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. Reqs: 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.