

Video: Top ten business analysis trends for 2011

Bill Goodwin
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1. Business architecture will be the primary focus for business analysts

In 2011, the business analyst will place primary focus on business architecture. The BA's critical thinking ability and unique skills set combination will be relied on to examine the complex, inner workings of the organisation through an enterprise-wide lens, not just isolated view points. In particular, enterprise-wide policies, rules and processes will be the focus as organisations strive to remain competitive, increase efficiencies and improve the quality of their goods and services, to better appeal to today's financially sensitive marketplace.

2. Business analysis will guide the surge in cloud computing

2010 was the proving ground for cloud computing as organisations asked: "Is it worth it?" While a small percentage of organisations said yes, in 2011 we will see a significant increase in the implementation of cloud-based computing solutions as the benefits of lower costs of ownership outweigh the uncertainties around access and security. To help ensure smooth transitions to the cloud, organisations will look to business analysis to provide the needed insights from a business architecture perspective.

3. Requirements management and development (RMD) will lead in delivering smart business perspective

RMD will lead the re-assessment and re-evaluation of performance as organisations push hard to improve operational efficiencies. By helping to structure and guide a disciplined, yet flexible approach to meticulous business analysis, RMD will ensure organisations realise the full benefits of key initiatives such as the development of a cloud-based computing infrastructure.

4. BPMN will solidify its reputations as the industry standard

Business process modelling notation (BPMN) will continue to earn recognition and stature as the industry standard by which organisations model their business architecture. This structured, disciplined approach's syntax and language will be appreciated for its clarity by both technical and business stakeholders.

5. Agile success will go to those willing to break with tradition

As the use of Agile methods - especially Scrum - continues to explode, the organisations that realise the greatest success will be those that acknowledge the skill sets of both business analysts and project managers, but not in a hierarchal pecking order.

6. Business analysts will be recognised as critical to change-management to avoid troubled projects

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From their enterprise-wide vantage point, business analysts will be relied upon to help executives better understand the impact change will have on the organisation and to help minimise negative impact that results from change. BAs who do not focus on change management process and managers who ignore BA insights will continue to see more than their fair share of troubled projects.

7. Resurgence of centres of excellence

With breathing room from a slightly improved global economic outlook, many organisations are working toward greater internal organisation. For RMD this will mean a resurgence of centres of excellence and more resources devoted to the evolution of communities of practice to better meet the demands of increased organisational performance.

8. Requirements management and development will be essential to regaining market share

Over the last three years, many organisations saw a loss of market share as their customers spent less and spent it elsewhere. To accelerate their ability to recapture lost market share, organisations will look to RMD to chart the course for deconstructing and reconstituting the organisation - through process modelling, data modelling, measurement and more.

9. Requirements management and development will continue to struggle to define itself

The business analysis profession will continue to gain well-deserved recognition as RMD fosters greater efficiencies and processes across the organisation. However, the improvements and innovation it drives that enable new insights and voices will dwarf the BA's place at the table, leaving the still-maturing RMD role grappling with defining itself. This will be in great contrast to RMD's expanding criticality in new frameworks such as Agile and cloud computing.

10. Requirements management and development will require better balanced competencies

The reputation of RMD professionals for soft skills like elicitation and communication has overshadowed their capacity for complex technical skills. Business analysts will step up their game with increased focus on graphical modelling, cost estimates, risk analysis and other measurements that quantifiably prove RMD's value to the organisation.

The top ten business analysis trends were compiled by a global panel of ESI International senior executives and consultants.

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