



SumatoSoft Discovery Phase: Business Benefits

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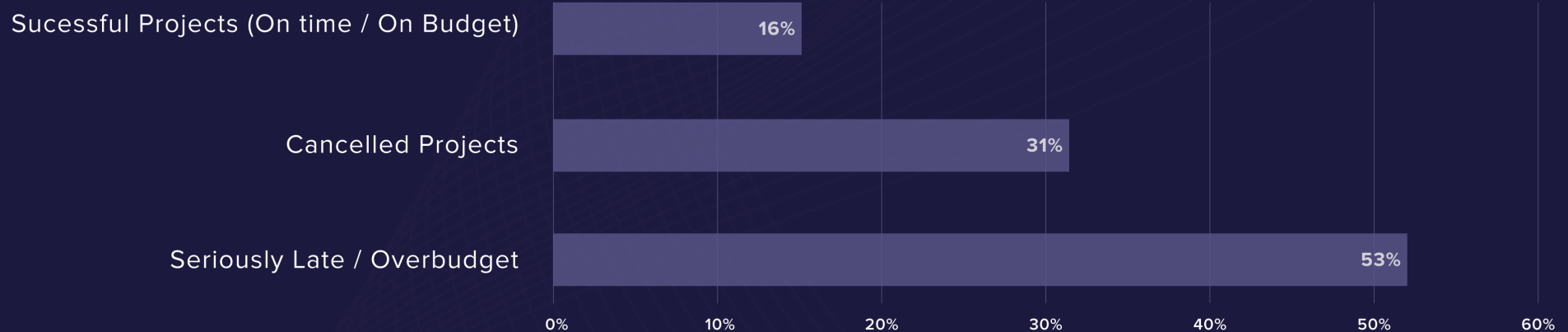


Introduction

Everyday hundreds of IT projects are started; hundreds of organizations entrust their business future to technologies. However, many of these projects will fail or will be delivered late or/and over budget.

The Standish CHAOS Report, which surveyed more than 9,000 IT projects, found that 31.1% of all projects was cancelled before they were completed. Challenged projects accounted for 52.7% (they were finished later than planned and with the exceeding budget). Only 16.2% of the surveyed projects were delivered successfully.

Even those projects, which were completed, had mere changes in their original specifications. It was revealed that projects completed by big companies had only 42% of the originally planned features and functions. Smaller businesses had better rates - 78.4% of deployed projects with at least 74.2% of their original features and functions. However, it is still far from being perfect.

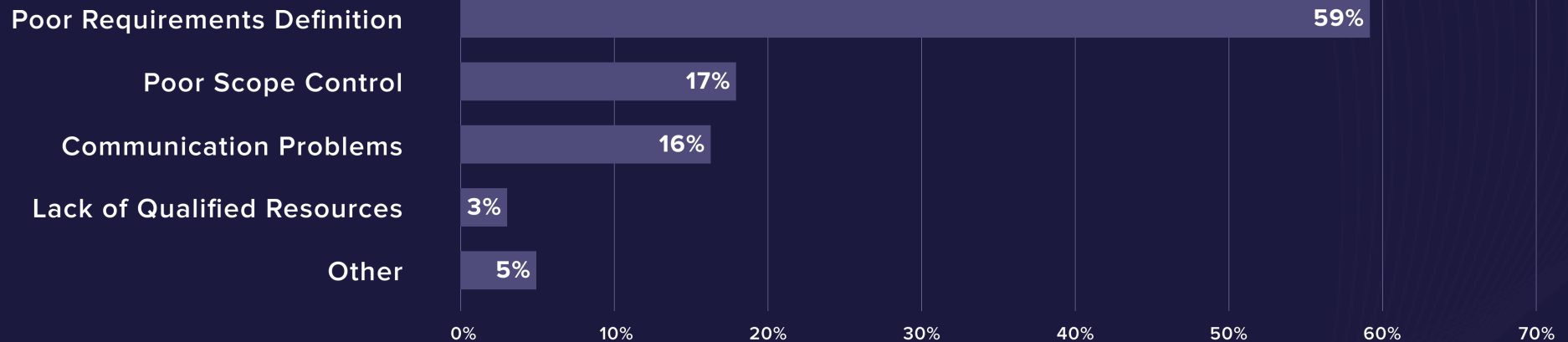


Why do projects fail?

Unfortunately, project failures have become too common. Most companies take loss of money, time, people resources, and functionality for granted. Nevertheless, technologies are constantly improving, project management methodologies are changing, and resources are expanding, so why does it continue to happen?

According to ESI International survey of 2,000 business professionals, the key reasons why a project fails are incomplete requirements, changing requirements and communication problems.

Business analysis is a research discipline of identifying business needs and determining solutions to business problems. Solutions often include a software-systems development component, but may also consist of process improvement, organizational change or strategic planning and policy development. The person who carries out this task is called a business analyst or BA.



Requirements gathering value

Requirements are the core of any software project. They determine the functionality, behavior, and ultimately the success of the project. Unfortunately, most companies do not pay enough attention on the requirements gathering process. This task is often left up to project managers or even developers, who are trained to implement the necessary features or functions, not gather or analyze requirements specifications.

The most common requirements problems:

- **Uncertain / incomplete requirements**
- **Missing / incorrect requirements**
- **Inclusion of non-essential requirements**

When requirements planning and gathering are not executed the right way, the consequences can be very costly. Sometimes, adding an additional (read – missed) requirement during the development or even after deployment can cost several times more than adding this feature during the project planning.

Capturing the right requirements at the very beginning of a project builds a solid foundation for its future success.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_analysis





Impact of business analysis

The BA is a mediator between the customer/user and the company aiming to meet this user's needs. According to the International Institute of Business Analysis, business analysts are "responsible for identifying the business needs of their clients and stakeholders, to determine solutions to business problems." As a translator, he or she "elicits, analyzes, validates and documents business, organizational and/ or operational requirements".

Business analysts have two major assets, which make them valuable project team players:

1. Business Domain Diving In

The list of assumptions made during the analysis and estimation. Usually, they cover the unknown aspects of the solution or those which require additional investigation and analysis.

2. Business Analysis Skills, Tools and Techniques

A business analyst has many specific skills and is aware of various analysis techniques enabling him/her to understand and document the business problem and the solution to solve it.



Operations Period

Implementation Period

Study Period



System requirements life cycle

Business solution life cycle

- Value Management Techniques
- Conflict Management Skills
- Facilitation and Consensus Building Skills
- Decision-Making Techniques
- Key Performance Indicator Development
- Stakeholder Management Skills
- Requirements Presentation Skills
- Requirements Gathering Tools
- Requirements Facilitation Skills
- Early Requirements Writing Skills
- Requirements Verification Techniques
- Partitioning and Decomposition of Requirements
- Feasibility and Alternative Analysis Techniques
- Risk Identification Techniques
- Prototyping Techniques
- Risk Analysis and Response Planning Tools
- Risk Planning Techniques
- Prototyping Techniques
- Risk Monitoring and Control Tools
- Requirements Allocation Techniques
- Change Management Tools
- Validation Techniques
- Verification Techniques
- User Surveys and Interviews
- Change Management Tools

Discovery phase

Definition and documentation

Discovery Phase is the initial and the most important part of the whole business analysis process.

The main aim of Discovery Phase is to create a vision of the future solution and to document all project requirements.

After a thorough analysis of the client's business and business challenges, SumatoSoft specialists prepare the document where the following BA artifacts will be documented:

1. Business Requirements

Business requirements for the project are defined by the business goals (problems) and are used to set the software requirements. Clearly described business requirements make it easier to ensure that the software requirements meet the initial business goals.

All business requirements should be exhaustive, measurable and prioritized.

2. Product Vision and Scope

Another important part of the business analysis is a definition of the product concept described in terms of features. Features are the high-level description of what needs to be built to meet the business requirements.

3. Stakeholders Identification

Our BA specialist identifies actors (people or systems) who will use this or that feature. For example, any website has at least two actor: non-registered user and an administrator. Taking a look at the system from the actors' point of view, SumatoSoft BA ensures that no key functionality is missed or that the solution meets all functional and usability needs of the actors.

4. Stakeholders Needs Discovery

The final Discovery Phase report includes the list of the main use cases. Use cases are descriptions of the interactions between the system and the actors. For example, actions described as "adding an item to a customer's order" is a use case. Defining use cases is important as it clearly explains how real users will use the system. They allow for less vagueness in requirements development.

5. Functional Requirements

The more detailed functional requirements and business rules are logically derived from the use cases. An example of such functional requirement is "the system shall allow users to log in with using one of the following social profiles: Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn". Making a use-cases-based list of software requirements allows for fewer missed requirements.

The "Requirements Specification" document can be used to present and explain the product vision to any software development team.

Top benefits of Discovery phase

Discovery Phase is the initial and the most important part of the whole business analysis process.

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After a thorough analysis of the client's business and business challenges, SumatoSoft specialists prepare the document where the following BA artifacts will be documented:

1. Creation and Presentation of a Shared Vision

After a thorough analysis of the business domain and the problem to solve, the BA creates a Shared Vision – a picture of the future solution, which is understood and agreed on by all the stakeholders. This vision is presented in a document containing texts, flow diagrams, use cases, storyboards, user stories, activity diagrams, business process models, wireframes and other mockups, etc.

2. Building Bridge Between Business and IT Team

Business analysts connect clients' businesses and IT staff, translating business requirements of a solution in a clear and extended specification to the team who will build it.

It prevents the following problems from happening:

- **Validation and testing challenges**

Business correctness of the solution cannot be validated and tested only by direct examination of the implementation.

- **Requirements fragmentation**

The IT team is provided with the unified list of requirements for designing and developing a solution.

3. Improved Requirements Management

The BA watches over the process of translating business requirements through functional requirements to a solution specification, so that every requirement is understood, interpreted and realized by all parties the right way.

Additional benefits



Reduce costs
as much as 50%



Improve
quality



Decrease
Out-Of-Cycle rework



Cut Time-To-Market
by 20%



Focus on value
to deliver



Shorter project funding
approval time



Consistency
across project delivery

Appendix

Business analysis terms definition

Term	Definition	Alternative names	Questions asked to identify
Business problem	Describes an issue preventing the business from achieving its goals		What problem is this product to solve? Keep asking the question “why is that a problem?” until you reach “money” in the answer.
Business requirements	Measurable target specifying when the business problem has been solved.	Sales Targets, Senior Management Goals, Business Objectives, Needs	What metrics can we use to define the business problem as solved?
Product concept	Vision of the actual solution planned to implement in order to meet the business objective. It is usually described by a list of high-level features.	Project Vision, Mission Statement	What product is to be built for each of the business strategies to meet the business requirements?
Success metrics	Business objectives that will be measured to define the project success.	Project Management Targets, Product Targets	Which metrics can define if the product built is successful? How will we know if it fully meet the business requirements?

About SumatoSoft

With deep understanding of modern technology and strong expertise in multiple business domains, we implement comprehensive projects and deliver high-end web, mobile and IoT solutions.

We develop custom software products tailored to specific business needs of our clients and support them throughout the whole way: from an idea to its implementation.

Our solid background, flexibility and full transparency enabled us to become a trusted technological partner for our clients. SumatoSoft is synonymous with top quality and high-end products & services.

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