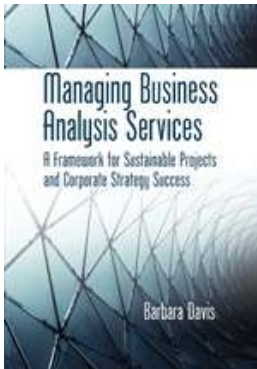


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Managing Business Analysis Services***

Author: **Barbara Davis**

Publisher: **J. Ross Publishing**

List Price: US\$54.95 Format: hard cover; 232 pages

Publication Date: 2013 ISBN: 9781604270792

Reviewer: ***Madison Berndt***

Review Date: August 2013

Introduction to the Book

A surprising amount of knowledge is packed into this book. Barbara Davis begins with a good assessment of business analysis service organizations in their current state as found in most organizations. Her assessment is filtered through a SWOT analysis and numerous examples are provided to support the argument for an improved framework. Diagrams are used to highlight the general concepts and tie everything together. The book is full of examples that will be familiar to most business managers. The succinct way that Davis describes the dynamics involved in these examples is something that most managers will appreciate.

Readers are educated about the processes used by the Business Analyst as well as the value provided to projects and the organization. The mindset and professional motivations of the Business Analyst are evident throughout the book and will ring true with Project Managers and Business Analyst. For business managers using the services of a business analyst this offers a wealth of guidance on how to assess, coach, and make use of talent. The book offers actionable guidance for building a sustainable business analysis service organization as well as improving individual performance.

Overview of Book's Structure

The first section of the book deconstructs the business analyst services model and how this contributes to results. Davis uses the SWOT assessment to identify what works and what doesn't work in today's organizations that use a business analysis service model. Davis then defines a new framework that builds on the findings of her analysis. The new framework is applied to organizing, managing, and developing business analysis professionals.

Organization and control of business analysis services within the new framework is further defined in the second part of the book. Business managers will find the information provided on measurement and monitoring of performance useful and actionable. To insure a sustainable implementation of the proposed services model, the author provides ample coverage of career paths and accountability for adding value to strategic business objectives. Every element covered in this section is actionable and can easily provide a transition point for moving in a more sustainable direction. Each element ties into the overall services framework and also stands on its own as a good standard practice.

Engagement models and their impact on business analyst services are covered in detail later in the book. Key factors that lead to problems are used to educate the reader on how some current practices are inhibiting performance. Application of the framework proposed by Davis moves the organization away from many of the problems. The value offered by the book is that a new services framework does not need to be in place before taking action. Sufficient understanding is provided to help identify immediate opportunities for improvement.

Highlights: What's New in this Book

This book provides guidance for professionals who manage the delivery of business analysis services. The IIBA promotes and defines business analysis as a discipline. Barbara Davis builds on that foundation to show how the business analysis services can best be delivered in an organizational context. In doing that, she also provides a valuable resource for project managers and other professionals that need to get the most value possible from the business analyst employed on their teams.

Highlights: What I liked!

What I like most about this book are the many well-articulated explanations. The author does an excellent job of crafting statements that pull everything together into one or two sentences. This alone makes the book interesting to read.

The level of detail provided on a tactical level makes this book useful for professionals at any level in an organization. What I like about Barbara Davis' book is that all the tools are provided to facilitate any individual to implement the model starting with their personal sphere of influence. As an example, a project manager may have the opportunity to influence who is selected for a project team and probably has an understanding of who would work best on the team. However, using the competency model, it's possible to formalize the criteria used for selecting subject business analyst support. That increases the odds of getting the best person on the team and has the added benefit of defining a standard for identifying and developing talent.

Shortfalls: What was Missing?

There is a lot to like about this book and the level of detail is good for the purpose of implementing the framework. The book does not go into detail about specific Business Analysis techniques or methods. However, sufficient information is provided that most business managers will quickly understand what is being discussed.

Who might benefit from the Book?

The book offers insights into the assessment, management and development of Business Analyst, and is useful to any IT professional. For those responsible for developing Business Analysts, this book will be a handy guide that gets a lot of use. For Project Managers, this book gives you the insight that you need to identify and utilize top talent for your project teams. For Business Analyst, this book will show how to develop your career and demonstrate value in any organization.

Conclusion

A Lot of relevant information is provided and the book is enjoyable to read. Barbara Davis provides a complete overview of her framework for a sustainable business analysis services organization. Although many elements covered in the book may be familiar to most business managers, the way they are tied together in the book creates a fresh understanding of the opportunities for improvement. The strongest aspect of the book comes from the fact that it is written by a seasoned professional who is able to share insights on how best to manage the change process itself.

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About the Reviewer



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Madison Berndt is a Project Manager located in the Dallas, Texas area focused primarily on IT related projects within the retail industry. His experience includes startups, mid-sized/high growth, and established Fortune 500 companies. He is a graduate of UT Arlington having earned his Bachelor Science in Economics in 1989 and Masters of Business Administration in 2007. In 2010 he earned the PMP certification and is an active volunteer with the PMI Dallas Chapter. Madison can be contacted at email@wberndt.com.