



Insights into the BA Skills Market & Team Resourcing Paper

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Introduction

Dear BA Manager Forum members,

Firstly, wasn't it great to have the BA Manager Forum back as an in-person event!

This paper has been produced off the back of the two identical 'Team Resourcing' sessions held on 10th June 2022. It contains insights from over 50 business analyst leaders, capturing responses using both Sli.do and through breakout activities.

Groups in both sessions, took a different resourcing model each and collaboratively undertook SWOT analysis (except for 'Experienced permanent hires' which was produced beforehand as an example). They are based on the experiences of practice leaders, from many of the UK's leading organisations. The following page acknowledges those organisations involved.

The session was inspired by the significant increase in demand for business analyst skills across the country and further afield, and the challenges this has brought for hiring managers trying to backfill and grow their BA capability.

For BA leaders interested in carrying on the conversation with peers, a new Specialist Interest Group (SIG) LinkedIn group, as part of the BA Manager Forum has been established. ['BA Manager Forum: Team Resourcing SIG'](#) is open to all members of the BA Manager Forum.

In case you can't access the link above: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12676100/>.

For those who could make the sessions, hope you found them helpful, and this paper serves as a practical extension of the conversations we had. If you couldn't make it, don't worry – it is intended the paper can be read without having attended.

Please feel free to get in contact if you'd like to discuss any of the points raised or if you have alternative views that you'd like to share.

Lastly, good luck with your future hiring plans. I hope that through diversifying the models your practice uses, that it supports your plans for both current needs as well as building a sustainable talent pipeline for the future.

Many thanks

Jamie Toyne

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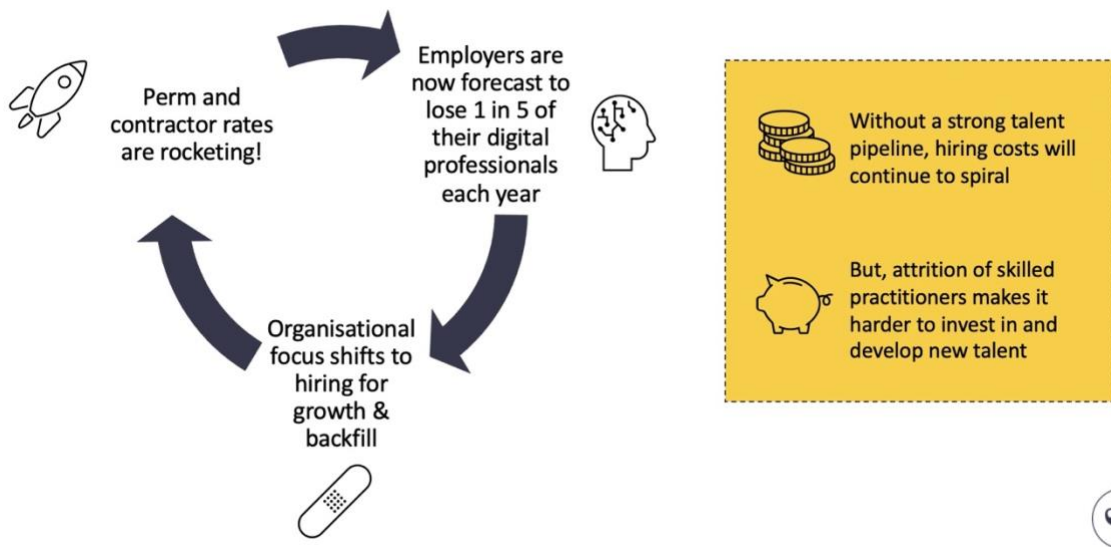
Organisations who have contributed to the production of this paper

We would like to thank the Business Analyst Practice Leaders from the organisations below, who attended the BA Manager Forum sessions held at the Grand Connaught Rooms, London on 10th June 2022. Your contributions and insights have been invaluable to the production of this paper.

- ABRDN
- Allianz
- Bank of England
- BGL Group
- BT
- BUPA
- Carnival UK
- Carter Jonas
- Central Government
- Channel 4
- CMC Consulting
- Cumberland Building Society
- Disclosure and Barring Service
- DVLA
- DWP
- Dyson
- EE
- Eximous Alliance
- First Central
- Hargreaves Lansdown
- herd consulting
- HMRC
- IG
- Intellectual Property Office
- Jumar
- Just Eat
- Kingfisher
- L&G
- Land Registry
- LV
- Maersk
- Ministry of Justice
- Motability
- Network Rail
- News UK
- NHS
- Ocado
- Ordnance Survey
- Pension Insurance Corp
- Principality Building Society
- Rolls-Royce
- Royal College of Nursing
- RS Components
- Severn Trent
- Social Work England
- St James Place
- Talbot Underwriting
- University of Cambridge
- University of Leicester
- University of Oxford
- University of Sheffield
- University of York
- West Brom Building Society
- Whitbread

Current Business Analyst skills market

Many will be familiar with the huge demand for business analyst skills, as well as the shortages of them. As illustrated in the diagram below, this is a cyclical problem. Without proper investment in developing targeted, specialist digital skills – the market will continue to suffer from a lack of supply, which cannot satisfy demand. The education system (school leavers and degree holders) typically provides generalist technology awareness but arguably lacks the direct entry routes into specific professions, in the same way a law or pharmacy degree does.



Development pathways such as the Level 4 Business Analyst apprenticeship, internal programmes or working with third party organisations that develop talent pipelines are imperative to us being able to attract people with the right aptitude and curiosity, as well as support their progression into being fully fledged and experienced BAs.

Insights from the BA Manager Forum

We used the opportunity of having over 50 BA leaders together, to gather how they've found hiring over the past 6-9 months and what they see as the biggest barriers preventing them from recruiting the skills they need. As these were free-text responses, they've been aggregated into themes, which you can find below.

What have been your experiences of hiring experienced BAs over the past 6-9 months?

- 73% of BA leaders have found it either **frustrating, challenging, turbulent, difficult, tiring, or hard**.
- 35% have specifically mentioned they're regularly seeing **low quality and inexperienced applicants** applying for experienced roles.
- 33% found it either **disappointing, horrible, never ending, or bonkers**.
- **Expensive and high salary expectations** were mentioned by 29% who took part.
- Only **6% haven't done any recruitment in the past 6-9 months**, and just 2% have found hiring to be quite good.

What do you see as the biggest barriers preventing you from recruiting the skills you need?

- 69% of BA leaders see **pay, budgets and uncompetitive reward packages** as their biggest barrier to recruiting the skills they need, with many seeing applicants demanding more than what they can offer.
- **Lack of availability of business analyst skills and experience in the market**, 57% saw as a barrier. With a few seeing career changes from other professions, especially in project management but lacking the experience and knowledge required.
- Arguably linked to the first point around pay, 25% specifically called out **too much choice and competition in the market** as a barrier.
- 20% found **internal recruitment, vetting and onboarding processes to be a barrier** to recruiting the skills they need. Additionally, 12% of responses called out they were **struggling to keep up with the pace of the market** and were missing out due to not being quick enough to meet candidate expectations.
- 12% believe **location** will be a barrier, as their organisations shift back to either full time office based or hybrid roles.
- **Only 2% of all responses saw economic uncertainty as a barrier** to recruitment.

Resourcing models available to BA Practice Leaders

Acknowledging the challenges faced within the market, we explored the different team resourcing models available to practice leaders, as well as looked at the importance of having a blended resourcing strategy.

There are several resourcing models available, that provide BA skills and expertise to practice leaders. Typically, we see these focussed around 5 main areas, which are defined below. Only 12% of those surveyed, used additional models not specifically mentioned.

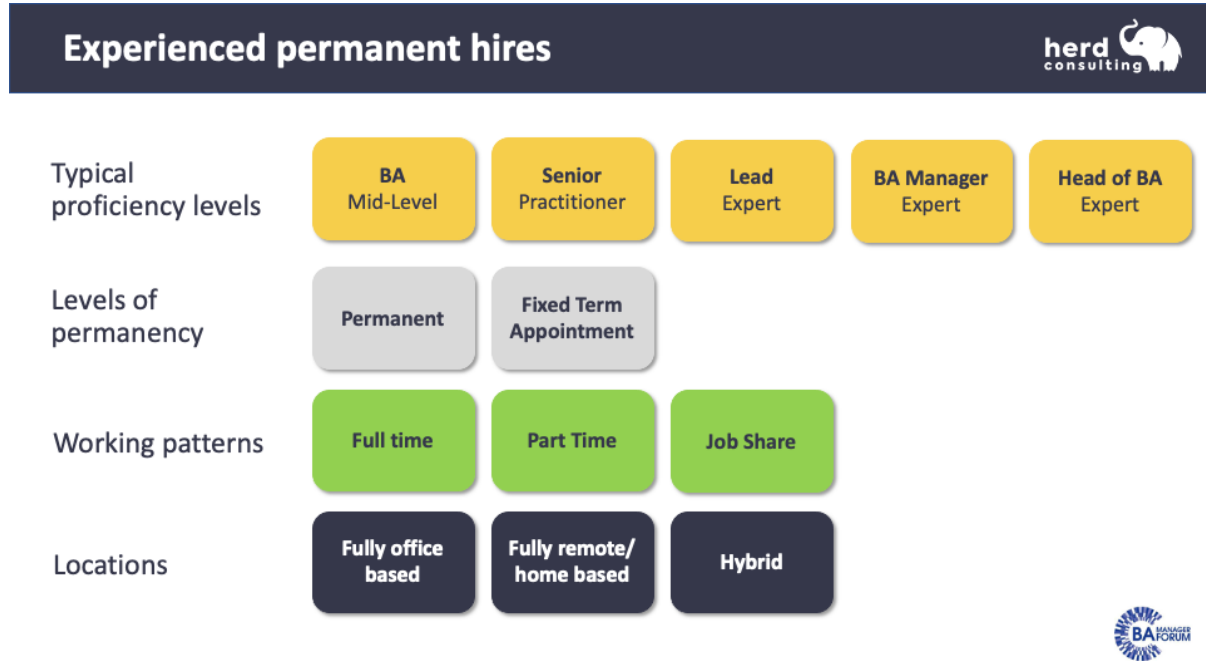
Overview of models available

- 1 Experienced permanent hires
- 2 Trainee permanent hires
- 3 Contractors
- 4 Consultancy frameworks
- 5 Recruit, train and deploy



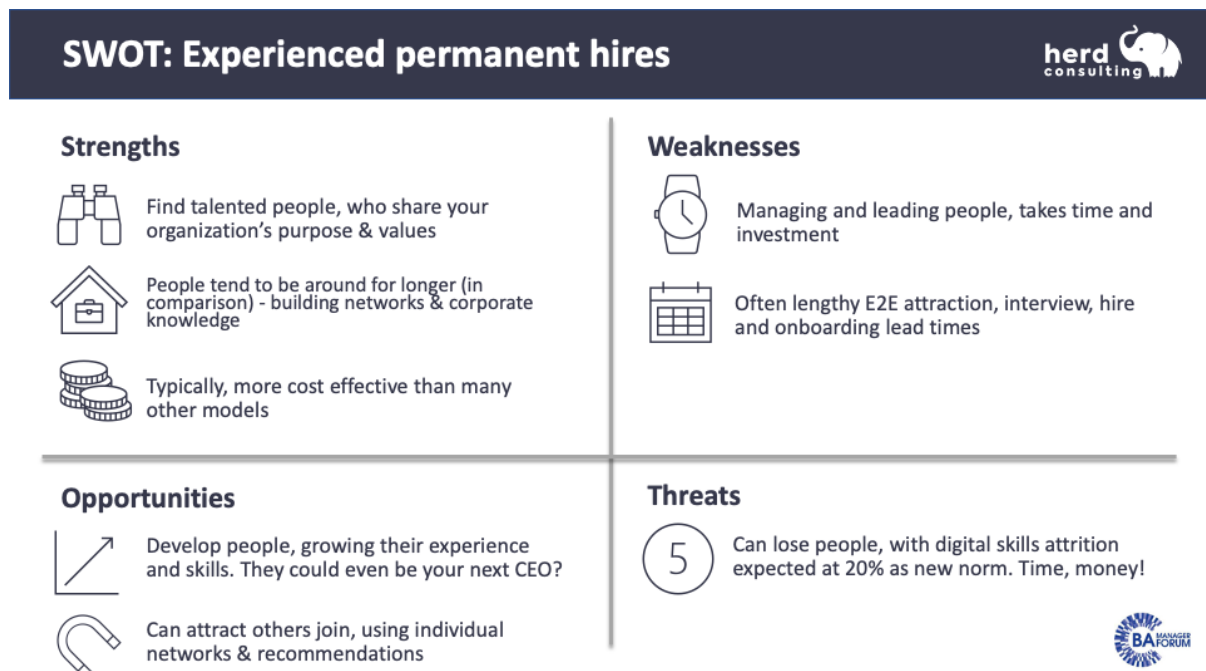
Experienced permanent hires

99% of organisations surveyed had experienced permanent hires, as part of their practice make-up.



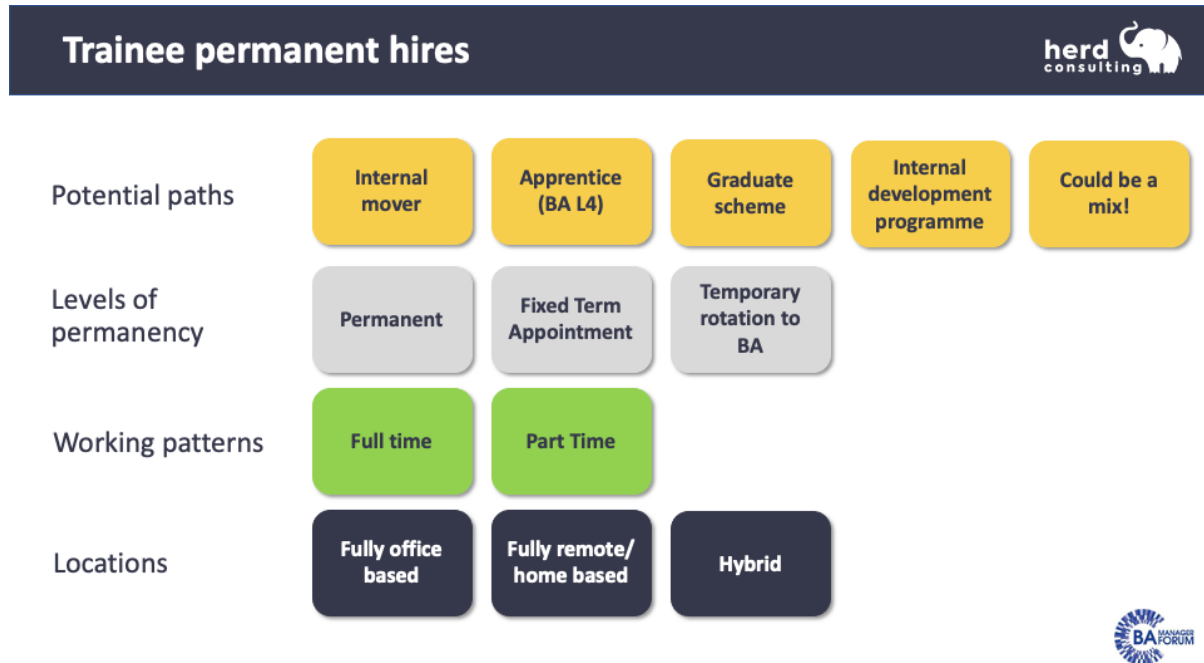
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

Unlike, the remainder of the resourcing models, SWOT analysis for experienced permanent hires was completed prior to the BAMF event so it could be used as an example. Also, expecting it was likely the most familiar model to all attendees.



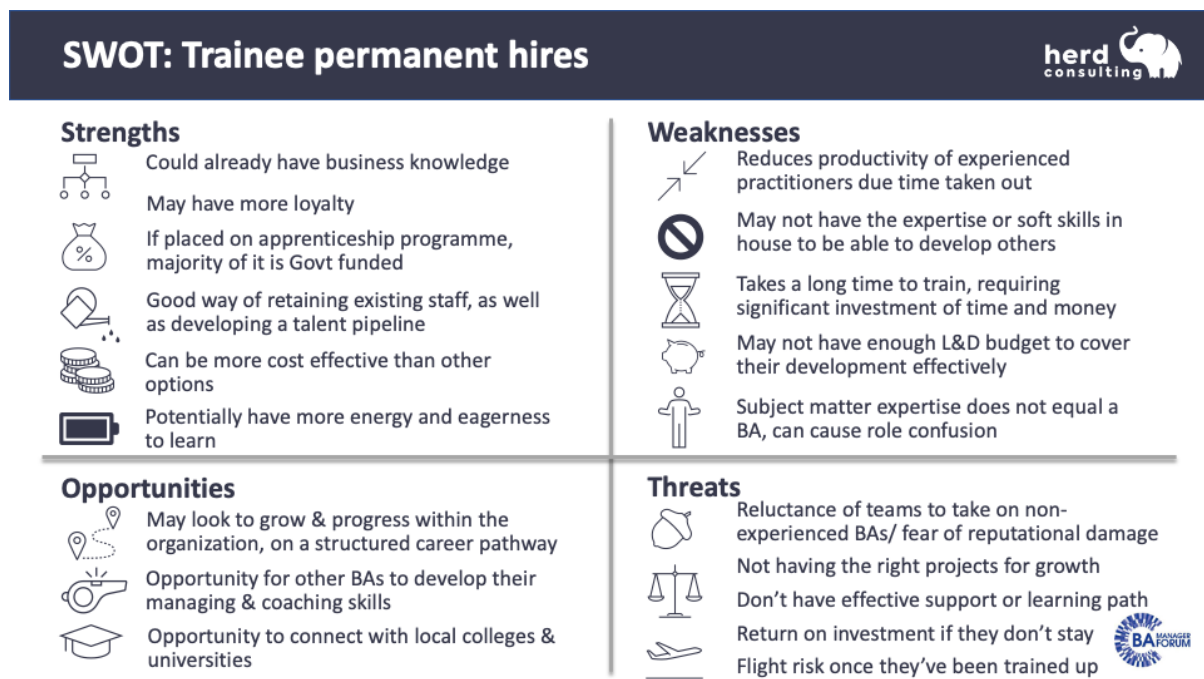
Trainee permanent hires

60% of organisations surveyed had trainee permanent hires, as part of their practice make-up.



Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

The SWOT analysis below and for each subsequent model is based on the consolidated thoughts of two different groups of BA practice leaders who attended the BA Manager Forum on the 10th June 2022.



Contractors

91% of organisations surveyed used contractors to provide BA skills to their practice.

Contractors

Inside or outside of IR35?



Direct or agency?



Potential reasons for hiring contractors:



Temporary backfill



Industry knowledge



Specialist BA/Tech expertise



Faster option to recruit



Internal constraints (headcount etc.)



Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

SWOT: Contractors

Strengths

- Speed to recruit
- Gives flexibility in team, can easily ramp numbers up or down as required
- Usually come with significant experience, meaning they require little support
- Can find specialists in a specific domain, technology or area of business analysis
- Many are flexible in terms of breadth of role, travel, etc.
- Often have good networks that can be helpful

Weaknesses

- Expensive in comparison to other models
- Can move on quickly, with little notice
- No talent pipeline is being built
- Knowledge retention can suffer
- May become dependent on a specific individual
- If outside IR35, additional effort needed to specify exact outcomes and SOW

Opportunities

- Contract to perm conversion
- Using contractors as mentors
- Can give contractors less exciting work
- Learn from the experiences of contractors

Threats

- Can encourage perm team members to want to go contracting
- Tax changes e.g., IR35 can make it difficult to attract good contractors (inside vs outside)
- Could unsettle team dynamics
- ★★★ Quality can be inconsistent



Consultancy frameworks

57% of organisations surveyed used consultancy frameworks to provide BA skills to their practice.

Consultancy frameworks

Consultancy providers

4

Big 4 style

Boutiques

Profession specialists

Full delivery team provision

Piece of work delivery (usually SOW/ outcome driven)

Call-off individuals (usually under existing commercial frameworks)

+ many more variations!

Examples:

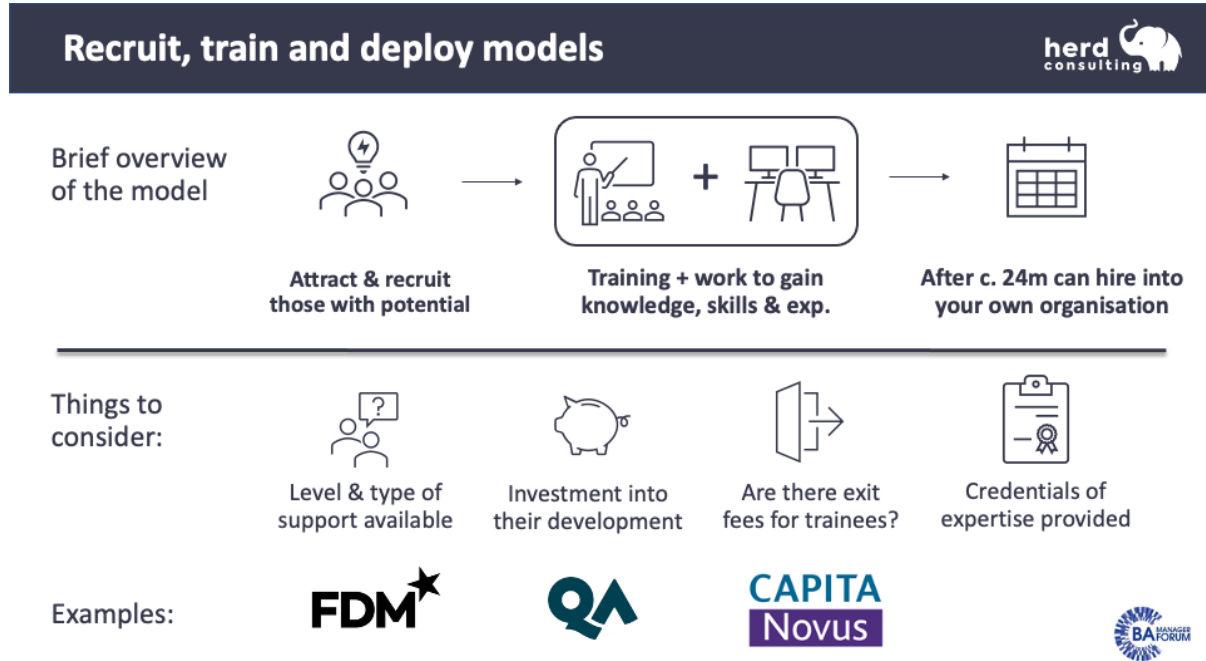
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

SWOT: Consultancy frameworks

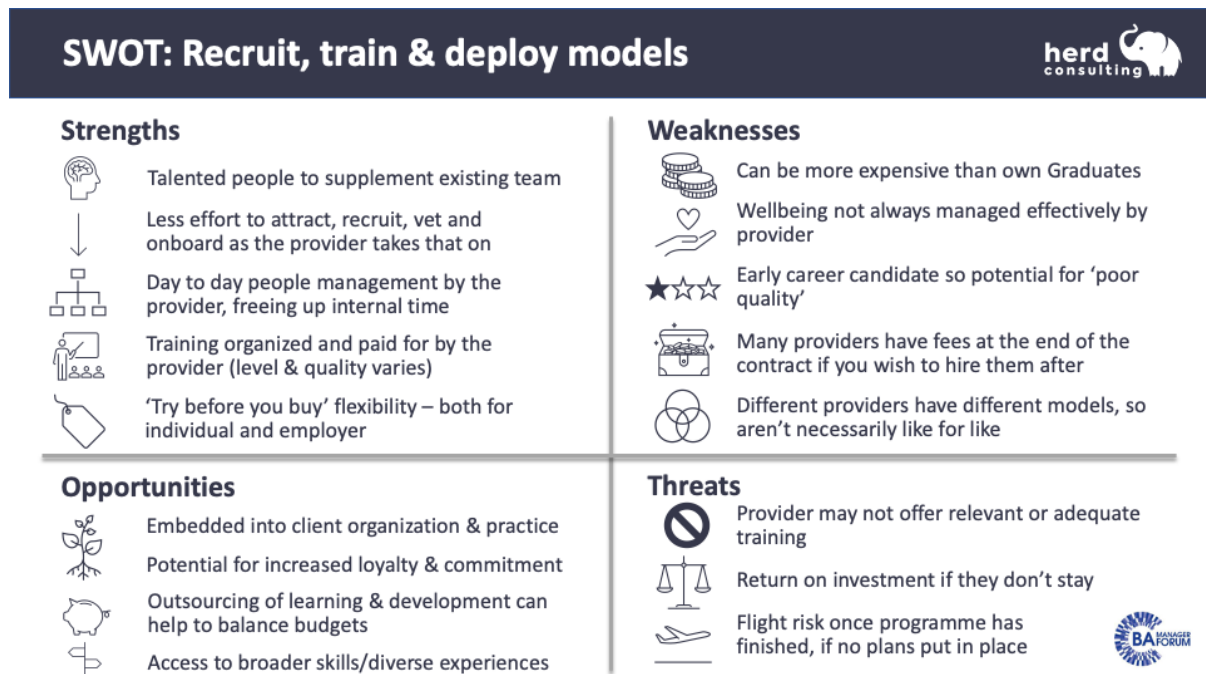
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed to recruit and bring into the organisation Focused solely on a task or project Can find specialists in a specific domain, technology or area of business analysis Gives flexibility in team, can easily ramp numbers up or down as required Objective and apolitical to internal nuances 'Strength of voice' and ability to influence Usually independent, little leadership support needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive in comparison to other models Some are focused on a specific framework, and may lack context of the business/industry Knowledge retention can suffer Consultancy engagement can often be an overhead on permanent staff Inconsistency in quality of consultants provided, sometimes lack of transparency on their capability Getting access to internal systems can be tricky
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large pool of expertise Learn from the experiences and knowledge of consultants Perception of status/knowledge can be helpful, especially to influence outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May just implement and leave, and may not stay to embed and deal with fall out Potential rivalry with other resourcing models, most likely permanent colleagues Knowledge on specific project, can be easily lost

Recruit, train and deploy models

34% of organisations surveyed worked with recruit, train and deploy providers to supply BA skills to their practice.



Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats



Others (not mentioned above)

12% of organisations surveyed used other resourcing models, not mentioned above.

Conclusions

As the insights clearly support, finding experienced and skilled business analysts is tough. With demand increasing for our profession, and a consensus that there was no view of the market slowing down anytime soon – our role as BA leaders and specifically hiring managers, will likely remain frustrating, challenging, turbulent, difficult, tiring, or hard for some time yet. However, there are some positive steps we can all consider to hopefully increase our successes.

The saying of ‘not having all your eggs in one basket’ has never been so relevant, we must look to consider what resourcing models are suitable for our practices and organisations, and whether we need to take a more blended approach. Both, to address short term needs, and whilst acknowledging that we must also continue to invest in developing a future talent pipeline.

To help leaders reflect, consider, and potentially change their blended resourcing strategy, the template supplied during the session has been included as a link to a Word document below. Please feel free to change or tweak this as relevant, and if you are looking to use it – think about what criteria you may wish to include that is pertinent to your own organisation and needs. The ones included are purely suggestions.

Business Analyst: Blended Team Resourcing Strategy - <https://docdro.id/oj8ZP4W>

Business Analyst: Blended Team Resourcing Strategy

	Experienced Permanent Hires	Trainee Permanent Hires	Contractors	Consultancy Frameworks	"Recruit, Train, Deploy"
Examples:	Full-time, part-time, job share.	Apprenticeship Programmes, Graduates, internal movers.	Direct or Agency? Inside or outside #BS?	Capita, Deloitte, Thoughtworks, Bureau.	FDM, Capita Novus.
Current Headcount: (% split or exact numbers)					
Target Headcount Blend: (% split or exact numbers)					
Scoring criteria: (These are only suggestions, feel free to add your own in the space provided).	Budget available?	Budget available?	Budget available?	Budget available?	Budget available?
	Ease/speed of hire	Ease/speed of hire	Ease/speed of hire	Ease/speed of hire	Ease/speed of hire
	Growing future pipeline	Growing future pipeline	Growing future pipeline	Growing future pipeline	Growing future pipeline
	Level of expertise	Level of expertise	Level of expertise	Level of expertise	Level of expertise
	Model already in place?	Model already in place?	Model already in place?	Model already in place?	Model already in place?
	Support required?	Support required?	Support required?	Support required?	Support required?
Objectives and Key Results (OKRs):					
Next steps to help you realise your strategy:					

The above can also be found on the LinkedIn group, [BA Manager Forum: Team Resourcing SIG](#).