

9 Steps to Planning

Business Analysis Approach

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Step 1

Begin with Business Needs and Objectives

- A need is a problem or an opportunity faced by an organization.
- The needs are described at a high level to define the business analysis activity.
- Different approaches will be followed for:
 - › A need concerning a modification in one component; and
 - › A new customized system.
- Width and depth of business needs and objectives for business areas affected in the business architecture spectrum shall be taken into account.

Step 2

Define the Level of Formality

- The level of formality is derived from the abstract by exhaustively drilling down.
- Predictive approaches require a more formal and detailed way of providing deliverables.
- Adaptive approaches are based on less formal, approved deliverables and characterized by continuous feedback on existing working elements.
- Example:
 - › If you are a business analyst at a software provider and your client is a public organization, the level of formality is predictably high.
 - › If you work as a business analyst in a start-up in the R&D department the level of formality required is lower.

Step 3

Decompose the Effort

- The decomposition of lower-level tasks helps with estimation and aids in making them more manageable and is necessary for a realistic business analysis approach.
- Every task must be specific, understandable, time oriented and achievable.
- Breaking down a chaotic effort in manageable tasks is a prerequisite for a successful business analysis approach.

Step 4

Schedule and Prioritize the Business Analysis Activity

You must consider:

- The current activities the resources are engaged with;
- The urgency of the business analysis activity; and
- The project's milestones.

Step 5

Identify Complexities

Each project's complexity level is different. The complexity of the project can be increased by:

- The nature of the solution;
- The industry special characteristics;
- The interdependency between different needs;
- The difficulty of gaining the business knowledge because of the many terms; and
- The unknown effects, especially in case of innovation.

Step 6

Identify Risk(s)

Some risks to consider when selecting a business analysis approach are:

- Project's budget and time constraints;
- Technical feasibility;
- Cultural differences;
- Attitudes of all stakeholders; and
- The importance of everyday business operation (in cases, the solution is not appropriate).

Example:

- *Surgical materials have high risk as people's lives are dependent on them.*
 - *A Cards Management system solution is of high importance as the money of many citizens is depending on it.*
 - *A marketing behaviour analysis tool may be lower risk as the interpretive nature does not affect the day-to day operation.*
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Step 7

Select Between Predictive and Adaptive Approach

- **Predictive approach** is appropriate for big projects with high risk and low tolerance to fail. Maximizing control and minimizing risk is characteristic of the predictive approach.
- **Adaptive approach** is based on a trial-and-error philosophy with continuous feedback and small deliverables. The overall solution risk is accepted.

Step 8

Gain Acceptance of the Approach

In some cases, a formal sign-off is required by the stakeholders with decision-making authority and approval authority about the business analysis approach.

Step 9

Evaluate the Approach

The business analysis approach will be evaluated by the result and the effectiveness. This experience will lead to better results and contribute to organization knowledge.

