked to sign off, little understanding of impacts, and insufficient time to review. The answer was a clear schedule of when each output document would be completed. The schedule had been agreed with the BAs and TAs to ensure it was realistic but challenging, with each document being completed in three stages:

1. A final draft, quality reviewed with the document authors and workstream leads
2. A structured document walkthrough with BA and TA leads and nominated SMEs and managers

A final issue for sign-off by the sponsors

This proved really effective for the following reasons.

- Everyone was focussed on delivering work to meet the timescales in the schedule. Involvement in planning this and agreeing it achieved commitment from everyone.
- The quality review sessions made sure work was a good standard, consistent across all the areas, and made sure there was acceptable coverage of analysis
- The structured walkthroughs ensured

all feedback was captured together and facilitated challenge and understanding of different viewpoints. You knew everyone had read the document as you were going through it with them.

Sponsors signed off documents quickly as their direct reports were heavily involved in agreeing them during the walkthrough sessions.

Summary

Following the approval of this phase, the project moved into development and implementation and went live over a week-end in September 2004, with no problems of any significance. Although it was a month late due to data migration issues, it was described as the most successful migration project undertaken by the company.

A review of lessons learned highlighted the appropriateness of the approach taken to analysis. The effectiveness of working relationships between BAs and TAs, clarity of scope, division of work across functional areas, and the actual documentation were credited as contributing to project success.

The company used the approaches described above as a model for a subsequent migration project that had been on the back-burner for a number of years, and I feel the success experienced gave the company the confidence to undertake it.

Given the opportunity, BAs can make a real difference to the projects they work on, and the success that follows is no accident.

Ian Partridge is a Business Analyst in the Change Management function at Schroders Investment Management Ltd, and also has experience in the communications and retail banking sectors.



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Closing the Gap

We often talk about the increased “currency” of the business analysis role. Very often though we are asked if the increased importance and scope of the role is recognised in potential levels of earnings.

At our last seminar Paul Turner looked at the word “professional” in relation to the BA role and drew analogies with professional footballers, professional accountants and yes even ladies of the night (you had to be there). And so is the new found “professionalism” of the BA borne out in hard cash.

From our research the answer would appear to be YES.

We looked back over the last 2 years and found that between April 2004 and January 2007 BA salaries have risen by 11% and BA contract rates by a resounding 22%. In real terms this makes for an extra £4,000 per annum for permanent staff and £80 per day increase on the contract front.

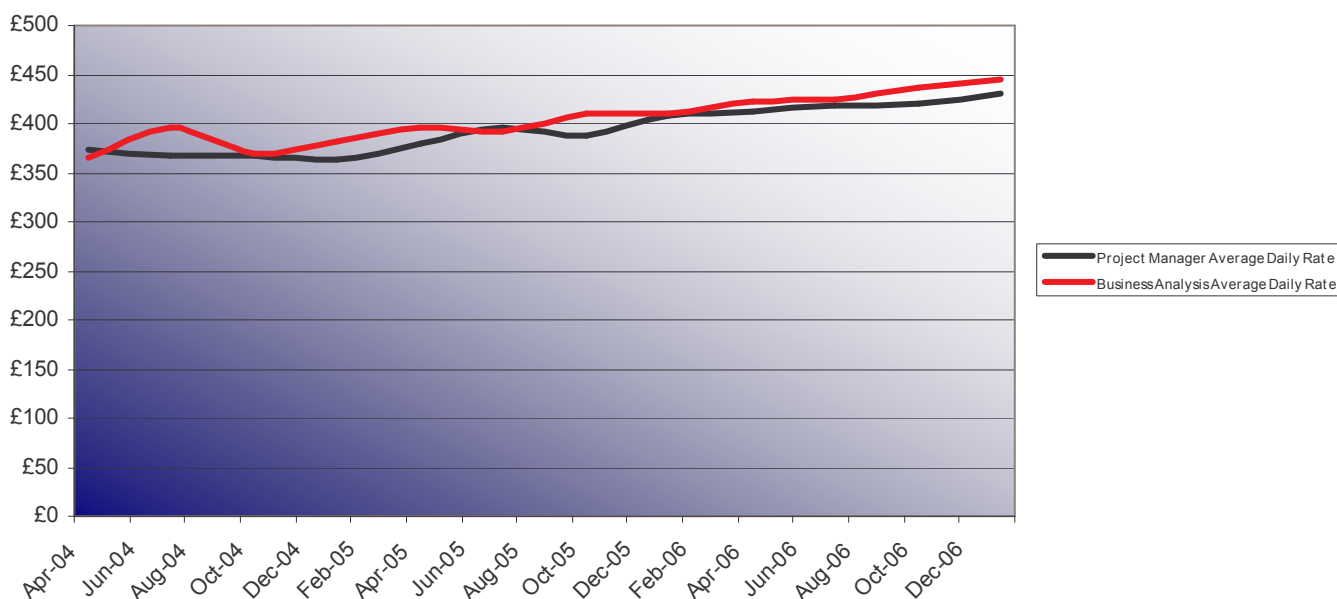
In itself these are impressive figures but what of the BA being the poor cousin of the project manager? In the same period project management salaries grew by only 8% and PM contract rates by 13%. Remarkably our research showed that on average BA contract rates had overtaken average project manager rates. This seems slightly fantastical and I have had to look back at the figures carefully. Whilst heavyweight project managers

will still secure far and away the highest rates, averages within the two disciplines have grown at different levels with the BA average rate overtaking that of the PM during the second half of 2006. Taking a sanity check on these figures I looked back at recent campaigns and can see plenty of evidence where BA rates have increased significantly more than other project hires. What reasons can we find for this trend?

In a nutshell many organisations we speak to are switching on to getting the analysis piece right.

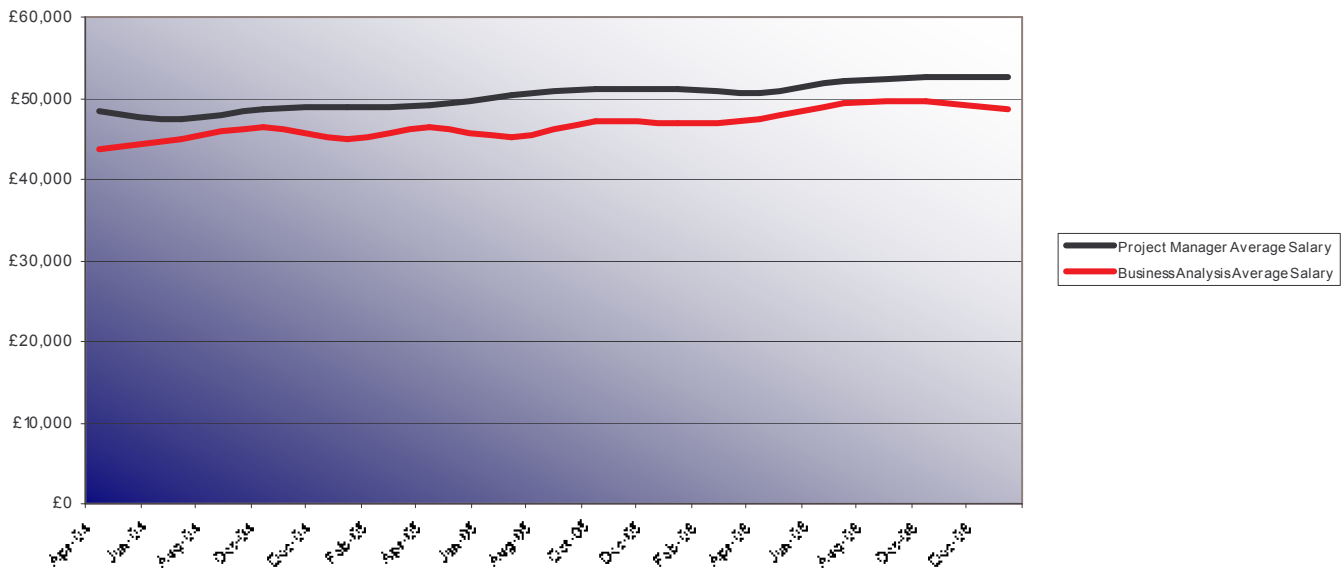
- **Playing the lead** - The individual BA or team of BA’s may form the linchpin of a change project. That change in itself may be seen as critical to the years’ figures e.g. a new product launch or to Directors avoiding jail sentences by meeting a statutory or regulatory requirement.
- **Supply and demand**—“Good” business analysts are in short supply. High demand then inevitably makes for higher rates and salaries.
- **“Big 4” alternative** - We have noted moves within some organisations to handle more change “in-house” rather than relying on “big 4” consultancies. The BA team is seen as a grounding for business consultancy skills and why not provide your own staff with a career path into consultancy as opposed to relying on third parties? Savings in consultancy invested in healthier salaries for your

Business Analysis Average Daily Rate



Source: www.itjobswatch.com

Business Analysis Average Salary



leading BA's makes an awful lot of sense. Similarly on a contract footing why not make use of a BA to support a business manager through change?

The new craze.

I believe there is a small element in the rising pay that relates to the BA role being in vogue. Suddenly it becomes fashionable to focus on the analysis role and where the spotlight falls usually money follows.

We should make a note here as to why permanent salaries for BA's remain lower than their PM counterparts. One main reason may well be that for full time staff project management is seen as a step up the career ladder and the expectation for all parties is that it will be paid at a premium. The gap then needs to be maintained as it is in everyone's interests. Contractors and certainly agencies don't have such hang-ups and being more finely tuned to market conditions can capitalise on the higher demand. (Contractor figures also tend to be rounded up far more and so if we were seeing an underlying market rise of say 10% on £300 per day this would magically equal a new rate of £350 per day.)

What Next?

Achieving a parity of permanent earnings between BA and PM is perhaps the surest test of the role being accepted in its most professional form. Whilst we see some organisations being prepared to invest in business consultancy roles at the top of the BA career ladder these examples are limited. Parity in BA/PM earnings would though mark-out a real shift in the development of the BA role. I use the term "would" rather than "will" as it is still uncertain if parity will be achieved. The gap then remains but it is narrowing all the time.

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Source: www.itjobswatch.com

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