

Individual Report

Agile Business

Team 08 – Making Programming Sexy

Ragesh Chellathuray

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Individual Report

**Master of Science in Business Information Systems**

The goal of the project was to develop a proposal for a curriculum that would make technical informatic courses more attractive for students in the Business Information Technology degree program

This individual report contains a self-reflection about my role and contribution in this project and ends with a reflection highlighting my learnings during the entire project.

# My project role

Within the team we first discussed how we want to distribute the roles. There was an ongoing discussion within the first two weeks whether we want to change the roles after each sprint. To run this project there was a need for a product owner and business analysts Having role rotations, would have given us the possibility to understand the effort and responsibilities required to fulfill the role of a product owner. However, in the discussion during the Sprint 1 Retroperspective, we noted that transferring knowledge among the team members is very time consuming and could lead to potential loss of knowledge. As we wanted to focus on the project objectives and given that changing roles from sprint to sprint is not a usual approach in real-life business, we decided to discard this approach.

I took over the role as a Business Analyst during the entire project. I shared this role together with my teammates Lawrence Morillo and Marc Fink.

To understand the role of a business analyst, I first revised the BABOK Guide to figure out what is required by a business analyst. As per BABOK a business analyst should concentrate on the activities around understanding company problems and goals, analyzing the needs and solutions, devising strategies, driving change, and finally also facilitating stakeholder collaboration.

To understand the current problems and the goals of the study program we first interviewed the project sponsor (Dr. Prof. Hinkelmann). After the first discussion we started to point out the problems and its root cause. We conducted some document analysis to get a proper understanding about the context. Furthermore, we also analyzed the gap between the current and future state situation. Afterwards we defined the stakeholders which we need to interview to gather further information. As a next step, we discussed and agreed on the approach how we want to approach the elicitation phase and how to interact with the stakeholder. We performed interviews with students and professors. Out of these actions we obtained the useful information, which we then consolidated to get a proper understanding of the as-is situation and the pain points. We then confirmed our outcome with a smaller amount of stakeholder to ensure that the gathered information reflect the real situation. Out of this we created a first draft for a potential solution. After that we prepared and distributed a survey to broader audience (Lecturers and Students) to define the requirements for the future study program. After defining the requirements, we again prepared a focus group discussion to confirm the requirements Based on this information we started to design a potential scenario for a future study program. As part of another focus group discussion we further refined our solution based on the received feedbacks. We finally introduced this approach to project sponsor and presented our new study approach on pitching session.

# My contribution

What was my contribution? Relate it to the overall achievement of the project.

With regards to my contribution, I was involved in every phase. In the first phase to understand the current situation I went through the gathered documentation to get a proper understanding around the as-is situation. In a group discussion with the other business analysts I shared my understanding and aligned this with their understanding. We then documented final output of discussion in our documentation. I was also then involved in the interviews with the project sponsor and BSc Students and used my understanding from our documentation to further lead the discussion. We then created a first draft for a potential solution. To gather the feedback from a broader audience I supported the team in creation of survey which we then distributed to the lecturers and students. Based on the gathered feedback from the survey we defined together the requirements for the potential solution. We confirmed these requirements with a focus group where we discussed our outcome and their views on this. Finally, we then designed the new study approach which presented to the project sponsor and finally to a broader audience. During the entire project I ensured that me and my teammates fulfilling the business analyst role have update our Kanban Board on Trello so that our Product Owner has a proper view around the pending tasks.

As mentioned in the beginning I was involved in almost every phase. The description above endorse this statement. A business analysts’ contribution is required in each phase as he or she has the big picture around the context. In our project I shared this role with my teammates, and we contributed our skills from the beginning until to then end of this project. Also, the fact that we were able to give our product owner quick response around the project and the context confirm this!

# My learnings

I am not working as a business analyst in my company. Therefore, the role as a business analyst was quite new to me. However, given that I am a former BSc BIS student the project context was quite familiar to me. To understand the roles and responsibility of a business analyst, I revised the BABOK guideline. In my eyes, this guidance gives a very good understanding around this role. During the project I used very often the Babok guide to on the hand to figure out what is required from my side. On the other hand, it also helped me to confirm whether my actions make sense in relation to the project goals.

# Strategy analysis

# We used the insghts from Babok regarding strategy analysis on the start of our project. It helped us to define how we want to get the understanding around the current and future state of the project goal. We used the Brainstroming method for both states to get the inputs from every teammember. Then we prioritized and focused on the inputs which we rated with the most points. As this was the first phase where we started to work together for this project we had sometimes discussions where we noted that we somehow lost the focus on the current situation and started to talk about potential solutions It was good then that one of our group member stopped the discussion so that we could again focus on the problems before moving to the future state discussions. We also noted that not all tasks in Babok was relevant to us. So we only focused on that tasks which we agreed is most important to us.

# Business analysis planning and monitoring

It helped me a during the beginning phase, as this knowledge supported me and my colleagues (Business analysts) how we want to approach the tasks for business analysis. Instead of starting the project without any plan, this knowledge are supported us to first draft a potential approach. We then discussed our approaches and noted that sometimes we had some different views. However, after having a look together on the techniques in Babok we could decide on the final approach. Also, in terms of how to define our stakeholder and how to approach them it was very useful and supported us to define the techniques how we can capture their inputs. Often, we also checked the Babok guide to confirm whether our discussed approach makes sense.

# Elicitation and collaboration

In my eyes the probably most important Knowledge area for me and my colleagues working as business analysts. It helped us a lot to understand how we want to gather information. The tasks and techniques described here supported us a lot in the planning. We noted already after the first interview with the student and the project sponsor that we really need to focus on the preparation and to use the most applicable technique to elicitate requirements. For me and Marc it was quite difficult to be not biased while preparing the interview and survey questions. Here it was very good that we had Lawrence in our team who then informed us to be careful on this. Also, the discussion in the focus group to confirm our requirements was sometimes quite difficult as during these discussions we noted then new potential requirements, which we then again discussed internally how we want to consider them in our list of requirements.

# Requirements lifecycle management

To trace, maintain and prioritise our requirements we used our lists of requirements as the central basis for this. We tracked them all in a spreadsheet. We tried to define key words for requirements and then to relate the received feedback to these key words. It also helped us to update and prioritise them after discussions with our stakeholder. My biggest learning here was that not everything mentioned by stakeholder needs to be documented. However, it was quite difficult to me to figure out what in-or exclude from our requirements lists.

# Requirements analysis and design definition

Also, on very important part, where we designed based on gathered requirements the new study program. Having our list of requirements supported us a lot in this phase. In this phase I noted that we had several discussions around the potential solutions. Not everyone was happy with the solution as someone suggestions were not considered. However, after several discussions and changes on the solution we then agreed on the final solution.

# Solution evaluation

As we only created a potential draft for a new study program, we could analyse or measure how it works once introduced to the reality. However, we introduced our solution to different stakeholders (project sponsors, lecturers, students) and received generally good feedback. Some inputs we also tried to consider in the solution and refined our solution.

**General learning**

I think having this agile approach in projects to achieve the goal is the future. I will try to consider this also in my future projects. It really helps to be agile and to really create MVPs immediately instead of working until to the project end and having the end product. It also supports to get immediate feedback from the stakeholder and to ensure that we are on the right way. For me it was not always easy to think in sprints. Often, I turned back to the traditional approach of the waterfall model. However, after discussions with my teammates I could then change the mind set and work with the agile approach. Something, where I really need to focus more is the defining and the granularity of the tasks in our Kanban board. Sometimes, we had tasks within our Kanban Board, which was good to know, however not necessary for the Kanban Board. Also updating the Kanban Board is very important as otherwise this Board would not make sense.

“*Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.   
The important thing is not to stop questioning.”*  
– Albert Einstein