

## The Rise of the Business Analyst — Again

by Michael H. Hugos

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**W**hen I got into the IT business years ago, I thought the business analyst was the most pivotal person in the whole profession. That was the person who was the bridge between business and technology, the one who could see and understand both sides and whose goal was to apply technology to support business initiatives that would help the company grow revenue or shrink operating costs.



Over the last 20 years, we lost sight of that, as the technology focus began to shift away from IT and toward the business users. The PC dethroned the mainframe and minicomputer. Local-area networks enabled whole companies to run on PCs and servers. The chips powering PCs got more and more powerful, allowing the software to get more full-featured.

Then the Internet hit the big time, and for the past 10 years, we've been exploring the many things you can do when you combine people and computers in real-time networks via the Web. But by now, the newness has worn off, and we are back to thinking about that old concern of how to use this stuff to make money. That's where the business analyst comes in once more.

A lot of IT functions have been outsourced, including data center operations, programming and the help desk. The one function that doesn't seem to lend itself to outsourcing is business analysis. To effectively look out for their best interests, companies have to analyze their specific challenges and find unique responses to them. If they play the "me too" game of simply doing what everyone else is doing, they will reap no real competitive advantage. Sure, a company can bring in consultants to help and to train its analysts, but it cannot get consistently good results if it outsources the whole analysis function. Why? Because an analyst needs to really understand the company he is working with, and the best way to do that is to live there and be part of it.

I often hear that companies have not developed their business analysis capabilities because they believe that analysts use soft skills that anyone can exercise without much training. I beg to differ.

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*Navigating Your Organization's Future*

## The Rise of the Business Analyst — Again *(continued from page 1)*

I was once asked to start up and run a group of business analysts for a company that already had a 100-person IT department. As part of that job, I had to define the specific skills my analysts should have and then put in place a training and career advancement program that would develop those skills. This gave me cause to think carefully about the skills that analysts need and how to develop them.

### Here's what I found:

- Business analysts must be able to facilitate joint application-design sessions that involve groups composed of both business and technical people. They need to actively include everyone in the sessions and encourage people to contribute their ideas.
- They need to do process mapping. This is often a very good way to focus the conversations of a group in a design session and provide a big-picture context in which to place people's ideas.
- They need to apply data modeling to organize the data flowing through the business processes they are designing. By this I mean logical data modeling (not the creation of physical data models in fourth normal form).

Once analysts have facilitated group design sessions, created process flow diagrams and organized the relevant data into a logical data model, they must pull this all together and create the user interface for the system that will drive the activities in the process flow and handle the data in the data model. This is where analysis turns into synthesis, and where the design of any new system emerges. And as if all that weren't enough, good analysts must also be skilled at system testing, user training and even project management.

Soft skills? These are some of the hardest skills to master in the whole IT profession. And companies need good business analysts now more than ever if they are going to

thrive in our fast-changing global economy.

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## The Business Analyst Certificate Program

***“[Business Analyst] skills are some of the hardest skills to master in the whole IT profession. And companies need good business analysts now more than ever if they are going to thrive in our fast-changing global economy.”***

Mr. Hugos' concluding point is right on point for today's business environment. Innovations in information technology have had a dramatically positive impact on American business over the last 15 years. Still, research consistently shows that a large percentage of software projects fail to deliver the intended business results. The “business/IT” divide is a key factor in these failures.

Indeed, more than 50 percent of organizations polled in a recent IT Governance Institute survey lacked any formal structure to align IT investments with business strategy. Enter the Business Analyst.

According to BPMInstitute.org, business analyst practitioners are poised to have a dramatic impact on organizations' ability to create more responsive business models while addressing the business/IT divide that plagues so many companies today.

The business analyst works as a liaison among stakeholders in order to elicit, analyze, communicate and validate requirements for changes to business processes, policies and information systems. To succeed in this role, an individual must have a broad range of business, technical and interpersonal skills. Several of the universities Orion partners with have asked us to develop a ***Business Analyst Certificate Program*** that delivers these critical skills and is aligned with the International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) Body of Knowledge.

There are six main IIBA knowledge areas:

- Enterprise Analysis
- Requirements Planning and Management
- Requirements Elicitation
- Requirements Analysis and Documentation
- Requirements Communication
- Solution Assessment and Validation

The ***Business Analyst Certificate Program*** is compatible with the IIBA structure and delivers the skills, techniques and tools to:

- Understand and define the organizational need
- Gather the information needed to clearly define the requirements
- Document requirements for use by all stakeholders
- Analyze, verify and validate requirements
- Create a framework for successful requirements management and communication

Orion has developed custom structures for Rutgers University, University of Texas, University of Delaware, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Information and schedules are on Page 3.

## Business Analyst Certificate Programs and Seminar Series

**Rutgers University** – New Brunswick, NJ.

**BA Critical Skills Series** with optional certification (tests and case study). Series is comprised of three 2-day seminars. Series fee is \$2,985. Certification fee is \$795. Individual seminars are \$1,295 each.

<i>Building Effective Business Requirements</i> .....	October 25 -26
<i>Project Management for IT &amp; BA</i> .....	November 13 - 14
<i>Process Mapping</i> .....	December 11 - 12

**University of North Carolina at Charlotte** – Charlotte, NC

**BA Certificate Program.** Program is comprised of one required seminar, three core seminars and one elective seminar. All seminars are two days in length. Program fee is \$4,480. Individual seminars are \$995 each.

<i>Building Effective Business Requirements</i> .....	October 2 - 3
<i>Enterprise Analysis</i> .....	November 8 -9
<i>Gathering &amp; Documenting Requirements</i> .....	November 27 - 28
<i>Analyzing &amp; Satisfying Requirements</i> .....	December 12 - 13
<i>Process Mapping and Analysis</i> (elective) .....	February 5 -6
<i>Software Testing and QA</i> (elective) .....	February 26 -27
<i>Project Management for IT and BA's</i> .....	March 11 - 12

**University of Delaware** – Wilmington, DE

**BA Certificate Program.** Program is comprised of four two-day modules across four months and a capstone case study. Program fee is \$3,595.

<i>Essentials of Business Analysis</i> .....	September 25 -26
<i>Enterprise Analysis</i> .....	October 23 -24
<i>Gathering &amp; Documenting Requirements</i> .....	November 13 - 14
<i>Analyzing &amp; Satisfying Requirements</i> .....	December 4 -5

**University of Texas** – Austin, TX

**BA Certificate Program.** Program is comprised of one required seminar, three core seminars and one elective seminar. All seminars are two days in length. Program fee is \$5,742.50 with an early-bird discount price of \$4,972.50. Individual seminars are \$995 each.

<i>Enterprise Analysis</i> .....	July 11 -12
<i>Gathering &amp; Documenting Requirements</i> .....	August 8 -9
<i>Building Effective Business Requirements</i> .....	September 26 -27
<i>Software Testing &amp; Quality Assurance</i> .....	October 8 -9
<i>Analyzing &amp; Satisfying Requirements</i> .....	October 16 -17
<i>Project Management for IT &amp; BA</i> .....	December 11 - 12
<i>Strategic Systems Management</i> .....	February 12 - 13

**Orion Development Group** – Denver, CO

**Five-Day BA Certificate Program.** Program is comprised of an intensive one-week seminar with pre- and post-seminar testing. Program fee is \$2,995 with an early-bird discount price of \$2,495.

5-Day Business Analyst Certificate .....	January 28 - February 1
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For more information please visit [www.odgroup.com/seminar/ba\\_certificate.asp](http://www.odgroup.com/seminar/ba_certificate.asp).

# Good News for the Process Management Professional

Orion has been very pleased to observe the steady growth of the Association of Business Process Management Professionals (ABPMP). ABPMP is a non-profit, vendor-independent professional organization dedicated to the advancement of business process management concepts and its practices.



## The Mission of the ABPMP is:

- To engage in activities that promote the practice of business process management
- To develop a common Body of Knowledge in this field, and
- To contribute to the advancement and skill development of professionals who work in this discipline

ABPMP is actively working on a program to support the recognition of BPM as a professional discipline. This includes building a BPM-Body of Knowledge (BPM-BOK), a model curriculum for BPM, and a professional certification program for BPM practitioners. The first draft of the BPM-BOK is currently under review.

## Membership

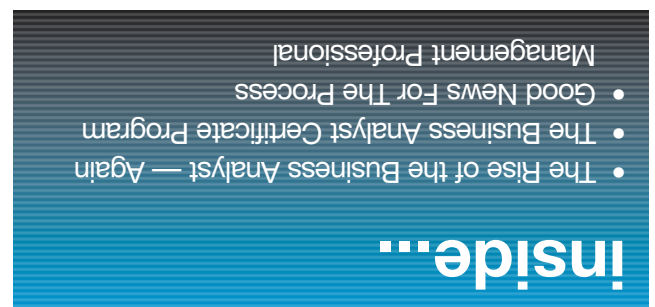
Membership in ABPMP cost \$100 per year. The ABPMP provides members with opportunities for networking, continuing education and sharing best practices, new ideas, and experiences of its members and professional colleagues. Members are also eligible for significant discounts for major industry conferences, training and special events.

## Know the BPM Space

With the growing influence of technology in process management, the definition and future of BPM have become less clear. ABPMP members have the opportunity to move beyond the hype of analysts, vendors and evangelists and work side-by-side with fellow practitioners. From process management, rules analytics and business transformation you'll be able to learn how the BPM marketplace is being defined...and help redefine it. Please consider joining this group of dedicated professionals who will help advance the future of the business process management profession.

To learn more about the ABPMP, go to [www.abpmp.org](http://www.abpmp.org).

## Here Is Your Newsletter



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