



BUSINESS ANALYSIS CONFERENCE EUROPE

16 - 18 September 2024 • London, UK

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The Rise of the Data Business Analyst

Afsar Alam

Agenda

1. My BA journey
2. The data lifecycle
3. The need for a Data BA
4. How you can succeed as a Data BA



My BA Journey



 **Santander**
Senior Data Analyst



MSc Economics



BSc Financial Mathematics



Finance Business Analyst



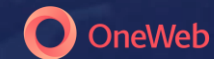
*Sr Technical
Business Analyst*



Executive MBA



*Finance Business Partner/
Financial Analyst*



Data Business Analyst



Data BA/ Scrum Master

Data Lifecycle

The background of the slide is a photograph of an offshore oil rig at sea. The rig is a complex structure of metal platforms and towers, with a prominent yellow staircase leading up from the water level. The sky is a deep, dark blue, suggesting a twilight or night setting. The overall tone is industrial and somewhat somber.

“Data is the new oil...”

Like oil, data is valuable, but if unrefined it cannot really be used. It has to be changed into gas, plastic, chemicals, etc. to create a valuable entity that drives profitable activity. So data has to be broken down and analysed for it to have value.”

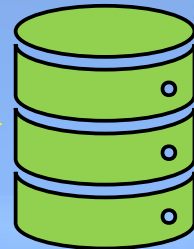
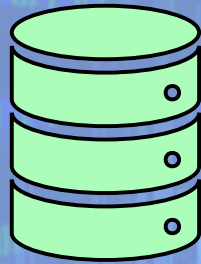
Clive Humby, 2006

E2E Data Lifecycle

DATA

INFORMATION

KNOWLEDGE



Operational Systems/
External Data Sources

Cloud Data
Storage

Data Engineering

Data Warehousing/
Data Provisioning

Business Intelligence/
Data Science

Business
Decisions

Technological Changes

Significant technological improvements such as improved connectivity globally, cloud computing and cloud storage means data is now:

1. Growing larger in volume
2. Captured more frequently
3. Processed more rapidly



Why is data so important?

The E2E process of turning data into information so it can become knowledge involves a lot of processes such as:

Data ingestion, data testing, data transformation, data sharing, data consumption and more!

So why are organisations always looking for ways to do this process better than their competitors?



A night sky with the Milky Way galaxy visible. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of a radio telescope facility, including a large dish antenna and several smaller structures. The sky is dark with many stars and the bright band of the Milky Way. The text is overlaid on a dark rectangular area on the left side of the image.


The Need for a Data BA

**Why do organisations
need BAs for data
projects?**

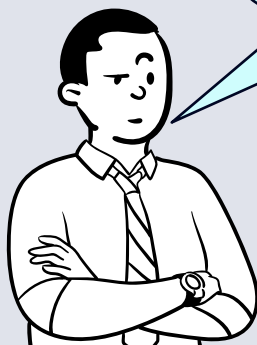


What problems do Data BAs solve?


Data BAs are generally the first point of contact for all data problems. Some examples below:



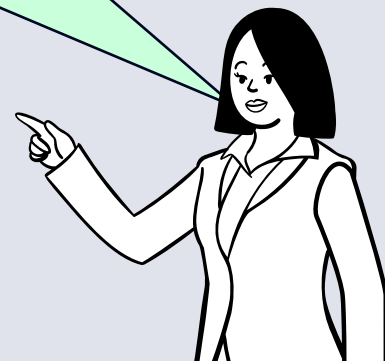
I have launched a new application, and I need all the data to be archived and stored securely.



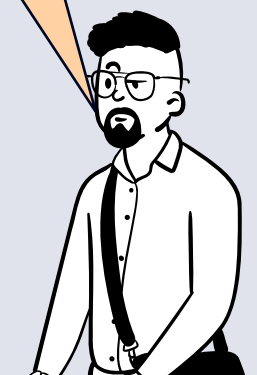
My data is incorrect, which is making my data modelling inaccurate – this needs fixing ASAP!



The data I need takes too long to query and extract, plus it's too expensive!



I need a new dashboard developed, so I can get insights on cost-savings.



I want access to some existing datasets via a new API for our customers please – they will place more orders if they get this feature!

How Data BAs solve problems?

BUGS	NEW DATA FEATURES/ PRODUCTS
Fixing issues with existing data products/ features	Building new data features and data products
EXAMPLE PROBLEMS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Pipeline failures• Data Quality Issues (e.g. duplicates, incorrect or missing data)• Slow queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ingesting new datasets• New use-cases (data transformations)• New databases and tables• New reporting & analytics
DATA BA APPROACH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document issue with clarity - simplifying complex information.• Manage fix by keeping stakeholders informed.• Take feedback for preventative measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate workshops to dive deep into topics and align teams on the requirements.• Process-mapping and diagrams.• Use standardised templates/ questionnaires to ensure completeness of requirements.

Data BA ticks all the boxes!

Who can help an organisations deliver data projects?



Someone who can:

- ✓ Simplify complex information
- ✓ Understand the bigger picture across the business
- ✓ Facilitate problem solving and break silos
- ✓ Lead and motivate others
- ✓ Manage stakeholder expectations



Becoming a Data BA

Data BA: Skillset Overview

Personal Qualities	Hard/ Technical Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpersonal Skills• Problem-Solving• Communication• Leadership• Critical Thinking• Flexibility and Versatile• Stakeholder Management• Organisation Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Management• Data Analysis/ Visualisation• Database Management• Data Engineering• ETL tools and methodology• SQL, Python etc.• API knowledge• Domain knowledge 



Data BA: Three Key Pillars

EXPERIENCE	LEARNING	NETWORKING
<p><i>“Great things never come from comfort zones.”</i></p>	<p><i>“The secret to mastery in any fields is to forever remain a student.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Not about having a lot of connections. It's about having a few genuine connections that are valuable and mutually beneficial.”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tailor or pivot your career to get more exposure to data work.• From modelling data on excel to running complex SQL queries – it’s all invaluable.• Be brave and versatile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether it’s formal education at university or a certification with a professional body, there is no end to learning.• Personal recommendations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BCS BA modules• BCS Data Management Essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on quality over quantity• Coffee or lunch with friends, old class-mates and colleagues can open doors you did not even know existed.• LinkedIn is an excellent way to showcase your talent digitally!

Key Takeaways

1. Demand for data SMEs is on the rise:

*Organisations are prioritising data projects more than ever before.
COMPETITIVE EDGE OVER RIVALS = MORE PROFIT*

2. There IS a need for Data BAs:

Data projects need someone that understands the bigger picture, simplifies complex information and facilitates problem-solving. A good Data BA does exactly that AND MORE.

3. You can succeed as a Data BA!

Be brave and versatile on your approach to work, make use of networking and never ever stop learning.





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