

A Surprising Change Leader: Your Business Analyst

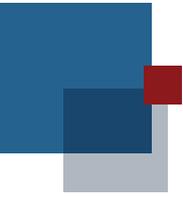
The most successful organisations are able to identify opportunities for self-improvement and conceive of changes that can make them more efficient, more successful and better equipped to achieve their goals. But, all too often, these new ideas get discussed, everyone resoundingly agrees they're a good idea and then, somehow, the changes fail to work. However, it usually isn't the actual idea that flops; it's the implementation and adoption process. What most companies don't realise is that the leader who can help them champion major change is already on staff and ready to be utilised: the Business Analyst.

Change scares people and makes them uncomfortable. As facilitation experts and change agents, Business Analysts can help validate and assess the feasibility of change in your organisation.

Your Business Analysts Are Uniquely Qualified

Given their inherent skill set, Business Analysts are naturally suited to lead and integrate major organisation-wide change. By utilising techniques and expertise they already employ on a daily basis—critical thinking, problem solving, modelling current vs. future state, facilitation—Business Analysts are primed to help shepherd the entire change management process.

The fact is, change scares people. It makes them uncomfortable. From the point of inception, your Business Analyst can help validate and assess the feasibility of change in the context of your organisation—a process that will provide solid rationale when communicating changes to staff members. Because Business Analysts are savvy at gauging their audiences, potential obstacles will be anticipated and solutions can be readily implemented. A master of facilitation, your Business Analyst is also well-qualified to listen, address concerns and bridge any gaps among departments affected by new shifts in roles and expectations.



INSIDER INSIGHTS

The Key to Successful Change is Making It Sustainable

Any organisation can initiate major sweeping changes. Some of those changes may even be easily accepted. But what's really crucial to ensuring that these changes help you achieve your goals is making sure they stick. When changes are successfully adopted, they become ingrained in the fabric of the culture—become the new "normal"—until there is no risk of reversion.

Navigating the Stages of Change

All organisational change requires people to alter their behaviors or beliefs about their work, which may require learning new skills or interacting with new people. For many people, change is perceived as risky and something to be avoided. But by empowering Business Analysts as change leaders, new ideas can be more effectively communicated, substantiated and supported throughout the stages of change to help ensure permanent adoption.

Positioning—Announcement of new content or practices drives an initial collective emotional response.

Uncertainty—Organisation accepts change will happen, but management is unsure of the impact without knowing details.

Clarification—More information and consistent messages improve understanding of why change is needed and what the impact will be.

Focus—With clarification and more information, the organisation is able to focus on new direction, roles and expectations as a whole.

Acceptance—Individuals assess new direction versus personal needs and respond accordingly—most choose to adopt, some choose to exit.

Top performing organisations make change sustainable and successfully navigate through the five stages of change.

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Your Business Analyst Offers Strengths that Other Leaders Can't

Obstacles will inevitably arise. Your Business Analyst is uniquely qualified to help the company handle issues at every phase of change.

Successful change requires focused energy. The Business Analyst can help to drive direction that is consistent and repeatable to motivate action.

Obstacle	Perception	The Business Analyst's Solution
Lack of Consistent Leadership	I hear different things from different people and I don't know who to believe anymore.	There needs to be a collective belief in any new policy. If there are naysayers, they're not the right people in the right position and they will prevent change from becoming fully realised. Appropriate coaching will be necessary. Critical thinking and problem solving techniques can help BAs prioritise, specify and create models for requirements at every single level so there is clear understanding of responsibilities and purpose. Naysayers are then not fulfilling job descriptions and can be dealt with accordingly.
Fuzzy Vision and Goals	Why are we making these changes again? I don't understand why we need to change when we've already got a process.	Successful change requires focused energy. Through requirements analysis and traceability, BAs can help tie the changes back to a specific organisational objective so staff can make the connection. Direction must be consistent, focused and repeated in order to motivate action.
Broken Interactions	I'm hearing how great these changes are, but I'm not seeing any benefits. Plus, my bosses aren't doing anything different, so why should I?	Talking the talk is not enough. Leadership needs to use every vehicle possible to communicate and reinforce the change, as well as report progress. Most importantly, leaders must be the example and "walk the walk." BAs can persistently inform leadership of current state, steps to get to desired state and what actions they are individually responsible for. Leaders must practice what they preach.

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Complacency, Laziness	I hear what you're saying, but what I'm doing already works, so I'm going to keep doing it that way.	<p>Change makes people uncomfortable. Staff must be willing to embrace change at a management level—or be removed.</p> <p>BAs can create a sense of urgency by evaluating current state vs. future state. Through findings from gap analysis, variance analysis and force field analysis, BAs can definitively state, "Here's what will happen if we don't do this. Here's how we will fail."</p>
Passivity	It doesn't seem like this directly affects my job, so why should I care?	<p>Wherever a person is in the organisation, his or her actions are important and have a direct effect on the company.</p> <p>BAs can use facilitation techniques to let everyone have a say and participate, so they feel vested in the process. Using the right conduits to promote healthy individual and collective contributions encourages interaction, builds trust and allows for "straight talk." This interaction and reiteration of changes helps reinforce a focused energy.</p>
Established Social Norms	That's nice, but that's not the way we do things around here. That's not how this company works.	<p>To achieve sustainable change, you have to get to the point where the change becomes the norm. This takes reinforcement and repetition.</p> <p>Along the way, BAs can evaluate what's working to support adoption and what obstacles still remain. They can then advise on actions necessary to further embrace and apply change in order to keep the organisation on track toward their goal.</p>

Facilitation techniques allow everyone to be vested in the feedback process, promoting interactions and trust-building.

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Focus on Short Term Wins	Great. This is working. We've made progress, so I guess we're done.	<p>It's important to reward incremental successes but equally critical that the organisation isn't cut short from reaching its goal. Celebrating adoption of a major change too early can result in complacency afterward and an end to progress.</p> <p>BAs can help keep leadership honest in regards to tracking toward goals. Compelling evidence and acknowledgement of progress is great motivation to keep going—all the discomfort has been worth it!—but there may be more work to be done. Tie progress back to quantifiable factors.</p>
Jumping the Gun	This project came in on time and on budget, so we're successful.	<p>Achieving sustainable change isn't a one-time thing. Maybe the project was successful, but only 70% of the organisational goal has been achieved.</p> <p>BAs can lead by treating change as a constant process. Leadership must look backwards as well as forward. All steps that reinforce change—communication, reiteration of responsibilities, walking the walk—must be revisited and repeated.</p>

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