

MARK EDMEAD - PRESENTER

Q: Please explain what makes the BRM different from the BSA (Business Systems Analyst) role

A: There is a bit of a challenge between all these different groups working together. There can be a lot of confusion between the BSA and the BRM. Usually the BRM will use the BSA/BA/EA – will use as a SME to understand the business. The BRM is looking at an integrated/higher level; they can use the BSA to help understand what's going on. There's a bit of a distinction on that, because the BRM is really interested in the relationship between the business and IT, while the BSA may not be so concerned about that. BSA's aren't there to manage the relationship.

Q: How many organizations have you worked with that have BRMs? It seems funding one or more BRMs (even explaining value proposition) could be a barrier

A: I don't know how many companies per se, but I've been working in this relationship for the last 4-5 years, and it IS a challenge. Merlyn Vaughn is a founder of the BRM Institute and has a blog that he discussed how to provide the value proposition to show management, and you can find more information at brminstitute.org

Q: Shouldn't the project manager own some of these responsibilities? Does it create a clash between the PM and BRM?

A: Yes, it happens a lot. What happens is that the project manager has the relationship with the client, and now the BRM wants that relationship. The reason is we like to see the BRM role as the primary contact. The project manager has to move from project to project or client to client, and not to one relationship. The BRM is a more consistent contact. The project manager isn't there to manage the RELATIONSHIP, but they are more there to manage the PROJECT. Not that it doesn't happen. How to manage? Create a RACI chart and put a column for the PM and the BRM and the BA, and the Enterprise Architect and define all the activities that will be performed.

Q: Where do you typically see the BRM reporting in the organization?

A: Usually they report to IT, to the CIO or someone designated by the CIO.

Q: What kind of profile/soft skills are then required?

A: We talked about emotional intelligence and negotiation skills. You want to understand relationship building and communication and how people like to communicate. If you look at the BRM institute it will talk about the various types of skills. To interface within all levels of the organization these are going to be important skills to have.

Q: What is the difference between a Tactical BRM and a Service Level Manager?

A: That's probably a little too complex to answer it here now. The SLM is usually working at the solution part of it, and not necessarily at the tactical part of it. The focus is a little bit different. The focus of a tactical BRM is to make sure the solution that you're implementing is in line with the planning for IT. The other person is actual solutions in operation, they do work together. When there is a conflict, RACI charts again could be useful.

Q: Is there anything like a dashboard to measure and communicate on the quality of the IT/Business relationship?

A: That spreadsheet that I have will give you the ability to use a maturity model and plot the actual results, so yes.

Q: Is the issue of having more contractors than fixed term staff for the IT section related to BRM...or is the incapability of CEO/CTO to let the Business owners believe the IT staff criticality?

A: I'm not sure if there is a distinction between the two. Many people use contractors. Sometimes needs of the business change and they only need a contractor for six months. It's hard to answer that question, it usually depends on the needs of the company.

Q: Will this be recorded?

A: Yes, the recording is on our website, www.itsmacademy.com