

## 9.5 Interaction Skills

Interaction skills are represented by the business analyst's ability to relate, cooperate, and communicate with different kinds of people including executives, sponsors, colleagues, team members, developers, vendors, learning and development professionals, end users, customers, and subject matter experts (SMEs).

Business analysts are uniquely positioned to facilitate stakeholder communication, provide leadership, encourage comprehension of solution value, and promote stakeholder support of the proposed changes.

Interaction Skills core competencies include:

- Facilitation (p. 207),
- Leadership and Influencing (p. 208),
- Teamwork (p. 209),
- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (p. 210), and
- Teaching (p. 210).

### 9.5.1 Facilitation

#### .1 Purpose

Business analysts facilitate interactions between stakeholders in order to help them make a decision, solve a problem, exchange ideas and information, or reach an agreement regarding the priority and the nature of requirements. The business analyst may also facilitate interactions between stakeholders for the purposes of negotiation and conflict resolution (as discussed in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (p. 210)).

#### .2 Definition

Facilitation is the skill of moderating discussions within a group in order to enable all participants to effectively articulate their views on a topic under discussion, and to ensure that participants in the discussion are able to recognize and appreciate the differing points of view that are articulated.

#### .3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective facilitation include:

- making it clear to the participants that the facilitator is a third party to the process and not a decision maker nor the owner of the topic,
- encouraging participation from all attendees,
- remaining neutral and not taking sides, but at the same time being impartial and intervening when required in order to make suggestions and offer insights,
- establishing ground rules such as being open to suggestions, building on what is there, not dismissing ideas, and allowing others to speak and express themselves,

- ensuring that participants in a discussion correctly understand each other's positions,
- using meeting management skills and tools to keep discussions focused and organized,
- preventing discussions from being sidetracked onto irrelevant topics, and
- understanding and considering all parties' interests, motivations, and objectives.

## 9.5.2 Leadership and Influencing

### .1 Purpose

Business analysts use leadership and influencing skills when guiding stakeholders during the investigation of business analysis information and solution options. They build consensus and encourage stakeholder support and collaboration during change.

### .2 Definition

Leadership and influencing involves motivating people to act in ways that enable them to work together to achieve shared goals and objectives. Understanding the individual motives, needs, and capabilities of each stakeholder and how those can be effectively channeled assists business analysts in meeting the shared objectives of the organization. The business analyst's responsibility for defining, analyzing, and communicating business analysis information provides opportunities for leadership and influencing, whether or not there are people formally reporting to the business analyst.

### .3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective leadership and influencing include:

- reduced resistance to necessary changes,
- articulation of a clear and inspiring vision of a desired future state,
- success in inspiring others to turn vision into action, • influence on stakeholders to understand mutual interests,
- effective use of collaboration techniques to influence others,
- influence on stakeholders to consider broader objectives over personal motivations, and
- re-framing issues so alternate perspectives can be understood and accommodated to influence stakeholders towards shared goals.

## 9.5.3 Teamwork

### .1 Purpose

Teamwork skills allow business analysts to work productively with team members, stakeholders, and any other vested partners so that solutions can be effectively developed and implemented.

## .2 Definition

Business analysts often work as part of a team with other business analysts, project managers, stakeholders, and subject matter experts (SMEs). Relationships with people in those roles are a critical part of the success of any project or enterprise. It is important for the business analyst to understand how a team is formed and how it functions. Recognizing team dynamics and how they play a part as the team progresses through various stages of a project is also crucial. Knowing and adapting to how and when a team is progressing through a project's life cycle can lower the negative influences that impact a team.

Building and maintaining trust of teammates contributes to the integrity of the team as a whole and helps the team perform at its fullest capacity. When team members actively foster an environment for positive and trusting team dynamics, difficult decisions and challenges become less complicated.

Team conflict is common. If handled well, the resolution of conflict can benefit the team. Resolving conflict requires the team to focus on examining the positions, assumptions, observations, and expectations of all team members. Working through such problems can have the beneficial effect of strengthening the foundation of the analysis and the solution.

## .3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective teamwork include:

- fostering a collaborative working environment,
- effectively resolving conflict,
- developing trust among team members,
- support among the team for shared high standards of achievement, and
- promoting a shared sense of ownership of the team goals.

## 9.5.4 Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

### .1 Purpose

Business analysts occasionally mediate negotiations between stakeholders in order to reach a common understanding or an agreement. During this process, business analysts help resolve conflicts and differences of opinion with the intent of maintaining and strengthening working relationships among stakeholders and team members.

### .2 Definition

Negotiation and conflict resolution involves mediating discussions between participants in order to help them recognize that there are differing views on the topic, resolve differences, and reach conclusions that have the agreement of all participants. Successful negotiation and conflict resolution includes identifying the underlying interests of the parties, distinguishing those interests from their stated positions, and helping the parties identify solutions that satisfy those underlying interests. The business analyst accomplishes this while ensuring that the outcome of the resolution aligns with the overall solution and the business

needs.

### .3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective negotiation and conflict resolution include:

- a planned approach to ensure that the negotiation takes into account the tone of voice, the conveyed attitude, the methods used, and the concern for the other side's feelings and needs,
- the ability to recognize that the needs of the parties are not always in opposition and that it is often possible to satisfy both parties without either side losing,
- an objective approach to ensure the problem is separated from the person so that the real issues are debated without damaging working relationships, and
- the ability to recognize that effective negotiation and conflict resolution are not always achieved in a single autonomous meeting, and that sometimes several meetings are required in order to achieve the stated goals.

## 9.5.5 Teaching

### .1 Purpose

Teaching skills help business analysts effectively communicate business analysis information, concepts, ideas, and issues. They also help ensure that information is understood and retained by stakeholders.

### .2 Definition

Teaching is the process of leading others to gain knowledge. Business analysts are responsible for confirming that the information communicated has been understood by stakeholders. Business analysts lead stakeholders to discover clarity in ambiguity by helping them learn about the contexts and value of the needs being investigated. This requires teaching skills in selecting the most appropriate visual, verbal, written, and kinesthetic teaching approaches according to the information or techniques being taught. The intent is to draw out stakeholder engagement and collaborative learning to gain clarity. Business analysts frequently elicit and learn new information, and then teach this information to stakeholders in a meaningful way.

### .3 Effectiveness Measures

Measures of effective teaching include:

- utilizing different methods to communicate information to be learned by stakeholders,
- discovering new information through high levels of stakeholder engagement,
- validating that audiences have a clear understanding of the key messages that are intended to be learned, and
- verifying that the stakeholders can demonstrate the new knowledge, facts, concepts, and ideas.