Industry-Standard Best Practices in Business Analysis

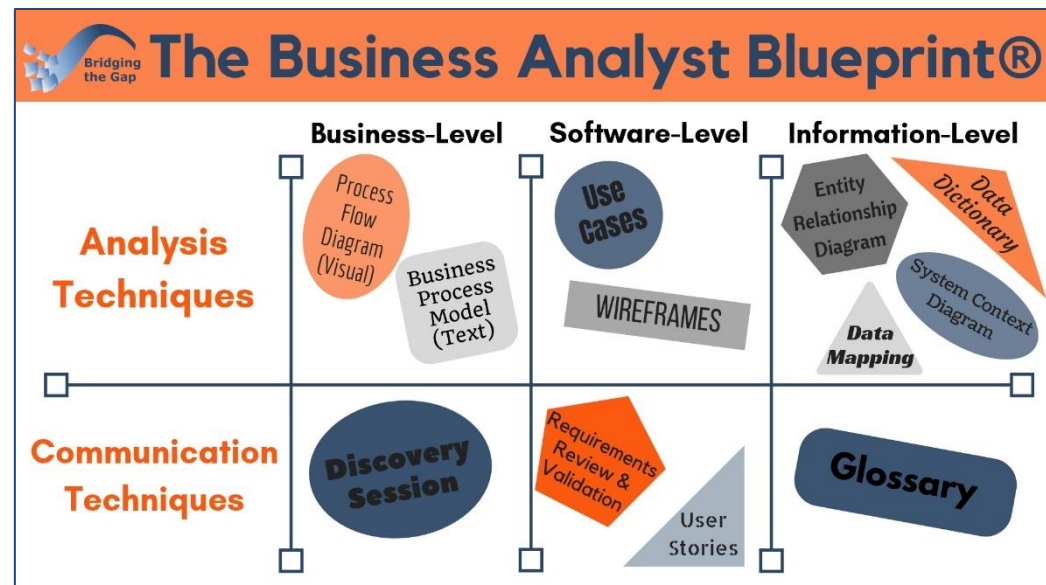*Created by Laura Brandenburg, CBAP*

About the Assessment

This assessment is designed for professionals looking to assess their business analysis skills. It is a tool to help you clarify your level of awareness and experience of key business analysis techniques and industry-standard best practices, and to make more informed decisions about training, process improvement, and career opportunities.

The first step is to complete the assessment, recognizing that some experience may have happened informally, outside a structured business analysis process. The second step is to identify training needs and a development plan.

Assessment Part 1: The Business Analyst Blueprint®

The techniques in The Business Analyst Blueprint® cover the industry-standard best practices that business analysts use to discover, analyze, and communicate requirements on a typical business process or software change project.

ASSESSMENT OF EACH TECHNIQUE

Skill	Explanation	Related / Variant Terms	Level of Skill • Novice • Intermediate • Expert	Formality • Informal • Formal
Process Models	Map out a high-level process and use clarifying techniques like swimlanes and decision points.	Process Maps, Workflow Diagrams		
Business Process Document	Create a detailed textual document to describe the business process that includes roles, business rules, exceptions, entry points, and end points.	Business Procedures, Business Workflow, As Is Business Process		
Discovery Session	Engage stakeholders from multiple departments to provide input on the current state business process.	Elicitation Session, Stakeholder Meeting		
Business Process Improvement	Create organizational change by clarifying, updating, and improving the business process.	Organizational change, Continuous Improvement, To Be Processes		
Use Cases	Create a detailed textual document that describes the user's interaction with a software system to achieve a specific goal.	Functional Requirements, Software Requirements		

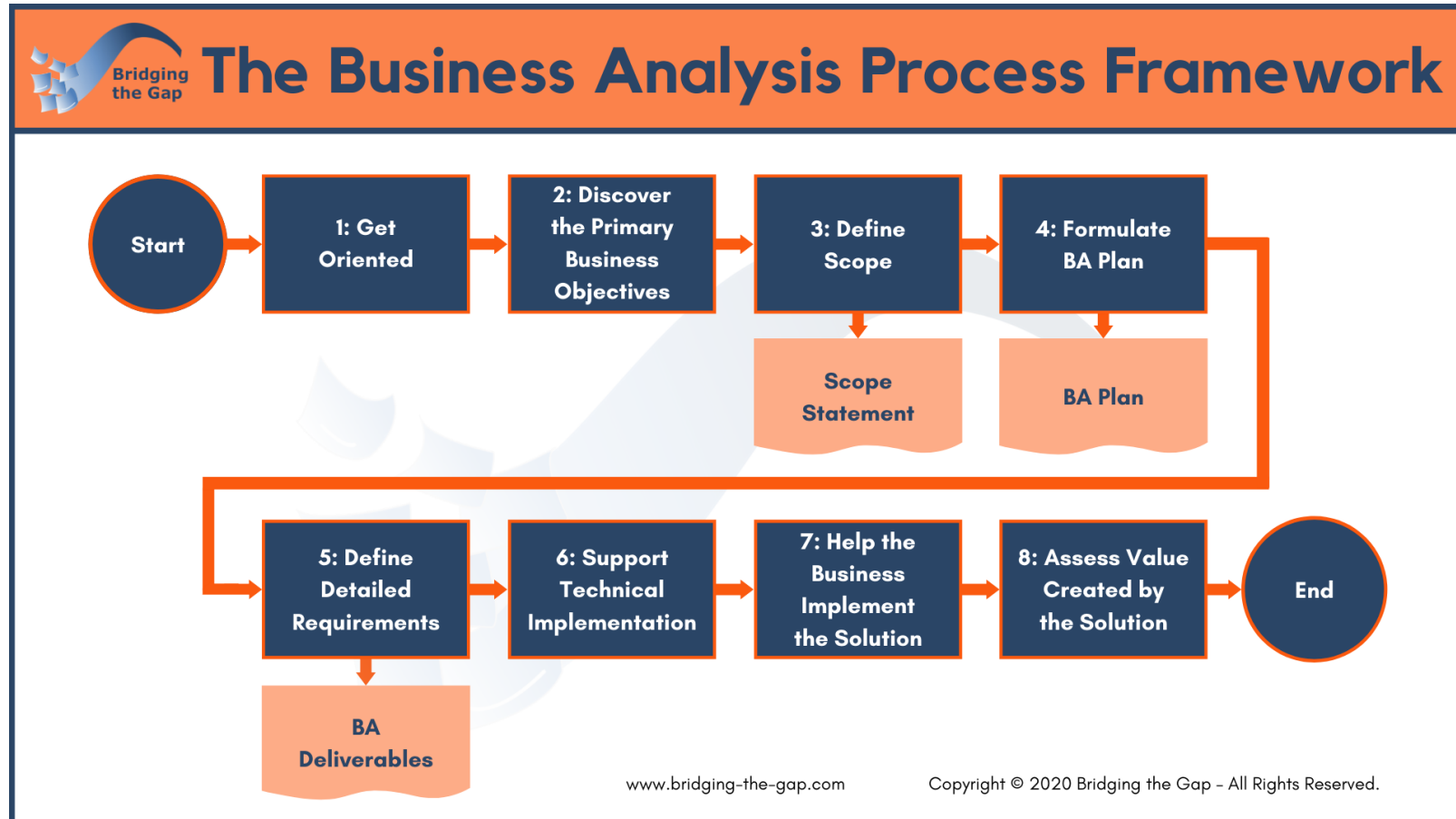| Skill	Explanation	Related / Variant Terms	Level of Skill • Novice • Intermediate • Expert	Formality • Informal • Formal
Wireframes	Create a visual model of the user interface.	Prototype, User Interface Model, Rendering		
Requirements Review & Validation	Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the use cases and wireframes represent the intended requirements and are feasible to implement.	Requirements Meeting, Design Meeting		
User Stories	A functional requirements model for communicating software requirements in an agile software development environment.	Acceptance Tests, Product Backlog		
Glossary	Document defining key business terms and their definitions.	Terminology,		
Entity Relationship Diagram	Visual model clarifying key business concepts and how they relate.	ERD, Domain Model		
System Context Diagram	Visual model showing how information flows between systems.	Context Diagram, Data Flow		

Skill	Explanation	Related / Variant Terms	Level of Skill • Novice • Intermediate • Expert	Formality • Informal • Formal
Data Dictionary	Detailed matrix identifying the key attributes to be stored by an information system, and business rules for each attribute such as whether it is required and what type of information it contains.	Data Matrix, Attribute List		
Data Mapping	Detailed matrix identifying how data flows from one system to another, common in data migration and system integration projects.	Data Flow, API Specification, Data Migration Specification		

NOTES

ASSESSMENT PART 2: THE BUSINESS ANALYSIS PROCESS

The business analysis process covers the step-by-step sequence for taking a project from ambiguity to clarity, and delivering a high-quality solution that actually meets the requirements.

Click here to learn more about the business analysis process

The Business Analysis Process Framework

Start → 1: Get Oriented → 2: Discover the Primary Business Objectives → 3: Define Scope → 4: Formulate BA Plan

3: Define Scope → Scope Statement

4: Formulate BA Plan → BA Plan

5: Define Detailed Requirements → 6: Support Technical Implementation → 7: Help the Business Implement the Solution → 8: Assess Value Created by the Solution → End

5: Define Detailed Requirements → BA Deliverables

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Assessment of Experience with Each Step of the Business Analysis Process

Skill	Explanation	Level of Skill • Novice • Intermediate • Expert	Project Sizing • > 1 week • >1 month • 1-3 months • 3+ months	Stakeholder Environment • 1-2 stakeholders • 3-5 stakeholders • 6+ stakeholders
1 - Get Oriented	Ability to discover what's needed to get started quickly, by clarifying the role, the project, and the existing system and process capabilities.			
2 - Discover the Business Objectives	Discover what's driving the project so you can ensure the scope addresses the true business need, or problem to be solved.			
3 - Define Scope	Gain agreement from the business and technology stakeholders on the project scope – or what will be accomplished within the project constraints.			
4 - Formulate BA Plan	Create a realistic and credible business analysis plan that includes deliverables, stakeholders, and timelines.			
5 - Define Detailed Requirements	Work through the detailed requirements deliverables and establish an iterative rhythm.			

Skill	Explanation	Level of Skill • Novice • Intermediate • Expert	Project Sizing • > 1 week • >1 month • 1-3 months • 3+ months	Stakeholder Environment • 1-2 stakeholders • 3-5 stakeholders • 6+ stakeholders
6 - Support Technical Implementation	Ensure the technical solution meets the objectives, through collaboration and user acceptance testing.			
7 - Help the Business Implement the Solution	Support the business stakeholders in making business process changes so that the solution ultimately delivers the intended result.			
8 - Assess the Value Created by the Solution	Assess the ROI (Return on Investment) of the delivered solution.			
Agile Business Analysis Concepts	Apply the business analysis process iteratively and effectively to collaborate with an agile software development team.			

ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING NEEDS AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Opportunities to Translate Informal Experience to More Formal Experience

Highlight opportunities to apply more formal tools, templates or techniques to solidify past transferable experience into a marketable business analyst skill. Often these will be the quickest wins for an aspiring business analyst, to gain traction quickly with a core set of business analyst skills. Formal training or 1-1 mentoring are both options.

Opportunities to Gain Initial Familiarity and Experience

Highlight opportunities to gain exposure to new concepts and start building experience. Often these tasks can be done first under the direct guidance of a senior business analyst, or as part of a formal training program that includes both training and skill application.

Opportunities to Gain Exposure to Additional Steps in the Business Analysis Process

Include opportunities to shadow or complete steps in the process that they have not seen before, or apply the steps in a project of increasing significance or stakeholder complexity. For example: going from discovering the business objectives from a single stakeholder to negotiating objectives from 3 or more stakeholders.

ABOUT BRIDGING THE GAP

Bridging the Gap offers business analysis professionals best-in-class online training to support their professional development and certification goals.

While participating in an online course from Bridging the Gap, participants learn new techniques, apply them on active projects, and add immediate value to their organization. This means you'll see an immediate return on your investment in improved analysis work.

Founded in 2008, Bridging the Gap is an Endorsed Education Provider™ of the International Institute of Business Analysis® (IIBA®).

The Business Analyst Blueprint® certification program enables participants to earn their Applied Certification in Business Analysis™ (ACBA).

The **Applied Certification in Business Analysis™** (ACBA) designation certifies that an individual has applied the foundational business analysis techniques and planning processes by leveraging industry standards. Certified individuals have successfully applied 12 analysis and collaboration techniques in business process analysis, software requirements modeling, and data modeling, and planned a project using the Bridging the Gap business analysis process framework. All of their deliverables have been instructor assessed to meet rigorous standards.

Click here to learn more about The Business Analyst Blueprint® certification program:
https://www.bridging-the-gap.com/business-analyst-blueprint/

Questions? We are happy to help. Email us at info@bridging-the-gap.com.