Business Analysis: Best Practices for Success

By Steven Blais

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The definitive guide on the roles and responsibilities of the business analyst

Business Analysis offers a complete description of the process of business analysis in solving business problems. Filled with tips, tricks, techniques, and guerilla tactics to help execute the process in the face of sometimes overwhelming political or social obstacles, this guide is also filled with real world stories from the author's more than thirty years of experience working as a business analyst.

- Provides techniques and tips to execute the at-times tricky job of business analyst
- Written by an industry expert with over thirty years of experience

Straightforward and insightful, *Business Analysis* is a valuable contribution to your ability to be successful in this role in today's business environment.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap
Business Analysis

Best Practices for Success

Outside of its top executives, there is no single position more central to an organization's overall success than the business analyst. The business analyst may be the only position within an enterprise that has knowledge of business processes, as well as the IT technology that supports them, all while bringing technical and business staff together to collaboratively solve problems.

Presenting best practices for identifying business problems that need solving and ensuring their solutions bring value to your organization, *Business Analysis: Best Practices for Success* demonstrates that the business analyst is more than a requirements recorder. Rather, the business analyst is a central cog in the successful organization's driving wheel.

This practical guide takes a critical look at the business analyst's role as the ultimate problem solver in both the business and development communities when there is a problem. Filled with illustrative case studies, tips, tricks, techniques, and guerrilla tactics, Business Analysis helps execute the process in the face of sometimes overwhelming political or social obstacles. Informed by author Steven Blais's forty years of experience performing an abundance of roles and activities integral to the business analyst position, this book answers frequently asked questions, including:

- What is my relationship with the project manager?
- Is it possible to create a common language for IT and business?
- Is there a methodology or process for business analysts?
- How can I improve the communication between product stakeholders and developers?
- Since I'm doing all three roles, what is the difference between the project manager, the systems analyst, and the business analyst?
- How do we deal with customers who give us the solution and not the problem?
- Is it necessary to provide cost justification such as an ROI for projects, and if so, how do you do it?
- Why is there always such a gap between the user requirements and the delivered product?

Being a business analyst means you are the center of change in your organization, and that's a dangerous place to be without a map, or at least a good plan of action. Create positive change for your organization, improve processes, clarify communications, investigate problems, produce solutions— do it all, with the hard-won guidance found in Steven Blais's Business Analysis.

From the Back Cover
Praise for *Business Analysis Best Practices for Success*

"The profession, growth, and acceptance of the business analyst are increasing in a way similar to the growth of project management in the early 1980s. A recent review of the emphasis on requirements and requirements management shows the business analyst is at the forefront of successful change in organizations and enterprises around the world. Today, companies are taking on more complex projects. Many of these types of projects are strategic in nature and necessary for the growth and even the

survivability of the firm. While business decision-making can be accompanied by large rewards, there is also the opportunity for catastrophic failures if faulty business decisions are made. Most successful business process methodologies will include business analysis and project management. The need for business analysis support on process improvement and solution development is quite apparent.

This book by Steven Blais is a must-read for all professionals working on business and technical initiatives. Business analysts, project managers, and other stakeholders must understand each other's role in order for a successful marriage of project management and business analysis to take place. Steven clearly defines this relationship in Chapter 6 of this new book. It is entirely possible that, in the future, business analysis certification will be required by anyone working on business processes. But for the present and the near future, project support from business analysts will be essential. This book is just the tool and resource needed to explain, clarify, and put the practical concepts of business analysis in the hands of project stakeholders, project managers, and business analysts."
—**Harold Kerzner**, PhD, MS, and MBASenior Executive Director, IIL

"Since I first met Steven Blais, I felt he was one of the best living examples of a true business analyst and captured the spirit of the profession. Hence, I began reviewing this book with high expectations, and it did not disappoint. Steven excels at communicating concepts that have real meaning and utility, dealing with the real-world, practical challenges we face while doing business analysis, and gives us the tools and structures we need to do business analysis at its best."
—**Laura Brandenburg** host, Bridging-the-Gap.com

"I am excited to see this project finally published. Steve's understanding of business analysts, their roles and responsibilities, and the contribution they make to the development of solid business requirements is??unparalleled. Having good requirements is the cornerstone of any successful project. The book provides not only a thorough discourse on the topic; it can easily be used as a reference guide."
—**Mara D. Burns**, PMP cofounder, PM Lessons Learned

About the Author
Steven P. Blais is a solution architect and a consultant, coach, trainer, and course author in business analysis, software development, and project management. He contributes articles on a regular basis to allPM.com, a project management webzine published by the International Institute for Learning (IIL). He is a frequent content provider to numerous BA blogging sites, including EssenceoftheBA.com, and chairs a committee for the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge R3 with the International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA), the predominant organization for the growing discipline of business analysis, with currently over 15,000 members in ninety chapters worldwide.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Chris Gibbons:

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Sandra Earnhardt:

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