10 Key Steps to initiating a Business Process Project

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Introduction

In the rush to implement projects, organisations seem resigned to fund post-implementation rework and fixing effort instead of investing for quality before development begins.

1. Be clear on the Strategic Objectives the project must achieve
2. How does the organisation currently operate?
3. Justify the project
4. Initiate the project
5. Determine project boundaries
6. Agree on Standards
7. Identify the Stakeholders
8. Elicit Requirements
9. Build Requirement Packs
10. Assess the solution

The focus of this Webinar is to identify the 10 key steps to initiate a successful Business Process Project.

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Step 1: Be clear on the Strategic Objectives the project must achieve

The business strategy provides the fundamental direction the organization must follow to adapt to a changing environment and help the organization to take advantage of opportunities or minimize risks.

Strategies must be developed with an understanding of the business environment, and therefore, must take into account:

- **External Customers**
- **Industry Competition**
- **Resource competencies**
- **Business and IT Constraints**
- **Change**

"If you don't know where you are, a map won't help" Watts Humphry

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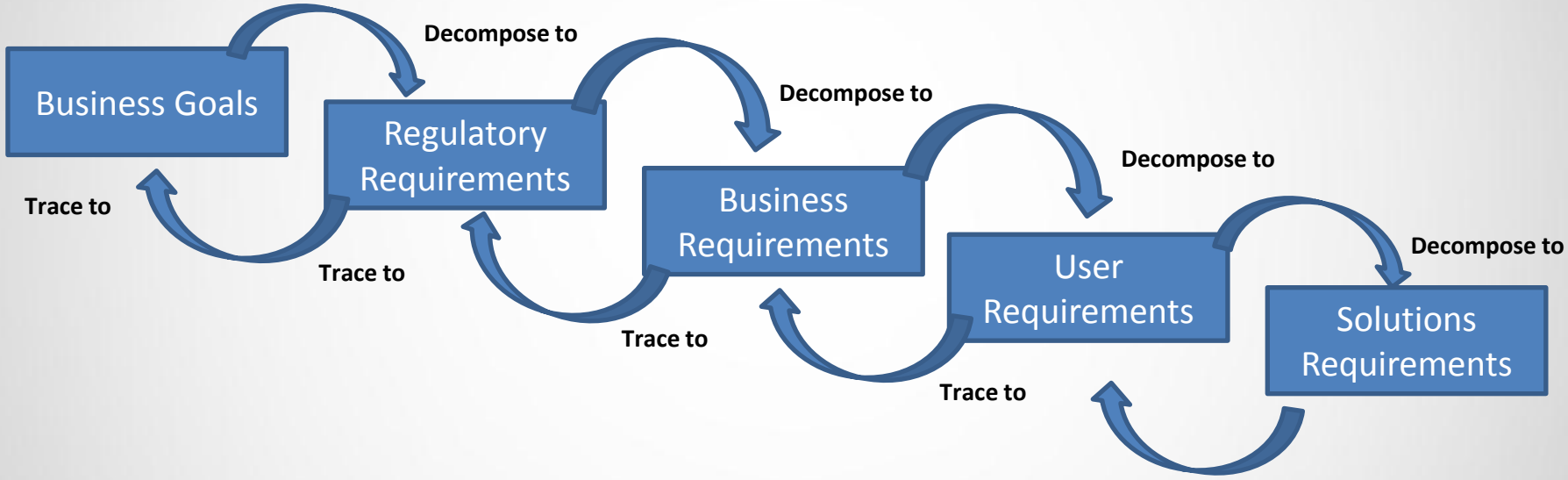
Step 1: Be clear on the Strategic Objectives the project must achieve

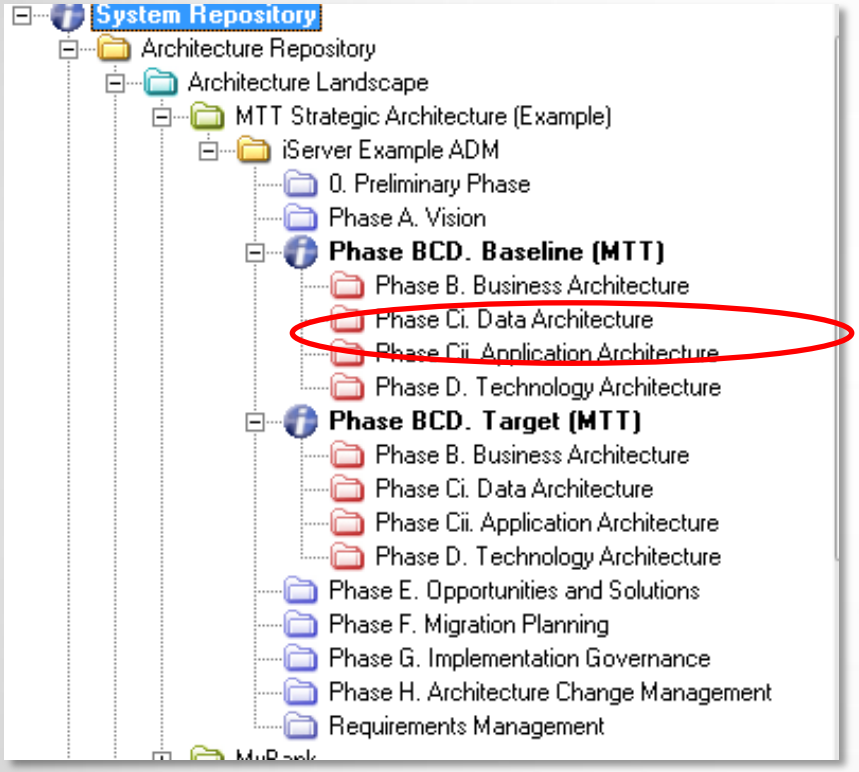
Enterprise architecture refers to the scope and boundaries of an organization's operations, including the processes, information, people, assets, IT architecture, customers, and suppliers with which the organization interacts to implement its business strategy. Therefore enterprise architecture takes a broad view of the organisation.



Business strategy drives changes in the enterprise architecture which then leads to changes in the IT architecture

Step 1: Be clear on the Strategic Objectives the project must achieve

Use simple tools that provide an integrated modelling environment and central repository to remove the complexity of EA and Project work.



BThe business strategy is a living document and is only effective if made visible to the organisation. To effectively align the organisation to its strategy, an integrated modelling environment tool with a central repository should be instituted that links the organisation vision to its enterprise architecture, its process models, its service models and to supporting documentation content that allows for sharing and collaboration by EA and analysis teams across the organisation.

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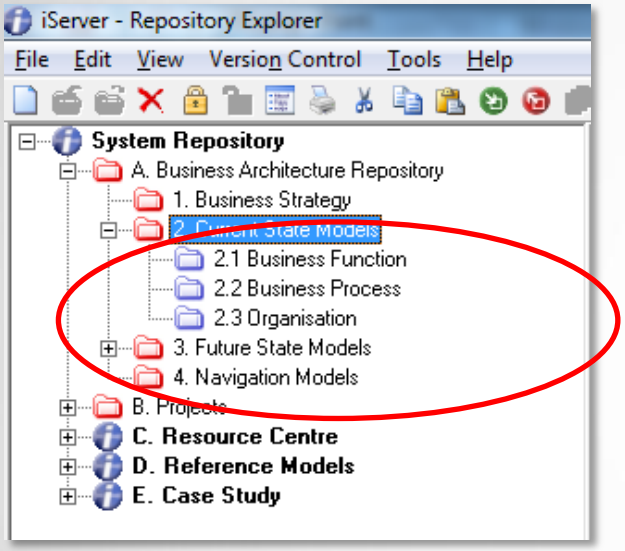
Step 2: How does the organisation currently operate?

Model the AS-IS state of the enterprise architecture to determine how the organisation currently operates. This includes measurements and costs.



Process Modelling is used to identify the essential business activities.

Metrics are collected at task level; How long does it take; how many times is it performed; when are the peak and trough periods; how many errors occur; what is the cost of the task?

Analyse and look at what causes things to happen in a certain way and use this knowledge to improve performance and customer service.

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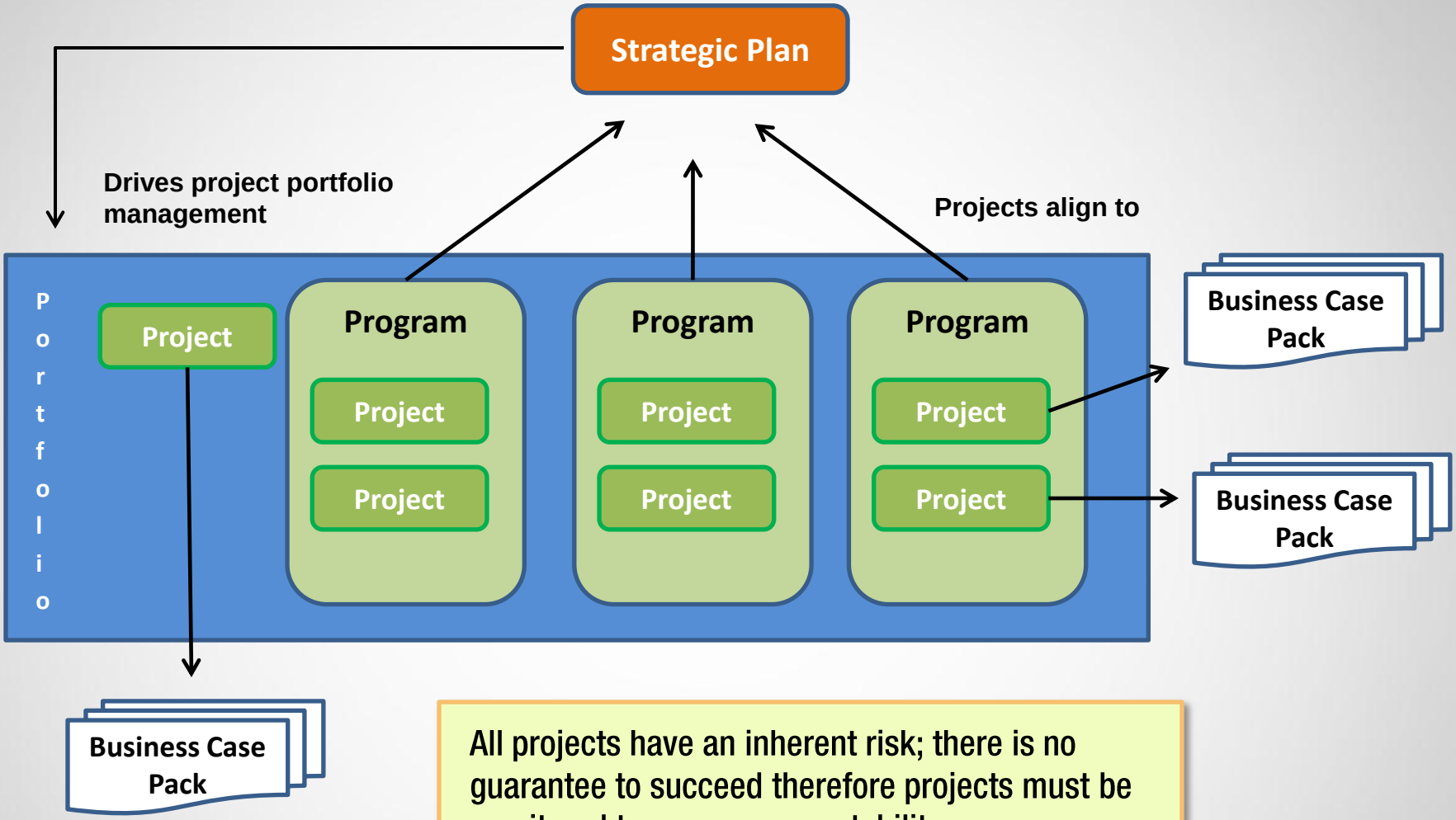
Step 3: Justify the project

Develop a business case for each project to justify the project on financial grounds

Project Type	Discretionary or Non-discretionary (always funded first)
Scope	What is in what is out
Risk	Identify Threats and Opportunities and document the risk response strategy to deal with the risk
Assumptions, Constraints, Dependencies	to ensure clarity around the business conditions that if changed would impact the need for the project
Feasibility study	Evaluation of proposed alternatives to determine if they are technically possible within the constraints of the organization and whether they will deliver the desired benefits to the organization
Financial Justification	Estimate future expected costs; Estimate future expected benefits; Determine implied return and other economic indicators; Compare implied return to alternatives
Calculate Economic Indicators	Payback period; Return on investment (ROI); Present value (PV); Benefit-cost ratio (BCR); Net present value (NPV); Internal rate of return (IRR); Non-quantifiable benefits
Prioritise projects	Compare projects and determine which projects are the best to pursue. Prioritise projects and produce a roadmap.

Step 3: Justify the project



All projects have an inherent risk; there is no guarantee to succeed therefore projects must be monitored to ensure accountability.

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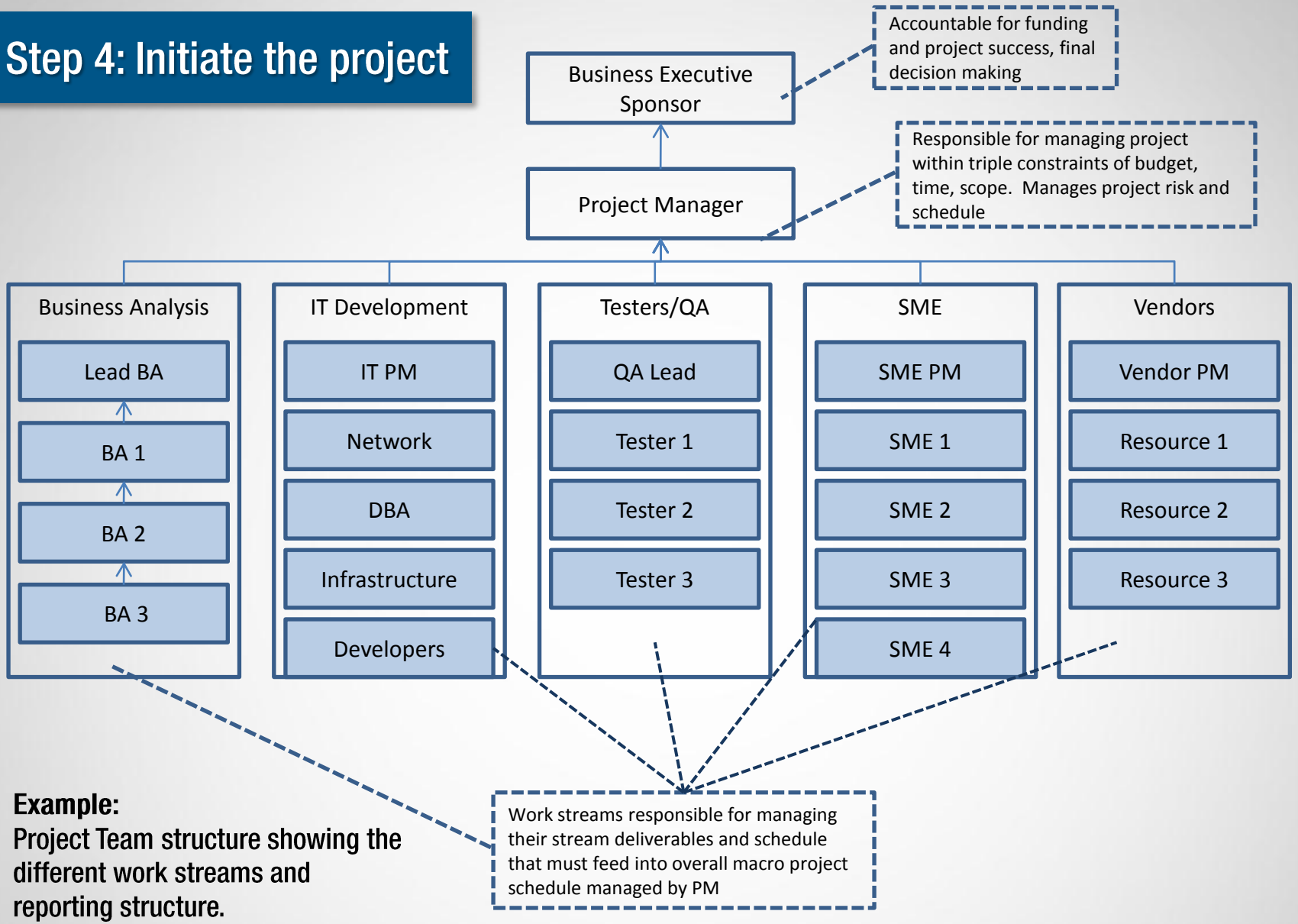
Step 4: Initiate the project

Set the team up for success! Allocate the right people with the right skills to the project team.

Project Sponsor	**Ideally should be from the 'business'. Is the final decision maker; Is accountable for project success; is responsible for justifying the need for the project and communicating the purpose to the rest of the organisation.**
Project Manager	Responsible for managing the project with budget, time and scope including managing project risks.
Business Analyst	Responsible for requirements including managing requirements risks. Includes stakeholder management; requirements communication plan and functional, non-functional and transition requirement deliverables.
Development Team	Responsible for the physical solution specifications and developing the solution according to the functional and non-functional requirements
Test Team	Responsible for Test Strategy; Test Scenarios and Test Cases and for managing test process that includes UAT.
SMEs	Responsible for providing business knowledge, Technical Knowledge and/or external specialist knowledge to the project.

Step 4: Initiate the project



Example:
Project Team structure showing the different work streams and reporting structure.

The above project structure represents a large, high risk project. The structure will vary depending on project type and size.

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Step 5: Determine project boundaries

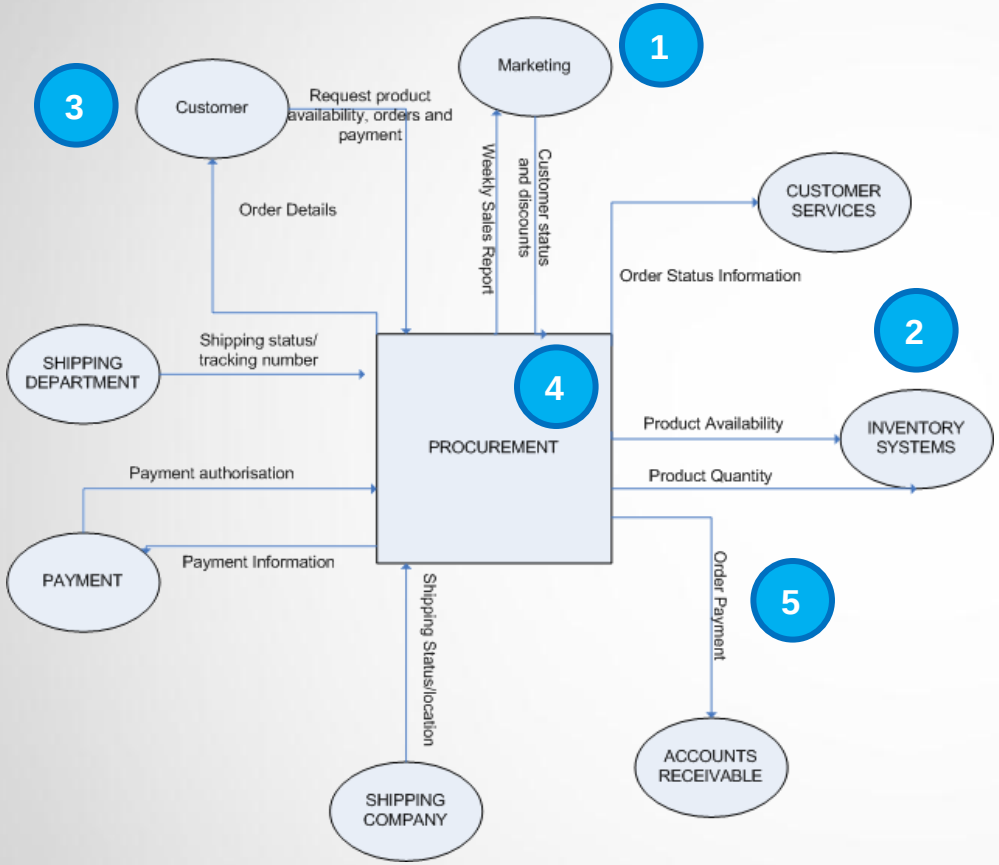
Scope the project properly to keep the team focused and stakeholders engaged.

There are 3 types of scope an analyst must consider:

BUSINESS AREA SCOPE	The organisation units/areas to be investigated; the processes, systems, documents, stakeholders
PROJECT SCOPE	Scoping the Work; what activities will you do; what project deliverables are required
SOLUTION SCOPE	What will be included in the final product; The extent of functionality to be delivered; The size of the envisaged solution; What solution-related deliverables (external) are to be produced

Step 5: Determine project boundaries

Context Diagram technique showing the scope of the business area to be studied:



Other modelling techniques that can be used for scoping are:

Use Case Diagram; Decomposition diagram; Interaction Diagram, etc.

1. External Agents that interface to the business area
2. Existing application that may require an interface to the business area
3. Org units, roles, vendors, customers that interface to the business area.
4. The name of the business area of study
5. Information that flows in and out.

Colour-coding and numbering techniques can be used to clearly agree what is in scope and out of scope. This technique may uncover more specific information about project scope that may not have been considered by the Sponsor or SME.

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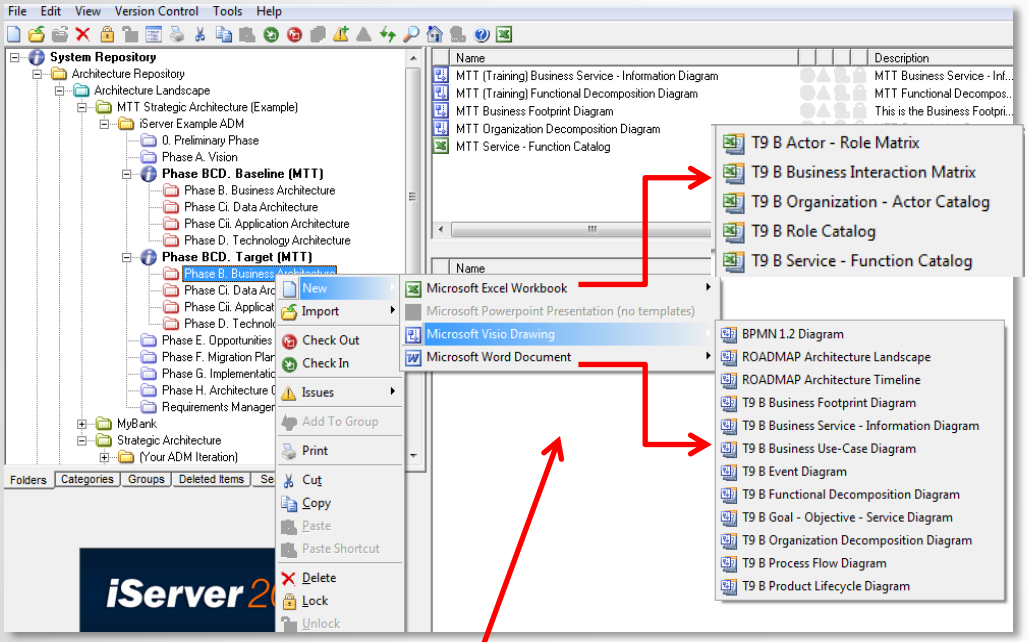
Step 6: Agree on Standards

Focus on spending time on the right things. Remove administration drudgery and implement standards early.



iServer allows you to set up document and drawing templates and to control the shapes based on the modelling notations that are used. For example, at Architecture level, Archimate may be chosen to draw architectural views, whilst on projects it may be more appropriate to use BPMN for process models and UML notation to show the features of a system from the perspective of actors. A project could use a combination of all notations to describe requirements accurately. This complexity could create problems for individuals without the use of a good tool that tracks impact and reuse.

Naming standards for documents, diagrams, models, and other project elements are important for precision, standardization, and communication.

Templates set up to restrict the type of deliverables required for architecture.

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Step 7: Identify the Stakeholders

Every project will have Direct and Indirect Stakeholders. Engage stakeholders throughout the project.

- 'Outside-in' approach allows you to focus on the primary stakeholders first
- Analyse stakeholders – what is their influence in the business; what authority do they have; are they decision-makers; do they have personal biases?
- Assess stakeholder risk - do they buy-into the project purpose? Will there be resistance?

Stakeholder commitment to the project is imperative to the success of the project. Stakeholders ideally should have the authority to make decisions and have the trust of Executives and user community. One of the most common reasons for project failure is lack of user involvement.

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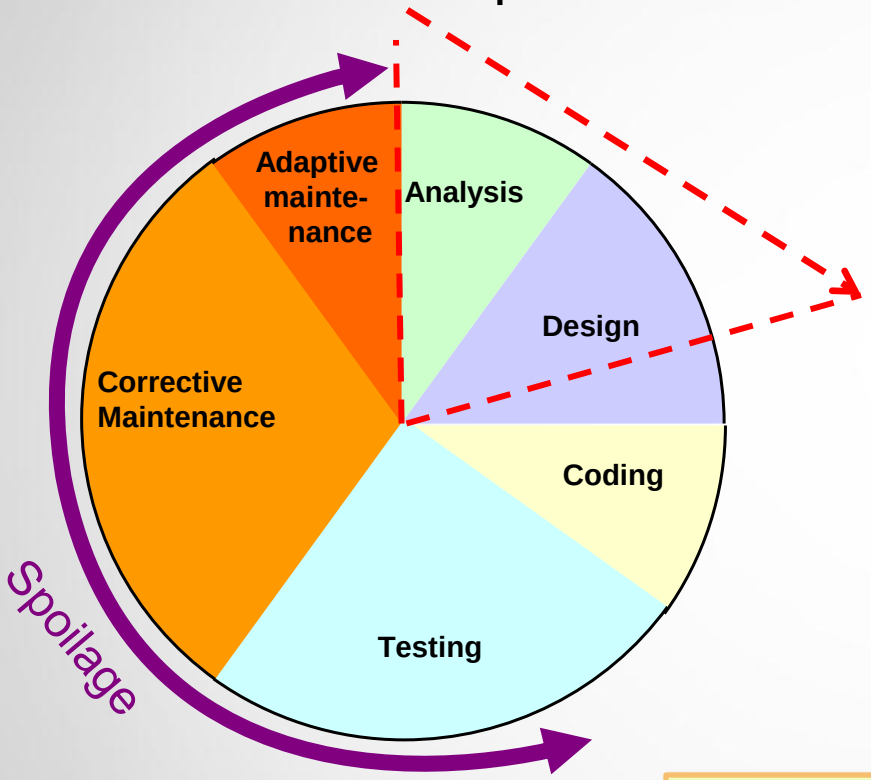
Step 8: Elicit Requirements

Elicitation typically occurs in the beginning stages of a project during the 'Analysis' phase of the project lifecycle. There are many techniques business analysis practitioners use to work with stakeholders to elicit requirements for the solution.



Source: Tom de Marco: Managing & controlling software projects

Invest more time in analysis to get requirements right!

Work with stakeholders and facilitate
Brainstorming sessions
Focus Group sessions
Root cause analysis sessions
Gap analysis sessions
JAD sessions

There is always time to fix things, but seemingly never time to do it properly in the first place

A facilitator is someone who brings structure and process to a group session and is responsible for guiding the session participants through various techniques to gain consensus. Business Analysis practitioners must be highly skilled at facilitating stakeholder groups and must remain neutral.

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Step 9: Build Requirement Packs

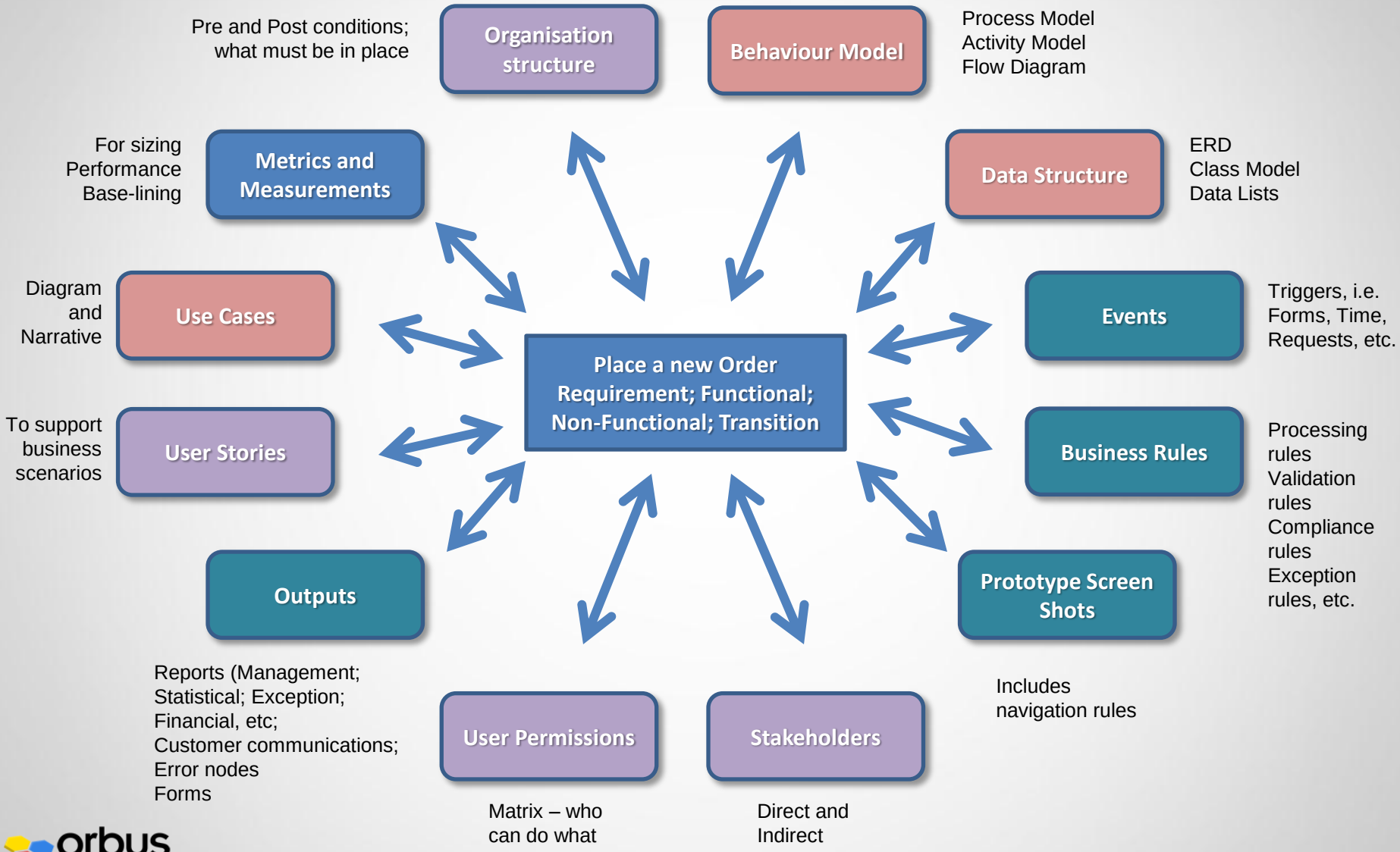
Requirements elicitation is iterative.

- Allow for models to be built in iterations until they are complete
- Allow different views to be created and shared with different stakeholder groups (business and IT) who collaboratively provide validation of the models to ensure they correctly represent the business.
- Requirements must be accurate, consistent and complete therefore create a requirement pack to satisfy one requirement (e.g. Place an order) that contains all of the elements to make it complete for example, use case diagram, use case narrative, user stories, activity diagram indicating variation and exception processing, screen prototypes, business rules, inputs and outputs (reports, documents, forms) data/class model, data lists, definitions, etc.

A diagram becomes a model when it is enriched with text and metrics to document understanding of the current or desired processes of a business area.

Step 9: Build Requirement Packs

Components needed for a complete Requirement



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Step 10: Assess the Solution

- Assess the solution throughout the development process.
- The business analysis practitioner works with stakeholders to ensure the **right** solution is to be implemented that will solve the business problem/s .
- This is validated through the requirements process.
- When development takes place, the project team ensures the solution is being developed **right**
- Quality check techniques are performed to minimise defects **before** User Acceptance Testing begins.

Testing is an important part of developing a business systems solution

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In Summary

This presentation does not try to constitute an authoritative approach for projects but attempts to provide some guidance and comment on the main activities/techniques that support each of the 10 key steps to initiate a successful Business Process Project (it in no way covers all techniques, methods, standards or approaches – every project is unique and will need to be assessed).

The tips, techniques and content of this presentation are aligned to good business analysis practice as documented by the International Institute of Business Analysis® in the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge® and shared material from leaders in the field of Business Analysis and Project Management as well as 30 years personal professional experience.

Questions and Answers

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