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## BA Trends for 2011

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January 24, 2011

Today's business realities demand a better balance of soft and technical skills from business analysts, according to a global panel of senior executives and consultants asked to identify the Top 10 Trends for the discipline.

To achieve organizational goals within the fast paced, highly demanding business environment of 2011, requirements management and development (RMD) — also known as business analysis — a better balance between technical and soft skills will separate the leaders from the rest of the pack.

Over the next year, market opportunities and rapid technological developments will result in greater demand from organizations for the specialized skill sets of requirements management and development professionals. For business analysts, slow and steady will win the race as they bring their output into a better balance between soft and technical business analysis skills to demonstrate their true value to the organization.

This theme is reflected throughout the 2011 Top 10 trends for RMD or business analysis, which were determined by a global panel of ESI International senior executives and consultants, and were announced today. ??

**1. Business architecture will be the primary focus for business analysts.** ?In 2011, the business analyst will place primary focus on business architecture. The BA's critical thinking ability and unique skills set combination will be relied on to examine the complex, inner workings of the organization through an enterprise-wide lens, not just isolated view points. In particular, enterprise-wide policies, rules and processes will be the focus as organizations strive to remain competitive, increase efficiencies and improve the quality of their goods and services, in order to better appeal to today's financially sensitive marketplace.

**2. Business analysis will guide the surge in cloud computing.** ?2010 was the proving ground for cloud computing as organizations asked, "Is it worth it?" While a small percentage of organizations said yes, in 2011 we'll see a significant increase in the implementation of cloud-based computing solutions as the benefits of lower costs of ownership outweigh the uncertainties around access and security. To help ensure smooth transitions to the cloud, organizations will look to business analysis to provide

the needed insights from a business architecture perspective.

**3. Requirements management and development will lead in delivering smart business perspective.** RMD will lead the reassessment and reevaluation of performance as organizations push hard to improve operational efficiencies. By helping to structure and guide a disciplined, yet flexible approach to meticulous business analysis, RMD will ensure organizations realize the full benefits of key initiatives such as the development of a cloud-based computing infrastructure.

**4. BPMN will solidify its reputations as the industry standard.** Business process modeling notation (BPMN) will continue to earn recognition and stature as the industry standard by which organizations model their business architecture. This structured, disciplined approach's syntax and language will be appreciated for its clarity by both technical and business stakeholders.

**5. Agile success will go to those willing to break with tradition.** As the use of Agile methods — especially Scrum — continues to explode, the organizations that realize the greatest success will be those that acknowledge the skill sets of both business analysts and project managers, but not in a hierarchal pecking order. ?

**6. BAs will be recognized as critical to change management to avoid troubled projects.** From their enterprise-wide vantage point, business analysts will be relied upon to help executives better understand the impact that change will have on the organization and to help minimize negative impact that results from change. BAs who don't focus on change management process and managers who ignore BA insights will continue to see more than their fair share of troubled projects.

**7. Resurgence of Centers of Excellence.** With breathing room from a slightly improved global economic outlook, many organizations are working toward greater internal organization. For RMD this will mean a resurgence of centers of excellence and more resources devoted to the evolution of communities of practice to better meet the demands of increased organizational performance.

**8. Requirements management and development will be essential to regaining market share.** Over the last three years, many organizations saw a loss of market share as their customers spent less and spent it elsewhere. To accelerate their ability to recapture lost market share, organizations will look to RMD to chart the course for deconstructing and reconstituting the organization — through process modeling, data modeling, measurement and more.

**9. Requirements management and development will continue to struggle to define itself.** The business analysis profession will continue to gain well-deserved recognition as RMD fosters greater efficiencies and processes across the organization. However, the improvements and innovation it drives that enable new insights and voices will dwarf the BA's place at the table, leaving the still-maturing RMD role grappling with defining itself. This will be in great contrast to RMD's expanding criticality in new frameworks such as Agile and cloud computing.

**10. Requirements management and development will require better-balanced competencies.** The reputation of RMD professionals for soft skills like elicitation and

communication has overshadowed their capacity for complex technical skills. Business analysts will step up their game with increased focus on graphical modeling, cost estimates, risk analysis and other measurements that quantifiably prove RMD's value to the organization.

*Glenn R. Brûlé, CSM, CBAP, executive director of Global Client Solutions for ESI International, brings more than two decades of focused business analysis experience to every ESI client engagement. Glenn works directly with clients to build and mature their business analysis capabilities by drawing from the broad range of learning resources ESI offers. A recognized expert in the creation and maturity of Business Analysis Centers of Excellence, Glenn has helped almost a dozen clients in the energy, financial services, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, insurance and automotive industries, as well as government agencies across the world. His approach to maturing requirements management and development capabilities focuses on short-term reductions in costs, resources and time to market while charting a path to long-term change that drives organizations competitively forward.*

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