Business Analysts in an Agile World

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What is this about ...

Value of software

Building the right product

Building the product right

Where do BA’s fit in this ...
What this is not ...

Back to basics – requirements gathering

How To workshop for iterative development

A means to get you to buy my book ...
I haven’t written one
What Does It Mean to Develop Software?

Solving a problem, that you don’t understand, and keeps changing.

Creating a solution, that you don’t understand, and keeps changing.

Expressing ideas in a language, that you don’t understand, and keeps changing.

Using an interpreter with unforgiving error.

Making decisions with limited resources.

Software bugs, or errors, are so prevalent and so detrimental that they cost the product, according to a newly released study commissioned by the Department of Commerce. The research, which found that over half of the costs are borne by software users and the remainder by software companies, estimates the annual cost of software errors at $69.5 billion.

Flights delayed nationwide as glitch in FAA network cascades through air system
By HARRY R. WEBER and JOAN LOWY, Associated Press

February 20, 2009 1:34 PM PST

Most iPhone applications gathering dust
But the problem isn't just in the software. iPhone users have very short attention spans. The latest research suggests that people who file the 1040EZ form is nearly three years ago, and the U.S. General Accounting Office and the congress have recommended that the IRS Oversight Board, an independent panel of industry and technology experts who advise the IRS and Congress, take a more hands-on approach to managing the agency's IT budget and operations.
What does this lead to?

- Frustration
- Anger
- Disappointment
Where is the value of Software?

In its Use?

OR

How its developed?
Challenge for Software Teams

Building the right product

Right Product

Building the product right
Build the **right** Product

Goal: Not to build more software, goal is to minimize what we build. Make the world better for those who use the software we build.

Jeff Patton, Agile Conference 2012 Orlando

Build the right thing, for the right place, at the right time.

Mike Bollinger - Livefront
What do BA’s do ...

What is necessary to make sure we build the right product

Analyze
Advise
Anthropology
Solicit
Mitigate
Coach/Mentor
Educate
Team morale
Facilitate
Collaborate
How do we know ...

Are your clients delighted by your work?

Are you delivering software that people want to use?

Have you asked?

What is your definition of a successful project?

Is your success “qualified”?

Are you working at a sustainable pace?

Do you want to do it again?
Evolution of Business Analyst

Traditional BAs are growing up and OUT of IT

IT project teams are building software differently

Kupe Kupersmith - Business Analysis is Dead, Long live business analysis
Traditional

BA’s conditioned to believe they can and should define detailed requirement at the beginning of the project.

Assumes:
1. Customer can definitely know, articulate, and functionally define what the system or software should do at the end of project
2. Once documented, requirements will not change, at least not without potential project delays, budget overruns, or stunted features
3. Requirement process is confined to a single product owner who sits apart from the dev team envisioning the product

Does not acknowledge the inherent uncertainty in software development agile seeks to embrace.

Reference: “The Agile Business Analyst” Mike Cottmeyer, V. Lee Hanson
Iterative (Agile)

1. As we learn more about the evolving system, our knowledge will influence the system we want to build.

2. Process of building the system helps the team learn more about what is possible.

3. The very act of creating the requirements will cause them to change.

4. Begin to realize change is really good, helps us deliver greater value to customer and attempting to define everything up front results in constant change management.

Reference: “The Agile Business Analyst” Mike Cottmeyer, V. Lee Hanson
Challenge for Software Teams

Building the right product

Building the product right
What are we up against ...

Existing software development practices are not keeping pace with business needs.

Increasingly complex projects.

Clients don’t know what they want ...

Specialized skill sets decrease collaboration – “Don’t need Testers until the Test phase”

Limited team & management visibility

Software Development is an empirical process

How did Agile get started


1986 – 2001: A number of companies – Honda, Fuji, Cannon use the approach to build printers, cars, cameras, etc. demonstrating its usefulness.

2001: A group of supporters and practitioners of the Agile Method come together to create the Agile Manifesto

Reference: http://www.agilemanifesto.org/history.html
What is Agile?

- An iterative and incremental (evolutionary) approach to software development which is performed in a highly collaborative manner by self-organizing teams within an effective governance framework with "just enough" ceremony that produces high quality software in a cost effective and timely manner which meets the changing needs of its stakeholders.

- Includes a number of methodologies:
  - XP – Extreme Programming
  - Scrum
  - Adaptive Software Development
  - Dynamic Systems Development Method
  - Feature Driven Development

Reference: “Disciplined Agile Software Definition” Scott Ambler
http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/agileSoftwareDevelopment.htm

Reference: “ABC: An Introduction to Agile Programming”
http://www.cio.com/article/100501/ABC_An_Introduction_to_Agile_Programming
The Plan creates cost/schedule estimates

The Vision creates feature estimates

The Agile Manifesto

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools

Working software over comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration over contract negotiation

Responding to change over following a plan

While there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

Reference: http://agilemanifesto.org/
Agile Key Principles

- Customer Satisfaction
- Change
- Get to “Done”
- Collaboration through shared responsibility and Face-to-Face Communication

- Discipline
- Simplicity
- Leadership / Accountability through self-organization and empowerment
- Inspect and Adapt

Reference: http://agilemanifesto.org/
What is Agile? – Overview

Deliver highest business value items first. Expect changes. Continually improve.
Build the product right

Great teams build great software and those teams should be trusted and empowered to deliver.

Place tremendous amount of responsibility and accountability on the individual team member.

Creates a culture of empowerment and trust.

The Agile Business analyst - Mike Cottmeyer, V.Lee Henson
Understand empowerment

• Client/Customers
  – What to work on
  – When to work on it and in priority order
  – When to stop (enough to release)

• Team members
  – All have say – expected speak up
  – Try it and see (ideas welcome)
  – Check how they work together
Build the product right

Shorter commitments
More opportunity to course correct
Fail early fail fast

Evolve it ... stop arguing.
Ask the team what is the right thing to do?

MINIMUM viable product
You can’t discover which experiences are great if you don’t get something out there for people to use.
The Benefits of an Agile Approach

• Projects within organizations with “High Agility”:
  – 73% finish on Time
  – 75% finish on Budget
  – 83% meet goals and business objectives
  – 71% meet or exceed ROI

• Key Drivers that reshape Culture:
  – More collaborative and robust risk management
  – Rigorous change management to better adapt to changing market conditions
  – Increased use of iterative practices, based on a solid foundation of project management standards

Business Analysts in Iterative world

Work doesn’t change ... it's how you approach it

High visibility ... a lot of stuff on the walls

Collocation ... sitting in close proximity
remember Crunch time?

Increased Collaboration on all aspects of prior tasks

Triad – Ken Pugh/3 Amigos – George Dinwiddie
Business Analysts in Iterative world

Increased need to coach/educate/mentor
‘Get comfortable with being uncomfortable’

Used to tell business to leave us to our work
now we are asking to be in the room

Are the right conversations happening between
you and client (management and users)
You and dev and tester
you and your management
Do you really need Bas?

Some one asked me the question are Bas needed in Agile

Why eliminate a role whose sole purpose is to fully understand the users and what their needs are?
The Death of “Agile”

• Why is “Agile” Dying?
• Analogy: Object Oriented Design
• “The way that Systems are built.”

“I try not to use the word ‘agile’ anymore. It tends to evoke emotional responses that cloud valuable discussions about the real issues. I came to realize that it’s more effective to talk specifically about ways to cope with uncertainty and reduce risks while improving the capability to deliver the right thing in the right way.” – Simon Baker, “No Bull: After 12 Years of Agile has the World of Software Really Changed?” May 2012.
Take aways

• BAs add value ➞ focus on user
• Build the right product
• Build the product right
• Value of Software ➞ $$$$$