RQX
Requirements Toolkit

A Guide to Interviewing Business Analysts

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Workbook Contents

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I.   Why Are There So Many BAD Interviews?

✓ Ego

✓ Closed-Ended Questioning

✓ Asking Inappropriate Questions for Resource Caliber

✓ Incomplete Lines of Questioning

✓ Asking Buzz-Word Questions

✓ Interviewing Inappropriate Caliber for the Role

✓ Intimidation (Showing / Being)

Notes:

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II. Nine Steps to Conducting an Interview and Building Your Winning Business Analysis Team:

Overview
- Define the job YOU want done   - Define the competencies for this role   - Define the hiring or contracting process   - Define the candidates you want to interview   - Communicate your role to recruiters and through advertising   - Select candidates for interviews   - Prepare interview questions   - Prepare the interview scoring   - Conduct the Interview
Step 1: Define the Job YOU want done
- What is the specific set of tasks that you need to have accomplished?   - What specialized skills are necessary accomplish the tasks?   - What is the minimum level of experience required for any person to be successful?   - What skill requirements does your company have for employees/contractors?   - How do you intend to advertise to find candidates?   - What is your timeline for hiring or contracting?   - Is it a contract or permanent role?   - How long is the engagement?   - What can candidates expect to get out of the role?   - What are the work location expectations of the role?   - Is there any room for telecommuting for the right candidate?   - What is the budget for this role/position?   - How will budget impact the candidate?   - Is the budget realistic for the level of skill required and the type of work to be done?   - What DON'T you want?

Step 2: Define the competencies for this role

- What are the specific competencies (UNDERLYING SKILLS, NOT TOOLS OR DOMAINS) for each of the tasks that the candidate will be responsible for?
  - For example, the task is Stakeholder Management. The competencies would be communication, assertiveness, leadership and responsiveness
  - **See sample Competency Model*
- How well do you expect the candidate to perform each of these competencies?
  - For example, the task is Stakeholder Management.
  - The competencies would be communication, assertiveness, leadership and responsiveness
  - The candidate should be able to clearly demonstrate these competencies within the interview and should have a proven track record of demonstrating each of them consistently (as evidenced through reference checks).
- How are you going to interview for these competencies?

Step 3: Define the hiring or contracting process

- What is the process for hiring or contracting?
- What are the next steps after the first interview?
- How long will the process take?
- Who is going to be a part of the hiring process?
- How will each person be involved?
- What is their experience or exposure to interviewing?
- Do they know what this particular role needs and what to look for in a candidate?
- What is their interviewing style?
- How will they bring out the best in the candidate to ensure an accurate and complete interview?
- What is the deadline for accepting profiles and resumes?
- What is the timeframe for the interviews?
- What is the schedule for interviews?
- Who will schedule the interviews?
- What results do you expect to from each stage of the process?
- How will feedback be distributed?
- How will results be recorded?
- What should NEVER happen in this process?

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Step 4: Define the candidates you want to interview

- Who is your ideal candidate?
- What do you want them to know about the role, project or company that is important?
- Will your ideal candidate really be interested in applying for this role?
- If your ideal candidate does not apply or turns down an offer, who is your next best candidate?
- What characteristics or personal habits and traits do you NOT want in a candidate?

Step 5: Communicate your role to recruiters and through advertising

- Create your role description using the information you have collected in steps 1 to 4
- Create your ad/email to notify recruiters about the opening
  - To get noticed easily in an inbox when you have an urgent need, use your subject line to get attention.
  - For e.g. "Urgent Resource Requirement: Senior Business Analyst"
- Distribute or publish your ad/email

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Step 6: Select candidates for interviews

- How many candidates will you interview?
- How will you rank candidate resumes?
- List all of the tasks for the role in priority order.
  - Which tasks will they be doing the most?
  - Which tasks will they be doing the least?
- Assign a weighted scoring for each of the tasks. Ensure that the total points for all tasks equals 50%
- Consider that you will need to see 3 things (attributes) in each successful resume:
  - Their role including primary responsibilities (20%).
  - The results that were achieved (15%).
  - How they contributed to those results (15%).
- Assign a weighted scoring for each of the three attributes. Ensure that the total points for all tasks equals 50%
- Establish a scoring range for the role based on you need for this particular role. Include a minimum and a maximum score for each candidate.
- Prepare a standard scoring sheet to score resumes based on contents.
- Exclude resumes that do not have the minimum types or levels of experience.
- Print one sheet per resume
- Score each resume to find those that score in the established range and exclude those that score outside of the range.
- Select the highest scoring resumes within the range, and schedule interviews with the number of candidates you want to interview.

Step 7: Prepare interview questions

- Identify all of the roles that each candidate has done and how the role fits with your opening
- Prepare questions for each of those roles to ask the candidate to elaborate about their specific responsibilities and accountabilities.
  - If you have never interviewed a Business Analyst and do not know anything about the role, go deep on these questions as this will ensure the candidate can give you enough detail and you can test their real knowledge not just the quick answers that may have prepared.
- Ensure that all of your questions are open-ended (not a yes/no)
- Avoid "buzz" word questions
  - ***See Sample Interview Questions***

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Step 8: Prepare the interview scoring

- Refer to your prioritized task list.
- Consider that you will need to see 3 things (attributes) in each successful candidate:
  - Fit for the role (20%) (Can they do the work required?).
  - Personality fit for the project team (15%) (Will they work well with the rest of the team?).
  - Bonus traits and attributes (15%) (Will they bring something extra to the role?).
- Assign a weighted scoring for each of the three attributes. Ensure that the total points for all tasks equals 50%
- Establish a scoring range for the role based on you need for this particular role. Include a minimum and a maximum score for each candidate.
- Prepare a standard scoring sheet to score interviews.
- Print one sheet per interview.
- Score each interview to find those that score in the established range and exclude those that score outside of the range.
- Are there any red flag answers that arose in the interview, or any gut feel of attitude issues?
- Put these "red flag candidates" off to the side or exclude them altogether.
  - CAUTION: if you have only a single candidate that scores within the range, and they have a red flag, re-consider your criteria or running another round of resume selections.
- Select the highest scoring candidates for the next steps in the hiring process.

Step 9: Conduct the interview and select your candidate(s)

- Select candidates for the next steps of the hiring/contracting process
  - Follow-up interview round (if applicable)
  - Make offer
  - Negotiate terms

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II.   Job Aides

Sample Competency Model

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Summary of the Assessment:

Filtering Candidates by Resume Submission

Sample Resume Scoring Sheet

Instructions:

When a candidate submits a resume in application for a role, the first task is to assess their eligibility for an interview. This section is intended to set flags or key indicators for the resume reviewer to assess this eligibility. Points are assigned to each indicator found in the resume.

Step I:

One point is assigned for each item in the detailed table below.

Step II:

Total the number of points for the sub-section. Add this total to all other sub-section totals from within this area or carry this number up to the Section Total row in the Points Earned column.

Example: The total points that can be achieved during the filtering stage for Business Acumen is 22

Area	Possible Points
Business Acumen	22
Team Building	9
Technical and Academic Skills	22

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Qualifying for the Interview

To qualify for an interview, the candidate's resume submission must have earned 25 points

Area & Flag/Indicator	Possible Points	Points Earned
Business Acumen	**22**	
Industry	**4**	
2 plus years consistent experience in 1 industry	1	
2 plus roles in industry above demonstrating cross-functional understanding of that industry.	1	
These roles must show that the candidate:		
•Advanced their level of knowledge and experience through horizontal moves within the industry	1	
•Advanced their level of seniority through lateral moves within the industry	1	
Management - Inventory	**4**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in Asset Management	1	
1 plus roles within managing inventory through activities that show that the candidate:	1	
•Demonstrated inventory forecasting	1	
•Contributed to purchasing of additional assets such as hardware, software and product licenses.	1	
Management - People	**5**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in management activities as a team lead, mentor, or manager	1	
1 plus roles within management that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
•Scheduling workloads of others	1	
•Providing support and mentoring to others	1	
•Assisting with employee reviews	1	
Management - Budgets	**4**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in budgeting activities as a PMO, financial officer, or manager	1	
1 plus roles within budgeting that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
• Estimating job/project cost	1	
•Forecasting	1	

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Area & Flag/Indicator	Possible Points	Points Earned
Business Acumen	**22**	
Management - Timelines	**5**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in scheduling activities	1	
1 plus roles within scheduling that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
•Estimating job/project scheduling	1	
•Work breakdown structure	1	
•Generating Gantt charts	1	
Industry	**4**	
2 plus years consistent experience in 1 industry	1	
2 plus roles in industry above demonstrating cross-functional understanding of that industry.	1	
These roles must show that the candidate:		
•Advanced their level of knowledge and experience through horizontal moves within the industry	1	
•Advanced their level of seniority through lateral moves within the industry	1	
Management - Inventory	**4**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in Asset Management	1	
1 plus roles within managing inventory through activities that show that the candidate:	1	
•Demonstrated inventory forecasting	1	
•Contributed to purchasing of additional assets such as hardware, software and product licenses.	1	
Management - People	**5**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in management activities as a team lead, mentor, or manager	1	
1 plus roles within management that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
• Scheduling workloads of others	1	
• Providing support and mentoring to others	1	
• Assisting with employee reviews	1	
Management - Budgets	**4**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in budgeting activities as a PMO, financial officer, or manager	1	

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Area & Flag/Indicator	Possible Points	Points Earned
Business Acumen	**22**	
1 plus roles within budgeting that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
• Estimating job/project cost	1	
• Forecasting	1	
Management - Timelines	**5**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in scheduling activities	1	
1 plus roles within scheduling that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
• Estimating job/project scheduling	1	
• Work breakdown structure	1	
• Generating Gantt charts	1	

Team Building	9	
Change Management	**4**	
1 plus years consistent experience in a company that has undergone a major change such as acquisition or integration of another company or changes to its organizational structure	1	
1 plus roles within this company that show that the candidate	1	
• Participated in assisting others deal with change through training, coaching or mentoring.	1	
Understood the impacts of change on people within the workplace	1	
Negotiation	**5**	
1 plus years consistent experience in gathering requirements or mediation or commission sales	1	
Experience or education in negotiation or conflict resolution	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in JAD sessions, interviews, and requirements gathering activities	1	
•Negotiated agreements or contracts	1	

Team Building	9	
System Development Life Cycle	**3**	
1 plus years consistent experience participating in the SDLC	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in SDLC activities such as scheduling, design and methodologies.	1	
Visual Products/Deliverables	**4**	
Experience or education in development of visual products and deliverables such as wire frames, personas, context diagrams, etc.	1	
1 plus years of consistent experience participating in the development of visual documentation	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in the development of visual documentation	1	
Textual Products/Deliverables	**4**	
Experience or education in development of textual products and deliverables such as requirements definitions, technical writing, process narrations, etc.	1	
1 plus years of consistent experience participating in the development of visual documentation.	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in the development of textual documentation	1	

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Technical And Academic Skills	22	
Issue Management	**3**	
Experience or education in Issue Management OR	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Worked to resolve post production issues/defects	1	
Quality Assurance	**3**	
Participated in team meetings to resolve issues	1	
• Participated in QA activities such as Use Case Development	1	
• Documented and analyzed test results for action	1	
Defect Management	**5**	
Experience or education in Defect Management	1	
6 plus months consistent experience participating in Defect Management	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in Defect Management activities such as logging defects into an issue management tracking tool such as Remedy	1	
• Participated in team meetings to resolve defects	1	

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Sample Interview Scoring Sheet

Interviewing Candidates

Instructions:

Once a candidate has passed been assessed for an interview, the recruiter must interview them to assess the knowledge they claim to have, the knowledge they should have and their personal fit with the company. This section is intended to set flags or key indicators for the interviewer to assess eligibility for hire. Points are assigned to each indicator found in the interview.

Step I:

One point is assigned for each item in the detailed table below

Step II:

Total the number of points for the sub-section. Add this total to all other sub-section totals from within this area or carry this number up to the Section Total row in the Points Earned column

Example: The total points that can be achieved during the interviewing stage for Business Acumen is 22.

Competency Sections	Possible Points
Business	10
Team Building	17
Technical and Academic Skills	29
Problem-Solving	7

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Area & Flag/Indicator	Possible Points	Points Earned
Business	**Section Total=10**	**0**
Common Functions and Processes	**Area Total = 1**	0
Demonstrated understanding of process and process controls within 1 of the industries claimed in the resume	1	
Organizational Structure	**Area Total = 1**	0
Demonstrated understanding of how business is organized to achieve business results	1	
Strategic Planning	**Area Total = 1**	0
Demonstrated understanding of how business plan for future successes	1	
Management - Inventory	**Area Total = 1**	0
Experience or education in using an automated inventory system	1	
Management - People	**Area Total = 1**	0
Experience or education in directing the efforts of others	1	
Management - Budgets	**Area Total = 4**	0
1 plus years consistent experience participating in budgeting activities as a PMO, financial officer, or manager	1	
1 plus roles within budgeting that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
• Estimating job/project cost	1	
• Forecasting	1	
Management - Timelines	**Area Total = 5**	0
1 plus years consistent experience participating in scheduling activities	1	
1 plus roles within scheduling that show that the candidate participated in:	1	
• Estimating job/project scheduling	1	
• Work breakdown structure	1	
• Generating Gantt charts	1	

Team Building	Section Total=17	0
Change Management	Area Total = 4	0
Demonstrated understanding of obtaining buy-in	1	
1 plus years consistent experience in a company that has undergone a major change such as acquisition or integration of another company or changes to its organizational structure	1	
Demonstrates that the candidate:		
• Participated in assisting others deal with change through training, coaching or mentoring.	1	
•Understood the impacts of change on people within the workplace	1	
Negotiation	Area Total = 3	0
Demonstrated understanding of eliciting base needs instead of requirements	1	
Experience or education in negotiation or conflict resolution	1	
Demonstrated active listening during these activities to clarify and extract the business need from the requirement	1	
Managing Conflict	Area Total = 2	0
Cite 2 instances of interpersonal conflict involving the candidate or others, where they were instrumental in diffusing the situation	1	
Cite 1 instance of a lateral or horizontal move in a contentious environment	1	
Communication	Area Total = 3	0
Demonstrates ability to participate in discussions appropriately by responding to input of others using clarification, building on ideas, following topic and providing feedback when anticipated during conversations, meetings and email	1	
Demonstrates ability to provide constructive feedback during conversations, meetings and email	1	
Demonstrates ability to participate in discussions appropriately by responding to input of others using clarification and building on ideas during conversations and meetings	1	

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Team Building	Section Total=17	0
Collaboration	Area Total = 5	0
Cites an example of ability to work positively with employees of varying levels of experience and seniority to accomplish assigned tasks	1	
Cites an example of ability to elicit support and direction from appropriate sources to complete tasks	1	
Cites an example of ability to provide support, recognition and encouragement to other employees to promote team effort	1	
Cites an example of ability to encourage participation of others through team-building activities	1	

Technical And Academic Skills	Section Total = 29	0
System Analysis and Design		
System Development Life Cycle	Area Total = 3	0
1 plus years consistent experience participating in the SDLC	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in SDLC activities such as scheduling, design and methodologies.	1	
Visual Products/Deliverables	Area Total = 4	0
Experience or education in development of visual products and deliverables such as wire frames, personas, context diagrams, etc.	1	
1 plus years of consistent experience participating in the development of visual documentation	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in the development of visual documentation	1	
Textual Products/Deliverables	Area Total = 4	0
Experience or education in development of textual products and deliverables such as requirements definitions, technical writing, process narrations, etc.	1	
1 plus years of consistent experience participating in the development of visual documentation.	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	

Technical And Academic Skills	Section Total = 29	0
Textual Products/Deliverables	Area Total = 4	0
Experience or education in development of textual products and deliverables such as requirements definitions, technical writing, process narrations, etc.	1	
1 plus years of consistent experience participating in the development of visual documentation.	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
Product Development Life Cycle	Area Total = 3	0
1 plus years consistent experience participating in the PDLC	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in PDLC activities such as scheduling and release management.	1	
Quality Assurance	Area Total = 5	0
Experience or education in QA Testing practices/environments OR	1	
6 plus months consistent experience participating in the QA process	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in QA activities such as Use Case Development	1	
• Documented and analyzed test results for action	1	
Issue Management	Area Total = 5	0
Experience or education in Issue Management OR	1	
6 plus months consistent experience participating in Issue Management	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	
• Participated in Issue Management activities such as logging issues into an issue management tracking tool such as Remedy	1	
• Participated in team meetings to resolve issues	1	
Defect Management	Area Total = 5	0
Experience or education in Defect Management	1	
6 plus months consistent experience participating in Defect Management	1	
1 plus roles within this experience that show that the candidate:	1	

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Technical And Academic Skills	Section Total = 29	0
• Participated in Defect Management activities such as logging defects into an issue management tracking tool such as Remedy	1	
• Participated in team meetings to resolve defects	1	

Problem-Solving	Section Total = 7	
Innovativeness/Initiative	**Area Total = 3**	**0**
Cite an example of innovativeness and initiative by bringing new and creative ideas for new processes, projects, and goals to appropriate management or corporate groups	1	
Demonstrates ability to work independently and be self-motivated	1	
Cites instances of working towards achievement of company and personal goals by performing tasks identified as necessary to accomplish the goal	1	
Personal Effectiveness	**Area Total = 4**	**0**
Cites an example of ability to prioritize tasks and manage time both under pressure and on a routine basis	1	
Cites an example of ability to discuss and mitigate identified risks and issues impacting critical success of projects and company	1	
Cites an example of ability to creatively resolve and mitigate risks and issues impacting critical success of projects and company	1	
Demonstrates ability to adapt quickly to new and changing situations	1	

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Sample Interview Questions

Sample questions for Business Analyst "fresher" candidates:

- What jobs have you done in the past?
- Tell me how that experience prepared you for a role as a Business Analyst.
- What were your specific responsibilities?
- Did you have to work with IT on that job?
- Did you have to fix or create new processes for that job?
- Did you have to work with people?
- Did you have to speak in public, or run meetings, or facilitate work groups?
- Did you have to write any significant documents?
- Were you responsible for customer service?
- Did you perform any technical writing, graphic design or editing?
- Did you ever have to prepare any marketing materials?
- Did you ever have to negotiate contracts or manage vendors?
- Did you ever have to hire resources?
- Have you ever been responsible for document management?
- Have you ever had to help train others on a new software application?
- Have you ever helped IT test any new applications before they were implemented?
- What volunteer roles or personal interests you have and how the role you played fits with business analysis?

Sample questions for Junior Business Analysts:

- What are the main steps of the requirements process?
- Tell me how you elicit requirements?
- What kinds of requirements do you have experience developing?
- What is the difference between functional and non-functional requirements?
- Why would you want to develop use cases for a project?
- How do you validate your requirements?

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Sample questions for Intermediate Business Analysts:

- What requirements process do you follow?
- Tell me how you elicit requirements?
- Tell me what techniques you use to analyze requirements
- How do those techniques differ from other techniques?
- What positive impacts do those techniques have on the results?
- How do you validate your requirements?

Sample questions for Senior Business Analysts:

- What requirements process do you follow?
- What do you think are the most common pitfalls of requirements development?
- How do you overcome those?
- Describe the approach you took on this project
- Why was that approach taken?
- What were the impacts of that approach?
- What approach would you use to accomplish the work on this project and why?
- Tell me what you could bring to the role
- What unique techniques do you use in Business Analysis?
- What positive impacts do those techniques have on the results?
- How do you quantify the results of those techniques?
- Identify the RESULTS you achieved in each of your roles.
- Did you help others to work better, faster or more efficiently?
- Tell me how you manage the difficult conversations with stakeholders.

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