



START *YOUR* BUSINESS ANALYSIS CAREER

A STEP-BY-STEP CAREER PLANNING COURSE



By Laura Brandenburg

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Hello and welcome to *Bridging the Gap*. I'm Laura Brandenburg and we are here to talk about how to achieve your business analysis career goals.

We're here specifically to help you map out a plan that's going to make the most of your skills, your experiences, and your opportunities so that you can get the result that you want out of your career.

Before we jump into the content for today's seminar, I'll share a bit about why I am here talking about achieving your BA career goals. The first question you might have is how did I get into business analysis?

My BA opportunity came from what seemed like a chance meeting in the hallway at the time. I was walking back to my desk after a meeting and a senior BA in the department stops me and tells me that they are opening up a new position in their department. She suggested I apply. I remember looking at her in disbelief. I had never even thought about business analysis as a career path.

I remember saying, "I'm in Quality Assurance and it's really, really busy. I'm not sure that I could leave them in a lurch."

And she said, "You know, it's a really good option for you and I think it will really help you move farther in your career. It's probably more money too."



And here I am over ten years later having found a set of responsibilities in business analysis that was such a perfect fit for who I was as a person and what I enjoyed doing, that now I'm helping others do it.

As I started *Bridging the Gap* and started talking to people about what they were doing in their business analysis careers, I realized that what I had thought was a chance meeting in the hallway really wasn't. **I had been doing some business analysis in QA and this had created the opportunity for me.** Although it wasn't premeditated, I had been expanding my business analyst skill set before I ever held the job title.

- I had developed an entirely new test process for my part of the department.
- I had gathered or elicited requirements from my manager and from other people involved in the testing process to ensure the process I was developing met their needs.
- I had been coordinating user acceptance testing and partnering with the business to ensure the final solution met their requirements.

All of those activities were relevant in my transition to the Systems Analyst job title.

(We were business analysts, but we had the title of "Systems Analysts." We're going to talk a bit about how titles can get in the way of seeing what opportunities are available in business analysis.)

I share my story so that you can know a little bit about me and my perspective, but I also share it because the experience of building BA responsibilities before being offered the BA job title is built into the career roadmap that we're going to talk about today.

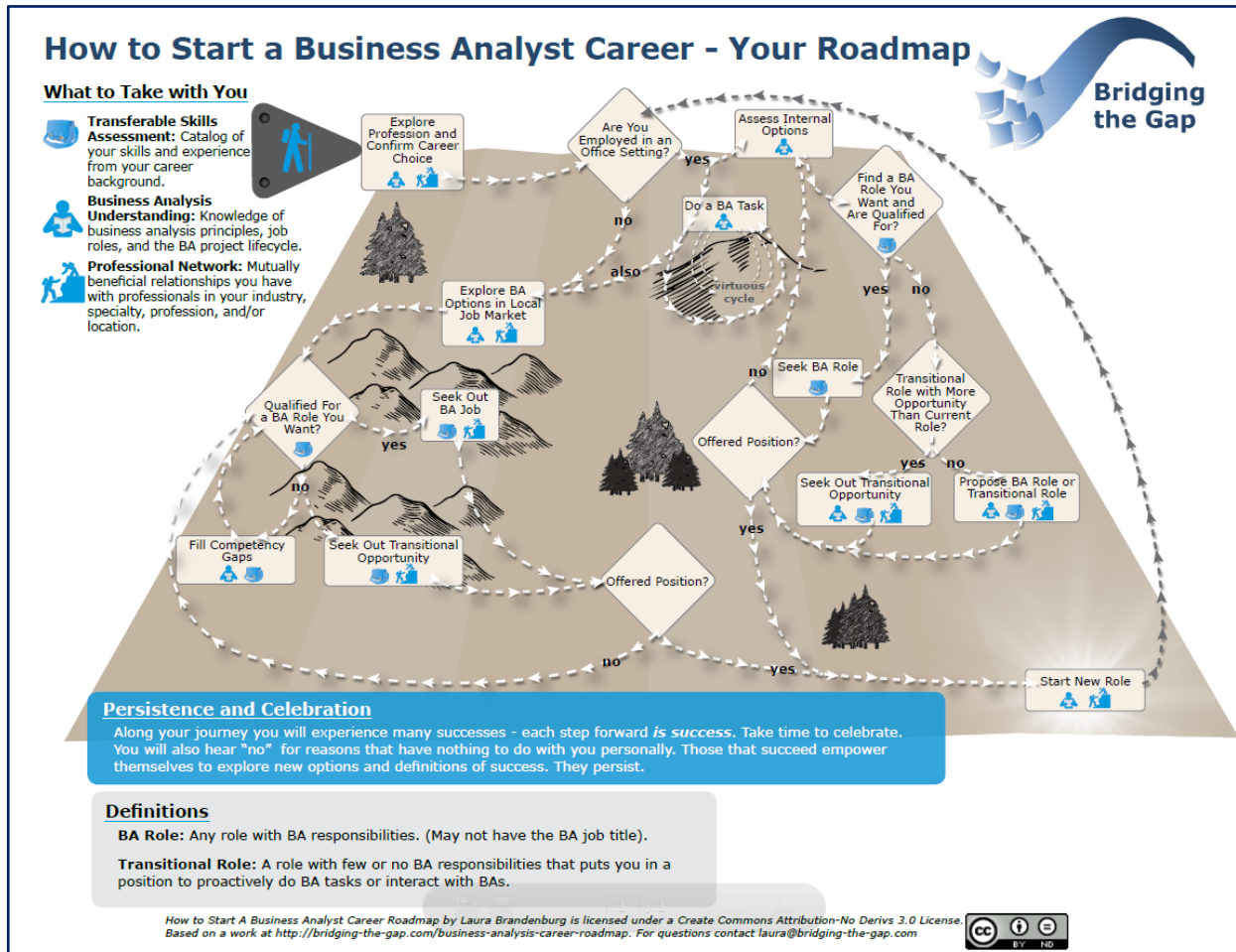
In this course, we will walk through the **How to Start a Business Analyst Career Roadmap**. If you haven't already downloaded the Roadmap, this

would be a great time to do that. Like all of the extra resources I'll reference in this recording, you can find a link in your transcript.

I suggest having the Roadmap in front of you either on your computer or printed out so that you can refer to that as we talk through it.

Click the link below to download the Roadmap:

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/business-analysis-career-roadmap/>



THIS IS NOT YOUR EVERY DAY WORKFLOW DIAGRAM

The first thing you'll probably notice is it's not your every day workflow diagram. It is a workflow diagram for sure, but it looks more like a hiking map or a trail map.

Why is that? Why did I pick the metaphor of hiking to represent this?

When you go hiking, you pick up a map at the trailhead and the first thing you do is decide how you want to hike.

Most hikes here in Colorado have multiple options – there are trails of different lengths, different levels of difficulty, some have views, some don't. Some are very steep and some are very gradual. You select the route through the trail system based on what you want out of that hike.

There are some parallels here to career transitions and career growth.

When you're making a career transition or growing your career, there are easy paths and there are difficult paths. There are places along your journey to stop and enjoy the view and look back at your success.

I see people taking very gradual journeys to get where they want to go and consciously building one experience on top of another. And I also see people take very short, very intense journeys. They get thrown into the business analyst role with very little preparation or background and need to sink or swim, so to speak.

Just like you can take different paths through a trail system, you can take different paths to your BA career goals.

There are some common trails that will get you where you want to go – if you know where you want to go. And those are the markers and the aspects that I have called out on the Roadmap.

The Career Roadmap is the result of a lot of work with professionals starting BA careers and two years as a hiring manager of business analysts. I've answered countless reader questions at *Bridging the Gap*, helped hundreds of course participants, and consulted with selected individuals one-on-one. I've reviewed hundreds of BA resumes, interviewed dozens of business analysts, and hired four BAs. I've seen people who are extremely successful and I've seen people invest a lot of time and a lot energy but not move all that much closer to where they want to go. I've seen business analysis from multiple perspectives and I bring all of those perspectives into the Roadmap.

What has made it into the Roadmap is what I've seen actually work. This map is not a prescriptive tool. It's not going to tell you that you have to go from Point A to Point B to Point C and then you're going to end up where you like. It's going to give you the trails and the opportunities and the activities you can choose to invest in that will get you where you want to go.

There are two pieces of information you need to find your path through the Roadmap. You need to know where you've been and you need to know where you want to be. We are going to talk about where you've been later in the session, because it will make a lot more sense once we've gone through some of the Roadmap. But let's take a few minutes and talk about where you want to be.

If you have started to look at BA job descriptions, you know there is a lot of diversity in the profession and the business analyst role that's going to be a perfect fit for you might not be the perfect fit for someone else. Just like there is no one path to business analysis, **there is no one definition of what it means to be a business analyst.**

Let's look at an example. Say you have a technical background and love technology and want to stay somewhat involved in the technology. You

might be a great fit for more of a Systems Analyst role or an IT Business Analyst role.

Or, you might not have a technical background and are hoping you can still become a BA. Your qualifications and aspirations might be a great fit for a process or business focused role.

In the business analysis profession, there are opportunities for professionals with IT backgrounds or no IT background and there is a wide variety of roles to select from.

If this sounds like a bit much to figure out right now, realize that while you'll move the fastest if you know exactly where you are headed, you can also choose to set a more general goal and take the slower more indirect route.

Let's take a breather for a minute and talk about two different kinds of road trips.

On the first road trip, the driver knows they want to get from Detroit, Michigan, to Los Angeles, California, as quickly as possible. They plan the most direct route, leave enough time to sleep in some decent hotels and eat some decent meals. They are on the beach in three days.

On the second road trip, the driver knows they want to leave Detroit, Michigan and head to California. They aren't quite sure where they want to live next, so they decide to head to Chicago and take Route 66 into Los Angeles. They want to experience a lot of the US, so they take a detour to spend a few days at the Grand Canyon, pop over and see a few friends in Denver, and even spend a night in Las Vegas. Then they drive up the coast, staying in a new town every few nights to get their bearings.

On the first road trip, the driver has a very specific goal and a very specific timeline. On the second road trip, the driver has a very general goal and a

non-specific timeline. Neither is necessarily better or worse, unless you hate long road trips or major highways.

Starting your business analyst career can happen in much the same way. The difference is that there isn't a direct route to choose. There is no major highway system connecting where you are in your career with where you want to be as a business analyst. The best you can do is take the most direct route from Detroit to Los Angeles. In the days before the US had interstates that would happen to be Route 66 without any of the side adventures.

That's why the Roadmap a trail map and not a highway map. But there are some legs of the journey that will help you establish your short-term income stream while still moving towards your BA career goals.

OK, that's a lot of talk about road trips. But it's important because I don't promise anyone a silver bullet. Not now, not ever. Yes, there are other training providers who promise to get you on the BA career super highway. I've seen that work for so very few people that I can't recommend it with any integrity.

When it does work it's more about being in the right place at the right time – and that means there was a big dash of luck involved. Again, I'm just walking you through what I've seen work for a lot of people a lot of the time, even people who didn't think they had much of a chance to achieve their BA career goals and who aren't particularly lucky.

EXPLORING THE PROFESSION AND CONFIRMING YOUR CAREER CHOICE

With that in mind, let's talk about the very first step on the **How to Start a BA Career Roadmap**, which is exploring the profession and confirming your career choice. You may feel like you went through this step a long time

ago. For me, this was over 10 years ago. But I've actually revisited the steps several times throughout my career. It's never a bad idea to ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I still in the right career?
- Am I moving forward and expanding my skills in a relevant way?
- Are there other opportunities that are a better fit for my goals?

If you have trouble identifying what result you want out of your business analyst career, plan to invest some time in this step. In the transcript, there is a link to a *Bridging the Gap* article called "42 Reasons to Start a Business Analyst Career." Read it and use it as a checklist to confirm your career goals.

Click the link below to read 42 Reasons to Start a Business Analyst Career:

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/42-reasons-to-consider-starting-a-business-analyst-career/>

The reason this step is so important is I do see a lot of people invest a lot of time and sometimes financial resources in pursuing a career that is just not a good fit for them. They are successful but they're not happy. They get where they want to go and then they realize that they didn't really want to be there in the first place. At that point they start to feel like they are back-tracking instead of moving forward. Invest a little time here now and guarantee you'll see your career moving forward, even if you decide to go outside of business analysis.

EMPLOYED IN AN OFFICE SETTING

The next step on the Roadmap is what's called a decision box in workflow diagramming language. And for us, this is our main split. Your answer to this question is the biggest determining factor in what activities make sense for you in the short term.

The question is: Are you employed in an office setting?

Let's talk about why this question is so important. Regardless of your role, if you are employed in an office setting, you can find opportunities to move towards your BA career goals.

Again, **regardless of your role, if you're in an office setting, you have options to move towards your BA career goals.** Just by virtue of being employed and working in an office, there are a lot of options there for you. You might be a project assistant, a software developer, receptionist, a customer service professional – it doesn't really matter. There are opportunities.

If you are employed, but in, say, the retail setting or a service industry or elsewhere outside of an office setting, some of this may still apply – we've actually had people apply the steps on this part of the Roadmap. But it's a much more difficult endeavor. It typically involves volunteering on top of working the job that brings your income in, which takes a lot of focus and diligence.

If your answer to this question is "yes", let's look at what steps you want to go through.

The first thing you want to do is assess what options you have internal to your current organization. What does this mean? This means discovering who does business analysis in your organization. If your organization has a

formal business analyst practice or a department of people with the business analyst job title, this step could be relatively simple.

In many scenarios, this isn't the case and you need to dig a bit deeper. This means looking at a wide variety of roles and responsibilities and discovering who does business analysis and may not even know it. As I mentioned, my first business analyst job title was Systems Analyst and I had that title for, I think, three or four years before I finally got the Business Analyst job title. That's one title to look out for.

We've seen people find project managers who do business analysis, software developers who do business analysis, as well as project coordinators, product managers, functional managers, administrative assistants, customer support professionals, quality assurance professionals, and technical writers, just to name a few common roles.

When you are on the hunt for business analyst job responsibilities, what you are really looking for is whether or not there is a role in your current organization that will move you closer to business analysis.

To learn about what BA responsibilities to look for, click the link below:

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/whats-the-business-analyst-role-on-a-software-project/>

Once you find someone who holds BA responsibilities, you'll want to reach out and find out more about their role. Specifically, you want to see if it's a role you want to work towards as part of your BA career plan.

I have an example here. David Wolf is a software developer and when he looked at his organization, he found that the project managers were doing the lion share of business analysis. He began to evaluate project management as a short-term career option because a lot of times it's easier to move into business analysis if you are getting promoted internally than if you are seeking a role outside of your organization.

He started partnering more proactively with some of the project managers and that has worked into an opportunity to do some business analysis tasks, which is really what we're going to talk about next because that's probably the most important part of the Roadmap.

Let's talk about this and then we'll circle back to what else you want to do with your assessment of internal options.

CREATING A VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF BUSINESS ANALYSIS OPPORTUNITIES

If you are employed in an office setting, **the most critical step you can take to move your BA career forward is to start doing some business analysis.**

What does that look like? What does it look like to just do business analysis?

Let's talk about another participant in one of our programs. Her name is Wendy. Wendy was a software developer who had done some BA activities in previous roles but had no BA responsibilities in her current role. She knew she wanted to be a BA and she preferred to stay in her current organization.

She took our Business Process Analysis course and she documented a process for her technical team. This is not in her job description. It was something she took upon herself to do.

She had the opportunity to present the process to a management team in her organization and they were very impressed with the work she did in putting it together.

She got noticed as someone who's doing something beyond her role in software development. That led to getting in on a customer interview, which was something that software developers did not have the opportunity to do in the organization.

Then she was starting to be involved in the elicitation process in her organization. She presented herself very well in that meeting and again got noticed as somebody who can do more than she's formally assigned to do. Six months after documenting the business process, Wendy was formally assigned business analyst responsibilities. Three months after that she was officially and retroactively promoted into a business analyst role.

Now, documenting a business process isn't the starting point for everyone. Some start by using more formal elicitation techniques. Others start by documenting functional requirements or scoping a project. Still others start in supporting roles, such as reviewing or updating requirements documentation or taking notes in a meeting for a business analyst.

One more thing to note about Wendy's story is that her organization didn't have a BA role. She was forming a BA role around some of her competencies and her interests as well as a need that she helped discover in the organization. She saw an opportunity and created a role for herself.

And this really leads us back to assessing your internal options.

As you look at who holds what business analysis responsibilities in your organization, you want to pay attention to whether there is a role that you could qualify for based on your existing skills and experience.

In Wendy's case, she found that a Product Manager held some of the BA responsibilities, but that there was a gap that needed to be filled.

Let's look at an example outside of IT, since I do not want to give you the impression that software development is the only or the primary path to business analysis. Nothing could be further from the case.

Another participant I worked with closely has a strong set of skills in accounting and finance. Throughout most of Jim's career, he had worked on creating reports and reporting systems or filling the ongoing activities needed to run a finance department. A few years before he became a business analyst, he saw an opportunity to build a new system that would streamline a reporting process. He took the lead in identifying the requirements and overseeing the project. Then he went back to his regular work in accounting but wasn't satisfied with it. He wanted to get back to project work.

He was able to leverage the experience he had overseeing the reporting project and his deep finance experience to find a first role as a business analyst for an accounting system migration project.

Like me, Jim's first business analyst experiences were not premeditated, yet he was still able to leverage them to move closer to his career ambitions.

I promised to talk a bit about skills, and this is as good a place as any to follow this side path.

THE BA SKILLS YOU MIGHT ALREADY HAVE

One of the most common mistakes I see people make is that they underestimate the value of the skills and experience they already have.

As a result, their answer to the question, "Am I qualified to be a business analyst?" is a resounding "no" when it should be a "yes" or at least a "some

of the time.” (And *some of the time* can be a very effective path to business analysis.)

You’ll see that one of the items to take with you on your journey is a transferable skills assessment. Transferable skills are skills that you’ve built through experience in your past roles. In the context of business analysis, *transferable skills are BA techniques you’ve used in non-BA jobs or soft skills you’ve developed in perhaps unrelated roles.*

For example, a customer service professional tends to be very good at asking questions and engaging not-so-happy people on the phone. And that tends to be really important as a BA as communication is a big part of our role.

Transferable skills can help you skip past entry-level business analyst positions. This is especially important because there tend to be very few entry-level business analyst positions. And those savored few entry-level positions tend to favor recent college graduates without the salary requirements of an experienced professional.

Finding your transferable skills can take a bit of a time investment, but it can also save you years in terms of moving you ahead in your BA career.

Click the link below for a detailed how to on compiling your transferable skills assessment.

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/how-to-discover-your-transferable-business-analyst-skills/>

That concludes our discussion of the right side of the Roadmap which is where you'll be focusing most of your time and attention if you are currently employed in an office setting.

WHAT IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED?

What if you are currently unemployed or not employed in an office setting? What options do you have to move towards a business analysis career?

Your options are going to be in the lower left part of the Roadmap and let's look at those next.

(If you are employed, don't ignore this section. You also want to be paying attention to your local job market. It's easy to get focused on your current organization and lose sight of what's happening in the profession as a whole. This can lead to you having a very specialized skill set that is not relevant outside your current organization. That means if you go to switch jobs, you don't have a lot of options open to you. Consider how you can invest a couple hours each month doing some of the parts of the lower left hand side of the Roadmap as it will help you create a safety net in your BA career.)

Let's get back to those of you who are unemployed and for whom this part of the Roadmap represents the lion share of your focus. One assumption I'm going to make in this part of the discussion is that you have some relatively short-term needs or desires to get income coming in.

EXPLORE BA OPTIONS IN THE LOCAL JOB MARKET

Let's talk about the first task – explore the BA options in your local job market. What does that mean?

Often I'm asked, what are the core skills of a business analyst? And there is a list of core skills that I've linked to in the transcript. You can use this as a checklist to compare your qualifications for a typical business analyst role.

Click the link below to learn about the core business analyst skills:

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/business-analyst-skills-important/>

The core skills are important, but what happens is that there tend to be some very specific local flavors to the business analyst role. So you really want to look beyond a generic business analyst job description to get an understanding of what the BA role is like in your local area, whether that's Madison, London, or Toronto.

As you look at job postings, find the answers the following questions:

- What industries and companies seem to hire a lot of BAs?
- What are the general business analysis skills that are required for most BA jobs?
- What specialized or non-BA skills did I see most often across BA job postings?
- Are there other job titles that commonly include BA job responsibilities?

In addition to looking at job postings, talk to BAs in your professional network about what they do and what qualifications they need to be successful in their roles. Ask them what systems they use, what types of documents they create, and what their BA practices are. You can meet BAs

at local professional meetings or ask for introductions through other connections in your network.

The understanding that comes from this analysis will either open or close some options for you. Probably both.

Consider the following questions:

- What types of BA roles am I qualified for?
- What special skills or expertise do I have that I can leverage for a subset of the BA roles?
- Are there any other related roles that I would consider?

If you go through these questions and discover that you are not qualified for any of the BA roles you are finding, then as a short-term career move you'll be looking at transitional roles. This is how you get your short-term income coming in while still moving towards your BA career goals.

Let's talk about what that looks like.

FINDING TRANSITIONAL ROLES THAT LEAD TO BUSINESS ANALYSIS

A transitional role is a role that you might not consider to be a full business analyst role, but that is a step closer to business analysis than you are today.

- If you are a software developer, you might look for positions where the software developers have some direct user interaction or ask to create documentation that you don't have experience with already.
- If you are experienced in sales, you might look for a position in a sales support role as those roles tend to have opportunities to analyze processes and support systems.

- If you are in accounting, you might look for a position in an organization where they are planning an accounting system migration as that could give you the opportunity to interact directly with the BAs and get exposed to more of a project type of work leveraging your accounting background on a project.

You can hear from listening to those three examples, there's a great diversity in the options of a transitional role. It really depends on what your experience and skills are.

Click the link below to learn about some more transitional opportunities:

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/13-jobs-that-lead-to-a-business-analyst-job/>

Ask yourself: What kind of role do I qualify for and how will it move me closer to business analysis?

Another filter to apply when evaluating transitional opportunities is whether or not the organization has a BA practice. Even if you are not directly applying for a BA job, knowing that the organization you are hiring into has a BA practice will make it easier to explore internal options and work your way into an internal promotion. (Essentially everything we talked about in the upper right hand side of the Roadmap.)

Through the analysis of your current qualifications and your local job market, you might also discover that you have some competency gaps to fill. So let's talk about how to go about doing that.

CREATING A PLAN TO FILL ANY COMPETENCY GAPS

Let's talk first about exactly what competency gaps it makes the most sense to focusing on filling. We see a lot of roles that require special skills in business analysis.

- You might see what looks like a great BA role but then they want business domain experience in a specific area.
- Or they might want you to know SQL.
- Or they might want you to know a specific system that you've never heard of.

Business analyst roles tend to have a lot of other qualifications layered on top of them. And you might wonder, well **how am I ever going to qualify for every BA role out there?**

That's not the question on the Roadmap. The question on the Roadmap is: Are you qualified for a BA role you want?

It's written very specifically this way. It's written to encourage you to consider the following:

- Are there BA roles out there that you are qualified for?
- And are those roles that you want to fill?

That's a very different question than: Are you qualified for every BA role?

If you go about trying to qualify yourself for every BA role out there, you'll be at this career transition for a long, long time. Longer than most senior business analysts are even in BA roles.

I'll let you in on a secret. Most senior business analysts are qualified for less than 50% of the business analyst roles in their local job market.

- That means me (and I'm a CBAP).
- That means your local IIBA Chapter president.

- That means the most credible, experienced, and trusted BA you've met.
- And that means you.

So don't set out on the path to qualify for every BA job. Focus on the types of roles you want and focus on the competencies you need to be successful in those roles.

What you'll notice is if you look deep at your market, there might be just a small handful of those roles that you're qualified for and that you actually want to do. That's okay because I don't think you want 20 jobs, right? Just one is enough for most of us. This process is about finding that one next opportunity that is the best fit for your qualifications, and that is the best fit for what you want out of your career.

Now, if you get to that point and there's still a competency gap, that's where it makes sense to really focus on filling your competency gaps even outside of being employed in an office setting.

In the path for those employed in an office setting, we talked about how to grow skills and experiences by applying BA techniques at work. This path is available to you as well, with a twist.

We've had a lot of course participants volunteer and build work experience that they are able to add to their resume. They've volunteered for a local non-profit, their church, and even local small business.

Let's talk about one specific participant, we'll call her Julie, who volunteered at a local pharmacy and documented a business process. She demonstrated her ability to do business analysis and help that organization find a root cause of some of the problems that were resulting in prescription errors. **She filled a competency gap while not currently employed in an office setting.**

Julie was also able to add to her work history. She added this experience right up at the top of her resume in her work history section. She was actually able to submit a relevant resume to a larger number of BA jobs as a result of doing that work. And she also received a recommendation from the pharmacy owner, who was a well-known professional in her local community.

That's the kind of thing that you might look at to fill your competency gap. Of course, you can invest in training alone, but if you are able to couple training with work experience, even if it's unpaid, you'll move ahead much more quickly.

Let's move on now to discussing your job search, whether that's for a full-fledged BA role or a transitional role.

FOCUSING YOUR BA OR TRANSITIONAL ROLE JOB SEARCH

In the transcript, I'm going to link to the resources we have on this topic and there is a lot to go through. But I do want to address the most common challenge I hear about.

I've updated my resume, but I'm still not getting calls. Why is this happening?

There are two explanations (and both could be true):

- 1) **Your resume is not showcasing your most relevant BA qualifications.** One of the most common mistakes I see is that people use the BA terminology, but don't actually talk about how they used a specific skill to make a project contribution. Or they don't use the BA terminology at all and hope the recruiter connect the dots – which never happens. Another is that they list a BA responsibility in their summary or achievements section but don't back it up in their work history. A third is that they talk about their projects in technical

terms instead of business terms. If you are making any of these mistakes, it means that your best investment will be in updating your resume to showcase your BA qualifications.

- 2) **You are not qualified for the jobs you are applying to.** If you can't sit down and actually match up the qualifications you have on your resume to the qualifications on the job, and you can't do that at least 80%, then you're probably not going to hear back from a lot of those opportunities. Its fine to apply to jobs where there isn't a perfect match, but take care not to let your ego tie into not hearing back about the position. That's a sure-fire way to kill your momentum. Your time is probably best invested in ensuring you're presenting the best possible applications for the jobs you are most qualified for.

Get help with your resume! Click the link below to read 8 Business Analyst Resume Secrets You Need to Know (Especially If You've Never Held the BA Job Title)

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/8-business-analyst-resume-secrets-you-need-to-know-especially-if-dont-have-the-ba-job-title/>

Get help preparing for job interviews! Click the link below to read What to Expect in a Business Analyst Job Interview

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/business-analyst-job-interview/>

AND THEN YOU LOOP BACK THROUGH

What happens once you land your next opportunity?

You'll notice that once you are successful in finding your next opportunity, whether that's the full-fledged BA role you were targeting or a transitional role, you loop through the entire Roadmap again.

This makes intuitive sense if you are in a transitional role. You'll be in a better position to create an even more virtuous cycle of BA opportunities and work your way towards your BA career goal.

But why loop back through if you are in a BA role?

The reason is that **the BA profession is still new and that means it's morphing**. We talked about how the roles are so diverse. And so we're seeing a lot of different qualifications. We're seeing the role grow. We're seeing competencies shift in terms of what's required to be a BA. And that means it's important that you also continue to develop professionally.

A lot of people get in to their new position and think they're done. Okay, I can take a deep breath and relax for awhile. You can definitely take a breath of fresh air, celebrate your success, and relax for a little bit. But then you really want to start thinking about how you'll continue to grow professionally by expanding your experience doing more tasks, looking at what internal options there are, and thinking about what that next role might be.

AVOIDING THE MOMENTUM KILLERS

On the topic of success, I want to talk about that blue bar at the bottom of the Roadmap that says "persistence and celebration." Why is that there?

This bar is about the mindset that I see most in helping people to be successful.

Let's talk about celebration first. Making a career change or working your way through this entire Roadmap is a big goal. You are going to achieve this in pieces and parts. Each step you take is a success and is worth celebrating.

One of readers shared about how she had assessed her internal options, reached out to the BA group, and was assigned to shadow a project and take notes in a meeting. She was even assigned a few big tasks. A big win on the virtuous cycle of BA responsibilities, right?

She was justifiably very excited about seeing the positive momentum. Then she felt reality kick in and she shared how all of a sudden she became disappointed in her progress.

She focused on the negatives:

- I'm not getting paid for this work.
- I'm not getting assigned more BA responsibilities.
- I'm not yet in a BA role.

Instead of feeling good about the success she had, she started to feel bad about not achieving her long-term goal. **This kind of thinking is a momentum killer.** If you allow this to happen to you, you will not have the persistence it takes to work through your career goal.

Then she read an article on *Bridging the Gap* where we talk about this exact experience. It's linked in the transcript so you can check it out for yourself. She realized that it was 100% OK to be proud of what she did and consider it a success. She realized that she was deserving of a little celebration.

Click here to read “What Does Success Look Like?”

<http://www.bridging-the-gap.com/what-does-success-look-like/>

This kind of mental and emotional flip is going to happen to you too. And sometimes the negatives can outweigh the positives.

- You’ll get really excited about getting a call from a recruiter and then maybe it doesn’t pan out.
- You’ll take on a BA task and do really well and receive positive feedback, but nothing else comes as an immediate follow-up.
- You’ll find or propose an ideal transitional role that would move your career forward and benefit your organization, but then there are budget cuts and internal promotions are closed for a time.

And even if you are successful at hitting an interim milestone, it’s rarely enough. Every time we get to where we want to go, we’re already focused on what’s down the line. We forget to stop and celebrate the initial success.

At the end of my courses we always talk about what each participant accomplished and how to celebrate it. Celebration does not have to be big. I’m not talking about a huge night out on the town or a \$500 shopping spree.

- You can toast with your partner over dinner.
- You could physically reach over and pat yourself on the back.
- Treat yourself to a small extra, maybe a dessert or an appetizer at dinner that you wouldn’t normally spend the money on.

Small celebrations acknowledge the progress that you're making. It gives you the energy to be persistent. It's about acknowledging yourself and your contributions and your progress.

Persistence is simply keeping on and not letting roadblocks and setbacks hold you back. If you celebrate the small successes, you'll have no problem with persistence.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Okay, so that gets us through the Roadmap.

We talked about starting by exploring the profession and confirming your career choice. We talked about the different opportunities that are available to you whether you are employed in an office setting vs. not being employed. Again, if you are employed, you want to be doing business analysis tasks. You want to be looking at what your options are internally and moving your way towards those options.

Then if you're not employed in an office setting, you really want to focus on finding the opportunities in your local job market that you're qualified for, whether that's a full-fledged BA role or a transitional opportunity that is going to move you towards the BA role. All along the way, for either path, you're going to be looking at filling your competency gaps, whether that's by actively doing business analysis tasks or even volunteering to do business analysis tasks if you're currently unemployed.

And that's the sum of the Career Roadmap. I hope you enjoyed this course and I look forward to being a part of your business analysis career success. Don't hesitate to get in touch if I can help you in any way. We do offer a wide range of virtual courses and work aids that can help you apply the principles laid out in the Roadmap and if you have any questions about

what would be the best investment, I'd be happy to make a recommendation for you.

Again, this is Laura Brandenburg from *Bridging the Gap*. Thanks so much for listening. Now get out and start doing!

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