

A Collaborative Approach to Business Process Modeling Using a Repository

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Joan has specialised in business analysis for more than 25 years and is currently involved in Enterprise Business Architecture.

She was the first South African to qualify as a CBAP® (Certified Business Analysis Professional) and has also trained in TOGAF and Zachman Frameworks.

Joan is the Director of Education on the Board of the IIBA®-SA Chapter that she co-founded.

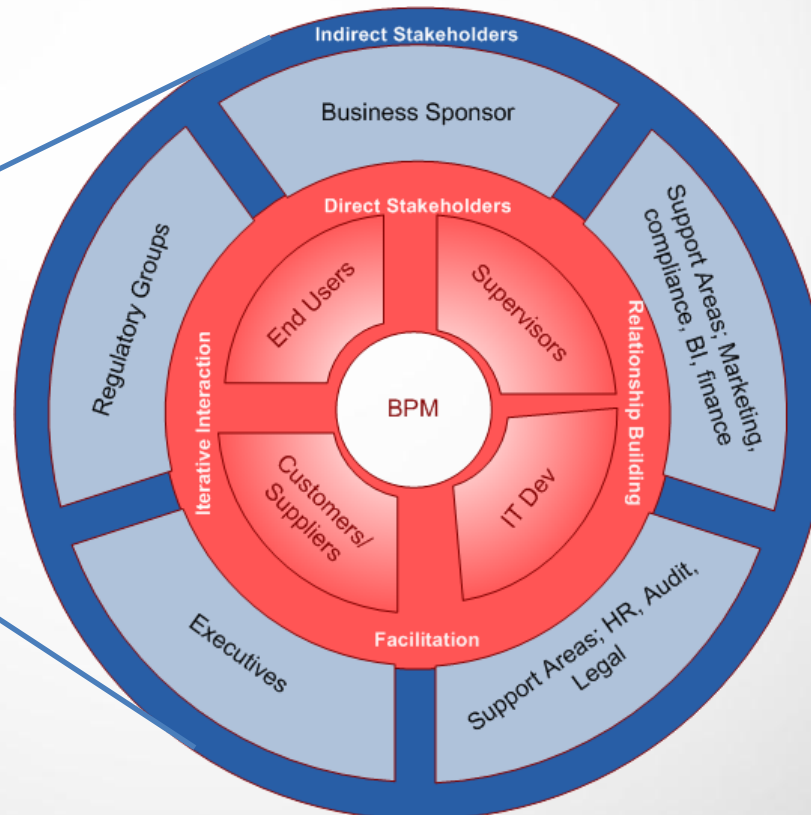
Joan lectures in Business Analysis for ESI-International (an IIBA™ Endorsed Education Provider) and is an Executive Consultant in Business Architecture and Analysis, consulting to organisations at a strategic level and providing mentoring and coaching at a tactical level.



- Who needs to know what?
- How will you tell them?
- When will you tell them and how often?
- How will you create buy-in?
- What information do you make part of a permanent record and how?
- Where do you store all of this information?

Steps to successfully collaborate with stakeholders are:

- 1. Plan**
- 2. Facilitate Stakeholder activities**
- 3. Document**
- 4. Validate**



Executive Groups :

- Facilitate Executives to determine strategic goals
- Facilitate Business and IT Stakeholder Feasibility teams to select suitable proposal options
- Facilitate Portfolio management teams to select and prioritise project investments to maximise investment

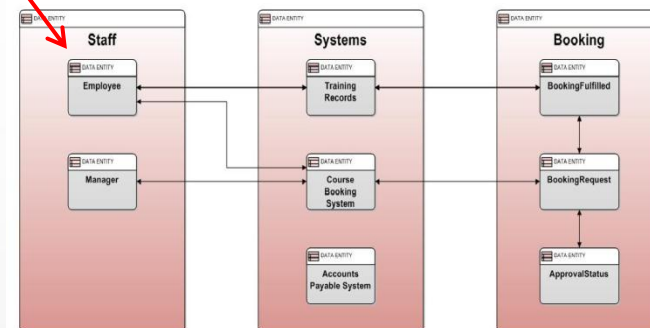
Business Stakeholders Groups :

- Facilitate brainstorming sessions to identify process improvement opportunities
- Facilitate Focus Group sessions to gain consensus of opinions on processes across same or different job groups
- Facilitate Joint Application design (JAD) sessions to gather requirements for To-Be designs
- Investigate AS-IS views to determine Root Cause of business problems
- Improve usability via force-field analysis, analysing and mitigating risk
- Formal and informal presentations with stakeholders to validate needs, gain approvals and to get buy-in
- Facilitate Business and Technical team sessions to evaluate solutions options and select vendor software

Root Cause Analysis:

*“An analytical technique used to determine the basic underlying reason that causes a variance or defect or a risk”**

**Source: PMBOK® Guide,*



A Business Analysis must create different model views for different stakeholder groups

Step 1: Plan stakeholder activities

Plan initiative activities

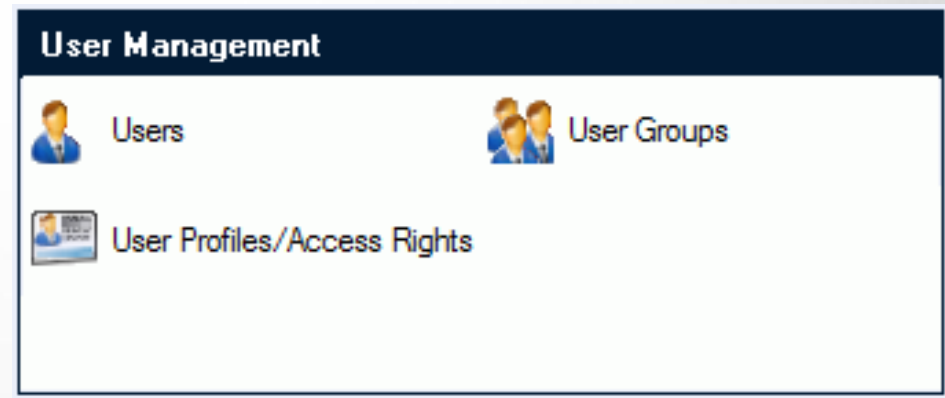
- Identify stakeholders (from Business case; Interviews, etc) including the business sponsor, users, and other stakeholders
- Categorise stakeholders into groups of common interests to ensure they participate when needed
- Identify geographical boundaries, adjust activities for remote locations
- Perform stakeholder analysis (influence, biases, authority, risk, etc)
- Identify interaction approach (face-to-face meetings; facilitated sessions; remote sessions, etc)
- Ensure strategies are in place to deal with resistance to change

Deliverables

- EA or Requirements Work Plan
- Work Breakdown strategy
- Stakeholders Communication Plan

Central Repository

- Set up Groups and Allocate Permissions
- Consider training needs to use the tool



Bear in mind; the use of collaboration tools does not remove the need for personal interaction skills such as Facilitated workshops.

Step 2: Facilitate stakeholder activities (1)

Facilitation is:

- The process of designing and conducting an effective group session
- The act of assisting a group in making decisions, solving problems, or exchanging ideas and information

**A Business Analysis Professional
facilitating sessions must
remain neutral at all times**

A Facilitator is:

A facilitator is someone who brings structure and process to a group session and is responsible for guiding the session participants through various techniques to gain consensus. Usually undertaken by the Analyst professional with business and technical knowledge and is competent using facilitation techniques.

Facilitation is an iterative process.

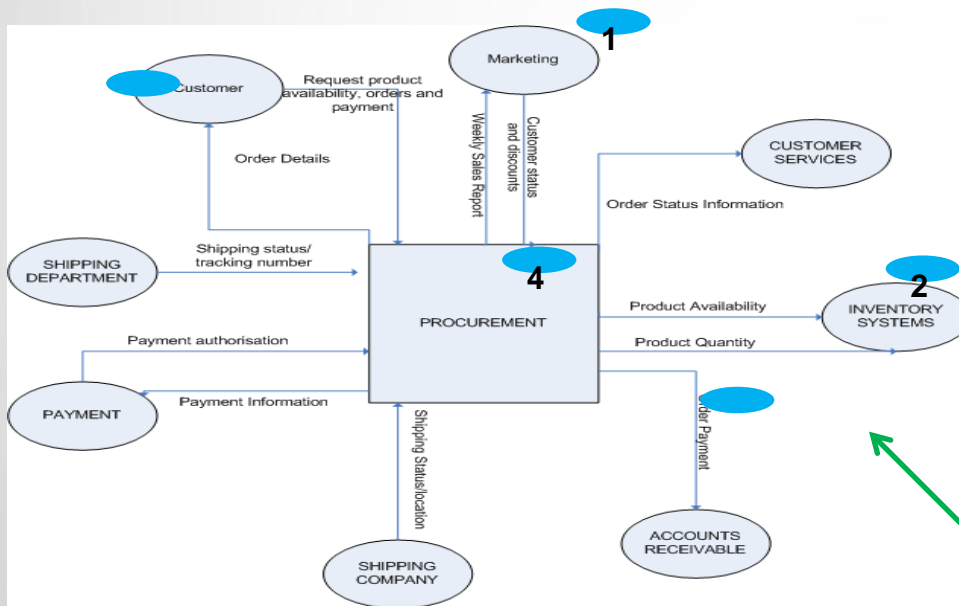
The iterative process to obtain analysis deliverables needs to be supported by a flexible, easy to use tool that **supports** the business analysis process. Most tools in the market pick up requirements management based on the assumption the requirements are defined and approved. The tools do not support the iterative business analysis process needed to get the requirements to the position of completeness and approval.

Step 2: Facilitate stakeholder activities (2)

Facilitation techniques are:

- Focus group sessions
- Brainstorming sessions
- Joint Application Design (JAD) sessions
- Structured Review and Walk-through sessions.

A Business Analysis Professional facilitating sessions must remain neutral at all times



Use modelling techniques when interacting with stakeholders for visualisation purposes. It helps to keep people focused, generates interest and creative thinking.

Warning! Do be highly skilled in modelling techniques and do know what models to use and when.

- Introduce the facilitator role, the session objectives, agenda and ground/session rules
- Establish a professional and positive atmosphere of respect and openness
- Create a safe place for open and honest discussions – job titles remain outside of the room
- Introduce the processes and techniques to be used in the session – brainstorming techniques, modelling techniques, etc.
- Facilitator to maintain neutrality on content and foster a process of building consensus – must manage conflict to gain win-win position.
- Ensure all stakeholders participate and establish their interests, assumptions, and perceived constraints
- Adjust facilitation processes and/or techniques as necessary
- Keep the group on track and maintain focus on topic and objectives
- Have a colleague scribe during the sessions – this is a skilled BA professional and not a minute-taker
- Manage group's expectations and thank them for participating
- Revisit Parking lot; Issue and Action Items – make sure items are allocated to names and dates
- Wrap-up session and communicate next steps

Post session:

- Finalise models and supporting text and add to central repository
- Submit link to model to stakeholders within 24 hours for further collaboration/issue resolution
- Ensure stakeholders understand how to 'read' the models and supporting text information
- Assess facilitation and decision processes – see how to improve for next session
- Follow up and assist in resolving open issues

There are many difficulties an analyst experiences when attempting to 'collaborate' with stakeholders situated in different venues and spread across geographical boundaries. Examples of the issues that Analysts have to deal with are:

Environmental Considerations

- Time Zones considerations
- Lack of common language (Clichés and rapid speech)
- Lead time in receiving materials
- Limitation on facilitation techniques; may need to assist participants in visualizing flipcharts and voting on issues
- Difficult to manage conflict due the lack of face-to-face observation
- Participants may be engaged in other activities.

Pre-meeting Considerations

- Send access instructions to participants timeously
- Check equipment and links are working correctly
- Have reconnect instructions handy when/if connection difficulties are experienced.

During the meeting Considerations

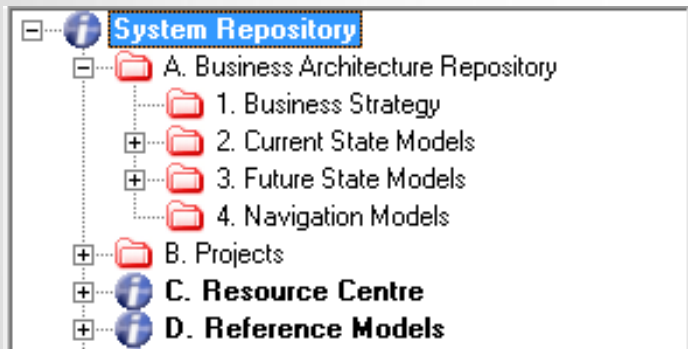
- Have a roll-call and introduce everyone
- Have someone take notes and time the session
- Get everyone to participate, ask direct questions, use electronic visuals if necessary.

Post-meeting Considerations

- Follow instructions on previous slide.

Step 3: Document (1)

When eliciting, analysing and documenting organisation information, be aware of the state of the business environment being investigated. The two states are: As-Is (Current) state and To-Be (future) state. It is important to ensure the state being documented because when business stakeholders talk about their work, they state what they currently do, why there is a need for change and their recommendations for change. Usually this is done in a conversational dialogue and a skilled analyst needs active listening techniques to distinguish and dissect the content into the right components when documenting.



Current and future states are investigated at all levels of abstraction, that is using Architecture level views, Process views and at detailed task level views. Most analysts experience difficulty in levelling.

Tip: A Business Process is a logical model of an end-to-end process which defines a complete piece of work that is of importance to the organisation. It has a defined started point and a defined end point that produces some form of tangible output that is meaningful to the business. A Business Process is modelled using a 'workflow' diagram that links activities that are initiated by a single external stimulus and are associated by a common business purpose such as "Provide Loan Offer". The workflow is initiated either by a customer requesting a loan offer or by the rework of new insight on a declined loan being requested. All of the activities contained in the workflow are associated with the common business purpose of providing a loan offer.

Step 3: Document (2)

Workflow Model elements:

- Workflow name (use verb-qualifier-noun naming convention)
- Boundaries around the activity or activities based on the role/business unit that performs the work
- Start point which is the independent trigger that initiates the workflow
- Control flows that represent internal triggers between activities and exiting the workflow
- Variation flows based on business rules
- End point/s that end the processing or provide interfaces to trigger other processing activities, such as “check customer credit record” that is still associated with the common business purpose.
- Data containers for each start/end point, data flow, activity and for the workflow.
- Workflow activities that are generalised at the higher level, will contain place-holder activities to support further decomposition (called sub-processes) at a lower level. For example, “check customer credit record” will contain lower level detail activities such as “Check credit limit”; “check credit usage”; “authorise available credit”.

Step 3: Document (3)



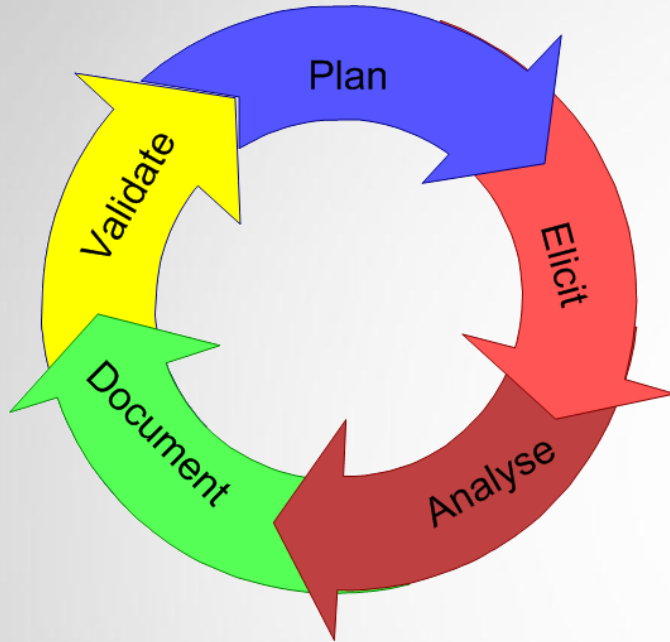
Activity elements are:

Activity is a generic term that includes operations, routines, procedures, actions and tasks carried out by business units or employees in some form or other, either automated or manual. An activity defines something the organisation does to achieve one or more of its objectives. The definition of Activity means it is complete in itself and does not depend on references to other activities for its completion. That is, the processing steps to perform the activity from start to finish.

Triggers are:

A trigger is a stimulus or incident that initiates one or more activities (Input triggers) and the effect of what has happened when an activity is completed (output trigger i.e. "Communication Letter sent").

Step 3: Document (4)



Help your audience to understand your models and supporting artefacts by keeping them simple and up-to-date.

Collaborate with stakeholders in an iterative and incremental manner. Use a variety of modelling techniques that depict different concepts or views and iterate back and forth between process models, business rules, data, use cases, etc. so that models evolve incrementally over time with collaboration and feedback from business and IT stakeholders. Using this structured approach will gain you respect because stakeholders will participate willingly when you work closely with them.

Architecture and project realisation is a way of thinking and not a concrete technology implementation. It is supported by the use of frameworks, patterns and best practices that complement the mindset and more importantly, it needs to be supported by a central repository that allows for incremental reuse and structure of organisation information. One fact in one place. Ensure models and documented text are clearly defined and aligned to the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation.

Step 4: Validate (1)



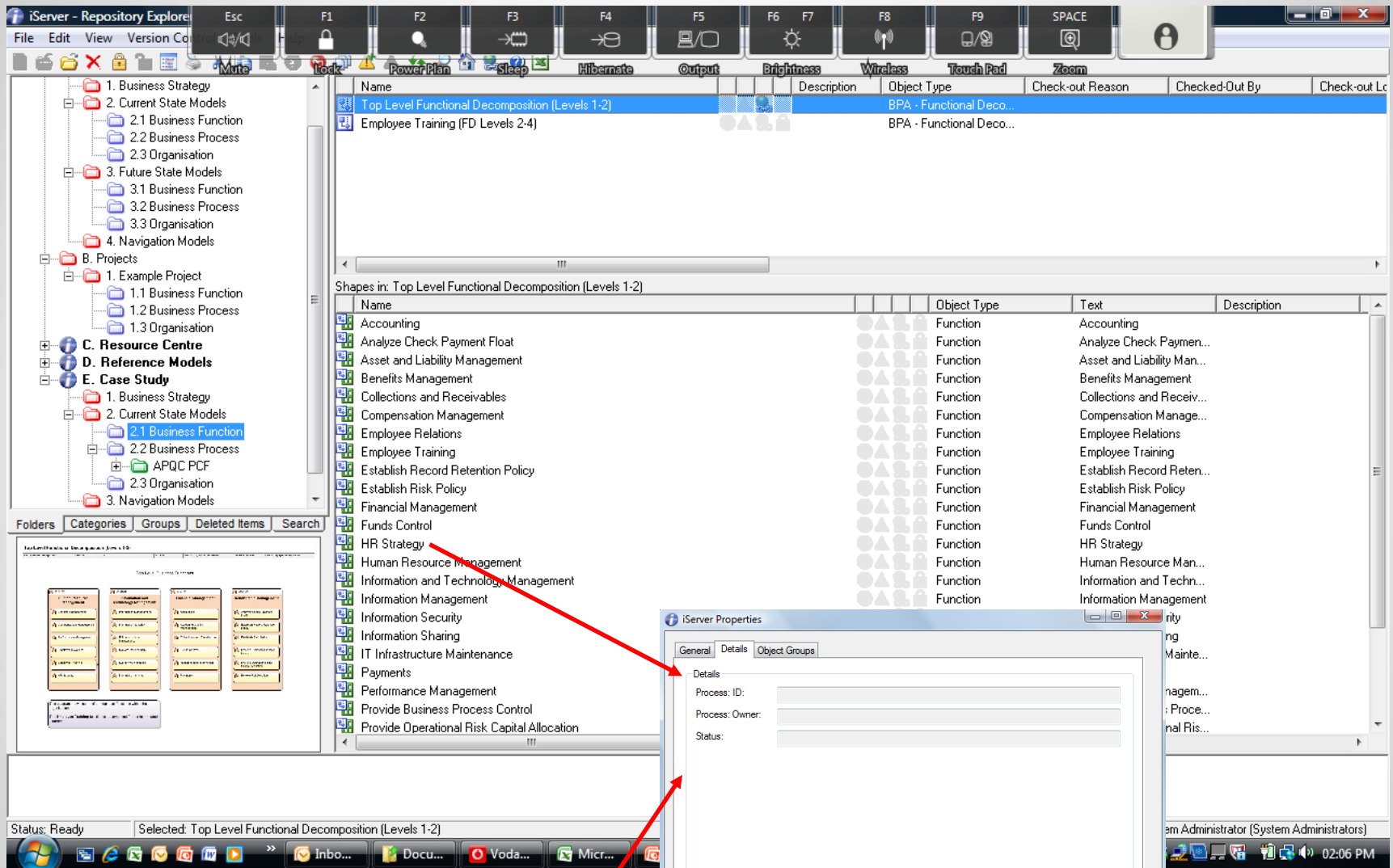
Getting approval and sign-off is an important milestone for analysts. Sign-off is an official approval from business and IT stakeholders that the initiated work is moving in the right direction. An ideal method to get sign-off is to facilitate structured walk-through or review sessions where business stakeholders can ask specific questions about the work, raise issues and have them address immediately. These sessions may be face-to-face or virtual.

Few excellent tools are available to Analysts that provide a repository where :

- work can be packaged and organised in a way that supports alignment between Enterprise Architecture models, project models through to networking diagrams.
- artefacts can be stored,
- where artefacts/objects can be reused by analysts and project teams and are version controlled,
- traceability or relationships are supported from strategic objective, to vision statements, to process models, data models, screen prototypes, etc. as analysts breakdown requirements and organisation information to the lowest levels.
- lifecycle statuses such as 'approved'; 'In progress' or 'under review' can be stored to support improved management and progress of work.

Validation techniques are defined in the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge®, owned and managed by the International Institute of Business Analysis® (IIBA)

Step 4: Validate (2)



The screenshot displays the iServer Repository Explorer interface. The left pane shows a hierarchical tree structure with folders like 'Business Strategy', 'Current State Models', 'Future State Models', 'Navigation Models', 'Projects', 'Resource Centre', 'Reference Models', and 'Case Study'. The 'HR Strategy' object is highlighted in the 'Case Study' folder. The right pane shows the 'Shapes in: Top Level Functional Decomposition (Levels 1-2)' table, which lists various functions and their descriptions. The 'iServer Properties' dialog box is open, showing the 'Details' tab with fields for 'Process ID', 'Process Owner', and 'Status'. A red arrow points from the 'HR Strategy' object in the tree to the 'iServer Properties' dialog box.

Name	Description	Object Type	Check-out Reason	Checked-Out By	Check-out Lc
Top Level Functional Decomposition (Levels 1-2)		BPA - Functional Deco...			
Employee Training (FD Levels 2-4)		BPA - Functional Deco...			

Name	Object Type	Text	Description
Accounting	Function	Accounting	
Analyze Check Payment Float	Function	Analyze Check Paymen...	
Asset and Liability Management	Function	Asset and Liability Man...	
Benefits Management	Function	Benefits Management	
Collections and Receivables	Function	Collections and Receiv...	
Compensation Management	Function	Compensation Manage...	
Employee Relations	Function	Employee Relations	
Employee Training	Function	Employee Training	
Establish Record Retention Policy	Function	Establish Record Reten...	
Establish Risk Policy	Function	Establish Risk Policy	
Financial Management	Function	Financial Management	
Funds Control	Function	Funds Control	
HR Strategy	Function	HR Strategy	
Human Resource Management	Function	Human Resource Man...	
Information and Technology Management	Function	Information and Techn...	
Information Management	Function	Information Management	
Information Security	Function	Information Security	
IT Infrastructure Maintenance	Function	IT Infrastructure Mainte...	
Payments	Function	Payments	
Performance Management	Function	Performance Management	
Provide Business Process Control	Function	Provide Business Proce...	
Provide Operational Risk Capital Allocation	Function	Provide Operational Ris...	

iServer Properties

General Details Object Groups

Details

Process ID:

Process Owner:

Status:

HR Strategy Object Meta-
data properties

Iterative and on-going Collaboration with business and IT stakeholders is **key** to the success of any EA or project work. To interact successfully with stakeholders requires analysts to have the following skills and characteristics:

- Must be technology agnostic and maintain an objective perspective.
- Be well respected and influential to support Senior Business and IT stakeholders. Establish credibility early by demonstrating business and IT knowledge.
- Master facilitation techniques and bear in mind success is about people – so interact and manage stakeholders well.
- Be able to negotiate. It is important to seek the win-win position on issues as work content is being developed. Do not let emotions or power-play get in the way.
- Be good at effective presentations and using different presentation media.
- Take the initiative to persuade, inspire, motivate and influence others plus have the ability to make quality decisions with a high level of stakeholder buy-in.
- Be respectful of stakeholders – include everyone, omit no-one.
- Be able to see the strategic big picture but have the ability to zoom in on small detail without getting lost.
- Be articulate and persuasive. Spend substantial time communicating and educating.
- Be persistent and a strategically inspired change agent. Overcome stakeholder resistance to change and pursue positive transformation.
- Be a master at good business analysis practice and modelling techniques and focus on the critical business processes that add value to the organisation and its customers. Follow the money trail.

Do you have any questions?



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