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**Winning  
Management  
Consulting**

**[HOW A BUSINESS ANALYST BECAME A  
BUSINESS PARTNER]**

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## INTRODUCTION

“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere”

Lee Iacocca

We currently live in an economic macro environment particularly difficult and uncertain. Most organizations don’t know what tomorrow holds and the only certainty is in the difficulties of the present. Organizations need to bet on confident investments, taking advantage of opportunities of the moment, and to be strict in monitoring their activity and results. Only then they will gain sustainable competitive advantage against their competitors.

The margin for error is absolutely minimal and, in a business where the activity is managed and supported by projects, the future of the organization is at stake, and who better adapt more easily and quickly recover and create your particularly blue ocean.

### As Is

**The management challenge is to assure that the project in fact answers the business problem and brings effective return for the organization.**

We may have a very well managed project, on time and on budget, but, if the business purpose of that project doesn’t bring return, we are using, in the wrong way, the Organization’s capital. Thus, it’s vital that every project is a won bet. Despite this premise, we cannot afford to continue watching the colossal deviations of scope, schedule and budget. We constantly verify scope changes, additional recurring requests, difficulties of understanding between the customer and the supplier resulting in an incorrect translation of the problem to the project teams with all the effects of rework, frustration and emotional weariness.

There is an informal decision-making process on the initiatives, the absence of cost / benefit analysis thereof; the lack of need’s alignment for the solution; and the lack of prioritization of requirements.

Unfortunately nowadays the business analyst is constantly one receive & forward without, showing the real interest for the business, autonomy and the involvement in the subjects with costumer areas. There are little or none attitude of intellectual curiosity, making questions and clearly understanding the business problem and thus to clearly contribute with positive suggestions and be a leader, instead of being led by the others opinions.

The business analyst must constantly have a pro-active, aggressive and a goal contribution permanently challenging business and their client areas in order to meet objectives.

However, there are several mistakes organizations made regarding how they see the business analysts function:

1. Not focusing on their core responsibilities
2. Wrong focus on people, forgetting the main principles to manage stakeholders
3. Not using the right business analysis, project management and process skills and competencies at the right time
4. Not knowing the way and objectives to achieve
5. Not having the right strategic communication and interactional skills
6. Disregard the fact that in reality business analysts should be internal consultants

### Problem

The business analysts are not committed with the project because they do not have the necessary knowledge, behavior, attitude and skills to add value to the project and company.

The right projects are not selected for the organization due to lack of alignment; the lack of real perception of the need, in order to select the most appropriate solution; and the lack of involvement of all

stakeholders. It is critical to have a strategic vision of all projects.

Often, the deal requests solutions and not needs, results in change request at an advanced stage of the initiative.

This turns out to be one of the challenges of management. It is continuously under check, recurrent additional requests, difficulties of understanding between the customer and the supplier, resulting and noting an incorrect translation of the problem for project teams with all the effects of rework, emotional exhaustion and frustration.

### Impacts

All these problems affect several areas and phases of the companies. We can verify a decrease of the customer's life cycle; a process quality reduction, verifying high rework; an increased customer dissatisfaction; and an involvement of more time (rework), money and human capital in the projects.

Internationally there are also many studies which demonstrates the enormous importance and relevance of this theme. One of the most important is the analysis and reporting made by the Standish Group®, it deserves the full attention.

In several hundred projects analyzed it was found the 3 main factors that led to disruptions with disastrous consequences for the own projects are directly related to the science of Business Analysis, as we can see in the figure 1.

1	Lack of User Input	12,8%
2	Incomplete Requirements & Specifications	12,3%
3	Changing Requirements & Specifications	11,8%
4	Lack of executive support	7,5 %
5	Technology Incompetence	7 %
6	Lack of Resources	6,4 %
7	Unrealistic Expectations	5,9 %
8	Unclear Objectives	5,3 %
9	Others	31 %

Fig.1: The causes of Projects failures ((font: The Standish Group))

This causes, combined with a inefficient business analyst role execution cause some impacts at three different levels not achieved nowadays:

**Business Domain.** There is a tremendous need for a set of activities that BA must perform, for instance:

1. Have a participative role in the budgeting meetings with business areas;
2. Have a participative role regarding governance model definition, performance metrics definition and evaluation.
3. Ensure a deep understanding of the problems of the area, its causes, its impacts, trends of these impacts.
4. Be aware of the goals that the area has and the gap that exists in reality to achieve them.
5. Get a sense of the area of performance in a Benchmarking logic with the industry, competitors and best practices.
6. In this dimension is absolutely critical that the business analyst puts an internal consultant hat and Problem-Solving Tool is his day to day.

**Overall Market Technology Solutions.** Critical domain that can never be overlooked.

1. It is necessary that the business analyst meet, understand and continuous be the master regarding technological advances in clients area, what are the tendencies, difficulties.
2. It is important to know the suppliers and partners that can help the business to solve problems.
3. It is necessary to organize and facilitate or coordinate sessions with these suppliers / partners in order to present the state of the art evolutions to client areas
4. It is necessary so that the BA define and maintain the fulcral players on an eco-system who actively challenge the client and help them solve their problems.

**Enterprise Architecture with focus on internally (or affiliates) solutions.** We are not alone. There's a global and worldwide synergies to be explored within our local or international affiliates.

1. It is necessary that business analyst knows and completely dominate the tools and technologies that exists, both on local and international context
2. Understand and ensure a complete interrelation of local and international projects whose synergies are for sure important to solve problems to our client and this will help us meet the goals we have proposed

## Solution

The process will find barriers in all its dimensions. To minimize this effect is important that the organization makes the Business Analysis practices with the initial support of experts who will help that the context adapts the process adjustment.

The business analyst, acting in the role of internal consultant or advisor, have the potential to offer and bring real benefits to their organizations. They can offer a clear, solid and an objective view that is based upon an analytical and systemic approach.

They can bridge the all different aspects of business performance and metrics, including those which necessitate a good understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the organization's IT systems.

Outside the business analysis community it seems to be little or none appreciation of the range of capabilities the business analyst owns. So, where does this lack of recognition originate? Perhaps it is the name - business analyst - which does not provide a clear sense of the work, skills and responsibilities, and unfortunately is open to everyone's interpretation.

Perhaps it is the lack of clear role definition. The consultancy nature of business analysis and the potential to offer real value to organizations may not be superficial. Perhaps the business analysts need to

put more effort into marketing their capabilities to the organization.

On market point of view, there are two names that jumps into sight:

Business Relationship Manager (BRM) and Business Partner (BP). Typically, are seen or recognized much more senior than a "simple" business analyst The BRM/BP would typically be more focused on working with client areas or business units senior management on strategy, alignment, relationship management, problem escalation resolution, and could typically sit on various steering committees. They may or may not be specific technology/solution focused.

The expertise of the persons involved is the first critical success factor.

It is absolutely important to develop both technical and behavioral skills in the area. The BRM/BP does not have to be experts in any business of the organization, nor in all technical areas, although with the natural evolution of this configuration (and maturity on organization) is likely to exist. The team must be expert in the process and have extraordinary and innate behavioral and communication skills and the effect is mandatory professionalization and career.

## Benefits

Is important to distinguish real benefits which are expect to be achieved with this change:

1. Primitive benefits, such as Increase the quality of the process and the business knowledge; Increase consultant motivation; and reduce customer dissatisfaction.
2. Instantiated benefits: reduce rework process due to the numbers of mistakes; increase customer life cycle through a better relationship; and reduce the length of proceedings by increased motivation, reducing also costs.

Meet time-to-market and reduce any budget deviation brings to the organization a context of predictability

and commitment to its stakeholders, denoting productivity, accuracy and quality.

## To Be

Therefore, business analysts (BRM/BP) should address the business requirements in a global perspective, working with the sponsor of the business at a strategic level and to define the product design or proposed resources with the portfolio and strategy of organizations.

Besides being an integral component of the delivery team, the business analyst (BRM/BP) also should focus on the fact that they play an essential role in the common understanding of the business needs with all stakeholders as well as being active participants. The business analyst (BRM/BP) is the “face” of an iterative process throughout the project and work with project stakeholders to translate their requirements into a single, consistent vision that developers can understand, as well as to translate the resulting questions that the developers have into something the stakeholders can understand. This task often includes significant negotiation and political maneuvers. One of the tricks is that a business analyst should impersonate an ignorant person and therefore keep asking questions.

It is their role to ensure that the requirements review is made with stakeholders and ensure that any business changes are reflected in future product interactions.

The business analyst (BRM/BP) functions expect to focus on communication and understanding, team’s involvement in creating the specifications, and help creating a high-trust and collaboration environment. The analyst can help the team to focus on the interaction’s goals and in the understanding of the requirements at a low level of detail.

The business analyst plays a central role in order to guarantee that the final product clearly defines the strategic product alignment to the business need. It also has a shared responsibility in setting the strategic criteria for the project’s completion, because they require the ability to listen and understand feedback

from all stakeholders and use this feedback to drive the necessary changes to the requirements and priorities of the project.

Without a business analyst the raising of requirements process is done Ad Hoc and the requirements end-up meeting the solution, which is not supposed to. This will also check up the lack of plans and processes of communication and commitment and accountability on the part of stakeholders. The goal is for the Business Analyst can do the lifting of all needs, without the solution’s influence in that. Remember. The solution must meet the requirements and not otherwise. There needs to be a benefit measurement after the implementation of products / services.

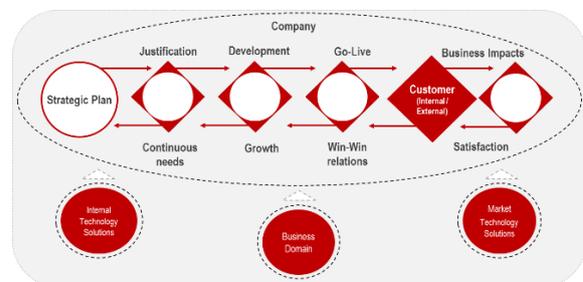


Fig.2: BRM/BP Domains ((font: The Author))

## Conclusion

The projects are not completed successfully due to 36.9% of factors related to business analysis. Therefore it is essential to bet on increase the maturity of the organization in Business Analysis as it has a direct impact on the performance of projects which in turn has a positive impact on business. The main actor which has a major responsibility in order to achieve it, is no doubt, business analyst, or in this new era, Business Relationship Manager / Business Partner.

“You can’t do today’s job with yesterday’s methods and be in business tomorrow.”

George W Bush

**Winning - “We make your objectives more predictable”**