

# BBD VIEW

# THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE BA



By Matthew Barnard, BBD Executive Head of Banking

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## ARE FEATURE ANALYSTS THE NEW BUSINESS ANALYSTS?

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As Agile continues to gain momentum in large enterprises, we continually need to review how we adapt traditional roles to the new paradigm. The role of a business analyst (BA) has caused much discussion over the years, with Scrum guides indicating the need for a product owner, scrum master and a development team. Many interpreted this to mean no need for analysts.

Agile teams often do not include a BA, normally comprising technical minds working alongside the product owner, to effectively deliver a quality product. This works very well when there is an experienced team, the product owner is available and the feature being implemented only impacts one product. In larger enterprises, where the feature (or features) being developed could span many products and teams, this can lead to complexity and inconsistent understanding.

As Agile teams break up complexity into smaller implementable features and stories (while driving this functionality across multiple teams to achieve enterprise scale), so the need has arisen for someone to understand the cross-team impact and facilitate the implementation.

We are finding that more traditional BA roles need to evolve to encompass a combination of business and systems analyst. At BBD we're calling this person a feature analyst, someone who is accountable for guiding the business requirements by working with the

business stakeholders, also working with the feature teams to ensure these are delivered effectively end-to-end. As per the diagram, traditionally BAs don't always work across a team, or have the technical knowledge to do so. Feature analysts have a broader end-to-end understanding of the project, can work across multiple teams and product owners and really own the process from start to finish, and getting involved at a technical level of implementations.

Constantly changing market demands and complex tech stacks are leading to multi-faceted product development, while fast-paced and ever-changing technology is resulting in companies having to push products forward faster. These factors require a role such as a features analyst, who understands the impact across the software development life cycle (SDLC), can implement the required changes and have the relevant technical and business skills to communicate with a variety of stakeholders.

A feature analyst can fulfil a type of scrum master role in that not only do they guide the product owners, they also facilitate the sharing of knowledge among the team and throughout the SDLC. This results in less information drop-off at the end of each feature and a closer realisation of the original business vision of a smooth and effective product delivery.

Aliaksandra Sukharuchkin, a feature analyst at BBD, says that although BAs have traditionally been forced to learn more of

the technical aspects, at BBD these roles are filled by people who are already quite tech savvy. This has paved the way for feature analysts in some of our project teams. Now that we're involved in all aspects from coding to testing and project guiding, we're able to ensure seamless implementation for our clients. Interestingly, it is often with implementation that clients experience their biggest downfall in the Agile landscape.

In conclusion, there is something deeply authentic about not just following a trend, but rather making your own space within methodologies for what works best for your employees, company and clients.

### About Matthew Barnard

Matthew is BBD's Executive Head of Banking and leads the fintech vertical. With a passion for both technology and financial services – his specialities include project management, fintech strategy and solutions architecture.

### About BBD

A provider of custom software development and application design solutions, BBD's 34 years of technical and developer expertise spans the banking, insurance, telecommunications, education and public sectors. Employing over 700 highly skilled, motivated and experienced IT professionals - BBD is South Africa's largest independent custom software development company.