

200+ Business Analysis Questions

The following list of 200+ questions is a resource list for interviews, workshops or other business analysis activities. The list is not intended to be comprehensive and is not in any particular sequence. It can be used for:

- Understanding stakeholder environments, their needs, and what they value
- Understanding problems and the current or future state
- Assessing requirement complexity
- Movement from business requirements to stakeholder and solution requirements
- Different types of initiatives, such as Business Process Improvement, Business Intelligence, Technology-driven, etc.
- Project tradeoff discussions

Understand Stakeholders

- 1) What is your role?
- 2) What is the type of business that you do?
- 3) Can you tell me more about your department and what your employees do?
- 4) How many are in your group?
- 5) What other people or departments do you work with and how?
- 6) Do you work with any external organizations?
- 7) When you heard about this project, what were your initial thoughts?
- 8) How do you see your role in relation to this project?
- 9) How and how often do you want to be involved?
- 10) Are there any constraints on your time during any period during the day, month or year based on a business cycle?
- 11) How are you impacted by the solution?
- 12) Are there any past events that might impact gathering information from stakeholders?
- 13) Who else might be impacted?
- 14) What are your constraints (and solution constraints) to obtaining an optimal solution?
- 15) Who would be the sources for the requirements of the solution for current state and future state?
- 16) Are there any stakeholders that may not yet have the business domain expertise to assist in requirement identification? If so, would you recommend any other sources for the information or recommend that we do a more iterative or prototype approach?
- 17) Are you aware of any conflicts between stakeholders regarding what is in-scope vs. out-of-scope?
- 18) Who would be the users of the solutions, both internally and externally from your organization (including those who extract information from the current system for reporting and decision making)?
- 19) Where are the users located? How many are there?
- 20) What are the users trying to accomplish with the system?
- 21) Do the users use the system differently depending on job roles, locations, etc.?
- 22) What are the user skill levels and experience in using the system? Are they different? How?
- 23) Who might you consider to be a “super user” of the current system we are investigating?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 24) Who has the authority to approve any solution alternatives?
- 25) Who are the decision makers?
- 26) Is there an approval and/or governance process that must be adhered to? If yes, can you provide a copy?
- 27) What are your motivations, desires and hopes for the solution?
- 28) How comfortable will you and the users of the solution be with the change?
- 29) Are there any existing working or environmental conditions that impact user's ability to use the system?
- 30) Can you provide details on the type of customers targeted by your service, product?

Enterprise Cultural Understanding

[Based on list from *Mastering Business Analysis Versatility* by Eugenia C. Schmidt]

Is the enterprise:

- 31) A globally or geographically dispersed organization (structure)?
- 32) A private or family owned company versus a public company (structure)?
- 33) Aligning service business units within other business units or are they centralized (as it relates to structure, service business units such as Human Resources, Information Technology (IT), etc.)?
- 34) Using multiple languages internally with employees or externally with users and customers (diversity)?
- 35) A result of blended cultures through acquisitions or mergers (diversity)?
- 36) Only adopting proven solutions versus being on the forefront with technology (risk tolerance)?
- 37) Going through rapid economic changes, either loss or growth, and providing predictions for the future (competitiveness and forecast)?
- 38) Heavily regulated (extent of external influence)?
- 39) Consistently making decisions by consensus or using other decision-making methods, such as autocratic or democratic (how decisions are made)?
- 40) Operating each business unit as its own entity with different processes and financial reporting, such as a franchise versus operating each as a centralized unit with consistent processes and financial reporting?
- 41) Implementing a formal enterprise architecture [business, information and technology]?
- 42) Implementing any reusable repositories of business analysis information (e.g. models)?
- 43) Structured with formal project management processes (e.g. Project or Program Management Offices)?

Understand the Problem and Current State

- 44) What is driving the need to make a change?
- 45) Is the need to change tied to a higher-level initiative?
- 46) Do you believe that this is the real problem, or might it be a symptom of a larger problem that we should address?
- 47) Is there any documentation for the current environment that I can review? What is the state of that information?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 48) Can you give me a quick, 30 second overview of how the system under discussion works today?
- 49) What is the most manual part of your job?
- 50) Are there any business policies or external regulations that drive the change?
- 51) What is the level of urgency?
- 52) What problems are you having now?
- 53) Are any problems associated with any specific applications or technology?
- 54) What is the most dangerous (costly, risky) situation you are dealing with?
- 55) What risks currently exist and how are they addressed?
- 56) How are you performing these business activities now (process/system)?
- 57) Please describe how the business process works today.
- 58) What is working well?
- 59) What is not working?
- 60) What are the pain points?
- 61) Do you share information with other departments or external organizations?
- 62) Is there any static information that is stored? How is it used?
- 63) What actionable data are you missing?
- 64) What data is being stored outside the system and why?
- 65) Are there any variations to the way the data is used by business units?
- 66) Are you using any vendor products? How is the relationship with the vendor?
- 67) Any problems associated with vendor products? Any complaints to the vendor or our own procurement regarding the performance of the product?
- 68) Are there any standard operating environments that we must adhere to?
- 69) In terms of effective and seamless communication between departments, what are the pitfalls and how would you like them addressed?

Understand the Future State

- 70) What is your vision of the desired end state?
- 71) Does the vision affect how we operate today (business model components)?
- 72) Is the vision aligned with the business strategy?
- 73) Will the vision impact the organizational structure in any way?
- 74) Do you believe that vision is possible? What are your realistic expectations?
- 75) How likely is it that the vision may change before it is implemented? Do you know how that should be managed?
- 76) Do you have any specific goals or objectives for the solutions?
- 77) What do you wish to achieve with the solution?
- 78) What benefits do you believe the solution would have to the business?
- 79) Can you compare the vision to something else that you have seen from another company?
- 80) Have you done any benchmarks or studies that helped you envision a solution?
- 81) What do you want the ability to do with the solution in order to accomplish your goals and objectives? How about other users of the new solution?
- 82) Are some objectives more important than others? Why?
- 83) How will we know that the vision is acceptable to each stakeholder?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 84) How will we know we are done and that we have achieved success?
- 85) Tell me about any new features or functions that you are looking for...
- 86) Are there any innovative technologies that are expected to transform processes?
- 87) How will automating processes improve efficiencies and can it be justified?
- 88) Are there any business policies or regulations that may constrain the solution?
- 89) Are there any differences depending on the location of the users?
- 90) Are there any new business policies that need to be supported?
- 91) Are there any checks that must be made before any actions are taken?
- 92) Are there any new approvals or decisions that need to be made?
- 93) Are there any technology constraints that may influence the solution we select?
- 94) Is there any information needed for executive or management decisions? Which and why?
- 95) Has this been tried in different markets or other industries?
- 96) Should third party solutions be considered?
- 97) Do you have any ideas for a solution?
- 98) Why that solution? How does that solution idea meet your needs?
- 99) Are any solution ideas unacceptable to other stakeholders?
- 100) As we develop the solution, is there anything else we should keep in mind?
- 101) Can you tell me if some of the numbers will change, such as # of users, # of transactions, etc.?
- 102) Can you forecast the numbers that change over time, such as users doubling in the next year?
- 103) Do you know of any security needs that must be more stringent than what we have?
- 104) What are you trying to accomplish with the new system that will be different from what you are doing today?
- 105) Are there different outcomes from the new system?
- 106) Are there any known exceptions or “what ifs” that must be considered?
- 107) What assumptions might you or others have regarding the solutions that you think we should discuss?
- 108) Do you have a list of functionalities that you expect?
- 109) Is the service (product) going to be implemented in your organization for external use?
- 110) How do you imagine the ideal product will work if done precisely as you planned?
- 111) What is the priority of those needs?

Process Improvement Questions

- 112) What is the end goal of the process?
- 113) What business events trigger the process?
- 114) Can you describe the event that triggers the new process?
- 115) Are there any business processes performed (outsourced) outside of the company (external)?
- 116) Which manual processes do you feel can be automated?
- 117) On a scale of 1-5, how critical would you say the process is and why?
- 118) On a scale of 1-5, how complex would you say the process is and why?
- 119) Are there any exceptions to the process or any workarounds in place and why?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 120) What do you like most about the process?
- 121) What do you like least about the process?
- 122) Are there single points of failure?
- 123) Are there any defects above tolerance levels?
- 124) What barriers exist that may hinder the process from being more effective?
- 125) Are there any processes that need to be optimized in some way?
- 126) Do you need to reduce process execution time? Why?
- 127) Is there any lag time within the process?
- 128) Would you remove any existing processes, and why (non-value add)?
- 129) Does the process waste any resources?
- 130) Are there any processes we should not touch or change at all? Why?
- 131) Are there any processes that should never change, and why?
- 132) Do you have any current metrics in place that measure any portions of the process? Do any need to be changed?
- 133) Do you use any external software that is also supported externally for any of your processes?
- 134) Does the process interface with other systems owned by a different organization? Why is that dependency needed?
- 135) Are there any new processes or interfaces that will need to be considered?
- 136) Is the process redundant with other processes performed in other business units?
- 137) Can dependencies to other processes be reduced?
- 138) Can you describe the steps involved in the new process?
- 139) Who performs those steps in the new process?
- 140) What might go wrong or interrupt those steps?
- 141) Is there a different way to perform that step?
- 142) What would be the most critical function to improve productivity within your system?

Requirement Complexity Questions*

[Based on list from *Mastering Business Analysis Versatility* by Eugenia C. Schmidt]

- 143) When reviewing requirements with team members, have team members done anything like this before? (Replies to questions can be put on a scale)
- 144) Does the team have any experience building such a solution? How much experience?
- 145) Are any of the solutions planned to be outsourced? How many vendors/contracts? What type of contracts?
- 146) How many stakeholders are impacted by the requirement?
- 147) Are the impacted stakeholders in various geographical locations? How easy is it to get access to them for requirement elaboration?
- 148) Are there any political or other external influences impacting the requirement?
- 149) Can you predict how many types of users would interact with the solution to this requirement?
- 150) Does the requirement impact user skills?
- 151) How old is the existing system that the requirement impacts?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 152) Are there any outstanding defects or other changes affecting the impacted existing process?
- 153) How confident are we regarding its scope of work and function?
- 154) How many assumptions are we making as a team around this requirement?
- 155) How likely is the requirement to change during its solution development?
- 156) Will the speed with which the requirement must be fulfilled impact the quality or the acceptance of the requirement?
- 157) Do functions have to cross different platforms or types of technology (different hardware requirements)?
- 158) Are there communications between different vendor products?
- 159) Are there different business events or triggers?
- 160) Are there any dependencies with other solutions not yet implemented?
- 161) Are there external interfaces required? How many? What types?
- 162) Is this requirement related to other requirements? What kind of relationship exists (shared information, within the same process, Parent-Child, etc.)?
- 163) Is it possible that when this requirement gets implemented it might break something else?
- 164) How drastic will the effect of the implemented requirement be on the job procedures?
- 165) Does the team have some pre-built modules that can be reused to address a portion of the new requirement?
- 166) Can the requirement be broken down into smaller, less complex components that can be implemented more iteratively?

Solution Requirement Questions (functional, data and non-functional)

TRANSACTIONAL DATA

- 167) What information must the system: Create, Read, Update, Delete, List?
- 168) What information must be displayed at each screen and why? [Currency (latency) of information, Validity of the information]
- 169) Does the information change states? How does it change from one state to the other? Example for Driver's License: New, Expired, Revoked, Suspended, Probation, Restricted

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

- 170) What decisions need to be made and what events triggers those decisions?
- 171) Why are those decisions important and what is their impact? How can they improve business results?
- 172) What questions need to be answered to make those decisions?
- 173) What information do you need to answer those questions?
- 174) Is the information currently available? Where?
- 175) Does the information need to be integrated with information from other organizations?
- 176) Is this information also needed in other organizations?
- 177) Will you be using any business intelligence information to gain insight into processes to improve process performance?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 178) Does the information need to be in a particular state?
- 179) Do you know where the source of the data is currently? Is it adequate for your needs?
- 180) Does the information need to be aggregated or summarized in a particular way?
- 181) Do we have consistent and clear definitions of the data? Will a data dictionary or data mapping be required?
- 182) Should any information be excluded?
- 183) Would you want any exceptions reported? Based on any tolerance levels?
- 184) Any trends that you want reported?
- 185) Are you having any data quality or integrity issues? Can you elaborate on the root causes of those issues?
- 186) If you had the ability to analyze your own data, what would you analyze?

QUALITY ATTRIBUTES (non-functional)

- 187) What quality attributes must the system possess (for agile this would be considered as either part of the acceptance criteria within the sprint - impacting the user story acceptance or it can be identified as technical debt addressed as part of enterprise infrastructure changes. If research is required for a decision, then that is called a spike)?
- 188) What gaps exist in the operation of the software? For example: Performance, Reliability, Robustness, Security, Usability
- 189) What should the state of the deployment environment be? For example: Availability, Flexibility, Interoperability, Install ability, Portability, Recoverability, Scalability, Safety
- 190) What should the state of the development environment be? For example: Efficiency, Maintainability, Reusability, Testability
- 191) What frequency of backups is needed?
- 192) For extensive outages, what disaster backup and recovery are needed?
- 193) Is there a need to temporarily define a solution to transition from the current state to the future state? For example: Transformation of data formats, start-up entry of information, entry of historical information, validation of current to future state interface information
- 194) Does a legacy system need to continue for a time after the new system has been deployed?
- 195) Do any business rules need to be converted upon deployment?

USABILITY

- 196) How do you imagine the screen navigation?
- 197) Are there areas that are more complex to navigate through than others, such of number of actions required to accomplish a task or effort in locating information [Simplify, Easier]?
- 198) Are some specific users having more difficulty in navigation than other users [new, infrequent, inexperienced, etc.]?
- 199) Are users making errors due to navigation issues [# of errors, rate of errors, etc.]?
- 200) Have the users been trained on how to complete their tasks?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 201) How often do users go to the tutorials or other navigation aids?
- 202) Are there any user procedures that need to be replaced or terminated?

INTERFACES

- 203) Are there any standards for system to system communications?
- 204) Do different transactions require unique formats?
- 205) Are there rules as to where transactions are distributed (various systems)?
- 206) Are there any import or export protocols?
- 207) Are there any message exchanges with hardware devices?
- 208) Are there any special external systems that manage rules, user parameters, reports, etc.?
- 209) Are there any special user interfaces?
- 210) Do any interfaces need to be terminated once we are at future state?

Project Management Questions Impacting Business Analysis

- 211) How will the project timeframe impact the scope of the solution? Can the scope be reduced to meet time constraints?
- 212) How will the project budget impact the scope of the solution? Do you think the scope is feasible within the budget constraint?
- 213) What are some roadblocks or risks that may affect the way we conduct our business analysis work?
- 214) Do we have the resources to conduct business analysis activities for this project?
- 215) Can we modify the approach to the project based on uncovered requirement risks?
- 216) What type of project is it and how might it affect the approach to business analysis (predictive vs. adaptive)?
- 217) Do any dependencies exist with other projects? How might that affect the business analysis activities?
- 218) Security [or other function] seems to be very important theme in your product backlog, would you like improvements to be implemented in a whole different sprint in and of itself?

Solution Decision Questions

- 219) What are the key drivers for the solution?
- 220) Do solutions need to align to any specific strategic vision or direction?
- 221) How risk tolerant is your organization, and the individuals within it, in accepting new technology solutions?
- 222) Are there constraints that may limit the type of solutions we look at? For example: operating on existing technology platforms, must have features, interfacing with other existing products, budget, etc.
- 223) Do we have the capabilities to build the solution in-house?
- 224) Should a formal evaluation of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions be conducted?
- 225) How will the final solution be decided and who will be involved in that process?

200+ Business Analysis Questions

- 226) Should solution ideas be captured during the requirement elicitation process and who will be involved in reviewing those ideas?

Questions About Value

- 227) How might you justify moving forward with this project? Does the cost justify the value to the business?
- 228) Can the tangible and intangible business value both be described?
- 229) Can elements of intangible benefits be made more tangible?
- 230) Is there an expected return on investment?
- 231) What is the perceived value of the solution to each stakeholder [value proposition]?
- 232) What are the tolerances if the full value is not implemented or must be implemented in phases?
- 233) Can requirements be prioritized based on their value to the individual stakeholder, organization or enterprise?
- 234) Does value for one stakeholder group impact or conflict with the value defined by another?
- 235) What does the stakeholder consider most important among value variables? For example: trade-offs between quality, time, need, cost, etc.
- 236) Can we make business requirements SMARTer?
- 237) Do we need to align value to a balanced score card, strategy or other enterprise-wide initiatives?
- 238) How robust must we trace value through the project's life cycle [impact traceability effort]?

Context-Free Questions

- 239) Anything else?
- 240) What else?
- 241) Is that it?
- 242) Can I recap?
- 243) Can you restate that a different way?
- 244) Can you show me?
- 245) Can you give me some examples?
- 246) Why? Who? What? When?
- 247) Say some more about that.
- 248) What other way have you tried that?
- 249) What do you mean by _____?
- 250) What is the reason for _____?
- 251) Tell me more about _____.
- 252) Describe the way you _____.
- 253) How do you feel about _____?
- 254) I would like to understand better. Can you clarify _____?