
CHAPTER 4

The business analyst

Objectives

- **Enhancing:**
 - the vital functions the BA performs
 - the skills and knowledge an effective analyst needs
 - how to develop such people in organization
 - proposes a job description for a requirements analyst, and you can also access a sample BA job description

Contents

1. The business analyst role
2. The business analyst's tasks
3. Essential analyst skills
4. Essential analyst knowledge
5. The making of a business analyst
6. The analyst role on agile projects
7. Creating a collaborative team

The business analyst role

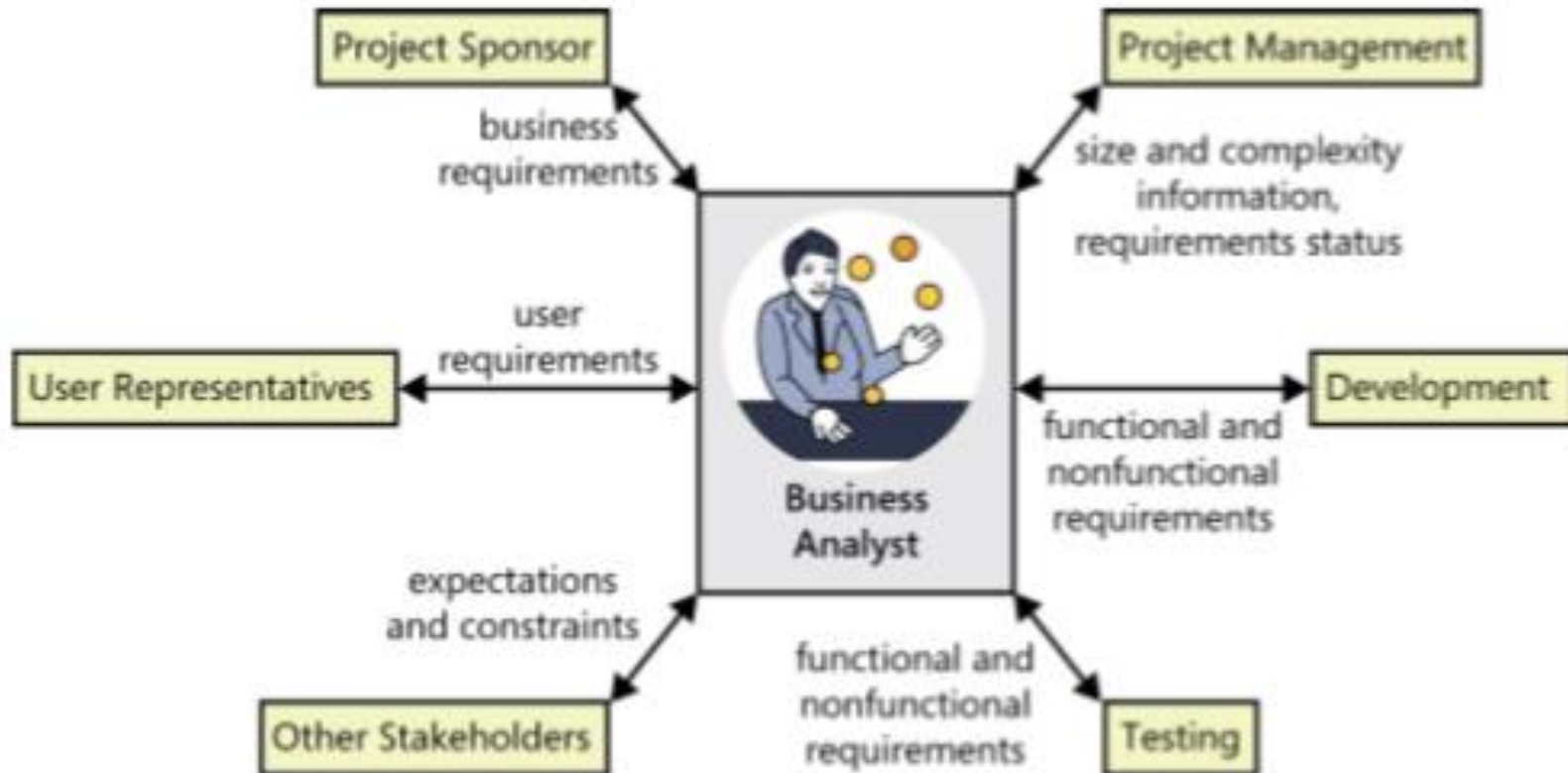


FIGURE 4-1 The business analyst bridges communication between customer and development stakeholders.

The business analyst's tasks

- Define business requirements
- Plan the requirements approach
- Identify project stakeholders and user classes
- Elicit requirements
- Analyze requirements
- Document requirements
- Communicate requirements
- Lead requirements validation
- Facilitate requirements prioritization
- Manage requirements

Essential analyst skills

- Listening skills
- Interviewing and questioning skills
- Thinking on your feet
- Analytical skills
- Systems thinking skills
- Learning skills
- Facilitation skills
- Leadership skills
- Observational skills
- Communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Modeling skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Creativity

Essential analyst knowledge

- need a breadth of knowledge, much of which is gained through experience.
- need to understand contemporary requirements engineering practices and how to apply them in the context of various software development life cycles.
- need to educate and persuade those who are not familiar with established requirements practices.
- the effective analyst has a rich tool kit of techniques available and knows when—and when not—to use each one.
- understanding of project management, development life cycles, risk management, and quality engineering
- analyst can minimize miscommunications with users
- understand the organization and business domains often detect unstated assumptions and implicit requirements
- suggest ways that users could improve their business processes or propose valuable functionality that no other stakeholder thought of

The making of a business analyst

- The former user
- The former developer or tester
- The former (or concurrent) project manager
- The subject matter expert
- The rookie

The analyst role on agile projects

- Define a lightweight, flexible requirements process and adapt it as the project warrants.
- Ensure that requirements documentation is at the right level: not too little and not too much
- Help determine the best approach to document the backlog, including whether story cards or more formal tools are most appropriate.
- Apply facilitation and leadership skills to ensure that stakeholders are talking to one another frequently about requirements needs, questions, and concerns.
- Help validate that customer needs are accurately represented in the product backlog, and facilitate backlog prioritization
- Work with customers when they change their minds about requirements and priorities, and help record those changes.
- Work with the rest of the team to determine the impact of changes on iteration contents and release plans