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Business Analyst Vs. Business Analytics Professional: What's The Difference?

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A business analyst and a business analytics professional are not the same. Very often, people get confused about these 2 terms.

Many times, they are used interchangeably. Few start-ups and organizations also seek out a business analyst when they are actually in search of a business analytics professional. Among the analytics enthusiasts who are searching for a job in business analytics, this causes huge confusion. So, it would be better if the difference between a business analyst and a business analytics professional is well-known.

Who Is A Business Analyst?

As defined by IIBA(International Institute of Business Analysis), the business analysis is a discipline of determining the business needs and identifying the solutions to business problems.

A business analyst coordinates between a client and the technical team. A client can be either the internal team that is required to work with the technical team or external, with the requirements to solve a particular problem. The technical team has the ability to either deliver a service or build a product.

The business analyst makes sure that the service or product provided by the technical team meets the client's present requirements. He/she collaborates with the external and internal stakeholders in the implementation as well as design of the service or product.

Who Is A Business Analytics Professional?

A business analyst doesn't work with data and is mostly concerned about processes and functions. On the contrary, reporting and data are the key components of a business analytics professional's job.

Let us consider 3 major elements that help us in understanding the difference between a business analyst and a business analytics professional.
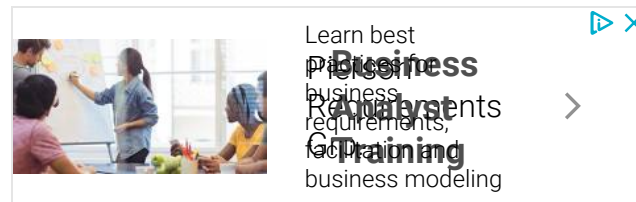
Analytical Problem Solving Skills

The business analysts utilize different techniques to analyze the problem and determine the solution. They conduct thorough analysis and deconstruct the solution or problem by making use of various methods.Few examples of this include decision models, business process models and use cases.

On the other hand, business analytics executives use logical thinking, predictive analytics and statistics to solve the business problems.

Let us consider 2 examples that state the way in which the business analytics executives solve the business problems.

- If a continuous stream of loan applications are being received by a particular bank, the business analytics professional will develop and implement a model to give a recommendation on which loan applications that bank must lend to.
- From a catalogue launch, if a manufacturer of home-goods wants to predict the expected profits, a framework will be applied by the business analytics executive to work on the problem and develop a predictive model to provide recommendation and results.

The Capability To Tell Story With Data

The business analytics professionals must be in a position to share the insights they derive from raw data. They must share the insights in a way that is clearly understandable to the end stake holder as most of the times, the end stakeholder will be a non-technical and/or business-centric person. They shouldn't use technical jargons while communicating and must present the insights in the simplest possible way. The stakeholder can be an internal or external client. Most of the times, they are business professionals with zero technical background and the authority to take decisions rests with them. The business analytics professionals are very good story tellers and they make use of advanced tools like Ds.js, R and Tableau to share their findings or story to the end stakeholders.

On the other hand, the business analysts are good communicators and they make use of excel, word and powerpoint to create visual models like wireframe prototypes or work-flow diagrams. They are also good at creating technical documentations. But, they don't develop custom dashboards making use of modern data visualization tools like business analytics executives do.

Programming Skills

A business analytics professional works with structured data and utilizes SQL in order to retrieve data from databases. He/she will write SQL queries to analyze and extract data from the transactions database and develop a set of visualizations if the management requires some advanced metrics about their company.

The analytics professional will also have a good expertise on the data science programming languages like Python, Julia, Hadoop and so on. He/she is good at visualizing, analyzing and manipulating data.

A business analyst, on the other hand, has nothing to do with data. Their focus is more on the functions and processes. The significant business analyst value propositions incorporate the calibration and testing, IT re-engineering, process, model requirements, KPIs(Key

Performance Indicators), vital pain points, context and business value maps. A business analyst possesses strong knowledge in development frameworks such as SLDC. He/she makes use of Excel to perform quantitative calculations and analysis. The programming skills are not used by the business analysts to perform calculations.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above that both these functions are extremely important for a successful business model. From the business decisions it automates as well as enables, the value of analytics can be derived. Every time, a business analyst will first begin with the business questions but not with data. They are also the domain experts who manage the project from the beginning till the end.

On the other hand, a business analytics professional begins to solve the business problem making use of data first. He/she cares about the retrieval of data, format of data and source of data. Data is the raw material for a business analytics professional.

A business analytics professional and a business analyst work closely to make sure the final project is delivered successfully. This explains the difference between a business analyst and a business analytics professional.

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