

SkillsAssessment -{BusinessAnalysis}

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Overview

● This skills assessment seeks to demonstrate your understanding and experience of the processes and thought exercises associated with business analysis, and general consulting.

● The ideal applicant should possess an inherent interest in solving problems. This means taking a problem that might be rudimentary - or something not particularly ‘exciting’ - and finding a novel approach that will help the client better understand their own challenges, and/or the end-user to have a better experience using the product.

● Have fun with this assessment - **solving problems should be enjoyable!**

The Scenario *(What a client has asked you to help analyze)*

A local library that maintains an inventory of books is expecting the number of patrons to increase substantially, as their small town was named “one of the best places to live” this year. Since additional funding for the library itself won’t materialize until next year (to buy more books), there is only one copy of each book. The library is currently using a paper-based card catalog lending system (which is very outdated), for which the main branch has been putting pressure on them to “upgrade to the 21st Century!”.

The initial sales call between Troy Web Consulting and the Library indicates that there will only be two roles in the system - a librarian, and a patron. Beyond that, no other requirements have been elicited yet, so it’s your job to scope the requirements (functional, UI/UX expectations, possibly some technical requirements, and/or transitional requirements) from the librarians that are



considered experts in their field - and should be able to answer any question (about libraries and their processes) that you ask them.

The Ask *(What Troy Web would like to see you do!)*

You’ve just started your first meeting with the librarians that will provide the requirements they have for the system. This is an hour long meeting - enough time to get a good overview of the project - and enough time to ask a good amount of detailed requirements-related questions

1. What questions would you ask the librarians in regards to the functional needs

(requirements) of the system?

* To begin, what are some vital elements that you would like a part of the user authentication for the library card holder? What information is necessary to become a (paper) card holder? We can start from there!
* When we think of the checkout process, what information do you think is necessary for the customer upon leaving the page? A generated due date? Renewal options? Fine print of fees?
* As there is currently only one copy of each material, are you interested in allowing users to place hold requests or would you like a first come, first serve basis?

2. What questions would you ask the librarians in regards to the UI/UX requirements of the system?

* An easy and convenient search functionality can be the most important to users! Would you be interested in seeing auto suggestions in the search bar? They can be of the newest releases or most searched materials.
* What categories, such as genre, would you like to see in the sort & filter to help users get to their desired results quickly?
* How simplistic would you like the login process for customers? Is it important to you that customers see highlights of what’s to offer on your home page or that a customer may login first? We want to make the navigation clear for your customer!
* How do you envision the landing page of the website, keeping consistent with your library’s brand? Are there any branding specifications you would like us to know about?

3. What questions would you ask the librarians in regards to the technical requirements of the system?

* What are some user controls that would be beneficial to you (the librarian) in helping the customer when they’ve mistakenly checked out the wrong item? Would you like to be able to cancel the check out on your user end? Would like to be able to cancel the check out **and** also check out the user for the correct, intended item?
* Do you think you would like to offer the option of email or text notifications? If so, what would this look like to you and what information would you like it to relay?

4. What questions would you ask the librarians in regards to the transitional requirements of the system (i.e. from catalog/paper-based system to software solution)?

* How do you feel about phasing into the transition so that as new features become available, we can hold trainings for these specific updates and take time to practice and comment on its usability? I think this will also be important when it comes to data migration, as we will want to carve out time to ensure accuracy is in place, and testing user functionality before going live.
* When technical issues arise, do you wish for your patrons to be able to find support online through frequently asked questions, a live chat, submission box? How do you see your customers gaining the best support when they reach a technological problem when trying to check out a book?
* How can we help your customers learn to use the new platform? Do you see this through a step by step infographic or a screen recorded navigation of the website/app?

**Additionally:**

1) Assuming that the client is unfamiliar with the SDLC process, how would you orient them to feel comfortable with the process, to ensure they feel at ease when discussing their challenges and voicing their opinions?

* I would make sure the SDLC process is framed as what we can do to make them happy. They are not just steps to this project. They are steps to their goals. I would like to make sure we are frequently reinstating the steps and have full transparency about where we are in the process and what is to come. The customer should not feel these are technical terms, areas of knowledge the team would only know. I want to work with the customer to help them take ownership in this project which is improving their system and making their customers happy. By keeping this in mind, I think we are creating an environment when the customer can share their honest thoughts about how they feel this process is going. I also think it is as simple as making sure to ask what they think instead of making any assumptions.

2) What strategies would you utilize if there was disagreement between the stakeholders as to the ‘most important’ features in the system? Or how they should function?

* I think if the stakeholders were at a disagreement that was at the point of a standstill with no compromise, conducting a needs assessment can be helpful to go back to the main goal and see the individuals’ needs and thoughts regarding it to gather where the common group and opportunities are. I think this can open perspectives and reframe what some of the necessary features accomplish. I also think it can be important to talk about phased implementation with the stakeholders. Allowing the stakeholder to know that their need is not dismissed, but can be done to enhance the project at a different date can allow them to be heard and see it is a part of the overall implementation.

3) After eliciting the high-level requirements on your first meeting, what follow-up activities would you perform to help prioritize the scope items they’ve discussed with you? a) For example, what thought exercises, or internal deliverables, would you produce to help clarify the ‘ask’ from the client for your colleagues?

* I believe a use case diagram and a stakeholder matrix can be good starting points to prioritize what was discussed and share with my team.

Bonus (Optional)

1. What ‘fun or exciting’ features could you propose to the librarians to set their library apart from the crowd?

* I think the library and the website can offer a personal feeling if you were to highlight a card holder/community member each month on the website. It can include what book they are currently reading, some great books they have checked out before, and what they like best about the library/community. The town is set to expand soon so the library and its website can be a great place to highlight some of its dedicated members and introduce them to others!

2. During your thought exercise (i.e. this task), what feature did you feel could pose the biggest challenge to the app being built successfully? What strategies would you recommend to manage the risks associated with that challenge?

* I believe a big challenge can be the data migration of the library catalog and its accuracy with details, categories, and duplicates. It will be very important to have processes already in play to catch these inaccuracies. As someone who has worked with the implementation of a new system and inputted previous and new data, the time and attention that goes into building a database entails a keen eye to detail. I would recommend time and patience with this process. I think it is important for the customer to understand building a strong and reliable database may take time, and since they are the experts, they may find inaccurate details themselves, but we will ultimately continue to strive to build it to the utmost quality. This will be something to look out for again, as we hope they will receive funds in the next year for more books, meaning more for the users to find on their apps!

3. What if any operational requirements questions would you ask the librarians?

* I would certainly want an idea of daily users. How many customers enter the library in a day? How many take out books? How many return books? How many customers have asked, if any, about a digital checkout process? Do you have a website? If so, how many visitors do you have in a day, week, etc.?

Considerations

● Any elements not specifically detailed in the guidelines are left to your discretion, and you are encouraged to use your sound judgment in completing the assessment as you see fit.



● There is no time limit for this exercise and quick submission does not grant any additional rewards.

Deliverables

● When complete, respond to this email with any attached documentation you have created and/or utilized to complete this exercise.