

10 Barriers to a successful BP Initiative

Joan Pournara CBAP®



t. +44 (0) 870 991 1851
f. +44 (0) 870 011 6412
e. enquiries@orbussoftware.com

Introduction

It is an organization's responsibility to set up projects and people for success, this means:

- Senior management support and sponsorship have been obtained and the executive management team is visible and active on the project
- Adequate funding has been made available
- Project success has been validated in a credible business case (that is, forecasted business benefits resulting from recommended process improvement)
- There is consensus that the project and business processes are clearly important to the achievement of the organization's business goals and objectives
- The proposed project team is experienced and highly skilled and roles and responsibilities are agreed
- The project team has access to experts who can offer ongoing guidance and coaching
- The employees work effectively by providing a team-based, co-operative environment, co-located for efficient communication and collaboration
- The organization is ready for change.

What are the barriers to achieving the above objectives? This presentation focuses on the top 10 barriers and provides the Do's and Don'ts to consider to avoid the pitfalls of project failure.

Barrier #1 – Lack of Business Sponsor Support

Project sponsorship must be from the Business primarily because:

It is their project – they must fund it and defend it

They are the final decision makers when consensus cannot be obtained amongst stakeholders

They must motivate, lead and reward the project team

They participate in facilitated workshop sessions to prioritise requirements, remove barriers and address risk

They champion the project across the organisation and are the primary communicators to Executives and End-User groups

They must set up projects for success



“I sold your company vehicle and used the money to hire a BA. But don’t worry, you won’t be entirely without transportation.”



Do Not:

Abdicate responsibility for the project to someone else who has less influence and authority across the organisation.

Miss the opportunity to leverage greater ROI by implementing solutions that cross organisation boundaries and remove duplication and silos.

Barrier #2 – Lack of a Business Case to justify the initiative

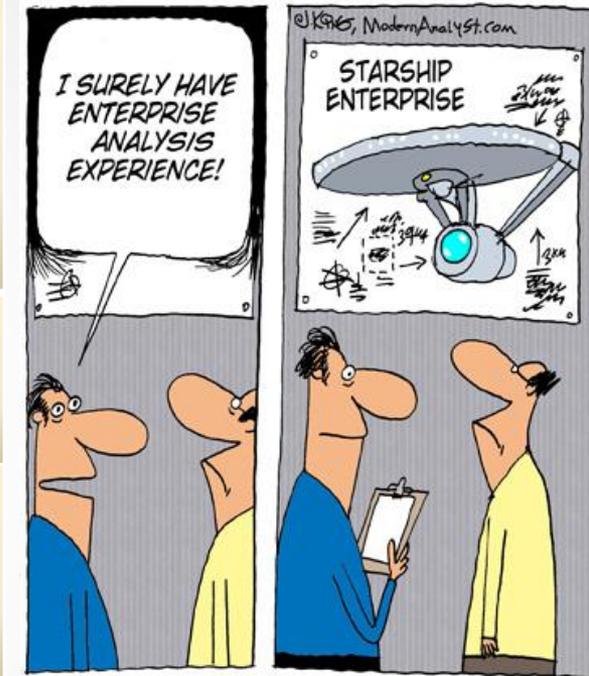
Organisations fund projects because they anticipate a return on the investment.

There are two types of projects – Non-discretionary and Discretionary. Non-discretionary projects are motivated by laws, health and safety, Compliance, etc. These projects have priority over other projects. Discretionary projects are motivated by changes, new ideas, new products, market / competitor advantage, etc. The organisation expects a return on their investment.

When organizational changes are needed to implement the business strategy usually senior business analysis professionals are involved in the development of the Business Case to justify the solution.

The business case provides executive management with information needed to make a go/no-go decision and should include different economic indicator calculations to support ranking and prioritisation of projects.

The complexity and effort needed to develop the business case must be based on type, size and risk of the project. The Business Case is a 'living' document and should be reviewed with each major project milestone.



Do Not:

Allocate valuable resources to projects that add no financial or qualitative benefit to the organisation.

Initiate projects that do not have an approved business case.

Barrier # 3 – Lack of effective Project Portfolio Management

Do:

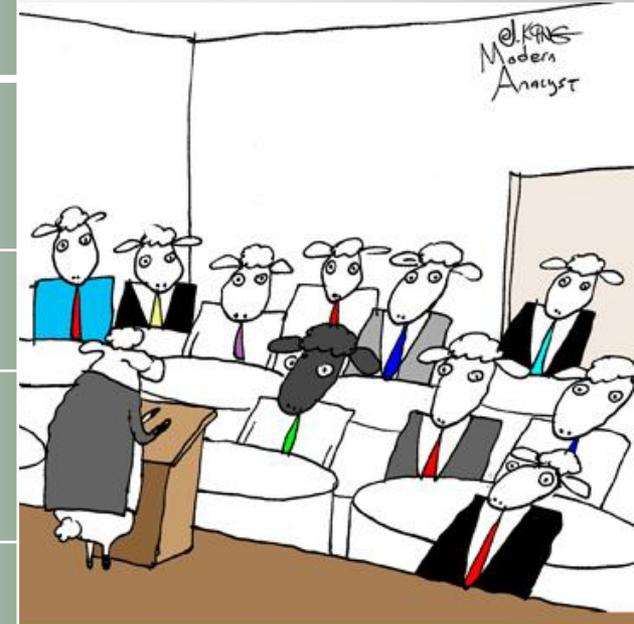
Ensure **ALL** projects are justified, ranked, prioritised and executed to meet the business strategy

Allocate the right resources, with the right level of skills to the right project as 'dedicated' team members who will ensure successful implementation of each project

Put processes in place to monitor the benefits and investment return the organisation expects to receive (from the Business Case)

Have the authority to stop duplicate and redundant projects that no longer are needed or are in crisis (i.e. Cost of project effort exceeds expected ROI)

Educate stakeholders on their responsibility to projects and ensure their involvement is managed effectively.



"We failed the project but don't worry, I think I know who we can blame."



Do Not:

Only include projects with an IT solution into the Project Portfolio. All projects cost money!

Do not forget to review ALL Business Cases and the Project Portfolio on a regular basis to ensure projects and their justification are still valid.

Barrier #4 - Lack of Stakeholder Buy-In and Involvement

Do:

Consider all people or groups of people who are directly or indirectly impacted by the project and are core to the success of the project

Analyse stakeholders to ensure the right people with the right knowledge, attitude, influence and authority work with project team members. *(Stakeholders must be decision makers in the organisation and should enjoy the right amount of respect among their colleagues and End Users to minimise resistance to the solution)*

Ensure stakeholders are committed to the project vision, objectives and timelines and that they understand the importance of their attendance in business analysis solution requirements and design sessions.

Consider the geographical locations of stakeholders and ensure the correct planning has been done to consider inclusion of everyone and plan for the use of the right techniques.

Look for stakeholder 'champions' who are capable of communicating the benefits of the solution to End User Groups.

The Business Analyst, quickly realized she picked the wrong End Users to interview after she asks them about features they'd like to see in the new software.



Do Not:

Forget to include indirect stakeholders from other business areas in the organisation, such as Legal, Compliance, Audit, Finance, HR, Marketing who may give either input to or require output from the new solution. Developers and testers are stakeholders too.

Barrier #5 – Poor Project Team structure, responsibilities and management

Do:

Make sure roles and skills needed for the project are identified and aligned to the type and size of project and allocate the right people with the right level of skills to roles.

Where possible, co-locate the project team to facilitate improved communication and team-work

Start the project in a professional way (1 or 2 day initial workshop that includes all roles). Explain need for project, solution approach, timelines, introduce roles and people and PM approach.

Put HR processes in place to ensure team members are retained for the duration of the project to implement the solution successfully.

Reward project team members appropriately for success.

Cultivate a positive project image and set up the project and team members for success. Keep people focused.



Do Not:

Let projects bumble along leaderless and rudderless.

Duplicate responsibilities – every team member must be clear on their role, tasks and value they bring to the project.

Let line titles and organisation hierarchy into the team. All team members are equal and bring their professional skills and knowledge to the team.

Barrier #6 - Requirements are documented in voluminous and ambiguous text.

Do:

Decompose requirements from Business to User to Solution Requirements.

Re-use Architecture models where possible. Use modelling techniques.

Models provide visualization of business reality and include text, diagrams, measurements, data and other elements

Good requirements consider and communicate 4 dimensions; behaviour (using workflow/process models); structure (data modelling); dynamics (Events, triggers) and Business Rules that constrain/control the business.

When modelling, the business analyst works with stakeholders and ensures information received is analysed, structured, organised, documented and validated accurately. Follow an iterative process.

Organise and package requirements into separate and complete sets that contain all the elements needed to fulfil the requirement. Formal delivery of requirement packs improves communication, resource allocation and management of the requirements development during the SDLC.



Do Not:

Email requirements documents to stakeholders for review and approval.

Fail to plan engagement activities with stakeholders iteratively until validated requirements are accurate, complete, consistent, unambiguous, verifiable, necessary, feasible and prioritised.

Barrier #7 – Solution development does not align with business needs

Do:

Perform root-cause analysis to ensure the right business problem / opportunity is addressed

Get consensus from stakeholders about the business problem / opportunity and ensure buy-in is obtained

Set up requirements to trace back to business objectives. Traceability is bi-directional and valid right through the SDLC. Use a good tool to implement traceability.

Implement agreed naming and numbering conventions to facilitate traceability

Understand the who, what, why, where and how and include measurements.

Always consider the customer! Customers are the reason why an organisation exists.



“You love the system! ... You love the system!”



Do Not:

Implement solutions to satisfy stated needs and not root causes. This will result in user resistance, failed applications, costly rework or a possible increase of expensive shelf-ware.

Barrier #8 – New software development approaches are not always understood and create confusion

Do:

Understand the differences between business analysis, project management and software development.

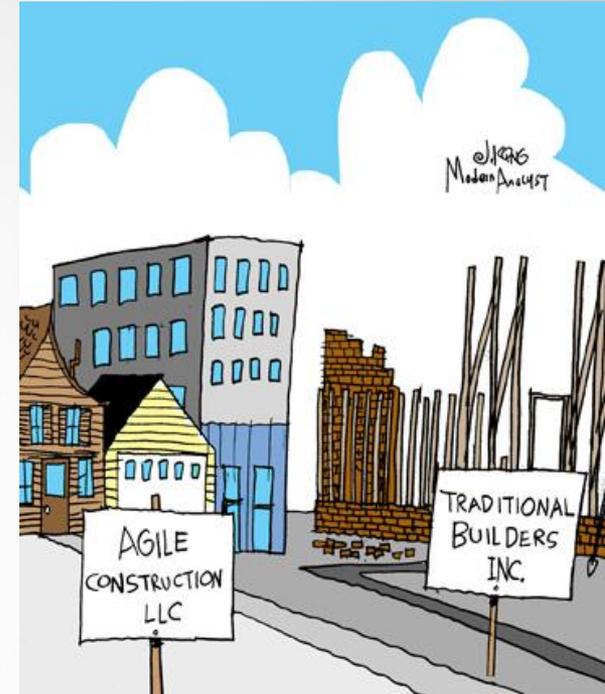
Invest more time and money in business analysis to get requirements right before they are approved to enter the SDLC.

Beware of enforcing the use of methodologies, trends or structured case tools without consulting with the people who have to use it.

Know your technical development environment.

Structure requirements independently of technology but know your organisation's standards and basic architecture.

Be knowledgeable on software development methodologies such as RAD, RUP, Iterative, Incremental, Agile, Waterfall, Prototyping, Simulation, COTS and implementations/transitions.



Do Not:

Assume methodologies detail or include the business analysis approach. Requirements Management typically assume requirements are known, structured, organised and approved for development. They do not consider the iterative work of Business Analysis.

Barrier #9 – Separation of business analysis responsibilities and different skill levels

Do:

Understand business analysis holistically as defined and documented by the IIBA® (International Institute of Business Analysis)

Allow sufficient time and money for Business Analysts to do their planning, elicitation, analysis, documentation, validation and communication of requirements

Understand the negative impact of silo'd Business Analysts (i.e. BA responsibilities are allocated to different titles) and the breakdown in communication and quality that is the result of this structure

Implement a professional development and training career path for Business Analysts that is aligned to international and professional good practices (IIBA®; TOGAF; Zachman, etc)

Understand Business Analysis is a **profession** and requires mature practitioners

Allocate the right BA with the right attitude and skill levels to the right projects. Set business analysis up for success in the organisation.



Do Not:

Enforce deadlines on Business Analysts without their input on planned tasks and estimations.

Undermine Business Analysts or underestimate the value they add to the success of a project.

Barrier #10 – Disparate Tools do not always support business analysis

Do:

Implement a tool that supports a central repository, collaborative modelling environment, textual documents and standardisation

Implement a tool that facilitates reuse of Enterprise Architecture deliverables, project deliverables and transitions artefacts from the AS-IS to the TO-BE

Implement a tool that facilitates sharing and collaboration between EA, BA and Stakeholders

Implement a tool that facilitates relationships between objects and supports impact analysis

Implement a tool that is flexible, supports various modelling notations and is easy to use. EA and Business Analysts need fast, flexible modelling and documentation environments

Understand good tools are not always the most expensive.



Do Not:

- Assume all Requirements Management tools support the practice of business analysis.
- Assume structured case tools will improve solution deliverables.
- Assume GIGO is dead!

Questions and Answers



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