

## How will the Trends toward Agile, Lean and/or DevOps affect Business Analysis?

Open Space Room 3, 11.30am 17/11/2016 – scribe's notes (Shirley Vollweiler)

### Themes

#### Organisation views of BAs

- BAs cause delays because we're too rigid
- "Control freaks"
- "BAs not needed in Agile teams"
- Agile: If have the skills and time to do a task (whether its development, testing or BA), do it – regardless of job title
  - o Cross-functional team members OR cross-functional teams? Ideal is "Jack of all trades, master of a few"
- BAs need to show the value of analysis – marketing issue

#### Business analysis tasks in Agile (and other methodologies)

- Do BA tasks still need to be done in these methodologies? YES
  - o But different methodologies can use different labels
  - o May use different techniques though
  - o BA role to ensure these tasks are done (if not to do the tasks themselves)
  - o Agile BA job ads ask for same BA skills as traditional ones
  - o Do we need "BAs" to do these tasks?
    - YES – because we have particular analysis skills (and experience) which others don't have – see below
- Should BAs do non-BA tasks too?

#### Analysis skills

- Understand problem, benefits, and potential solutions
- Keep big picture (the problem) AND the detail
- Ensure right thing is being delivered
- Represent all stakeholders requirements
- Translate
- Hold people to agreements
- Act as challenger
- Work with business to quickly decide what's wanted (in Agile situation)
- Fit it into organisation's context
- Look for requirement gaps
- Engage with business – including explain methodology
- Turn non-functional requirements into understandable requirements

#### Adapting to Agile

- Boundaries on BA role changing?
- BA loses authority/identity – team doesn't want to discuss
- "Scary" not writing everything down
- Not in detail at beginning, just user story

## DevOps

- Automate as much as possible for development, production and delivery, to deliver little and often
- Small team
- BA/developer can be joint role
- Roles cover production too e.g. incident management
- Value for money approach – identify biggest pain points (rather than focus on estimates etc)

## Lean

- Deliver minimum for customers
- Feedback after in production

## ***Raw notes – if wanted for reference***

*Working in an organisation that wants to do everything Agilely: BAs have to be able to add value other than as a business representative. What should BAs do to achieve this in Agile teams? – are we needed? Her organisation's view is that BAs are a "handbrake" who just ask awkward questions.*

*BAs as translators: Need business reps and BAs who can translate things to technical people.*

*Do people just not understand our abilities and skills?*

*BAs have skills that most business representatives don't have. We need to show others what these skills are.*

*Every new approach (such as Agile, though that's not exactly new!) should add value rather than throw the baby out with the bathwater – otherwise we'll go backward.*

*Job titles are changing: not just BAs but also change managers, subject matter experts – traditionally BA roles. Makes her ask: What will I be doing in the future?*

*One person was told "You're not just a BA, you're also a change manager, etc.*

*Traditional BA does a number of tasks. Like how BABOK doesn't tell you how to do the work. These tasks will continue to need to be done, as they are still relevant; need to look at how they're valid in different methodologies.*

*Justify what BA role is in Agile team – doing same tasks but with different labels (which can cause confusion) e.g. "backlog grooming". Some team members are more skilled than others at certain tasks.*

*BA role can be to ensure that these BA tasks are still being done e.g. in Agile environment.*

*Jenny asked: What do you do – what's the value that you add?*

*Versatility – e.g. testing or development – potentially do a variety of tasks. In fully Agile companies can be expected to pick up other tasks (e.g. C++ coding) if had finished all the "BA" work.*

*One organisation's rule is that if you have the skills and capacity to do a particular task, do it.*

*Not many other roles address the BA's specialties to cut through complexity to understand the problem and potential solutions – BAs shouldn't get distracted into doing other tasks.*

*Some people use Agile as an excuse to act as a cowboy.*

*BAs are seen as potentially delaying progress because we are too rigid about how to do things e.g. produce large documents that stakeholders don't want to read anyway. Focus should be that we've got to deliver for our customers – e.g. highlight the risks of a particular course of action, and move on.*

*BA responsibility in a project with four separate groups of stakeholders was seen as to represent them all, to ensure all requirements were heard, and that there weren't any gaps in requirements.*

*Agile approach of not writing down everything, and doing as you go, can be quite scary.*

*We do contribute – but need to make sure people see this.*

*Job ads for Agile BAs in fact are asking for exactly what BAs do, not different skills. If you have core analysis skills, you can adapt and use these in any world.*

*Agile BA is the same as any BA – is there a problem, etc. Difference when using Agile is that you don't do granular detail at the beginning e.g. user story as conversation starter – and avoid solving the problem at the start.*

*(External vendor prefers to work with the business rather than with the BA.)*

*BA role to challenge status quo is important aspect i.e. act as a “challenger”.*

*PMs make decisions, BAs told not to talk to the business – so BA challenges the PM, trying to represent business views in such conversations.*

*(Business often wants a solution there and then, without getting involved in a discussion. “Show me how this will work.” BA role is evolving; wearing several hats.)*

*Trend in Agile – BAs do more testing and development work if have the skills, and developers do some analysis tasks. This is great, though there are dangers. Cross-functional team members, as opposed to cross-functional teams. People acting as “jack of all trades, master of a couple” who understand all disciplines are ideal team members.*

*Tension in Agile between doing things quickly, yet not losing sight of the problem. Someone needs to ensure the latter – BA role is to keep hold of the big picture **and** the detail.*

*BA and product owner redirect the team back on goal.*

*BAs are regarded as “control freaks”.*

*BA role is to hold people to agreements.*

*DevOps: automated processes where possible for development, production and delivery to be able to deliver multiple small pieces frequently – small team including developer and tester. BA takes on other roles such as developer. DevOps team supports rapid release including testing, and is still responsible for the product once its in production. BA role can include talking to the business about how they can do this e.g. including incident management once in production.*

*When IT group is moving quickly, it is observed that the business can't always make up their mind as quickly on what's wanted – BA can help manage this.*

*When product owner is in the team, this works well. BA can work with the business lead when they see something that may impact what can be delivered in the required timeframe.*

*Adopting Lean UX (minimum for customers, then get feedback after its been in production for a short time) – hardest issue to deal with is the mindset of the business. Moving into realm of interaction with the customer.*

*BA value for the “big picture” – think about different components of the system, so everything will eventually work. Other than the BA, nobody with suitable skills is doing this.*

*Our role engaging with the business – how do we talk to them about the methodology (whichever one it is) that we're using? We need to ensure the right thing is being delivered, regardless of methodology.*

*In some situations, people say BA is not needed.*

*DevOps providing value for money – tell me your biggest pain points, rather than spending a lot of time and money creating estimates etc.*

*BA role is to turn requirements, including non-functional ones such as “move lots of data”, into something understandable.*

*In an Agile team, one BA feels he loses identity and authority – impression is the team just want to have stand-up and “get on with it”, rather than discuss.*

*IIBA is helping to evolve the BA role.*

*People like putting boundaries e.g. BA role is x – but this is expanding. Should “BA” be renamed? We have to counteract forces that are trying to push us into a corner.*

*In team – if it is everyone's job to do BA tasks, not clear what BA should do, and what BA value is.*

***Jenny – wrap up:***

*If you have great analysis skills, you're valuable to any organisation – still got to understand the problem, benefits, changes, stakeholders, fit it into the organisation's context – so BAs and analysis are still needed in Agile world. Might*

*be working more visually. Trendy words (which people understand differently) but pure analysis is still relevant, though might have to use different techniques. Subject matter experts don't have the analysis skills that we have. Need to show the value of analysis to organisations – “marketing”.*

***Notes from flip-charts/whiteboards made by Jenny:***

*Is it a marketing problem?*

*Value proposition*

*Justification of the role*

*Clarity of working together*

- relevant*
- innovative*
- response*

*BAs delay stuff!*

*Big picture*

*Agile is trendy*

*Job titles changing*

*Adaptive*

*“Jack of all trades – master of a few”*

*Cutting through complexity*

*Evolving role*

*Translate*

*“We don't need BAs in agile teams”*

*Cross-functional teams vs. people*

*The Big 4 (KPMG etc)*

*How do we communicate with our customers/business?*

*Language/techniques*

*Capabilities and experience*

*Big picture – all stakeholders*

*IT is about the customer*

*Continuous development/integration/deployment*

*Business mindset change*

*Deliver value*