

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS ANALYSIS

This special feature takes a look at the world of the Business Analyst and the relationship with Project Management. A world congress for Business Analysts will be taking place from 26-28 November in Barcelona. Organized by IIR it will run alongside the Project World conference and Risk Symposium with speakers from across the globe. For more details go to www.projectworld.com

The ProjectWorld Conference in Barcelona will have key speakers like Ian Cramb, chief operating officer, Citigroup EMEA, on effective leadership for driving change; Dr Stefan M. Golder, vice president Corporate Strategy Management, Daniel Swarovski Corporation, on excellence in execution; and Brien Akers, director, program planning and control (PP&C), The Boeing Company, describing Boeing's project management challenge with the 787.

Business analysts have their own international professional association and a UK chapter. Contact: www.theiiba.org and www.uktheiiba.org



IIBA™ United Kingdom Chapter

Setting up and running a business analyst centre

By **Glenn R. Brulé**, director of Client Solutions, ESI, and chair for International Business Development for the IIBA

Business analysis has come a long way in the past few years. Once an undefined role that changed from project to project – and from one organisation to the next – business analysts in many forward-thinking organisations are settling into their roles and getting much of the support they need to work well.

But other organisations around the world are still mired in 'old' problems, such as failing to define and outline job competencies properly, failing to standardise practices for business analysts and continuing to operate within a 'silos' mentality.

In response, many are finding success by creating business analysis centres of excellence (COEs). A centre of excellence is, essentially, its own specific business unit within an organisation with the responsibility of enterprise-wide operations focused on the discipline of business analysis.

A business analysis COE builds both the work environment and stakeholder awareness and representation across business units, customer relationships and vendor relationships'. It also sponsors and conducts evaluations of functionality and effectiveness and represents the business interests of the organisation and each individual business analyst.

On the most basic level, the business analysis COE offers organisations stronger, more successful projects. However, the advantages extend well beyond that. A COE:

- provides a centralised point of expertise
- integrates processes and practices
- provides oversight control
- reduces waste (and rework).

In order to develop and, as time goes on, mature, a variety of factors must be taken into consideration. The COE standard operating practices model (Figure 1) helps

organisations start the complex process of developing a COE and assessing the COE's maturity level. Think of it as the basis of your project plan. The model consists of four disciplines: **Framework, Environment, Resources and Business Alignment**.

1. Framework

The framework discipline helps put into place a broad, common approach for conducting business analysis activities within your organisation.

2. Environment

This discipline outlines the organisation's capacity to examine the as-is state of business analysis to determine the future state. The environment discipline will ultimately lead the COE to growth and maturity.

3. Resources

Resources refer to both the support the COE provides to the rest of the organisation and the support it provides to the business analysts within the group itself.

4. Business alignment

The business alignment discipline represents the movement from tactical to strategic organisational contributions.

From capability to maturity

The practice of organised and disciplined business analysis over a period of time constitutes maturity. Just because an organisation has methodologies in place does not mean they are operating at a centre of excellence level. Here are the three levels of maturity that you can refer to when determining where you are now and where you need to go.

Level 1: Community of practice – support

Most organisations today are performing business analysis at the community of practice level. Here, an overall acknowledgement by the organisation of the role of the business analyst and its importance to the success of overall project deliverables is beginning to form. However, accomplishments are only beginning to have any real recognition at the middle-management level. This level of maturity often includes:

- assessments and evaluations of business analysis competency levels
- identification of gaps that might exist in both performance and overall competencies and job descriptions
- development or redefinition of a solutions development life cycle (SDLC).

Figure 1: COE Standard Operating Practices Model

Disciplines	Framework	Environment	Resources	Business Alignment
Business Analysis COE Competencies	Standards & methodologies	Organisation & structure	Competency & career development	Enterprise analysis
	Metrics	Governance	Training & development	Customer relationships
	Tools	Assessment	Virtual team development	
	Knowledge management			

Level II: Business analysis bureau – maturity

At the business analysis bureau level, the business analysis group is, in fact, becoming 'mature.' They're beginning to be recognised as a distinct business unit within the organisation and the level of business acumen is high. This level is often marked by:

- a direct reporting structure
- a director of business analysis working to present his or her team as a distinct business unit
- a business analysis team as a distinct pool of resources.

Level III: Centre of excellence – strategic alignment

At this level, the business analysis group truly

becomes a centre of excellence. The group has demonstrated discipline both tactically and strategically. Level III maturity includes:

- strategic alignment—the business analysts are considered thought leaders in the organisation
- recognition as a key customer-service solution
- constant work to improve the business as a whole by helping other business units.

With maturity comes the difference between simply having formalised processes and really making your COE a definitive source for a centralised point of expertise, integrated processes and practices, oversight control, stronger project support and better pre-work.

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¹ Hill, Gerard M., The Complete Project Management Office Handbook, Auerbach Publications & ESI International, 2004. [See also The Project & Programme Support Office Handbook, Vols 1 & 2, by David Marsh, published by Project Manager Today Publications. Ed.]