

MASTERING BUSINESS ANALYSIS

“Our business analysis has shown us what we need to do to fix our business processes and systems. It also allowed us to identify the projects that will yield the highest value.”

The authors of *Mastering the Requirements Process* and the *Volere* requirements techniques, bring you their business analysis masterclass.

Business Analysis — what is it for?

Business analysis provides the foundation for almost every kind of business change. The craft of business analysis is to investigate the business, to find its problem hot spots and recommend ways to improve them. Business analysis is a combination of modelling, systemic thinking, innovating, communicating, root cause analysis, persuasion and several other analytical skills.

In short, business analysis is about understanding the real business and providing ways to make it better.

The business analyst is a modeller and a communicator. Models are used to understand the processes, information and behaviours that make up the business. This understanding is not superficial, but a knowledge

of the real, underlying business policy, and the root cause of any problems within this business. Further, the analyst must communicate this understanding so that all stakeholders arrive at the same view of their business. The analyst understands what people do, not what they say they do if he or she is to help bring the enterprise to its optimal state.

Business Analysis — who is it for?

Business analysis is almost everyone's job—every employee has some responsibility for effective business improvement. The most likely job titles you would find at this course are:

- Business Analyst
- Systems Analyst
- Project Leader
- Requirements Engineer
- Product or Program Manager

or similar titles. We also find **Users** and **Software Customers** benefit from learning state-of-the-art business analysis techniques, and how they can contribute to this vital activity.

This Course — what do I get?

By attending this two-day course you will learn how to:

- Discover real business needs, not just the most talked-about ones.
- Improve the business processes by applying automation or other means.

- Define the most beneficial scope for the analysis project.
- Use models to understand and communicate the business processes, and ensure stakeholders also understand.
- Understand how to employ business events as a way of

- partitioning the business for easier understanding.
- Be better at interpersonal communication.
- Think systemically, and find truly the best way to improve your client's business.
- Be a better business analyst.

Topics — what will I learn?

Business Analysis — what are we trying to do?

Business analysis is about improving your business. To do this, business analyst studies the enterprise and establishes the difference between the business as it is, and as it wants to be, or should be.

The business analyst employs *systems thinking* to see past the technological bias of the current way of doing things, and see the ideal business—what should be happening. This involves looking at a wide scope of business processes, seeing the *essence* of the business, and ultimately delivering a model of the desired future state.

The desired future state takes advantage of business opportunities discovered along the way, as well as fits with the management’s goals for the enterprise.

Modelling Business Processes – techniques for studying the business’s response to the event

The business analyst may use a variety of modelling tools to arrive at a complete and agreed understanding of what the business is currently doing. The current state is by no means the desired future state, but nevertheless provides a baseline for future improvements. It is also vital that the all opportunities for improvement are recognised at this stage.

We use Business Process Modelling Notation (BPMN) as a standard way of modelling the process. This is an established technique that is easy enough for business users to understand well enough to participate in the modelling process.

We also look at alternative ways of modelling, each having its own advantages. Scenarios are perhaps the most “business friendly” way for the business analyst to show the stakeholders what their business is doing, and what it is supposed to be doing. UML models are also popular.

Data models show the information used by the business. In discovering the stored information, the business analyst uncovers almost all of the business policy. Data are often confused with database design schemas, but here they are used in “business normal form” as an easy-to-understand way of discovering the underlying business policy.

Business Events – organising my analysis

Business events are things that happen outside of the business, but are significant in that the business must respond to the event. By discovering the business events, the business analyst sees the actual triggers that make the business function.

Business analysis is concerned with modelling the response to the business event. This response is known as a business use case or BUC, and is the basis for the subsequent investigation of the business processes.

The response to the event is modelled as an end-to-end process. This gives the analyst the advantage of seeing the big picture, as well as finding more and better opportunities for process improvement.

Systems Thinking – not getting carried away with solutions, but seeing the essence of the business

The essence of the business—or the real business—is quite different from the current solution, and indeed different from the proposed solution. The essence is not a solution at all, but the underlying business seen without the burden of technology. By discovering the essence of the problem, the business analyst avoids the age-old problem of developing what is asked for, only to find that it is not what is needed.

The essence is an abstract statement of the business; one that is free of technological bias. By gaining this pure statement of the business, the business analyst ensures that any system built is the right one, and one that lasts longer than any current technological fad.

Systems thinking means looking at the business as a whole, not just one small part of it, or one business user and his software system. The systemic-thinking analysts is concerned about the effect of one part of the enterprise on another, and the detrimental impacts of changes.

The Human Element – interviewing, resolving conflicts, facilitating workshops, communication skills

The business analyst is above all a communicator. He or she is charged with understanding a piece of the business using information collected from the people in that business. Clearly, the needed skill is an ability to talk to people, listen to them, and then ensure that both parties arrive at the same understanding of the enterprise.

Moreover, the business analyst frequently has to facilitate workshops, and to use communication skills to bring the sometimes disparate viewpoints to a consensus.

Delivering – now that you understand the business, here’s how to bring about the changes to improve it

A thorough understanding of the enterprise means that the business analyst is able to identify the most beneficial changes to the business. Usually, this means developing software systems, but sometimes it means updating and changing the business processes to be more effective.

The business analyst is also charged with identifying the high-value projects. These are the ones that give the greatest advantage for the cost and effort expended, and the ones that result in the most beneficial changes to the enterprise.

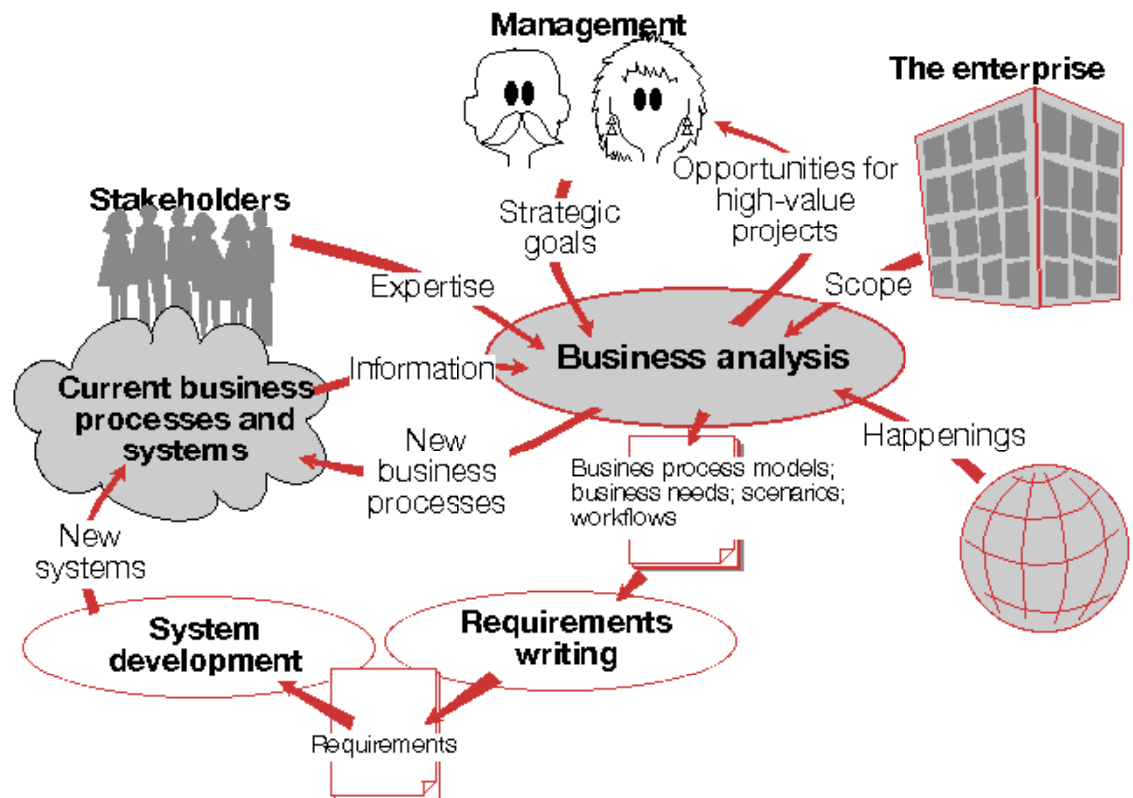
Mastering Business Analysis — what's in it for me?

Our businesses thrive or struggle on the effectiveness of their business processes, both automated and manual. Businesses with good processes provide better service and are more responsive to their customers. The converse is true.

Business analysis is the craft of enlightened improvement to business systems and processes. Moreover, business analysis gives you ways of identifying the areas where improvement projects will yield the highest value.

This two-day course in business analysis gives you the skills and tools to discover your client's real business, and to determine and demonstrate the best ways of improving it.

This course is a natural companion to *Mastering the Requirements Process*, where we teach the art of requirements writing. The models and understanding produced by *Mastering Business Analysis* are the optimal input, and foundation for, your requirements process.



Instructors — learning from experience

James Robertson is a consultant, teacher, author, project leader whose area of concern is the requirements for products, and the contribution that good requirements make to successful projects. His work in the area of business analysis and requirements gathering is valued by clients in many parts of the world.

He is co-author of *Mastering the Requirements Process*, Second Editions (Addison-Wesley 2006), *Requirements-Led Project Management* (Addison-Wesley 2005) and the Volere approach to requirements engineering. He is also a founder of The Atlantic Systems Guild, a think tank known for its innovative systems engineering techniques.

James Archer has worked in many different application areas using the Volere approach. He has always managed to come up with innovative solutions to the business problems, ones that have proved to be cheaper to implement and provide greater customer satisfaction in the long-term. He has always taken the approach of discovering the essence of the business problem before leaping into technical solutions, and customers provide glowing references to James's skills.

James also speaks on various aspects of Business Analysis to organisations across the UK including running popular workshops at the Government IT Profession Conference. He is a co-founder of the Business Change Special Interest Group of the BCS.

Mastering Business Analysis — how do I get it?

Please contact one of the principals of:

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Email [Suzanne Robertson](mailto:Suzanne.Robertson@atlantic-systems-guild.com)

In Australia please contact [Software Education](http://www.softwareeducation.com.au)

In Belgium, for training and consulting, contact [I.T. Works](http://www.it-works.be)

For training in Italy contact [Technology Transfer S.r.l.](http://www.technology-transfer.it)

Training in the Netherlands is handled by [Array Seminars](http://www.array-seminars.nl)

For all needs in the New Zealand please contact [Software Education](http://www.softwareeducation.co.nz)

In Norway please contact the [Norwegian Computer Society](http://www.norwegian-computer-society.no).

Seminars and consulting in the United Kingdom are available from [IRM UK Strategic IT Training](http://www.irm-uk.com)

In-house and public seminars the United States from [Software Quality Engineering](http://www.software-quality-engineering.com)