



BUSINESS ANALYSIS

FOR PRACTITIONERS

A PRACTICE GUIDE



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Project Management Institute

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PREFACE

Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide is a complementary document to PMI's foundational standards. This practice guide provides guidance on how to apply effective business analysis practices on programs and projects and to drive successful business outcomes. This practice guide provides those with an interest in and commitment to the business analysis discipline the following:

- Diverse collection of both long-established and recent business analysis techniques and practices, defined and explained by experienced business analysis professionals and practitioners; and
- Description of how these techniques and practices can be used including many specific examples.

The information in this practice guide will help readers to:

- Consider which practices and techniques are appropriate for use in their own organizations, and
- Consider how to adapt and adjust techniques and practices to meet organizational and cultural needs without diluting the quality of business analysis which they support.

This practice guide is intended to encourage discussion related to areas of practice where there may not yet be consensus. The discipline of business analysis and its associated roles continue to evolve. Some of the most significant drivers of this evolution are:

- Increased business focus on the ability to accommodate rapid change,
- Increased project focus on delivering value as efficiently as possible, and
- New and evolving approaches for stakeholders and project team members to collaborate with each other to deliver successful projects, which drive business value.

Additionally, the choice of business analysis practices—and how organizations tailor what they choose to implement—is highly dependent on organizational, cultural, and methodological norms. These choices are also impacted by how much change an organization is willing and able to embrace. There is no expectation that every practitioner of business analysis will use every technique noted in the practice guide, for example:

- Some practitioners may consider some of the techniques to be traditional and therefore too confining. PMI recognizes that agile practitioners may desire more adaptive techniques.
- Other practitioners may find that some of the techniques are too new and would potentially introduce risk or complexity.

With all of these considerations in mind, *Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide* offers these practices as a starting point to identify thought processes and approaches that may improve how organizations and practitioners approach and achieve effective business analysis.

PMI introduced this practice guide to identify useful approaches for integration with PMI foundational standards. Practice guides are developed by leading experts in the field, and this practice guide is no exception. Practice guides use a relatively new process that provides reliable information while reducing the time required for development and distribution. PMI defines a practice guide as a standards product that provides supporting supplemental information and instructions for the application of PMI standards. Practice guides are not full consensus-based standards and do not go through the exposure draft process. However, the resulting work may be introduced later as a full consensus standard and, if so, will then be subjected to PMI's documented development process for such standards.

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1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Practice Guide

The practice guide describes the work of business analysis and identifies the tasks that are performed in addition to the essential knowledge and skills needed to effectively perform business analysis on programs and projects. This practice guide is applicable to all programs and projects, regardless of whether these are focused on products, services, or process improvement. The concepts and techniques described in this practice guide are implementation-independent and can be used to develop manual or automated solutions, using any type of project life cycle.

The purpose of this practice guide is to define what business analysis is and to demonstrate the practical application of the discipline. This practice guide accomplishes the following:

- Provides a practical discussion of the business analysis work,
- Defines what the work of business analysis is as it relates to programs and projects,
- Discusses why the work is important,
- Provides specific examples of how the work is performed,
- Explains how different types of project life cycles impact the timing and type of business analysis work performed,
- Highlights areas where business analysts should collaborate with other team roles for improved program and project performance, and
- Fully aligns to the tasks, knowledge, and skills that comprise business analysis as identified by the extensive role delineation study conducted for PMI in 2013.

1.2 Need for this Practice Guide

When business analysis is properly accounted for and executed on programs and projects, the following benefits are achieved:

- High-quality requirements are produced resulting in the development of products and services that meet customer expectations;
- Stakeholders are more engaged in the process and buy-in is more readily achieved;
- Projects are more likely to be delivered on time, within scope, and within budget;