

BUSINESS ANALYST: A BRIDGE



- BA forms a bridge, a liaison, between business-unit and IT-solution team. The BA acts as a business problem-solver.
- Business needs are also called user-requirements or client-requirements.
- IT people may be a separate division within the same enterprise or a separate company.
- BA is also called: System Analyst, Business System Analyst, Functional Analyst.

What Does a BA Do:

- *Gathers* information on the business-needs of an enterprise, *Analyses* them, *eliminates* inconsistencies (if any), and *determines* (proposes) an IT-solution (the high level functional requirements) to meet those needs.
- Prepares the functional requirement document for the IT-development team.
- Interfaces with IT-development throughout the software development life-cycle (SDLC) to make sure the right product is developed and all requirements are met.
- Manages changes in requirements during SDLC.

EXAMPLE OF BUSINESS NEED AND FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Example:

- Business Need: Online (web-based) hotel reservation
- Two Funct. Reqr: *Show general view of hotel + its surrounding*
- City-map + points of interests + hotel location
 - Numbered room-layout on each floor
 - Each room color coded by price category
- Show reservation page + related info*
- Reservation/Inform. desk telephone + email
 - Room availability for selected dates
 - On-line calender
 - Cancellation policy
 - Customer information entry
 - Online payment options with credit-card
 - Reservation confirmation

Caution:

- Details of web-page contents, their organization in the displays, and navigation options are not specified. (They will be part of "design".)

What is Challenging to BA:

- Understanding business needs and the potential IT solutions.
- Requires domain-knowledge/expertise of two different domains.

Question:

- ? Add few more items in the list of functional requirements above.
- ? List some of the items in functional requirement for a business need for a meeting-scheduler of managers in a large company.

BA PROCESS

- Understanding business need
 - The business environment in which this need exists and in which the solution will become a part of (integrated in).
 - Analyzing the market opportunities (current and future) for the new product.
 - Analyzing the competition (if any) and their features for the new product.
- Defining the scope of project.
- Identifying requirements of the proposed solution.
 - Gathering information from users (via interviews, questionnaire, and direct observation of current practices). Each requirement is tied to a piece of data or to a function.
 - Identifying low level details, called *business rules*, which may change from time to time after software is delivered. (Example: max 2 online renewals per library book.)
 - Analyzing requirements (doable, consistent, complete, dependencies, and verifiable).
 - Documenting final set of requirements, including a priority-ordering of them.
 - Specify how each requirement will be verified/tested.
- Verifying that the delivered software meets the requirements

BA-process spans the whole SDLC.