

SOLUTION BRIEF

3 Business Analysis Nightmares that Keep CIOs Tossing and Turning All Night

Approximately 54%

of respondents to an Inter-View survey said that they do not work with centralised practices in place to govern how they are expected to get the job done.

Inter-View performs an annual survey of global business analysis professionals, and its most recent version found that the industry still has quite a bit of work to do in establishing best practices. Besides the figure pertaining to centralised practices, the survey also found that:

21%

of those polled lack a formal job description.

22%

of time spent completing projects is actually devoted to meeting business requirements.

43%

of respondents do not bother to plan their own work.

These statistics point to a still emerging ideology around business analysis. While the idea of developing strategy and a sense of intentionality around everything a business does may seem like common sense to those in the analysis sector, it is clear that many companies are unable to act on those ideals. This incongruity can leave CIOs with plenty of stress to deal with, and three issues, in particular, are downright nightmarish.

1. Agile Expectations from a Waterfall Business

Agile and waterfall operational methodologies stand in stark contrast. In classic waterfall setups, development teams would put a huge emphasis on designing project specifications and then use that knowledge to build all of the code needed and release it in one large batch. In agile, the goal is to start with a clear set of goals, but refine and adjust them as small groups of code are created and the project takes shape. It is a more flexible, responsive operational model that many businesses have come to expect from their IT teams.



The problem is that many businesses still use waterfall-like methods to make decisions. They will:

- **Perform extended analysis prior to initiating conversations about new projects.**
- **Hold behind-the-scenes meetings to talk through ideas** - often with executives alone and no input from the company as whole.
- **Consider every possible risk and potential value proposition behind a new strategy.**
- **Put the new measure into place and expect everybody to adjust quickly** – even those who have been out of the loop this entire time.

There is nothing wrong with planning, and due diligence is, of course, critical. But **businesses cannot afford to**

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blindsided IT with major decisions and expect them to be able to be agile and flexible enough to adjust without any problems. Overcoming this challenge hinges on bringing business analysis across disciplinary boundaries so that teams formed from disparate groups within the organisation can collaborate on decision making and create clear innovation plans that extend across the entire company.

Becoming agile as a business is only possible if technology leaders and business executives are able to come together and communicate well with one another.



2. Stakeholders Who Don't Care

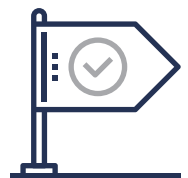
Engagement is a problem across many businesses. It doesn't take much for a person to feel so busy, bored or under-appreciated that they just tune out. This can happen because of stress, because individuals don't trust the company to come through on its promises, or for one of many other reasons. It is particularly problematic, however, when you have a team of people working to perform business analysis that is not entirely engaged on the project.



As an analyst, you may be doing financial projects, gathering data pertaining to risk and operational disruptions, trying to get different team members to anticipate how your findings will impact their lines of business, and being the central hub in an array of communications and operations surrounding an initiative. All of that can fall apart fast if your team members aren't engaged. **Motivating and getting the best out of project stakeholders is an invaluable skill that business analysts must develop.**

3. Impossible, Abstract Technology Goals

Evaluating the goals of software and infrastructure projects to identify development and system requirements is a primary competency for analysts. This process becomes impossible if leaders have abstract or entirely impossible goals pertaining to a new initiative. In many cases, these types of expectations come because corporate leaders don't have a clear understanding of tech limitations, and **the nightmare can be overcome when business and IT executives are able to collaborate with one another effectively.**



The Takeaway

The job role of a business analyst requires a rare combination of hard skills - data analytics, business process design, etc. - and soft skills - communication, leadership and team building.

Visit LearningTree.co.uk to see the full curriculum of courses needed to develop in these areas.

Source: <http://inter-view.report/publications/inter-view-report-2015/>