BLOGS

1.BA COMPETENCIES

Business Analyst (BA) competencies include much more than just technical knowledge. Over the course of a career, a Business Analyst performs a wide range of activities such as requirement elicitation, analysis, writing user stories, preparing documentation, supporting solution design, and conducting stakeholder meetings. To add real value to a project, a BA must be equipped with a broad mix of skills, knowledge areas, and behavioural abilities that enable them to understand business needs and translate them into workable solutions.

Business Analyst competencies are the set of capabilities required to perform BA responsibilities effectively and consistently. These competencies span multiple areas, including analytical, behavioural, communication, business, and technical skills. According to the International Institute of Business Analysis and its BABOK Guide framework, a BA must develop these capabilities to identify business needs, recommend solutions, and support organisational change through structured analysis practices.

One of the most essential competencies is analytical thinking. This helps a BA understand complex problems, interpret data, and propose suitable solutions based on evidence rather than assumptions. Analytical skills include critical thinking, root cause analysis, problem decomposition, systems thinking, prioritisation of requirements, and risk assessment. These abilities allow a BA to look beyond surface-level symptoms and identify underlying causes that impact business performance.

Behavioural competencies are equally important because they shape how a BA collaborates with teams, stakeholders, and leadership. These include adaptability, accountability, time management, ethical conduct, professionalism, and attention to detail. Since BAs often handle sensitive information and work under tight timelines, maintaining integrity and responsibility becomes crucial in ensuring trust and reliability.

A Business Analyst may work across different domains throughout their career, such as banking, healthcare, aviation, retail, and education. Therefore, they must possess strong business acumen. This includes an understanding of industry trends, organisational structure, operational processes, business models, regulatory frameworks, and customer expectations. Domain awareness helps a BA ask the right questions, interpret requirements accurately, and propose practical solutions aligned with organisational goals.

Communication is another core competency, as a BA acts as a bridge between business stakeholders and technical teams. Strong verbal communication, active listening, written documentation, negotiation, presentation, and facilitation skills are necessary to ensure clarity and alignment. A BA must be able to translate complex technical information into simple business language and vice versa, ensuring all stakeholders have a shared understanding.

Technical awareness also plays a vital role in day-to-day activities. While a BA may not always be deeply technical, familiarity with tools and platforms enhances efficiency and collaboration. Knowledge of tools such as Balsamiq, MS Visio, Jira, Confluence, Power BI, Tableau, Excel, SQL, and Azure supports requirement documentation, data analysis, process modelling, and reporting.

Interaction and stakeholder management skills are equally critical. A BA must build relationships, manage expectations, resolve conflicts, influence decision-making, and facilitate workshops. Strong interpersonal skills enable a BA to coordinate between cross-functional teams and ensure smooth project execution.

Additionally, a BA applies various business analysis techniques during requirement gathering and analysis. These include SWOT analysis, PESTLE analysis, root cause analysis, brainstorming, stakeholder analysis, MoSCoW prioritisation, Pareto analysis, workshops, interviews, and surveys. Each technique helps in understanding problems from different perspectives and arriving at informed decisions.

Leadership qualities further strengthen a BA's role. Even without formal authority, a BA often leads discussions, drives clarity, and supports strategic decision-making. Initiative, ownership, problem-solving mindset, and strategic thinking help them guide teams and maintain project momentum.

Since Business Analysts operate in dynamic environments, continuous learning and adaptability are essential. Technologies, business models, and stakeholder expectations evolve rapidly, and a successful BA must constantly upgrade skills, gain domain exposure, and refine analytical thinking.

Altogether, these competencies enable a Business Analyst to perform effectively, collaborate with stakeholders, support organisational objectives, and deliver value-driven solutions. By bridging the gap between business and technology, a competent BA ensures that requirements are well understood, solutions are relevant, and outcomes contribute to long-term organisational success.

2.ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) is a structured problem-solving technique that is used to address the root cause of a problem rather than only solving its symptoms. RCA helps in resolving issues from their origin so that the problem does not recur in the future. In simple words, RCA is the process of identifying, analysing, and eliminating the fundamental cause of a problem to prevent it from happening again. It focuses on long-term solutions rather than temporary fixes and ensures that organisations improve continuously.

A Business Analyst frequently encounters defects, process failures, stakeholder complaints, and performance issues in day-to-day work. Root Cause Analysis helps the Business Analyst identify the actual problem instead of making assumptions. It improves processes and efficiency, supports better decision-making, and helps reduce risks, costs, and rework. By understanding the root cause, the BA can recommend sustainable solutions that add long-term value to the project and the organisation.

The steps in Root Cause Analysis include identifying the problem, collecting data related to the problem, analysing the data, identifying possible causes, verifying the root cause, implementing corrective actions, and monitoring the results. This is not the end of the cycle; it continues every time a new problem occurs. RCA is therefore not a one-time activity but a continuous improvement approach that helps organisations learn from issues and prevent recurrence.

There are several techniques used to perform Root Cause Analysis. Some of them include the Pareto chart rule, the Five Whys technique, PCMA, FMEA, and the Fishbone diagram.

The Pareto technique works on the Pareto Principle (80/20 rule). It helps identify the few causes that contribute to most of the problems. It prioritises issues based on their impact so that teams focus on fixing the most critical ones first. It is represented as a combination of a bar chart and a line graph. On the Y-axis, we represent the number of occurrences and the cumulative percentage frequency, while on the X-axis, we arrange the issues in descending order of importance. By analysing this chart, teams can concentrate on the major contributors to the problem and resolve them effectively.

FMEA is a technique used to predict, detect, and evaluate potential failures in a system, process, or product. It analyses processes and assesses the impact, severity, and likelihood of failures occurring. This method helps prevent issues before they arise by identifying high-risk areas in advance. In this approach, we analyse the entire process and determine severity, occurrence, and detection ratings. These values are multiplied to obtain a risk priority value. The higher the value, the more severe the problem is considered. Based on this, teams prioritise actions and implement preventive measures.

The Five Whys principle is used to identify the root cause by repeatedly asking “Why?” The main purpose of this technique is to find the specific cause behind a problem rather than just addressing its symptoms. In this process, each “Why” is based on the answer to the previous one. By continuously asking questions, we gradually reach the underlying cause and arrive at a logical conclusion. It is simple, effective, and widely used in business and process analysis.

The Fishbone technique is another important RCA method that uses a diagrammatic representation. The diagram resembles the structure of a fish. At the head of the fish, the problem statement is written. Along the spine, we list the possible causes of the problem. Each cause is further divided into subcategories representing different ways in which the problem might occur. This structured mapping helps teams visualise all possible contributing factors and analyse them systematically to identify the root cause.

PDCA stands for Plan, Do, Check, Act. It is a cyclic and iterative technique used to analyse and improve processes continuously. In the planning stage, we identify the problem and decide the actions required. In the “Do” stage, we implement the changes. In the “Check”

stage, we evaluate whether the changes have produced improvements. In the “Act” stage, we standardise the solution or make further improvements. This is not a one-time process; it continues even after improvements are achieved to ensure ongoing optimisation.

These are some of the key methods through which Root Cause Analysis is performed. Each technique provides a structured way to understand problems and identify their underlying causes. RCA ultimately focuses on identifying and eliminating the root cause rather than treating symptoms. By doing so, organisations can prevent recurring issues, improve quality, enhance efficiency, and deliver better outcomes.

In conclusion, Root Cause Analysis is an essential practice in business analysis and process improvement. It enables teams to move beyond surface-level fixes and develop long-term, sustainable solutions. By continuously applying RCA techniques, organisations can strengthen decision-making, reduce operational risks, and build more reliable systems and processes.