

## The Top Ten Business Analysis Trends for 2016

Business analysts are experiencing a paradigm shift of their roles and moving away from being characterised as simply a tactical, check-the-box process. In this evolution, practitioners of the business analysis discipline have ever-increasing opportunities to contribute to their organisation's overall process and in doing so, advance the profession and deliver business value to the businesses they serve. A business analyst's comprehensive perspective of the whole business helps identify how the organisation meets customer needs, and what the organisation can do to better meet those needs.

The "Top 10 Trends in Business Analysis for 2016" examines the evolving ways in which BA practitioners can help organisations realise better business outcomes for the organisation and the shifts needed within the BA discipline. The overarching theme of the trends is a shift away from being an order-taker or liaison between stakeholders, to an increased focus on being an agent of change, communication and collaboration.

Here are the 2016 Top 10 trends in business analysis as compiled by a global panel of Strategy Execution senior executives and subject matter experts.

### The shifting role of BA toward communicating, instead of documenting

Those practicing the discipline will embrace the approach that being a strong business analyst requires more than just being an order-taker for requirements. It means establishing trust with stakeholders, and persuading them to embark on a journey of discovery together.

### Goodbye to the business requirements document

There will be a shift from the low-value work of writing and updating text-based documents to visual modeling, online repositories and real-time

### 2016 Top Ten Trends

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- Goodbye to the business requirements document
- Wider adoption of a professional BA approach to increase organisations' agility
- Building better business cases that set up projects for success and avoid ones doomed to fail
- More focus on business benefits, less on project activities
- It's not just about software, it's about the WHOLE solution
- Business analysis will help deliver better results from IT investments
- More business *analysis*, fewer business *analysts* drive career opportunities
- Yet many will continue to expect the "same old, same old" from business analysis
- Don't expect to get all the requirements up front



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collaboration tools. Driven by the needs of geographically-dispersed virtual teams, companies will need to invest in changing the way people work together.

## Wider adoption of a professional BA approach to increase organisations' agility

Business analysts will use-case diagrams, work-flow models, decision tables and other tools that enhance analysis and communication. Such models will feed into the business architecture for the whole enterprise to collectively deal with complexity and change into the future.

## Building better business cases that set up projects for success and avoid ones doomed to fail

The discipline of business analysis will help companies avoid getting into trouble from biased, inaccurate and superficial business cases. Better business cases will tell executives the whole story, and will be honest and well-socialised.

## More focus on business benefits, less on project activities

Delivering and optimising business benefits will take higher priority than the traditional project goals of delivering on-time and within-budget. Projects will provide better solutions that deliver benefits for years to come.

## It's not just about software, it's about the WHOLE solution

Changing organisational needs will demand much more focus on the business context, not just information technology. The interfaces, interdependencies and interactions that happen between the people, processes, business rules and other enablers will add to the challenge and "wholeness" of delivering solutions.

## Business analysis will help deliver better results from IT investments

Organisations will apply the discipline of business analysis before investing in enterprise-wide solutions like COTS products to ensure the right fit, and show businesses the greater value in changing their processes first rather than customising software.

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## More business analysis, fewer business analysts drive career opportunities

The techniques and tools of BA will be applied more, but there will be fewer with the job title of business analyst and more with titles such as process analyst, knowledge engineer, project director, client service director and client relationship manager.

## Yet many will continue to expect the “same old, same old” from business analysis

Other parts of the organisation, as well as other professions and disciplines will remain unaware of the evolution of the business analysis discipline and will hold it back with their expectations for extensive text-based documentation, not communication.

## Don't expect to get all the requirements up front

With about 45 percent of all approved requirements never actually being used, business analysts will use communication tools and techniques like design thinking and agile approaches that allow requirements to emerge and evolve over time.

Today's business climate requires project-based work be executed with more coordination and agility than ever before. The business analyst's skilled interaction with stakeholders throughout the organisation facilitates the critical need to bridge the gap between strategy and execution.

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### GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

901 North Glebe Road  
Suite 200  
Arlington, VA 22203, USA  
+1 888.374.8884

### EMEA

7 Bishopsgate  
London, EC2N 3AR, UK  
+44 (0)20.3743.2910

### APAC

111 Somerset Road #10-06  
TripleOne Somerset  
Singapore 238164  
+65 3158.9500

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