

## BA Managers Forum 11<sup>th</sup> May – Specialist Interest Group

### Emerging Functional Areas



Session hosted by David Avis, Barclays.

#### **Background**

The session was an informal session to determine whether there are new knowledge challenges being faced in our Businesses, whether there are common themes and if any of these topics posed significant challenges in terms of the learning required to be proficient.

It should be said that, for those who were not in the room, that this was an open conversation therefore a quantifiable approach wasn't employed.

#### **Opening**

To open the session, it was suggested that there may be a few areas that are currently triggering demand.

- New Technologies – some of which require strong application of business knowledge for example AI and the use of Big Data.
- Regulation – major regulations frequently create specific resource demands – for example GDPR where the resource market a few months ago was frequently asking for 'GDPR BAs'.
- Business Change – digitalisation, mobile first approaches, digitalisation of payments, IT security, etc.

The session was very well supported with c.45 BA Managers in attendance – these BA Managers represent a broad spectrum of sectors.

#### **Areas of Demand**

The following were all raised as areas where we are seeing demand for BAs with specific knowledge. Assumption here is that list doesn't include demand for routine BA knowledge areas that we can readily source.

- Cloud computing (AWS, etc)
- Data Analytics – Visualisation
- Ecommerce / Google Analytics / targeted adverts
- Felt that data migration was core BA
- Finance BA BASAL III / MIFID – accountancy related
- GDPR – Privacy Impact Assessments
- Customer Data – Insights
- UX / Design led thinking
- Block Chain / Distributed Ledger Tech (2 or 3 people being asked for this)
- Cyber Security – more data being exposed, more APIs, how do we keep our assets secure.

- Robotics / Robotic Process Automation (RPA)
- 'Infrastructure BA' – seemed like this was where platforms are being upgraded but the business understanding of what that Infrastructure does is not fully available (i.e. understanding the customer / colleague impacts of unavailability)
- AI (some feeling this was a buzz word for areas like Business Rules and Automation that have been around for years – some genuine AI too)
- Cashless / Digital Payments (inc Bit Coin)
- Brexit (some areas seeing demand for BAs who worked on Ring Fencing to move to Brexit) – some downstream impacts like Cross Boarder Data sharing.
- Drone enablement – warehousing / logistics spaces

### **Learning Required?**

The next step of the session was to map the above themes based on the level of demand vs the depth of content (i.e. how easy it is to train).

The exercises didn't conclude as collectively it was felt that:

- Ran short on time!
- All of these topics can be trained to good BAs. Either through dedicated training or just through the process of acquiring knowledge from the business areas / documentation.
- That there's a tipping point when we're no longer being asked for a BA but a specialist. The topic we explored here was data... we'd expect a good BA to be able to cover many aspects of this, specifying data, data migrations, working with data outputs. However, when we start to get into realm of analysing large complex data lakes, etc. that's the point we really need a professional data scientist.

### **Why are our businesses asking for specialist knowledge areas?**

One the questions asked was why we're seeing people asking for specific knowledge areas and the main thoughts were around a view of the experience allowing a quicker speed to market.

This of course presents two primary challenges.

- 1). Better 'selling' the BA role in our organisations to that the skillsets and what BAs, in their universal sense, bring to projects. That domain knowledge is a proportion of that however the acquirable proportion.
- 2.) If its preserved that the learning curves are slower than our business needs allow, it may also bring the challenge of how be better provide quick orientation to training to BAs being landed on their first assignments in these areas / how they better orientate themselves around the subject matter.

Many thanks to all who attended the session. It was an enlightening discussion.