MASTERING
BUSINESS
ANALYSIS

Updated to reflect the changing role of today's business analyst in agile and traditional environments.

Business Analysis — what is it for?

Business analysis is the foundation of automated system development and meaningful business change. Business analysis means uncovering the real business problem, and then crafting its optimal solution.

Business analysis means determining that there is a real and tangible value to be had from any proposed solution.

Business analysis means finding the real scope of the business problem, of determining the challenges faced by the customer segments, and designing innovative, appropriate and beneficial solutions.

In short, good business analysis ensures that the right systems are built, the right changes are made, and the owner or sponsor receives the optimal value for the development effort.

Business analysis is work study and modelling, systemic thinking, innovating, writing stories, persuading and several other analytical skills.

This course gives you the tools, the thinking and communicating skills, and the process for successful business analysis.

Business Analysis — who is it for?

While we believe that business analysis is almost everyone's job —every employee has some responsibility for effective business improvement—the most likely job titles you would find at this course are:

• Business Analyst
• Product Owner
• Systems Analyst
• Project Leader
• Requirements Engineer
• Product or Program Manager

or similar titles. We also find Business Stakeholders, Users and Software Customers benefit from learning advanced business analysis techniques, and how they can contribute to the organisation's wellbeing.

This Course — what do I get?

By attending this two-day course you will learn:

• How to discover the real business needs, not just guess at a solution.
• How to improve the business.
• How to define and analyse customer segments.

• How to write a value proposition that clarifies the intention of the business change.
• How to define a project so that it yields real benefits.
• How to write the correct business stories.

• How to be better at communicating and convincing people of your ideas and solutions.
• How to be innovative and find the best solutions to improve your client's business.
• How to be a better business analyst.

Topics — what will I learn?

Business Analysis — what we are doing

We start with the topic of business analysis itself, and how the business analyst is the driving force to change the business from its current way of working to the desired future state. The desired future state is an improvement to the business — it comes about when the business problem has been solved, or the opportunity exploited, and the needed systems and processes are in place.

In this section we explore business analysis and how it fits into your development cycle. We also look at a framework for effective business analysis, and discuss the role of the business analyst in today's organisations.

Inception — establishing the value

Inception lays the foundation of the project by determining the desired future state of the business, and what value that will bring to the organisation. Inception identifies and prioritises the customer segments and, where necessary, produces a separate value proposition for different segments.

The right result can only come if the project is solving the right problem. By defining the value proposition, how that value is to be delivered, the customer/user segments to whom it is to be delivered to, and the impact it will have, the Inception activity ensures that the project will provide real and continuing value.

We also look at some conventional project models such as SWOT, ALUo, PESTLE and the BMG canvas.

Reconnaissance — finding the real problem, and what can be done about it

We start by looking at the current state of the work, its scope, its culture, its values, its people and the ethos of the work. By looking at these factors, the business analyst is able to ask, and answer, the crucial question, "Are we solving the right business problem?"

By getting to the essence of the problem, the business analyst can see whether there are unstated assumptions or hidden problems that can impact the outcome of the project.

For any business problem there are usually several possible solutions. Rather than rush headlong into the first one proposed, the savvy business analyst uses safe-to-fail probes to quickly determine the best option. This option becomes the subject of investigation.

Investigation — understanding the current and the new

This is where we come to understand the business problem we are charged to solve. We begin by determining the correct scope of the business problem, and then use business activity models — UML, BPMN, stored data models and others — to communicate with the stakeholders and uncover the real problem.

Additionally, any future solution will be used by humans, so we look at the culture of the potential users and identify characteristics that have an impact on the design of the solution.

Design the Future Work — finding the optimal solution

Now that we understand the real problem we have to craft a solution. The designing business analyst uses elements of the problem, the desired impact of the solution, the target customer segments, and the value proposition to form the solution.

Any valuable solution will be innovative. This section teaches innovative thinking, especially in the areas of providing better information, and making the solution more convenient for its users.

Getting Approval — the right solution is not enough, you have to convince others

The business analyst must be a communicator. Here we show you how to tell persuasive stories, or narratives, to communicate with your stakeholders and ensure they have a clear understanding, and thus approve your proposed solution.

We give you some solid guidance on putting together a persuasive narrative, and telling your story so that is has impact on your audience.

Ongoing Business Analysis — the knowledge needed by the project

Many projects suffer from documentation problems: either there is too much documentation which means that valuable development time is lost, or there is too little which results in miscommunications, incorrect solutions, and wasted time when the solution is maintained.

In this session we look at the minimum viable knowledge needed for the project. We discuss the information gathered by the business analyst, and the worth of this information.

The result is that your project can be confident that it has gathered sufficient knowledge to succeed, and no more than is absolutely needed.

Mastering Business Analysis — what's in it for me?

Our businesses thrive or flounder on the effectiveness of their business processes, both automated and manual. Businesses with good processes provide a better service and are more responsive to their customers. The converse is true.

Business analysis is the craft of enlightened improvement to business systems and processes. Moreover, business analysis gives you ways of identifying the areas where improvement projects will yield the highest value.

This two-day course in business analysis gives you the skills and tools to discover your client's real business, and to determine and demonstrate the best ways of improving it.

This course is a natural companion to *Mastering the Requirements Process* where we teach the art of requirements writing. The knowledge and understanding produced by *Mastering Business Analysis* are the optimal input, and foundation for, your requirements activity.
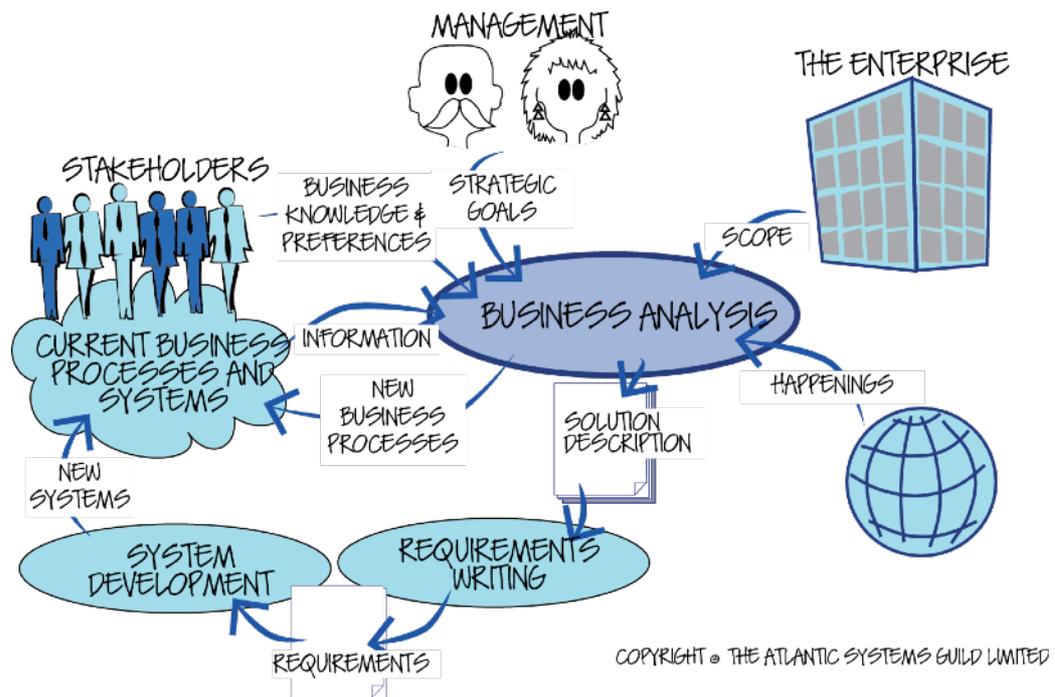
Instructors — learning from experience

James Robertson is a consultant, teacher, author, project leader whose area of concern is the requirements for products, and the contribution that good requirements make to successful projects. His work in the area of business analysis and requirements gathering is valued by clients around the world.

He is co-author of *Mastering the Requirements Process*, (Addison-Wesley 2012), *Requirements-Led Project Management* (Addison-Wesley 2005), *Adrenaline Junkies and Template Zombies* (Dorset House, 2008) and the Volere techniques for requirements.

He is also a founder of The Atlantic Systems Guild, a think tank known for its innovative systems engineering techniques.

James Archer is a business analyst, consultant, teacher, writer and innovator. James is co-editor and contributing author of *Business Analysis and Leadership* (Kogan Page, 2014). He identifies the key to great business analysis as an inclusive leadership style, innovative thinking, working collaboratively, to help people discover their real requirements.

James is one of the founders and organisers of the Business Analysis European Conference. In 2009 he was awarded Business Analyst of the Year. He has a Masters with Distinction in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership (Minnov) from City University.

James is an associate of the Atlantic Systems Guild and has contributed to the development of and taught the Volere approach to requirements and business analysis for the last decade.

Mastering Business Analysis — how do I get it?

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In Australia, please contact Software Education

Belgium courses are run by I.T.Works

Czech Republic, contact Michal Vallo at Aguarra

Italy, please contact Technology Transfer S.r.l.

Netherlands, the contact is Adept Events

New Zealand please click for Software Education

Norway please contact Norske Dataforening

Sweden, Staffan Melin at Require AB

United Kingdom, please contact IRM UK

United States, Software Quality Engineering