

**College of Humanities
Master of Financial
Technology-
FinTech**

**Business Analysis
FNT613**

Lecture 4

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Investigation Techniques of business situation

4th Lecture

FNT613

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Investigation Techniques of business situation

Week5
Chapter5

Lecture 4

Learning objectives

- Understand the importance of investigation techniques in analyzing business situations.
- Learn the different types of investigation techniques used in business analysis.
- Gain knowledge of how to gather and analyze data effectively.
- Develop skills in conducting interviews and surveys to gather information.
- Learn how to use observation techniques to gather insights about business situations.

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Learning objectives Cont.

- Learn how to use scenario analysis to assess potential outcomes and make informed business decisions.
- Understand the importance of ethical considerations in conducting investigations and gathering information.
- Develop skills in presenting investigation findings and recommendations effectively.
- Learn how to use visual aids and data visualization techniques to present complex information in a clear and concise manner.

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Learning objectives Cont.

- Gain knowledge of how to write comprehensive investigation reports that provide a thorough analysis of the business situation.
- Understand the role of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in conducting effective investigations.
- Develop skills in working collaboratively and communicating effectively with stakeholders during the investigation process.
- Develop skills in presenting investigation findings and recommendations in a clear and concise manner.

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Chapter outline

- Introduction
- Prior research
- Investigation techniques; Interviews, Observation, Workshops, scenarios
- User analysis
- Prototyping
- Quantitative approaches
- Suitability of techniques
- Documenting the current situation

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INTRODUCTION

When business analysts first enter an area of study, they need a range of tools and techniques to help them understand the breadth and depth of issues.

While they will be making use of background research, workshops, one-to-one interviews and quantitative methods of verification of data, they must also use diagnostic tools for understanding a problem area, and different approaches to documenting their findings, according to the focus.

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INTRODUCTION

The assumption behind this chapter is that the analyst will be responsible for performing a broad study that begins with a general understanding of the situation, then produces a diagnosis of the underlying causes and subsequently understands the requirements for a solution.

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1. Prior Research

When an analyst first approaches their client organization, (or division or department), they should first spend time gathering as much background information as they can. There are various sources available, but the internet has made access to such background information much simpler than before.

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- **Study website**
- **Study company reports**
- **Study procedure manuals and documentation**
- **Study the organization chart**



1. Prior Research

- **Study website**

This is the quickest and simplest way to get a view of what the organization does, what its values are, how it brands itself and how it wants to be perceived.

Depending upon the nature of the organization the website should provide access to information about the products and services, opportunities to interact with the site and give feedback, and offer details about the company.

One useful inference from the design of the website is how the company views its place strategically, in terms of the balance between the cost and the perceived quality of its products.

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1. Prior Research

- **Study website**

The design of the website will often give an indication of the level of quality it aims at: primary colors, flashing icons, liberal use of exclamation marks and free use of suggestive words like 'Bargain!' imply a more populist approach, while a quieter background, carefully composed photographs, moderated colors, all imply a concern for a perception of quality.

Interpreting a website in this way can provide an early insight into the business imperatives for the organization.

These things will give an idea of the level of professionalism of the site and expected standards of technology presentation and achievement.

This in turn can provide clues about the technological maturity of the company – is the technology aligned to the business intention, or are the developers showing off their skills at the expense of the company's message?

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1. Prior Research

- **Study company reports**

If we are approaching a commercial company in the role of an external consultant, it is useful to look at company reports to confirm the health of the company.

For example, UK companies are required to file the Income Statement (Profit and Loss Account) and Balance Sheet with Companies House, from where they may be accessed by the public.

These documents can provide much rich information about the levels of debt, liquidity, gearing, trends in growth or stagnation over the previous years, and a first insight into where there may be problems.

As an example, following an invitation to carry out consultancy work for a new client, an examination of the company's entry at Companies House revealed that it was about to be suspended for non-submission of accounts over the previous two years.

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1. Prior Research

- **Study procedure manuals and documentation**

Many business analysis projects will have a scope that is more local than those suggested above, and more focused on specific sets of processes. The prior research for such projects will include studying current system documentation and any procedures manuals.

These are to give an idea of the expected 'as-is' process, but another note of caution – over time such documentation will naturally become unrepresentative of the actual course of the process.

Studying the documentation is never a substitute for proper investigation and analysis; rather it enables preparation, a prior understanding of the domain in question that gives the analyst an entry point for various lines of investigation.

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1. Prior Research

- **Study the organization chart**

The organization chart sets out the management structure of the organization and can offer insights into the style and culture of the organization. Understanding the job roles and reporting lines are a valuable preparation for the more detailed investigation to follow.

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2. Investigation Techniques

There are many reasons that business analysis is required. For example, a study might be to investigate an area of concern, diagnose a weakness in the business processes or compile the requirements for a new system. There will be a variety of techniques available, depending upon the size of the domain in question, its location, the numbers of stakeholders to be consulted, and the nature of the information to be ascertained. Qualitative techniques can be further broken down into one-to-one sessions and collaborative sessions. The most common of the qualitative one-to-one approaches to investigation are the interview, a meeting with individual stakeholders and shadowing sessions. Collaborative approaches include workshops and focus groups.

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- **INTERVIEWS**
- **OBSERVATION**
- **WORKSHOPS- focus Group**
- **SCENARIOS**
- **USER ANALYSIS**
- **PROTOTYPING**
- **QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES**



2. Investigation Techniques

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2. Investigation Techniques

1. INTERVIEWS

The interview is a key tool in the business analyst's toolkit. A well-run interview can be vital in achieving a number of objectives. These include:

- making an initial contact with key stakeholders and establishing a basis for the business analysis work;
- building and developing rapport with different business users and managers;
- acquiring information about the business situation, including any issues and problems;
- discovering different stakeholder perspectives and priorities.

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2. Investigation Techniques

1. INTERVIEWS

Interviews tend to take place on a one-to-one basis, which is a key reason why they can be invaluable in obtaining personal concerns. They focus on the views of an individual and provide an environment where the interviewee has an opportunity to discuss their concerns and feel that they are given individual attention.

However, interviewing can be quite time consuming so the analyst has a responsibility to ensure that the interviewee's time is not wasted, the required information is acquired and a good degree of understanding and rapport is achieved.

2. Investigation Techniques

1. INTERVIEWS

There are three areas that are considered during fact-finding or requirements interviews:

- current functions that need to be fulfilled in any new business system;
- problems with the current operations or performance that need to be addressed;
- additional features required from the new business system.

Interviews may offer vaguely worded suggestions and so the skill of the interviewer is needed to assess the implications of the initial suggestions and draw out more detailed information.

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2.1 INTERVIEWS

- ❑ Advantages and Disadvantages of interviewing
- ❑ Preparation for interviewing
- ❑ Conducting the interview
- ❑ Following up the interview



2. Investigation Techniques

Lecture 4

2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Advantages of interviewing

One of the major benefits of conducting an interview is that it provides an opportunity to build a relationship with the users or clients. Whether we are helping the business to improve operations, solve a specific issue or replace a legacy IT system, it is critical that we understand the perspectives of the people involved with the business system.

Taking time to form good relationships early on in the project will increase the opportunities to understand the context and details of the business users' concerns and needs.

The focus of the information will vary depending upon the needs of the project but will usually include details about the current operations, including difficulties in carrying out the work, and will help with the identification of requirements for the new business system.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Advantages of interviewing

- providing an opportunity to understand different viewpoints and attitudes across the user group;
- providing an opportunity to investigate new areas previously not mentioned;
- enabling the analyst to identify and collect examples of documents, forms and reports the clients use;
- allowing an appreciation of political factors that may affect how the business performs its work;
- providing an opportunity to study the environment in which the business staff carry out their work.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Disadvantages of Interviewing

- They take up the interviewee's time, which is often difficult to be spared from a busy schedule, and this may mean that they try to hurry the interview or resent the time that it takes.
- The information provided during interviews may be an opinion from just one interviewee's perspective, requiring confirmation by quantitative data before any firm conclusions can be drawn.
- The analyst will have to coordinate these views and identify any gaps and conflicts between the different interviews.

2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

The interviewing process is greatly improved when the interviewer has prepared thoroughly. This saves a lot of time by avoiding unnecessary explanations and also demonstrates interest and professionalism, which helps to establish a mutual respect and rapport.

The classic structure of who?, why?, what?, when? and where? provides an excellent framework for preparing for interviews.

Who?

This involves identifying which stakeholders you will interview and considering the order in which they will be interviewed. Interviews usually begin with the more senior stakeholders as this helps us to understand the context for the problem before moving to the details so it is useful to interview someone who can provide an overview.

A senior person is also able to identify the key people to see and make any necessary introductions.

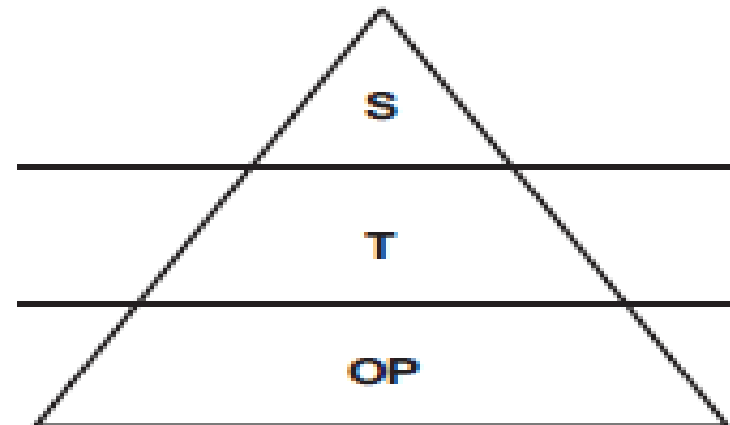
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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

☐ Preparation for interviewing*Who?*

The level of authority of the interviewee will dictate the nature of the questioning. The STOP model (Figure 5.1) illustrates a simple hierarchy.

Figure 5.1 'STOP', the organisation hierarchy



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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

Who?

'S' represents the strategic level of management. Our concerns at this level are to:

- confirm the terms of reference;
- understand any management information needs;
- agree the approach to the investigation; and
- ensure at this level that the project is aligned with the business objectives and strategy.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

Who?

'T' represents the tactical level, or middle management. Here we are concerned with

- understanding issues of performance,
- targets and management control.
- understand the Critical Success Factors (CSF) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that have been chosen and any associated reporting requirements.

These interviewees will be able to tell us what processes and functions are carried out in the department, and who the key people are, but we should not expect detailed descriptions of how the processes are executed. The tactical level interviewees should be aware of higher-level strategic decisions and hence able to identify any new business requirements for this area.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

- *Who?*

'OP' level represents the operational level, the people who perform the actual tasks of the department.

➤ These are the people who can describe accurately the existing business situation, and can identify problems and workarounds to deal with the current procedures.

➤ They have information about source documents, bottlenecks and the flow of the work, and are likely to provide ideas about the volumes of work (although these need to be treated with caution and should be analyzed using quantitative investigation techniques).

The questioning strategy for the interview will depend upon several factors, including where the prospective interviewee sits in the hierarchy, the objectives for the project and the nature of the issues to be discussed.

2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

- *Why?*

This involves considering why a particular interviewee is to be interviewed and the place of the interviewee in the organization, as described above. The objectives of the interview may range from the detailed elicitation of business needs to just establishing a good rapport and working relationship with a key stakeholder.

The forms of questioning and of note-taking will differ significantly depending upon the objectives of the interview.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

- *What?*

- This involves considering the information that could be provided by an interviewee and the areas you might explore during the interview.
- It helps identify the items to be discussed during the interview;
- Provides the foundation for the agenda.

Issuing an agenda two days or so before the interview helps to focus the mind of the interviewer and enables the interviewee to prepare by considering in advance the information required.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Preparation for interviewing

- *When? and where?*

These questions involve considering the venue, timing and duration of the interview. Typically, the interviewee will dictate the exact timing and duration, as this will depend upon availability. **Limiting interviews to a maximum length of one hour is a good idea since:**

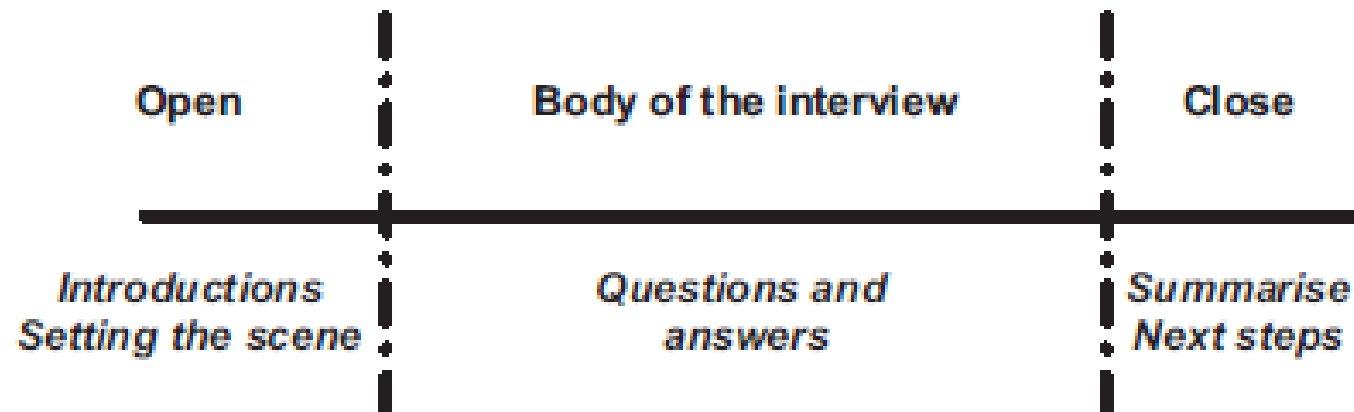
- The majority of interviewees will be busy with numerous work commitments.
- It can be very difficult to concentrate for more than an hour so longer interviews are often unproductive. This applies to both interviewer and interviewee.
- The longer the interview the harder it is to write up the notes accurately.

2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

□ Conducting the interview

It is important to structure interviews if the maximum amount of information is to be elicited using a basic structure of introduction, body of interview and close, as shown in **Figure 5.2**

Figure 5.2 The structure of an interview



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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Conducting the interview

➤ *The introduction*

In addition to making personal introductions, it is also important that the analyst makes sure the interviewee understands the purpose of the project in general and the interview in particular.

It is important to make sure that the interviewee has received the agenda and that any points they wish to raise are clarified.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Conducting the interview

➤ *Body of the interview*

This context will usually cover the responsibilities of the interviewee, and their range of responsibilities.

Once we have a context, we can structure the interview by examining each relevant area separately and in detail.

This will enable us to consider the issues, and the impact of those issues, in each area and to uncover any specific problems and requirements.

If the purpose of the interview is to understand a current procedure, a good way of taking notes can be to draw a diagram, such as a flow chart.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Conducting the interview

➤ *Body of the interview*

If the purpose is to discuss a number of broader issues, including needs for the future, a mind map is a useful way of noting what has been said, and also, if drawn up as part of the preparation, provides an easy visual check on what has been covered and further areas for discussion.

This can be important as however well you have structured your questions in your preparation, conversations always take unexpected loops and diversions.

In some situations it is appropriate to use a portable digital recorder to capture the interview in preference to writing notes.

It should also be remembered that using a recorder will involve a considerable overhead: it can take up to an hour to transcribe ten minutes worth of conversation.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Conducting the interview

➤ *Closure*

It is important to close the interview formally. The analyst should:

- Summarize the points covered and the actions agreed.
- Explain what happens next, both with regard to the particular interview and the project. We will usually want to advise the interviewee that we will send them a copy of the written-up notes so that they can check for any errors.
- Ask the interviewee how any further contact should be made; managing the interviewee's expectations of future behavior can be extremely useful and will be invaluable if we need any additional information or clarifications at a later point. This also serves to keep the door open for a future interview session if required.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

❑ Conducting the interview

➤ Following up the interview

It is always a good idea to write up the notes of the interview as soon as possible – ideally straight away and usually by the next day.

If it is not possible to write up the notes immediately you will find this task easier if you read through them immediately after the interview, and extend them where they are unclear.

2. Investigation Techniques- Interviews

2. OBSERVATION

Observing the workplace, and the staff carrying out their work, especially early in an investigation, is very useful in obtaining information about the business environment and the work practices.

There are several different approaches to observation, depending upon the level and focus of interest: formal observation, shadowing, protocol analysis and ethnographic studies.

It is important that before any work is observed, the person being observed should be reassured that the objective is to understand the task not to judge their performance.

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2.2 OBSERVATION

- ❑ Advantages and Disadvantages of observation
- ❑ Formal observation
- ❑ Protocol analysis
- ❑ Shadowing
- ❑ Ethnographic studies



2. Investigation Techniques

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2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Advantages and Disadvantages of observation

The views of the stakeholders involved in a project may have been sought during interviews but, to really obtain a feel for the situation, the analyst needs to see the workplace and business practices. This has the following advantages:

We obtain a much better understanding of the problems and difficulties faced by the business users. Seeing a task performed will help us prepare appropriate questions for a more in-depth interview with the person responsible for that task.

It will help us to devise workable solutions that are more likely to be acceptable to the business. **Conversely, being observed** can be rather unnerving and the old saying 'you change what you observe' needs to be factored into the approach taken and resultant findings.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Formal Observation

It is important that the staff members being observed are prepared beforehand and are aware that this is in order to understand the task not, as many will fear, in order to assess their competence and performance.

If the staff members perceive the observer as having been sent by management, they are more likely to perform the task according to the rulebook, rather than how it has evolved over time.

It is perfectly acceptable to ask people being observed about the sequence of steps they are following.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Formal Observation

It is perfectly acceptable to ask people being observed about the sequence of steps they are following, so long as:

The question does not sound critical of the way the person is working, either in words or tone of voice. It does not distract from their performance of the job. The analyst must position themselves in such a way that they can see clearly all that is happening, but do not get in the way or otherwise interfere with the task.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Formal observation

To get full value from the observation, it is beneficial to watch the staff members perform the task several times in order to understand the standard sequence, any possible exception situations and how they are handled, timings for the task and any ergonomic factors or physical working conditions that may enhance or hinder performance.

However, observing more sedentary tasks, such as manning a customer services helpline, or telesales can still provide a lot of useful information, for example, to understand where problems are arising or to elicit requirements for a new system.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Protocol analysis

Protocol analysis involves asking the users to carry out a task and describe each step they perform.

A similar approach may be used to train a new member of staff or someone unfamiliar with a task.

For example, rather than teaching new learner drivers in a classroom before they try driving on the roads, the drivers learn by watching the task being both performed and explained simultaneously, and they then perform it for themselves.

2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Shadowing

Shadowing involves following a user for a period, such as one or two days, to find out what a particular job entails. This is a powerful way to understand a specific user role.

When shadowing, we can ask for explanations of aspects such as how the work is done, the information used, or the workflow sequence, so it is a good way of clarifying what the individual actually does to perform the role.

The longer the analyst spends shadowing a user, the greater the opportunity to build rapport and the better chance there is of capturing the additional details that may not be elicited during a single 45-minute interview.

Shadowing key staff is a useful approach during the requirements definition work, since it provides a visual context for processes described during interviews or workshops.

2. Investigation Techniques- Observations

❑ Ethnographic studies

It is derived from the discipline of anthropology and involves spending an extended period of time – from a few weeks up to several months – in the target environment.

This approach enables the analyst to gain a thorough understanding of the business system as, in a short space of time, the business community becomes used to the analyst's presence and behaves more naturally and authentically.

The main value gained from ethnography is an appreciation of intangible aspects such as the organizational culture in which any proposed change must be embedded, including recognizing where both formal and informal power and influences reside.

This approach can also be very useful when analyzing complex business systems, for example, where the staff members are highly expert in conducting their work and the business rules are difficult to assimilate.

2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

3. WORKSHOPS

Workshops provide an excellent collaborative forum in which issues can be discussed, conflicts resolved and requirements elicited.

They are also a useful forum for carrying out other activities, such as compiling process models, understanding data requirements, eliciting critical success factors and key performance indicators or analyzing the quality of a requirements set before they are formally documented.

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2.3. WORKSHOPS

- ❑ Advantages and Disadvantages of workshops
- ❑ Preparing for the workshop
- ❑ Facilitating the workshop
- ❑ Techniques
- ❑ Following the workshop
- ❑ Hothouse workshop
- ❑ Focus groups



2. Investigation Techniques

2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

□ Advantages of workshops

- Gain a broad view of the area under investigation: having a group of stakeholders in one room will allow the analyst to gain a more complete understanding of the issues and problems.
- Increase speed and productivity: it is less time-consuming to have one extended meeting with a group of people than interviewing them one-by-one.
- Obtain buy-in and acceptance for the project: when stakeholders are involved in such collaboration, not only will they be more open to any business changes or features that result but they are more likely to be champions of the change.
- Gain a consensus view or group agreement: if all the stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process there is a greater chance that they will take ownership of the results.

2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Disadvantages of workshops

Workshops can be time-consuming to organize. For example it is not always easy to get all the necessary people together at the same time.

If the workshop is not carefully facilitated, it may happen that a forceful participant will dominate the discussion. In extreme cases, such a participant may be able to impose a decision because the other members of the group feel disempowered and unable to raise their objections.

It can be difficult to ensure that the participants have the required level of authority – which sometimes means that decisions are reversed after the workshop has ended.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑Preparing for the workshop

The success or failure of a workshop session depends in large part upon the preparatory work done by its facilitator and its business sponsor for the workshop. **They should spend time before the event planning the following areas:**

- The objective of the workshop
- The people to be invited to participate in the workshop
- The structure of the workshop and the techniques to be used
- Arranging a suitable venue

Lecture 4

2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Facilitating the workshop

The workshop should start by discussing the objective and endeavoring to secure the participants' buy-in.

Where difficulties are anticipated, it may be useful to invite a senior manager or the project sponsor to open the workshop in order to define some ground rules and set the expectations for behavior.

During the workshop, the facilitator needs to ensure that the issues are discussed, views are aired and progress is made towards achieving the stated objective.

The discussion may range widely but the facilitator needs to ensure that it does not go completely off the track and that everyone has an opportunity to express his or her concerns and opinions.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Facilitating the workshop

This is often done by the facilitator keeping a record on a flipchart, but it is better practice to appoint someone else to take the role of scribe during the workshop.

The presence of a scribe allows the facilitator to concentrate fully on the process and the attendees, watching non-verbal behavior to identify members of the group who may be feeling unhappy or unable to make their points.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Techniques

There are two main categories of technique required for a workshop: techniques for discovery and techniques for visualization.

Discovery techniques are those that help the facilitator to elicit information and views from the participants. It is vital that the facilitator considers which technique would be most suitable for a particular situation and group of participants. Examples of useful techniques (shown in Figure 5.3) are:

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

□ Techniques

Figure 5.3 Workshop techniques

Discovery

Round robin
Brainstorming
Brainwriting
Post-it exercise
Stepwise refinement
Break-out groups

Workshop

Visualisation

Process models
Rich pictures
Mind maps
Context diagrams
Use case diagrams
Task scenarios
User stories

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

➤ Discovery Techniques

Brainstorming (sometimes known as idea storming), where the participants are asked to call out ideas about a given item, all of which are written on a flipchart or whiteboard.

Round robin discussions where the workshop participants are asked for their ideas in turn.

Brain-writing which has similarities with brainstorming but requires participants to write down ideas.

Sticky (post-it) note exercises also involve writing down ideas but in this case, the participants work individually or in pairs.

Stepwise refinement is where we take a statement or idea and keep asking 'why?, why?' to every answer until we think we've got to the heart of a problem, idea or situation.

Smaller 'break-out' or 'syndicate' groups, where specific aspects are considered and then reported back to the larger group.

2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

➤ Visualization Techniques

- Many visualization techniques are suitable for use in a workshop. Visual approaches are quick to understand and to explain, and they help workshop participants to access the information being captured.
- There are several useful pictorial or diagrammatic techniques such as process models, data models, use case diagrams, rich pictures and mind maps.
- These techniques help the business users to visualize the area under discussion.
- Text-based lists may also be required to keep records of suggestions, agreed action points or issues for further discussion.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑Following the workshop

After the workshop any key points and actions are written up and sent to the relevant participants and stakeholders. This should be done as quickly as possible as this will help to keep up the momentum and highlight the need for quick action.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Hothouse workshop

A hothouse workshop is a specific type of workshop that applies Lean and Agile principles to a business problem.

In Agile environments a project, or phase of a project, may be initiated by a hothouse workshop, bringing the business and development teams together to solve business problems and using prototypes to define the functionality and scope of the solution.

This idea derives from the work of James Martin at IBM in the 1980s, when a Joint Requirements Planning (JRP) workshop brought senior executives and analysts together to define functionality, scope and timeframes for new developments.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Hothouse workshop

The workshop group is typically split into smaller teams who each develop a prototype solution during a series of iterations.

Ultimately, the outcome should be a prototype solution to a business problem accompanied by additional analyses of the corresponding metrics, processes, costs and benefits required to enable the delivery of the full solution.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

❑ Focus groups

Focus groups tend to be concerned with business and market research. They bring together a group of people with a common interest to discuss a topic. While such a meeting has similarities with a workshop, it is not the same thing.

A focus group could be used to understand people's attitudes to any current shortcomings with the business system, for example, the reason why customers are unhappy with a service, or why the website is failing to turn hits into sales.

A focus group may be used to suggest ideas for future developments and directions.

A focus group will be used as part of an information-gathering exercise, but the findings will need to be evaluated and assessed against the strategy.

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2. Investigation Techniques- Workshops

□ Focus groups

Focus groups can be a cost-effective way of obtaining views and ideas, but are unlikely to offer too much in the way of design, and are not suitable for obtaining quantitative data.

As with a workshop, the success of a focus group session depends in large upon the skill of the facilitator in allowing all members to express their thoughts and opinions, and to drill down into whatever may be behind any strong feelings provided as feedback or suggestions.

2. Investigation Techniques

4. SCENARIOS

Scenarios are useful when analyzing or redesigning business processes as they help both the staff member and the analyst to work through the steps required of a business process or system.

A scenario description will include the business event that triggers the transaction, the set of actions that have to be completed in order to achieve a successful outcome and other aspects such as the actor responsible for carrying out the task, the preconditions and the post-conditions.

The preconditions are the characteristics of the business or state of the IT system that must be true for the scenario to begin.

One of the key strengths of scenarios is that they provide a framework for discovering the exceptions that require alternative paths to be followed when carrying out the task.

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2. 4 SCENARIOS

- ❑ Advantages and Disadvantages of Scenarios
- ❑ Process for Developing Scenarios
- ❑ Documenting Scenarios



2. Investigation Techniques

2. Investigation Techniques- Scenarios

❑ Advantages of scenarios

- They require the user to include each step and the transitions between the steps, and as a result remove the opportunity for omissions.
- The step-by-step development approach helps ensure that there are no taken-for-granted elements and the problem of tacit knowledge is addressed.
- They are developed using a 'top-down' approach, starting with an overview scenario and then refining this with further detail. This helps the business user visualize all possible situations and removes uncertainty.
- A workshop group refining a scenario will identify those paths that do not suit the corporate culture, or that are not congruent with any community of practice involved.
- They provide a basis for developing prototypes.
- They provide a tool for preparing test scripts.

2. Investigation Techniques- Scenarios

❑ Disadvantages of Scenarios

The disadvantages of scenarios are that they can be time-consuming to develop and some scenarios can become very complex, particularly where there are several alternative paths. Where this is the case, you will find it easier to analyze the scenarios if each of the alternative paths is considered as a separate scenario.

2. Investigation Techniques- Scenarios

□ Process for Developing Scenarios

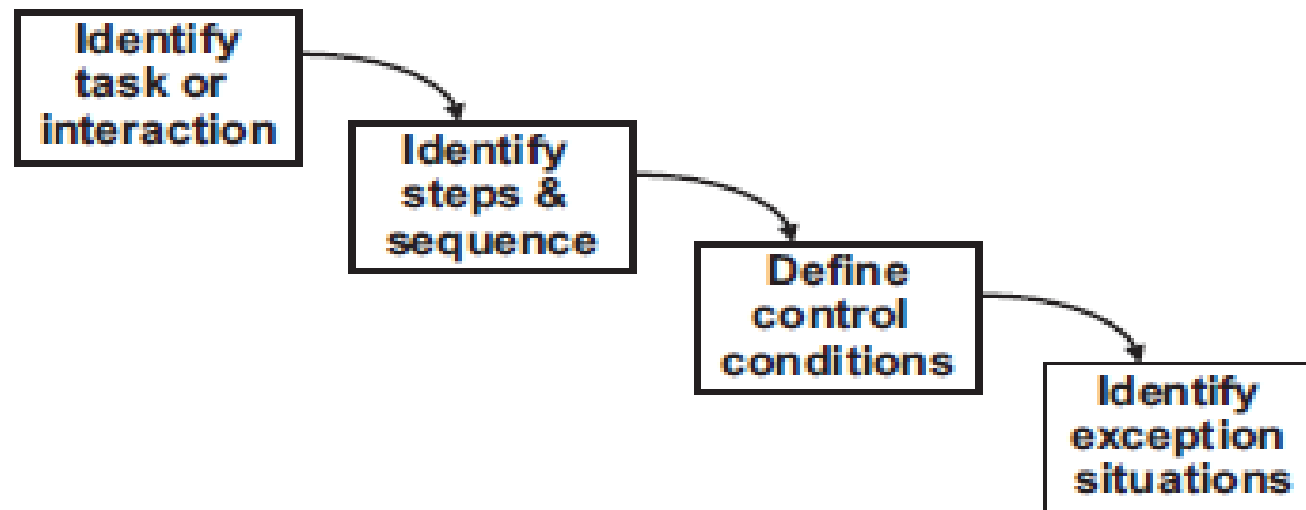
- Identify the task or interaction to be modelled as a scenario and the trigger, or event, that causes that interaction to take place.
- Identify the steps that will be carried out during the usual progress of the interaction, and the flow of these steps.
- Define the control conditions; the conditions that must be met in order to move from one step to the next, following the typical sequence of steps.
- Identify the alternative paths that would be required to handle the situations where the control conditions are not met.

Figure 5.4 shows an overview approach to developing scenarios and includes the following steps:

2. Investigation Techniques- Scenarios

❑ Process for Developing Scenarios

Figure 5.4 Process for developing scenarios



2. Investigation Techniques- Scenarios

❑ Documenting Scenarios

A popular way of documenting scenario descriptions is to develop use case descriptions to support use case diagrams. This technique is part of the Unified Modeling Language (UML) and is a textual method. However, there are a number of graphical methods for documenting a scenario, such as storyboards, activity diagrams, task models and decision tree diagrams.

CONCLUSION

Any business analysis project will inevitably include investigating business situations in order to clarify the problem to be addressed. To do this effectively, the business analyst needs a toolkit containing a range of investigative and diagrammatic techniques. This toolkit provides the basis for a key competency of a business analyst which is the ability to appreciate when particular techniques are relevant and the ability to apply them effectively.

REFERENCES

- **Required Reference:**

Debra Paul and James Cadle, et al, (2020). “Business Analysis”. BCS, 4th Edition. ISBN:978-1-78017-5102

- **Recommended Reading**

James Cadle, Debra Paul, Jonathan Hunsley, Adrian Reed, David Beckham, Paul Turner (2021). “Business Analysis Techniques” 3rd Edition, BCS. ISBN: 978-1-78017-5690

The End of Lecture

Thank You

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