

9.2 Behavioural Characteristics

Behavioural characteristics are not unique to business analysis but they have been found to increase personal effectiveness in the practice of business analysis. These characteristics exist at the core of every business analyst's skill set. Each of the behavioural characteristics described here can impact the outcome of the practitioner's efforts.

The core competencies of behavioural characteristics focus on the skills and behaviours that allow a business analyst to gain the trust and respect of stakeholders. Business analysts do this by consistently acting in an ethical manner, completing tasks on time and to expectations, efficiently delivering quality results, and demonstrating adaptability to changing needs and circumstances.

Behavioural Characteristics core competencies include:

- Ethics (p. 194),
- Personal Accountability (p. 195),
- Trustworthiness (p. 195),
- Organization and Time Management (p. 196), and
- Adaptability (p. 197).

9.2.1 Ethics

.1 Purpose

Behaving ethically and thinking of ethical impacts on others allows business analysts to earn the respect of the stakeholders. The ability to recognize when a proposed solution or requirement may present ethical difficulties to an organization or its stakeholders is an important consideration that business analysts can use to help reduce exposure to risk.

.2 Definition

Ethics require an understanding and focus on fairness, consideration, and moral behaviour through business analysis activities and relationships. Ethical behaviour includes consideration of the impact that a proposed solution can have on all stakeholder groups and working to ensure that those groups are treated as fairly as possible. Fair treatment does not require that the outcome be beneficial to a particular stakeholder group, but it does require that the affected stakeholders understand the reasons for decisions. Awareness of ethical issues allows business analysts to identify when ethical dilemmas occur and recommend resolutions to these dilemmas.

.3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective ethical behaviour include:

- prompt identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas,
- feedback from stakeholders confirming they feel decisions and actions are transparent and fair
- decisions made with consideration of the interests of all stakeholders,
- reasoning for decisions that is clearly articulated and understood,
- full and prompt disclosure of potential conflicts of interest, and
- honesty regarding one's abilities, the performance of one's work, and accepting responsibility for failures or errors

9.2.2 Personal Accountability

.1 Purpose

Personal accountability is important for a business analyst because it ensures business analysis tasks are completed on time and to the expectations of colleagues and stakeholders. It enables the business analyst to establish credibility by ensuring that business analysis efforts meet the needs of the business.

.2 Description

Personal accountability includes effectively planning business analysis work to achieve targets and goals, and ensuring that value delivered is aligned with business needs. It involves chasing down all leads and loose ends to fully satisfy the stakeholder's needs. Following through on and fully completing business analysis tasks produces complete, accurate, and relevant solutions traceable to a need. Business analysts take responsibility for identifying and escalating risks and issues. They also ensure that decision makers have the appropriate information in order to assess impact.

.3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective personal accountability include:

- work effort is planned and easily articulated to others,
- work is completed as planned or re-planned with sufficient reasoning and lead time,
- status of both planned and unplanned work is known,
- stakeholders feel that work is organized,
- risks and issues are identified and appropriately acted on,
- completely traceable requirements are delivered on time, and stakeholder needs are met.

9.2.3 Trustworthiness

.1 Purpose

Earning the trust of stakeholders helps business analysts elicit business analysis information around sensitive issues and enables them to help stakeholders have confidence that their recommendations will be evaluated properly and fairly.

.2 Description

Trustworthiness is the perception that one is worthy of trust. A business analyst being considered trustworthy may offset the natural fear of change experienced by many stakeholders.

Several factors can contribute to being considered trustworthy:

- intentionally and consistently completing tasks and deliverables on time, within budget, and achieving expected results so that colleagues and stakeholders consider the business analyst's behaviour dependable and diligent,
- presenting a consistent attitude of confidence, so that colleagues and stakeholders consider the business analyst's demeanor as strong,
- acting in an honest and straightforward manner, addressing conflict and concerns immediately so that colleagues and stakeholders consider the business analyst's morals as being honest and transparent, and
- maintaining a consistent schedule over a long period of time so that colleagues and stakeholders consider the business analyst's availability predictable and reliable.

.3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective trustworthiness include:

- stakeholders involve the business analyst in discussions and decision making,
- stakeholders bring issues and concerns to the business analyst,
- stakeholders are willing to discuss difficult or controversial topics with the business analyst,
- stakeholders do not blame the business analyst when problems occur,
- stakeholders respect the business analyst's ideas and referrals, and
- stakeholders respond to the business analyst's referrals with positive feedback.

9.2.4 Organization and Time Management

.1 Purpose

Organization and time management skills help business analysts perform tasks effectively and use work time efficiently.

.2 Description

Organization and time management involves the ability to prioritize tasks, perform them efficiently, and manage time effectively. Business analysts are constantly acquiring and accumulating significant quantities of information, and this information must be organized and stored in an efficient manner so that it can be used and reused at a later date. Business analysts must also be able to differentiate important information that should be retained from less important information.

Effective time management requires the ability to prioritize tasks and deadlines.

Techniques of organization include establishing short- and long-term goals, action plans, prioritizing tasks, and utilizing a checklist. Techniques for effective time management include establishing time limits on non-critical tasks, focusing more time on high risk and priority tasks, setting aside focus time, and managing potential interruptions

.3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective organization and time management include:

- the ability to produce deliverables in a timely manner,
- stakeholders feel that the business analyst focuses on the correct tasks at the right time,
- schedule of work effort and deadlines is managed and communicated to stakeholders,
- stakeholders feel their time in meetings and in reading communications is well spent,
- complete preparation for meetings, interviews, and requirements workshops,
- relevant business analysis information is captured, organized, and documented,
- adherence to the project schedule and the meeting of deadlines,
- provides accurate, thorough, and concise information in a logical manner which is understood by stakeholders, and
- maintains up-to-date information on the status of each work item and all outstanding work.

9.2.5 Adaptability

.1 Purpose

Business analysts frequently work in rapidly changing environments and with a variety of stakeholders. They adjust their behavioural style and method of approach to increase their effectiveness when interacting with different stakeholders, organizations, and situations.

.2 Definition

Adaptability is the ability to change techniques, style, methods, and approach. By demonstrating a willingness to interact with and complete tasks in a manner preferable to the stakeholders, business analysts can maximize the quality of service delivered and more efficiently help the organization achieve its goals and objectives. Having the curiosity to learn what others need and possessing the courage to try a different behaviour is adapting to situations and context.

Business analysts sometimes have to modify the way they interact with stakeholders, such as the way they conduct interviews or the way they facilitate workshops. Different stakeholders have different levels of comfort with techniques that are in the business analysis tool kit. Some stakeholders are more visual and respond better to information that is represented visually in models, diagrams, and pictures. Other stakeholders are more verbal and prefer textual descriptions. Being able to determine which techniques will work and which will not, and then adapt accordingly increases the likelihood of a successful interaction.

In the event that the goals and objectives of the organization change, business analysts respond by accepting the changes and adapting to a new mandate. Similarly, when circumstances arise or unanticipated problems occur, business analysts adapt by altering their plans and identifying options that can be used to deliver maximum value. The business analyst adapts when the business or stakeholder needs change, or when the context of the goal or the objective changes. When the need itself changes, the business analyst adapts by altering the plans and the approach in order to ensure that value is provided and delivered as part of the solution.

.3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective adaptability include:

- demonstrating the courage to act differently from others,
- adapting to changing conditions and environments,
- valuing and considering other points of view and approaches,
- demonstrating a positive attitude in the face of ambiguity and change,
- demonstrating a willingness to learn new methods, procedures, or techniques in order to accomplish goals and objectives,
- changing behaviour to perform effectively under changing or unclear conditions,
- acquiring and applying new information and skills to address new challenges,
- acceptance of having changes made to tasks, roles and project assignments as organizational realities change,
- altering interpersonal style to highly diverse individuals and groups in a range of situations, and
- evaluating what worked, what did not, and what could be done differently next time.