

Customer Relations and the Business Analyst

In today's market the customer should always come first. This has been the bread and butter of many industries throughout the ages. A satisfied customer is one who will keep coming back. The customer is the one who helps the bottom line. This is true in the field of business analysis. It is the customer's needs which the business analyst is fulfilling. The business analyst should help to strengthen customer relations. Time put into this is time well spent. Finding the customer to be unhappy is never a good thing. Ask any good business manager what their number one priority is and they will answer customer relations. Sometimes it does not always show.

Many of today's corporations utilize a big part of their budget on improvements in operations. The target is the bottom line. What they fail to realize is this can and will drive customers away. Targeting the needs of the customer is first and foremost in any business. The same holds true with business analysts.

When going in to trouble shoot a system, the business analyst becomes a production manager. If he or she does not put the needs of the customer first, the project will undoubtedly fail. Listening to the customer to determine what is needed and desired is the start of a good relationship. When the business analyst fails to listen the entire project could not only start on the wrong foot but end in disaster as well.

The business analyst must encourage feedback. He or she must understand just what the customer is wanting, even if they do not know themselves. The customer may know what he or she wants the project to accomplish. They may know how they want something to run. The customer just may not know how to say it. He or she may collect data imperative to the project program. It is the business analyst's job to determine if the data is even relevant. He or she is the liaison in this relationship. He or she must have good customer relations skills. The business analyst must speak the customer's language.

Putting the customer relationship first can be a daunting task at times. The bottom line is critical to success on any project. There are times the business analyst will be caught up in keeping cost down and compromise the relationship he or she has with the customer. The customer will be much happier if you go a little over budget and keep him or her happier in other areas of the project.

Sometimes it is easier to prepare reports and allocate spending to IT to accomplish a task than it is to spend time or money developing a plan for customer satisfaction. The price any company could pay for this is a high one. The business analyst is no different. Customer satisfaction means keeping them

informed of progress. Speak in a language they understand. Consult with them when a roadblock is met or when a progress point is passed. Either way, keeping a constant rapport with the customer ensures a satisfied client. This can lead to repeat business. This helps the business to grow.