

What Exactly Is a Business Analyst, Anyway?



To start things off; let's state that, in case you were to ask ten different HR Professionals what a Business Analyst is, that you would likely get about 10 unique answers. Well that is fundamentally the problem the emerging area of "Business Analysis" is facing. So, to find a little clarity on the matter, let's start by dividing all analysts to the two major categories; business (non-technical) and specialized. These will be the two main branches within the title. This isn't to say that you is not able to or sometimes necessary to operate on each side of the fence. This only goes to demonstrate just how confusing the title "Business Analyst" is.

The first side of this very broad coin is the business side. This is those professionals that employ a particular methodology to provide solutions that increase the value of a company or a business.

The other side of the coin is going to be the IT or Technical side. Now, this side has a simple function of applying specific methods to provide "technical" solutions to problems, which increases the ability of the business, which in turn increases the worth of a company. Confused yet? OK, moving on.

Many occasions analysts have been hired to not just find the problems but to also supply solutions. This is a completely different role than a job manager. As a general rule a business will acquire the services of an analyst or a firm to address a particular issue or problem that it's facing. The analyst will then visit the business, collect information, apply principles and methodologies, and generate a solution. Currently a requirements analyst may assess the needs and requirements (this may or might not be included in the solutions originally supplied). This information is then passed into a Project Manager. The PM will then follow their methodologies that are proven and techniques to generate the final product on budget and on time, hopefully.

Basically to describe what a company analyst is, we have to describe the job that a business analyst does. Since it is irrelevant whether the name is business analyst, process analyst, requirements analyst, operations analyst, business systems analyst, systems analyst, advisor, programmer/analyst, etc; the sole thing which makes a analyst an analyst would be the systematic approach to issues and solutions through predefined methodic principles.

Only a few of these characteristics of a BA is the the analyst;

- Works with businesses to identify improvement opportunities within procedures or operations
- Gathers, files, and analyzes requirements and needs that a business may have
- The BA solves problems that companies have

There are different organizations that make or adhere to accepted standards of practice within the discipline of company analysis. One of which would be the certifying agency of the International Institute of Business Analysis another would be the Object Management Group. These organizations will adhere strictly to specific methodologies that when correctly employed will lead not merely the analyst, but their clients, to a successful outcome regardless of current situations.

Methodologies can fluctuate greatly depending on the areas of the specific analyst or firm. No single methodology is right or wrong; nevertheless keep in mind that there are several well defined collections of areas which may be verified using a simple internet search. When an analyst claims to use a particular system or subject, check out.

So simply to sum up everything, a business analyst is basically defined as someone who performs certain tasks to create your company better. Like it's been said before, in case you've got an issue with your vehicle, you find an automobile mechanic. In case you've got a issue with your health, you find a physician. If you have a issue with your small business, you find a company analyst.

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