



BUSINESS ANALYSIS CONFERENCE EUROPE

16 - 18 September 2024 • London, UK

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The Rise of the Data Business Analyst

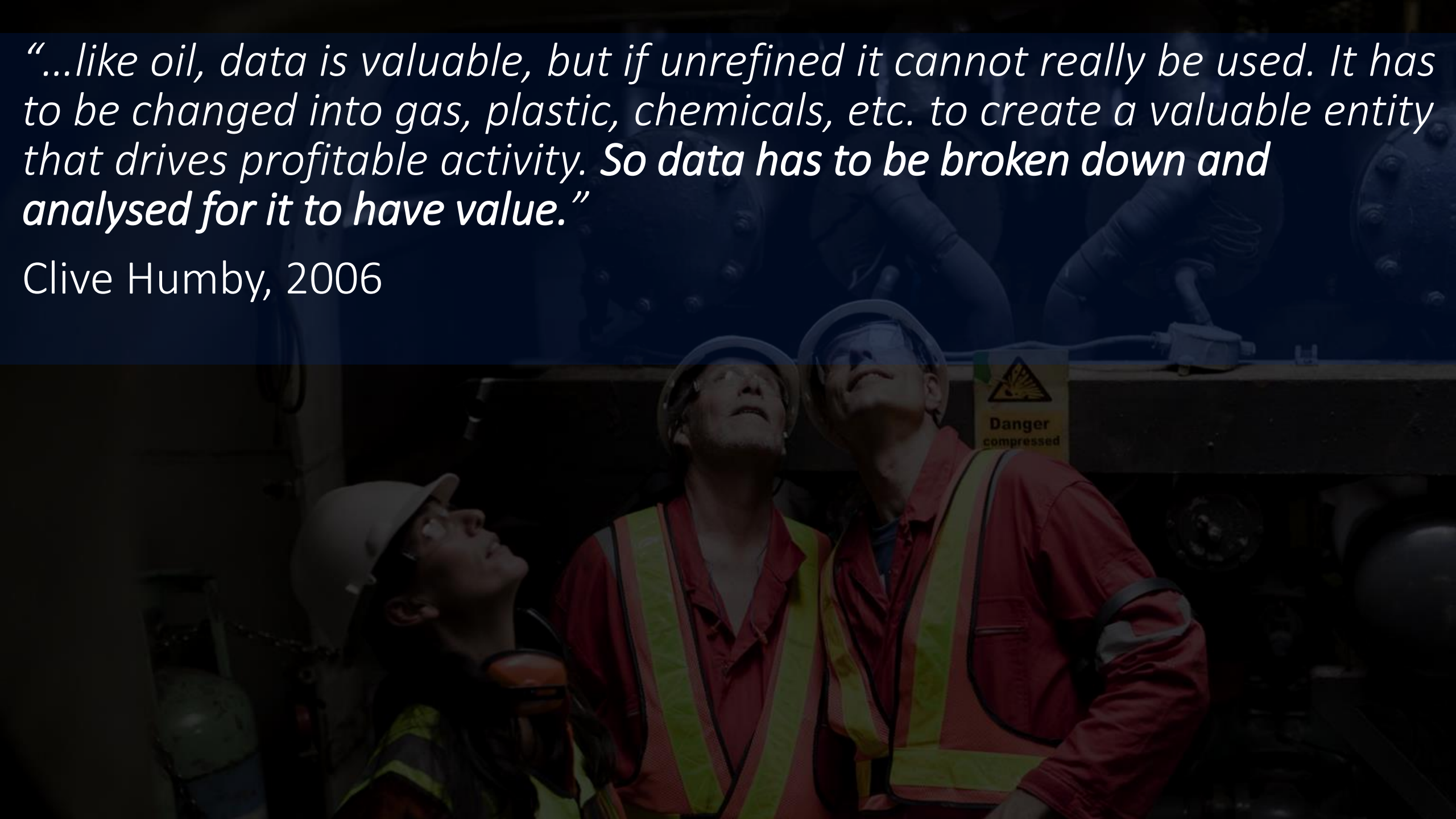
Afsar Alam

“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





Agenda


- My BA journey
- The data lifecycle in organisations
- The need for a Data BA
- How you can succeed as a Data BA
- Key Takeaways
- Q&A

My BA Journey

A decade in summary...





Data BA/ Scrum Master
2024-


Data Business Analyst
2022-2023


Finance Business Partner
2022


Executive MBA
2022


Sr Technical Business Analyst
2019-2022


Finance Business Analyst
2016-2019


Afsar Consultancy Ltd.
2016-


MSc Economics
2014


Senior Data Analyst
2014-2015

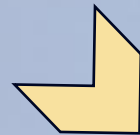

BSc Financial Mathematics
2013

E2E Data Lifecycle

DATA

Raw unprocessed facts/figures with no context

-2



INFORMATION

Processed data with context

*-2°C on Saturday
morning at 7:00am*

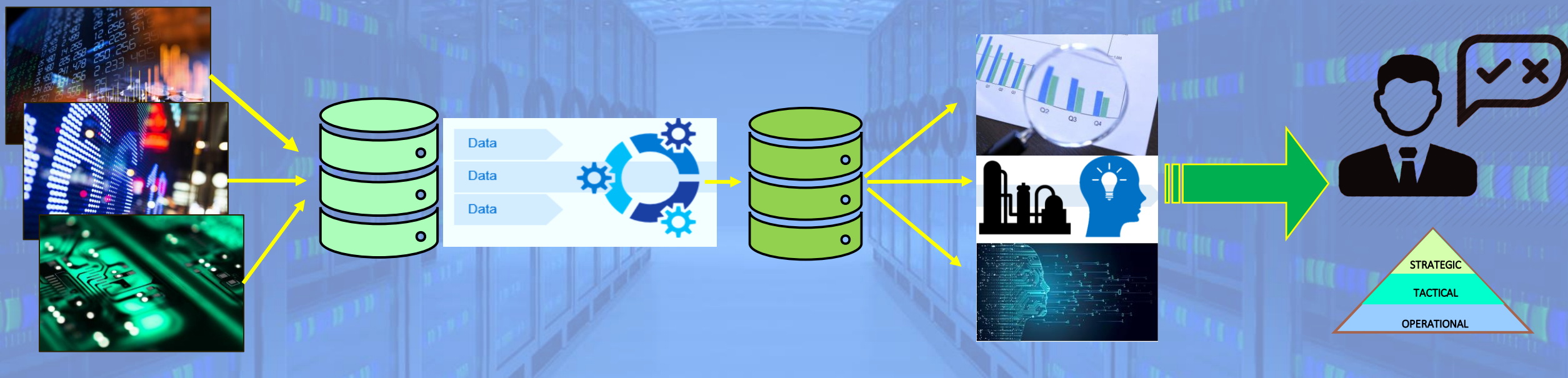
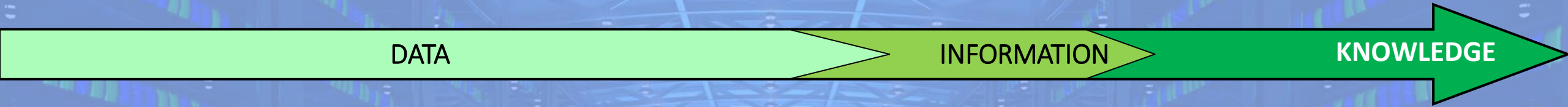


KNOWLEDGE

Analysed and interpreted for a conclusion

*I DECIDE that I should wear my
coat*

E2E Data Lifecycle in Organisations



Operational Systems/
External Data Sources

Cloud Data
Storage

Data Engineering

Data Warehousing/
Data Provisioning

Business Intelligence/
Data Science

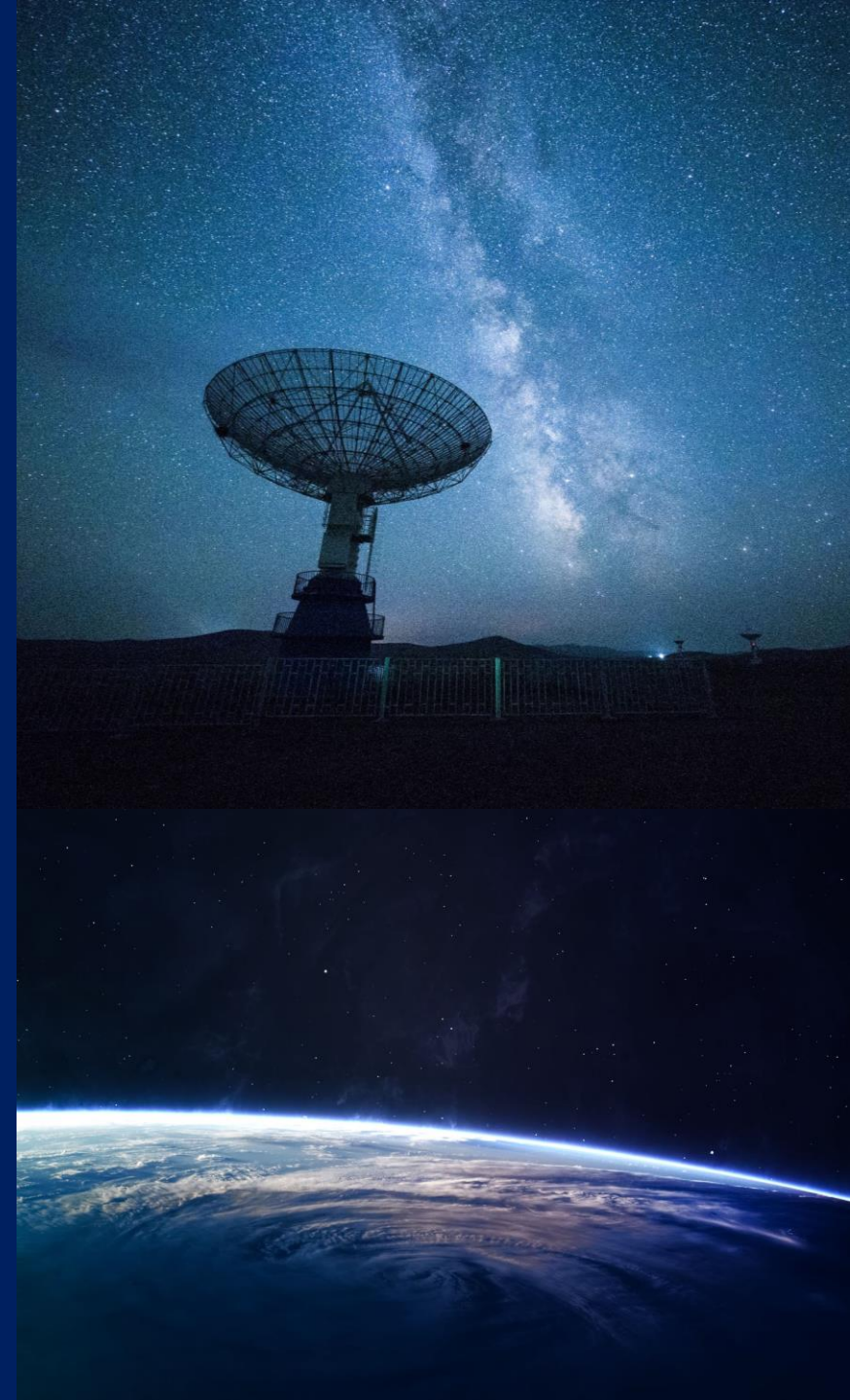
Business
Decisions



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 cleansing, data testing, data transformation, data sharing, data consumption and more.

So, why are organisations always looking for ways to do this E2E process better than their competitors?



A hand is shown moving a black chess piece on a chessboard. The background is a dark, blue-tinted image of a chessboard with several pieces visible. The text is overlaid on the image in white.

Making decisions **better, faster** and **more frequently** than your competition means more profitability.

COMPETITIVE EDGE OVER RIVALS = MORE PROFIT



The Need for a Data BA

“Business Analysts just write requirements”

No. We do far more!


Before and after documenting requirements, Business Analysts are involved in a variety of high-value tasks.

Requirements are the WHAT; A Business Analyst is also involved in the Why? Who? How? When? And more.


A Business Analyst needs the autonomy to be versatile in their approach so they can go beyond just writing requirements to deliver change.

What problems do Data BAs solve?


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



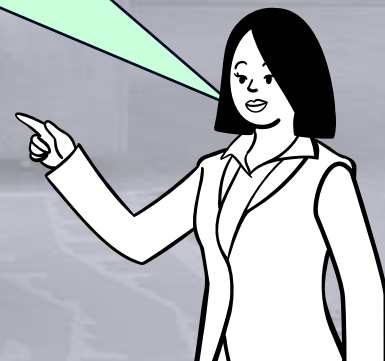
I am looking to launch a new app and I will need to store crucial application data securely.




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 customer data via a new API – we will increase our orders with 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
- ✓ Facilitate and enable business change



Becoming a Data BA

Data BA: Skillset Overview

Personal Qualities	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 field 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. Go beyond just writing requirements.	<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 Data BA is a changemaker who goes beyond **just** writing requirements.*

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.





Q&A



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