Business analysts seek first to understand the organization as it is and then imagine how it could be in the future. They shape their understanding of the desired future state by listening to leaders, stakeholders, subject matter experts and project team members. Business analysts then devise ways to get the organization from where it is to where it wants or needs to be.

They are the fresh set of eyes many problems need. They come into a situation without the preconceived notions held by people who routinely deal with a project’s subject matter. Business analysts ask the dumb questions without looking stupid. They question the fundamental assumptions everyone else takes for granted. For people who like to solve problems, business analysis is a great field.

### Business Analyst Duties & Responsibilities

Business analysts primarily work on project teams, and as part of their day's regular duties and tasks, a business analyst may perform some or all of the following:

* Work in cooperation with their project managers
* Work on more than one project at a time and so must constantly reevaluate their priorities and deadlines
* Gain an understanding of the organization’s business processes relevant to the project’s goals
* Document processes to help refine the problem the project is trying to solve; documentation almost always involves diagrams modeling how work is done
* Figuring out how the actual work differs from established policy, procedures and protocols
* Brainstorm requirements a solution needs to have and participate in requirements gathering to ensure their knowledge has as much depth and context as possible
* Flesh out the details of a business solution, which requires a good understanding of how technological solutions are implemented.

The business analyst is critical to a project’s success because he or she has an understanding of both the business side and technical side of things. The project manager often has this knowledge but not to the degree the business analyst does. A business analyst can translate technical jargon into something project team members can understand, and they can translate organization-specific lingo into terms computer programmers can incorporate into their mental framework.

As solutions are implemented, the business analyst ensures the technical work meets the business needs. The business analyst may also be involved in system testing and the creation of user manuals.

### Business Analyst Skills & Competencies

In addition to education and other requirements, candidates that possess the following skills may be able to perform more successfully in the job:

* Computer knowledge: The business analyst does not have to be a [computer programmer](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-does-a-computer-programmer-do-525996), but he or she needs a rudimentary understanding of how technical systems work and how the work of changing them is done. The business analyst’s solutions must also be achievable for the programmers.
* Problem-solving skills: The analyst must understand the organization as it exists, then try to change and improve it.
* Analytical skills: Business analysts need to process a wide variety of information, evaluate the costs and benefits of solutions, and solve complex business problems.
* Communication skills: Business analysts need strong communication skills in order to explain and support their analyses and recommendations in meetings and legislative committee hearings.
* Detail oriented: Creating efficient business solution plans requires careful analysis of a large number of details.
* Math skills: Most analysts need math skills and should be comfortable using certain types of software, including spreadsheets, database programs, and financial analysis software.
* Writing skills: Analysts must be able to present very technical information in a written form that is clear and understandable to their intended audience.