

Steps to Becoming a Business Analyst

Are you interested in becoming a business analyst, one of the fastest growing professions? You may have transferable skills and experience that would make you a good candidate for business analysis.

Consider these scenarios:

Are you like Rick? He had several years of expertise in insurance underwriting and his colleagues saw him as the “go-to” person. They came to ask: “How do I work around this issue?” or “What do we do when this happens?” or “Is there a way I can get this done more quickly?” Before he knew it, Rick was assigned to be “Subject Matter Expert” on a new change initiative – then bingo! He landed in a new role – a Business Analyst supporting Insurance products and systems.

Are you like Ruchi? Ruchi had a strong technology background, and started to ask why things were being done a certain way. She was an avid computer programmer, working in the retail industry and was instrumental in developing an online shopping website for an international retail store. In spite of the accolades she received year after year for the innumerable projects she worked on, she felt there was something missing. Why was she being asked to design solutions this way? Why would she create new functionality in one project, only to change it to reflect something different in the next project? She needed to understand the perspective of the millions of users accessing the shopping website. And she knew, sitting at her cubicle in front of a computer, she would never find out. She seized the next BA job posting!

Are you like Sally? While between permanent jobs, Sally took a temporary assignment to fill a project resource gap. Soon she showed her client that she could quickly grasp business concepts as well as understand the details, and she was good at transferring this knowledge among the project players. At the end of the project she realized that contract project work with gaps in between was an ideal work-life balance for her and so, after taking BA skills courses to bolster her experience and successfully acquiring the Certification of Competency in Business Analysis™ (CCBA®) accreditation from IIBA®, she adopted BA contracting as a permanent career approach.

Following are the steps to becoming a business analyst.

1. Determine if you want to be a business analyst.

Now that you have read through the scenarios above, and are interested in a BA career, find out more about business analysis:

- a. Read *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge® (BABOK® Guide)* which lists the tasks, activities, techniques and underlying competencies.
<http://www.iiba.org/BABOK-Guide.aspx>
- b. Access the following helpful career webinars offered through the IIBA Webinar Series
<http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Webinars.aspx>

<p>Being a BA Series – Your Career: I’m an “X” and I want to be a BA</p>	<p>Laura Brandenburg</p>	<p>Watch: http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Webinars/Videos/2012/20120814BeingAYourCareer.aspx</p> <p>PDF: http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Webinars/Public-Archive/2012/I-m-a-and-I-want-to-be-a-pdf.aspx</p> <p>Transcript: http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Webinars/Public-Archive/2012/Being-a-BA-Your-Career-Aug-2012-pdf.aspx</p>
<p>The BA Career: Perspectives from Employers and Recruiters</p>	<p>Tom Ryder Travis O’Rourke Tyler Krimmel</p>	<p>Watch: http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Webinars/Videos/2012/20120619TheBACareer1.aspx</p>

		<p>PDF:</p> <p>Transcript: http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Webinars/Public-Archive/2012/The-BA-Career-Perspectives-from-Employers-and-Recr.aspx</p>
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2. Apply Business Analysis to Your Career

- a. **Identify your current capabilities.** Review your educational background, work experience and make a list.
- b. **Analyze for skill and knowledge gaps against your desired career.**
 - Choose a BA role (e.g. business systems analyst).
 - Go to the IIBA Career Centre and search for a job. You can also use other search engines. <http://www.iiba.org/Careers/IIBA-Career-Centre-Find-business-analyst-jobs.aspx>
 - Once you find the job(s) you want, compare your skills to that of the job description.

Keep in mind:

Work Experience: Business analysis is about identifying business needs and solving problems. A sales person who uses solution selling first identifies the potential customer needs and then determines which of the product set will help solve the customer’s problem.

Knowledge: One of the underlying competencies in the *BABOK® Guide* is Business Knowledge. Do you understand the basic structure of business and its common functional areas such as human resources, finance and information technology? Do you have specific industry knowledge (e.g. banking, utilities, telecommunications, health care)?

Skills and Experience: There are many techniques used by a BA. See chapter 9 of the *BABOK® Guide*. You may have experience modeling data or processes or experience planning and estimating work, presenting, creating business cases, creating and conducting training – this list represents just some of the skills that transfer to business analysis.

Read the following article: “Top 5 Transferable Skills <http://iiba.info/12Hliz9>”

- c. List the gap between the job you want and your current skills. (By the way, gap analysis is a BA task!)

3. Close the Gap - Create a List of Professional Development Requirements

- Take courses <http://www.iiba.org/Learning-Development/Endorsed-Education-Provider-Training.aspx>
- Get experience through volunteering. Ask if you can be part of a project
- Go to your local IIBA Chapter and network. <http://www.iiba.org/Chapters.aspx>

4. Prepare for your interview and celebrate your new career!