



## CHAPTER 4

# The business analyst

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## ■ 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



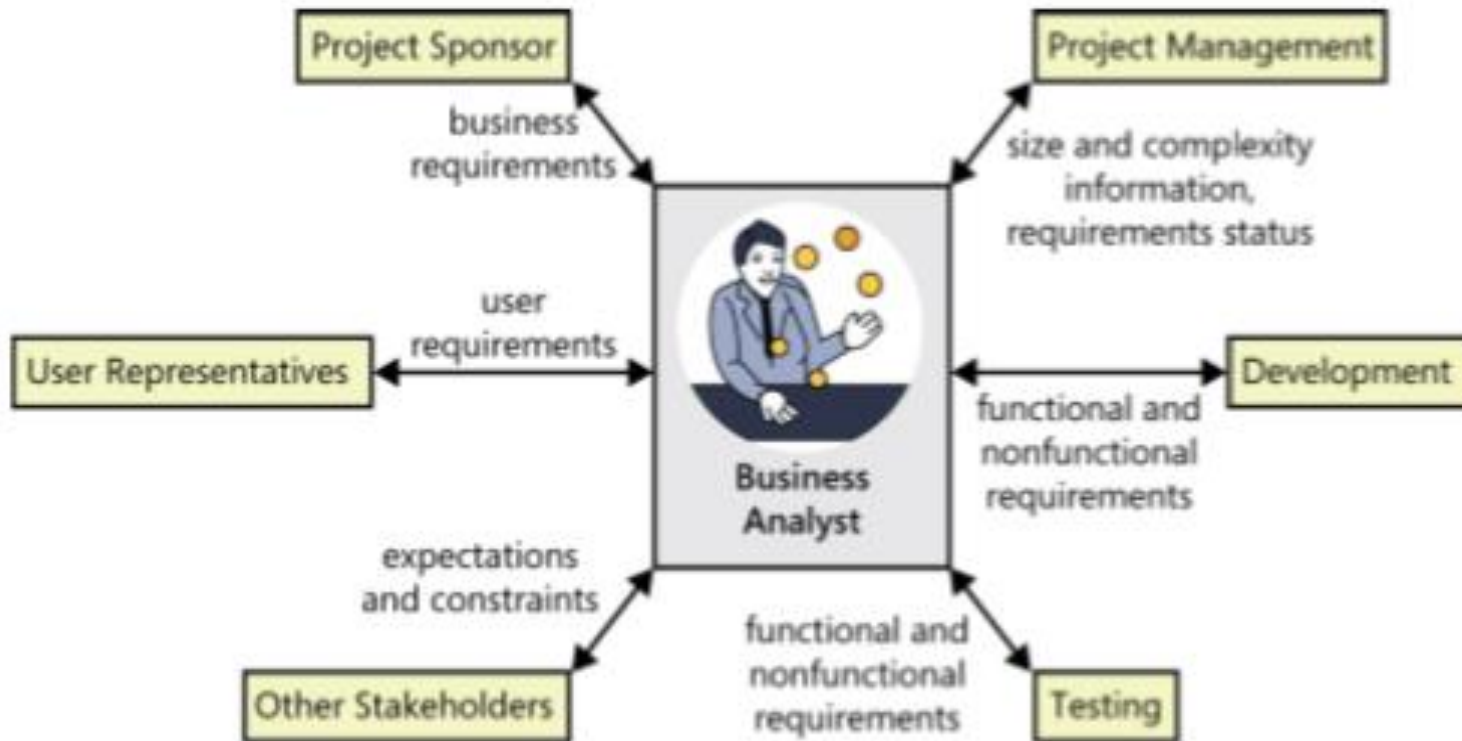
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# The business analyst role

- Biz analyst (BA) enables change in organizational context by defining needs and recommending solutions that deliver value to stakeholders.
- BA elicits analyzes others' perspectives, transforms the information collected into a requirements specification, and communicates the information to others stakeholders.
- BA helps stakeholders find the difference between what they say they want and what they really need.
- BA educates, questions, listens, organizes, and learns. It's a tough job!



# The business analyst role



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

- The BA is the individual who has the primary responsibility to elicit, analyze, document, and validate the needs of stakeholders.

# The business analyst's tasks

The BA must first understand the biz objectives for the project and then define user, functional, and qualify requirements that allow teams to estimate and plan the project and to design, build, and verify the product.

- 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



# The business analyst's tasks

- Define business requirements:
  - BA helps the biz or funding sponsor, product manager, or marketing manager define the project's biz requirements.
- Plan the requirements approach:
  - The BA should develop plans to elicit, analyze, document, validate, and manage requirements throughout the project. Work closely with the project manager to ensure these plans align with the overall project plans and will help achieve the project goals.
- Identify project stakeholders and user classes:
  - Work with sponsors to select appropriate representatives for each user class, enlist their participation, and negotiate their responsibilities.
- Elicit requirements:
  - The BA helps users articulate the system capabilities they need to meet their biz objectives by using a variety of information-gathering techniques.

## ■ Analyze requirements:

- The BA uses requirements models to recognize patterns, identify gaps in the requirements, reveal conflicting requirements, and confirm that all requirements specified are within scope.

## ■ Document requirements:

- The BA is responsible for documenting requirements in a well-organized and well-written manner that clearly describes the solution that will address the customers' problem.

## ■ Communicate requirements:

- The BA needs to communicate the requirements to all parties. The BA should determine when it's useful to represent requirements by using methods other than text, including various types of visual analysis models.



- Lead requirements validation:

- The BA is the central participants in reviews of requirements. The BA should review designs and tests that were derived from requirements to ensure that the requirements were interpreted correctly.

- Facilitate requirements prioritization:

- The BA works with stakeholders to prioritize all requirements to align with achieving biz objectives.

- Manage requirements:

- The BA is involved throughout the entire SW development life cycle, so he/she should help create, review, and execute the project's requirements management plan.

# 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

- The BA needs a breadth of knowledge, much of which is gained through experience.
- The BA needs to understand contemporary (đương thời) requirements engineering practices and how to apply them in the context of various software development life cycles.
- The BA needs to educate and persuade those who are not familiar with established requirements practices.
- The effective BA has a rich tool kit of techniques available and knows when—and when not—to use each one.

- The BA needs to understand project management, development life cycles, risk management, and quality engineering.
- The BA can minimize miscommunications with users.
- The BA needs to understand the organization and business domains often detect unstated assumptions and implicit requirements.
- The BA also needs to 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:

- They understand the biz and the work environment, so they can easily gain the trust of their former colleagues. They speak the user's language, and they know the existing systems and biz processes.
- On the downside, former users are now BAs might know little about SW engineering or how to communicate with technical people. Some of them believe they understand what is needed better than current users do, so they don't solicit or respect input from those who will actually use the new system.

## ■ The former developer or tester:

- Some developers have little patience with users, preferring to work with the code and promote the glamour of technology.
- Of course, some others recognize the criticality of the requirements process and can work as BA when necessary.
- The developer-turned-analysts might need to learn more about the biz domain. They can easily lapse into technical thinking and jargon, focusing on the SW to be built instead of the customers' needs.
- Testers aren't commonly asked to perform the analyst role. However, a tester often has an analytical mindset that can lend itself to being a good BA.

# The making of a business analyst

- The former (or concurrent) project manager:
  - PMs are sometimes asked to also fill the role of BA, probably because they have some of the same skills and domain knowledge required.
  - However, they will have to learn more about requirements engineering practices. They must learn to focus on understanding the biz needs and prioritizing those within existing project schedules, rather than focusing on timelines, resources, and budget constraints.
- The subject matter expert (SME):
  - The BA who is a domain expert might specify the system's requirements to suit his own preferences, rather than the needs of various users.
  - The SMEs are expert in their understanding of the “as-is” system, but they are sometimes difficult to imagine the “to-be” system.

# The making of a business analyst

## ■ The rookie:

- The new graduate will have little relevant experience or knowledge. The advantage of hiring a novice as a BA is that he will have few preconceived notions about requirements processes should work.
- Because he lacks related experience and knowledge, a new graduate will have much to learn about how to execute the BA tasks and the intricacies of the practices.
- The new BA needs to learn so much. Mentoring can reduce the learning curve for a novice BA and instill (thấm nhuần) good habits from the outset (từ đầu).



# The analyst role on agile projects

Following are a few suggestions for a BA to apply her/his skills on an agile project:

- 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.



# The analyst role on agile projects

- 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.

*There is a lot of value in having a role such as a product owner to represent the users throughout development. However, the person filling the product owner role might not have all of the biz analysis skills or time to perform all the related activities.*

**THE END  
THANK YOU!**