

## Planting the Seeds to Grow a Mature Business Analysis Practice



## A White Paper from Kathleen Hass and Associates

## 1. The Terrain

Our current turbulent economic times call for businesses to be able to react to change quickly, to chart a new course on a dime. Challenges abound:

- Our global economic systems are teetering on the verge of collapse and by all accounts the recovery will be sluggish
- Our legacy of business and technology complexity poses barriers to our ability to change guickly

- Adaptability and agility are essential for success in the global marketplace
- Getting it right the first time is the only option – there is no time for doovers
- Success requires a plan and approach that:
  - Hits the mark
  - Is executed without a flaw
  - With expert skills
  - Delivers real business value

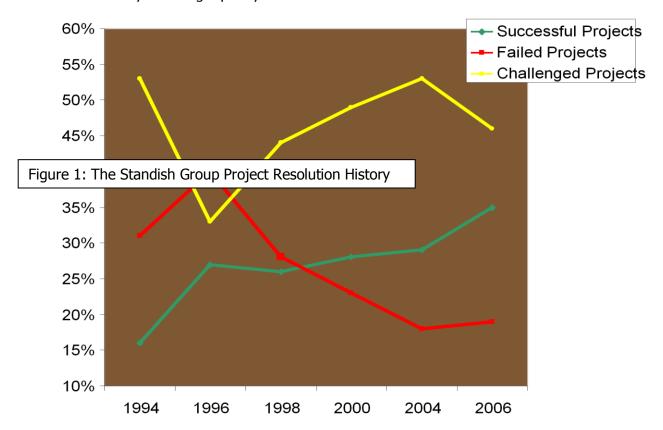


Figure 1: Standish Group Project Resolution History

To be able to react to – and even pre-empt – change to remain competitive, organizations must be able to execute

projects flawlessly. With so much riding on successful projects, it is no wonder we have invested heavily in improved project management processes, tools and competencies over the last two decades. Although project performance has greatly improved, it is still woefully inadequate.

Consider the progress we have made (Figure 1), which is mostly due to improved project management and to reducing the size of projects (smaller projects are much more likely to succeed). Even with the improvements, nearly two-thirds of IT projects continue to fail (nothing of value is delivered) or to be challenged (they are over time and cost, and likely did not deliver the full scope of functionality). What does this mean to our ability to compete in the marketplace? We know that failed and challenged often come with projects significant financial impacts. A few examples:

- Rework and abandoned systems: a combined \$75B per year
- Boston's "Big Dig" Public Works Project: \$>10B overrun; Loss of life
- ► EuroDisney: \$4B failure
- ► FBI's Virtual Case Management System: \$170M failure

▶ America La France ERP System Implementation: lost \$56M in revenue in 2007; filed for bankruptcy in 2008

Another study by TechRepublic, Inc. and its parent Gartner Group, Inc. ® revealed that a staggering 40 percent of IT projects fail, which costs IT organizations an estimated \$1 million each year. Clearly, we must do better.

## 2. The Root Cause

So, what is the root cause of our continued inability to deliver new business solutions faultlessly that hit the mark and add significant business benefit? Many experts have made the case that it is our *gap in business analysis capabilities and competencies* (Figure 2) that is the root.

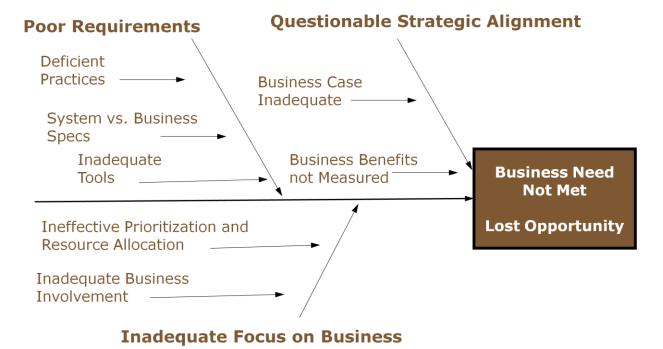


Figure 2: Root Cause of Failed and Challenged Projects

Consider the following research results that helped drive the overwhelming consensus that the gap in business analysis capabilities poses a barrier to higher levels of project performance.

### **META GROUP RESEARCH**

Communication challenges between business teams and technologists are chronic – we estimate that 60%-80% of project failures can be attributed directly to poor requirements gathering, analysis, and management.

### **FORRESTER RESEARCH**

Poorly defined applications have led to a persistent miscommunication between business and IT that largely contributes to a 66% project failure rate for these applications, costing U.S. businesses at least \$30B every year.

### **JAMES MARTIN**

56% of defects can be attributed to requirements, and 82% of the effort to fix them.

#### **KEITH ELLIS**

More than forty-one percent of new development resources are consumed on unnecessary or poorly specified requirements.

## 3. The Challenge

Our challenge is to close the gap in BA capabilities and competencies. What will it take? Are today's business analysts up to the task? According to the *The New Business Analyst: A Strategic Role in the Enterprise*, November 2006 Evans Data Corporation Research Study, the typical business analyst looks something like this:

▶ 40 years old

- ▶ Median income: \$75K
- Well educated
- Hails from IT
- More than 5 years experience doing BA work
- Analysis skills acquired on the job
- Disturbingly, they report most of their projects do not deliver all requirements

In addition, today's BAs fill many roles:

- Business analysis: 29.3%Project management: 18.7%
- Developer: 15.4%
  SME: 13.5%
  Tester: 10.1%
  Other: 13%

Clearly, BAs that are focusing on multiple roles and tasks involving diverse disciplines cannot devote the time and attention needed to build a mature BA Practice and a world class BA workforce. The current hybrid role is tactically focused, deep into project tasks.

Where is the industry heading to transition the BA from a tactical player into a more strategic asset (Figure 3)?

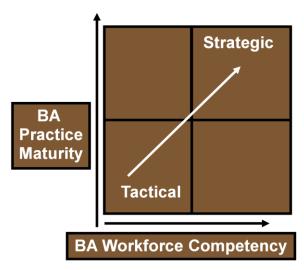


Figure 3: Where the BA role is heading

According to a 2008 study, (Carey Schwaber and Rob Karel, *The New Business Analyst*, Forrester Research, Inc., April 8, 2008), the BA will retain the current tactical roles that are both IT and Business oriented:

#### **IT ORIENTED**

- Improve operations through changes to technology
- Mostly generalists as opposed to:
  - Information BAs
  - Process BAs
  - Rules BAs
  - Experience BAs (usability)

### **BUSINESS ORIENTED**

- Improve operations through changes to policy and process
- Using
  - Business Process Mgt.
  - Business Rules Mgt.
  - Six Sigma
- Mostly functionally focused:

- Finance
  - HR
  - Manufacturing

The industry will also begin to groom and field more strategic BA roles, driving BA Practice maturity to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of our organizations:

### **BUSINESS ARCHITECTS**

- ▶ Make the enterprise visible
- Keep the business and IT architecture in synch
- Make visible:
  - Current state (as-is)
  - Future state (to-be)
  - Gap in capabilities needed to achieve the future vision

### **BUSINESS/TECHNOLOGY ANALYSTS**

- Convert business opportunities into innovative business solutions
- Translate strategy into breakthrough process and technology change
- Cross-functional and cross-domain experts

## 4. The Daunting Road Ahead

As businesses acknowledge the value of business analysis – the result of the absolute necessity

Mature BA Practices	Proactive Environment	Effective BA Workforce	Business Focus
Standards & Tools	BACOE	Competent BAs	Enterprise Analysis
Metrics & Measurements	BA Governance	BA Role Definition & Career Path Leading to VP BA	Customer Relationships
Continuous Improvement	Periodic Maturity Assessments	Mentoring Program	Business Benefit Management
Knowledge Management	Periodic BA Workforce Evaluations	Robust Training Programs	Competitive & Feasibility Studies

Figure 4: Building Blocks of a BA Mature Practice

to drive business results through projects – they are struggling to figure out four things: (1) what are the characteristics of their current BA workforce, (2) what kind of BA workforce do they need, (3) what is needed to build a mature BA Practice, and (4) how are we going to get there. As you can see in Figure 4, there are many elements that need to be in place to implement a mature BA Practice. So, it begs the question: how are we every going to get there, and how fast can we get there?

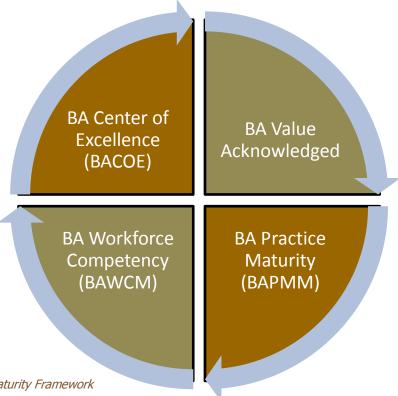


Figure 5: BA Practice Maturity Framework

K. Hass and Associates have developed the comprehensive BΑ Practice **Maturity** Framework (Figure 5). The journey begins with an acknowledgement that business analysis is a critical business management discipline for the 21st century. Realizing that it takes investment and resources to build a new business management process, our framework calls for a proven, structured approach coupled with expert change management skills. Our framework involves a three-pronged approach to build a mature BA Practice, develop a competent BA workforce, and establish a BACOE to plant the seeds and steer the course.

## 5. How do we Cultivate Mature BA Practices?

The goal of our BA Practice Maturity Framework is threefold:

## Implement rigorous Enterprise Analysis practices that include the following key activities:

- Building the current and future state business architecture
- Conducting rigorous opportunity analysis and problem analysis with a small expert team to ensure an understanding of the business need

7

- ► Conducting feasibility analysis with a small expert team to identify the most feasible solution to propose
- Developing a business case with a small expert team to propose a new project to build the solution
- Continually validating the assumptions and forecasts made in the business case throughout the project
- ► Conducting solution assessment and validation throughout the project
- Measuring the business benefits of the deployed solution as compared to the forecasts made in the business case

## Implement effective Requirements Management practices:

- Planning the requirements approach and activities
- Eliciting requirements using multiple elicitation techniques, and validating elicitation results
- Defining and specifying requirements using multiple techniques (e.g., text, models, tables, matrices)
- Analyzing requirements to ensure they are accurate, complete, and testable

- Validating that the requirements meet the business need throughout the project
- Managing changes to requirements; welcoming changes that add business value; reducing the cost of change through iterative development
- Communicating requirements using custom messages for each stakeholder

## Conduct meticulous change management practices:

- Ensuring the organization is ready to operate the new business solution efficiently and effectively
- Managing the organizational change required to ensure the new business solution is operated efficiently and effectively
- Developing the necessary business artifacts: business policies, procedures, rules, training, retooling, restructuring
- ▶ Implementing an effective benefits measurement and management

To steer the course, we have developed the BA Practice Maturity Model (Figure 6).

## **BA Practice Maturity Model**

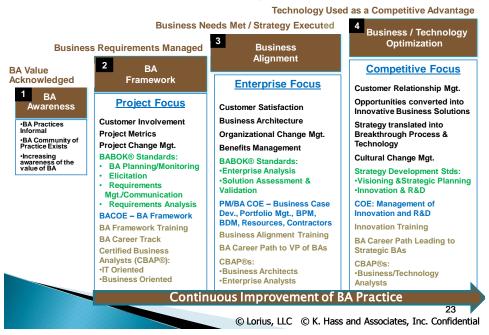


Figure 6: BA Practice Maturity Model

The maturity levels of the BA Practice Maturity Model are described below (Figure 7).

Level	Description
Level 4: Business Technology Optimization	Business Benefit: Technology is Used as a Competitive Advantage  Organizations at Level 4 recognize that advanced business analysis practices are needed to use technology as a competitive advantage. Level 4 organizations vest accountability for business/technology optimization in a centralized organization that represents the entire enterprise that is responsible for management of the business/technology optimization practices. Specifically, to achieve Level 4:  The enterprise BACOE is integrated with other centers of excellence (project management (PM), quality assurance (QA), software architecture and engineering (SE) and manages the vision, goals, objectives, and plans to achieve business/technology optimization  The following process and tools are developed, piloted, deployed, and institutionalized:  Innovation: convert business opportunities into innovative new business solutions  Strategy Development and Translation into breakthrough process and technology change  Customer Relationship Management  Organizational Readiness Assessments  Organizational Change Management  Quantitative BA Process Management Program Integrated with PM, QA, SE  Business/Technology Optimization Training Program is developed and required
Level 3: Business Alignment	Business Benefit: New Business Solutions Meet Business Need; Strategy is Executed Organizations at Level 3 recognize that business analysis is essential to ensure business alignment of project goals, objectives, and the new business solutions deployed by the project teams. Level 3 organizations vest accountability for business alignment in a centralized organization that represents the entire enterprise and is responsible for management of the business alignment practices. Specifically, to achieve Level 3:  The BACOE mission is the centralized Management of Resources, Contractors, Vendors  The following process and tools for achieving business alignment are developed, piloted, deployed, and institutionalized:  Enterprise Analysis  Portfolio Management Support & Facilitation  Strategic Alignment of Project Investments  Solution Assessment and Validation  Benefits Measurement Program  Business/Technology Architecture exists for the current and future states  A Business Alignment Training Program is developed and required
Level 2: BA Framework	Business Benefit: Business Requirements are Managed Organizations at Level 2 recognize that business analysis is a valuable capability by vesting accountability for it in a centralized organization that represents the entire enterprise and is responsible for the management of the BA Framework. The organization, often referred to as the business analysis center of excellence (BACOE), assigns roles and responsibilities and establishes plans for developing, piloting, and deploying BA standard requirements management practices. Specifically, to achieve Level 2:  The BACOE is established and roles and responsibilities assigned to develop and manage the BA Framework  The following process and tools for managing project requirements are developed, piloted, deployed, and institutionalized:  BA Planning and Managing  Requirements Elicitation  Requirements Management and Communication  Requirements Analysis  Requirements defect prevention  The knowledge management process and system is developed and is in place to archive, manage changes, and provide appropriate access to all BA process and tool assets and actual BA artifacts  A BA Framework Training Program is developed and required
Level 1: BA Awareness	<b>Business Benefit: Business Analysis Value is Acknowledged</b> At Level 1, an organization does not have plans to implement a business analysis practice, or it has plans, but they do not yet demonstrate an understanding of the value of business analysis

Figure 7: BA Practice Maturity Model Description

### **CULTIVATING MATURE BA PRACTICES**

Our BA Practice Maturity Assessment Program is intended to provide validated, accurate information about the current state of BA practices, accompanied by recommendations for improvement, and support along the journey. In addition, the assessment determines the readiness of the organization to accept and support the new BA practices and formation of a BA Center of Excellence to plant the seeds and steer the course. Specifically, the assessments:

- Measure the ability of your organization to repeatedly deliver new business solutions that meet the business need and result in the expected benefits
- Provide a foundation and guidance for advancement of practices through prioritized, sequential improvements
- Provide an indicator of how effective your organization is in meeting business objectives and executing strategy through successful implementation of new business solutions

Our approach to conductina organizational maturity assessment can be formal or informal. In either case, it is multi-dimensional, and includes planning meetings culminating in a kick-off session, administration of our assessment instrument, review of project artifacts and deliverables, accompanied by a series of interviews and focus group sessions. Information is synthesized, organized, validated and documented in a data summary report and an assessment findings and recommendations report containing a two-year roadmap and action plan for immediate next steps.

We use the BA Practice Maturity Model as the basis for several types of assessments as described below (Figure 8). Depending on how far you have come in your journey to cultivate mature BA practices, we recommend the most appropriate evaluation of your BA Practice.

Practice Evaluation	Abbreviated Assessment	Full Assessment
Questionnaire Administration	Questionnaire Administration	Questionnaire Administration
5 Interviews	5 Interviews 2 Focus Groups 3 Projects Reviewed	10 Interviews 4 Focus Groups 5 Projects Reviewed
Kickoff and Findings Presentations	Kickoff and Findings Presentations	Kickoff and Findings Presentations
Data Summary Report	Data Summary Report	Data Summary Report
	Findings and Recommendations Report	Findings and Recommendations Report
1 Assessor	2 Assessors	2 Assessors
1-2 Weeks	2-3 Weeks	3-4 Weeks

Figure 8: BA Practice Maturity Assessment Options

# 6. How does an Effective BA Workforce Take Shape?

The goal of building an effective BA workforce is to ensure the organization has appropriately skilled BAs possessing the competencies needed to successfully deliver new/changed business solutions that meet business needs (Figure 9).

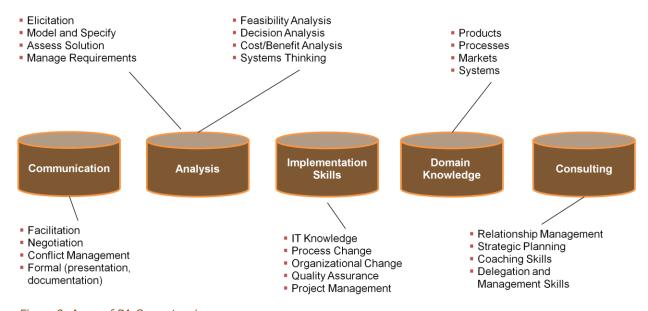


Figure 9: Array of BA Competencies

To determine the characteristics of your BA workforce, and recommend advancement of skills and competencies, we have developed a BA Workforce Competency Model (Figure 10) and BA Workforce Competency Evaluation Program. This model is based on the latest industry research and is in alignment with our BA Practice Maturity Assessment Model that supports the BA Practice Maturity Assessment program. The model is four-tiered:

- 1. Business Analyst
- 2. Senior Business Analyst
- 3. Enterprise Business Analyst
- 4. Business/Technology Analyst

## LEVEL 1: OPERATIONS/SUPPORT BUSINESS ANALYST

Level 1 includes both Generalist Analysts and Business System Analysts. These business analysts typically spend about 30% of their time doing business analysis activities for low complexity projects designed to maintain and continually improve business processes and technology. The remaining time they are fulfilling other roles including project manager, developer, engineer, SME, domain expert, and tester. As legacy processes and systems age, these business analysts are becoming more and more valuable since they are likely the best (and often only) SMEs who fully understand the legacy operational processes and technology.

### **LEVEL 2: PROJECT BUSINESS ANALYST**

Level 2 analysts include both IT- and Business-Oriented Analysts who work on moderately complex projects designed to develop new/changed business processes and IT systems. Typically, these BAs come in two types:

- IT Oriented Analysts who improve business results through changes to technology. Mostly generalists, with specialists that include Experience Analysts, Business Rules Analyst, Business Process Analyst, Data Analyst, etc.
- Business Oriented Analysts: Improve operations through changes to policy

and procedures. Business-oriented Analysts are mostly specialized, focused on Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, Manufacturing, etc. In decentralized organizations, these analysts are dedicated to a major business area, improving the processes and the corresponding technologies that are used to run the operations. In other more centralized organizations, these business analysts are organized as a pool of talent whose efforts can be transferred seamlessly to the areas of the enterprise that are in most need of business analysis support.

## **BA Workforce Competency Model**

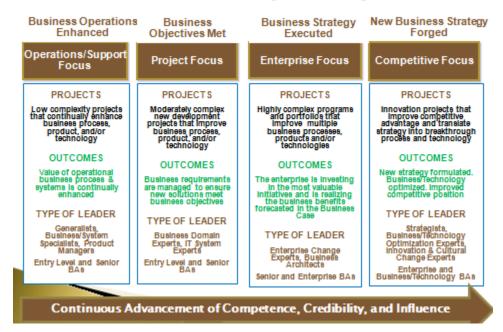


Figure 10: BA Workforce Competency Model

#### **LEVEL 3: ENTERPRISE BUSINESS ANALYST**

Level 3 includes Enterprise Analysts and Business Architects who are operating at the enterprise level of the organization. These analysts ensure that the business analysis activities are dedicated to the most valuable initiatives, and the business analysis assets (models, documents, matrices, diagrams etc.) are considered corporate property and are therefore reusable. Enterprise Analysts focus on the analysis needed to prepare a solid business case to propose new initiatives. They also work on highly-complex, enterprise-wide

projects. Business Architects make the enterprise visible and keep the business and IT architecture in synch.

### **LEVEL 4: BUSINESS/TECHNOLOGY ANALYST**

Business/Technology Analysts are business and technology visionaries who serve as innovation experts, organizational change specialist, and cross domain experts. Business/Technology Analysts focus outside of the enterprise on what the industry is doing, formulate the future vision and design innovative new strategy, and approaches to doing business to ensure the enterprise remains competitive, or even leaps ahead of the competition. Business/Technology Analysts convert business opportunities innovative to business solutions and translate strategy into breakthrough process and technology.

### **BUILDING A COMPETENT BA WORKFORCE**

Our BA Workforce Evaluation Program provides the information needed for BAs to baseline their competencies and prepare their own professional development plans, and for management to draft an overall BA workforce development plan for the organization. The results provide a basis for workforce adjustments BA and/or realignment, training requirements, professional development activities, and specific mentoring and coaching needs.

Our BA Workforce Evaluation collects basic demographic information about the business analysts, e.g., years of experience, time spent on BA activities versus project management or more technical tasks, amount of BA education. We then compare the state of your BA workforce to the industry as a whole. The information on how much time is spent on BA activities provides a view as to your actual capacity to deliver new business solutions.

Individual BA Competency Assessment	Group BA Workforce Assessment	
	Planning, Set Up and Kickoff Presentation	
Questionnaire Administration	Questionnaire Administration	
	5 BA/Manager Interviews	
Individual Report	Individual Reports	
Individual Professional Development Plan	Individual Professional Development Plans	
	Assessor Review and Analysis	
	Organization's Group Data Summary Report and Recommendations	
	Sub-Group Data Summary Reports and Recommendations	
	Group Findings and Recommendations Presentation	
	1 Assessor 3-4 weeks	

Figure 11: BA Workforce Evaluation Options

Our approach to conducting a BA Workforce evaluation includes interviews management, planning sessions culminating in a kick-off session, administration of the questionnaire to BAs and their supervisors, and follow-on consulting services to assist in optimal use of the information. Results are documented. analysed against our competency model, and summarized in assessment findings and reports. Findings are:

# 7. Who is Going to Plant the Seeds and Nourish the Practice?

Like any significant change effort, an effective team is needed to steer the Businesses are finding that the course. concept of a center of excellence helps to drive improvements to critical business Centers of excellence are practices. emerging as a vital strategic asset to serve as the primary vehicle for managing complex change initiatives, a business support function just as critical as accounting, marketing, finance and HR. A center of excellence is a team of people that is established to promote collaboration and the application of best practices. Centers of excellence exist to bring about an enterprise focus to business issues, e.g., integration, project management, enterprise architecture, business and IT optimization, and enterprise-wide access to information.

The concept of centers of excellence is quickly maturing in twenty-first century organizations because of the need to collaboratively execute strategy through

- Reported to the individual business analyst
- Summarized and reported to the supervisors of the BAs for their group
- Summarized and reported to management of the entire organization.

We use the BA Workforce Competency Model as the basis for two kinds of evaluations as described in Figure 11.

projects and programs. Project management offices (PMO), a type of center of excellence, proliferated in the 1990s as a centralized approach to managing projects, in response to the challenges associated with complex projects in an environment with low levels of project management maturity and governance. Now is the time to form Business Analysis Centers of Excellence (BACOE) to plant the seeds and steer the course to grow a mature BA Practice.

The goal: establish a BACOE that adds value to the bottom line of your company. To form a BACOE to last, consider the following:

- The *mission*: to deliver business value
- The *message*: a focus on business value delivered often; the right message to the right people
- The *right people*: respected, influential, viewed as leaders
- ► The *strategic alignment*: support the right project mix linked to strategy/mission
- The value: link improved BA Practices to executive goals; measure business benefits of new solutions

## **BACOE Maturity Model**

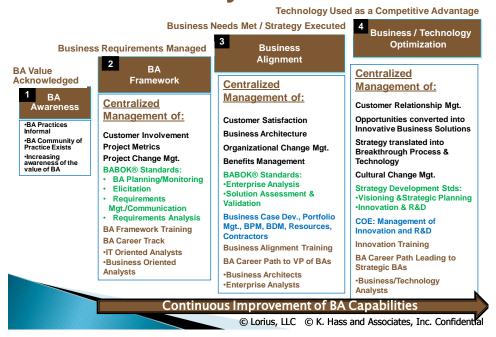


Figure 12: BACOE Maturity Model

To steer the course, we have developed a BACOE Maturity Model (Figure 12) and Implementation and Evaluation Program that is aligned with the BA Practice Maturity and BA Workforce Competency programs. We provide services to launch a new BACOE or to evaluate the maturity of your existing BACOE, and provide recommendations to immediately improve its effectiveness and ability to add value to the bottom line.

Implementing a successful BACOE is not a trivial endeavor. We recommend a gradual approach, focusing on management of the level 2 components first, and gradually implementing practices at levels 3 and 4. BACOEs earn credibility one project at a time. We therefore recommend focusing on the most important project(s) in your organization first, adding value to the project team, the executive sponsors, and virtually all of the project stakeholders.

Our BACOE evaluation process is similar to the BA Practice Maturity assessment, consisting of many of the same activities (Figure 13). COEs must deliver value to survive. Value is not templates, tools, methodology, processes, or training. Value gaining efficiencies, achieving cost savings, increasing customer satisfaction, reducing time-to-market, increasing revenue and profit, reducing deficits, or increasing competitive advantage. Too many COEs wrap their mission existence around the services they provide instead of their impact on the business. Remember: executives buy value such as time to market improvements, project time and cost savings, and delivering more business solutions faster with the same resources.

### **BACOE Evaluation Process**

Questionnaire Administration

Interviews and Focus Groups

**Review of COE Process Assets** 

Data Summary Report

Recommendations with 2-Year Roadmap and Action Plan

1 Assessor

1-3 Weeks

Figure 13: BACOE Maturity Evaluation Process

# 8. What Professional Services are Available to help Guide the Growth?

K. Hass and Associates offer professional services to organizations to help them in their quest to build a mature BA Practice.

Our services, while well developed and utilized, are always targeted and customized to each organization's particular needs. No two implementations are alike, although our approach is rooted in proven best practices for assessments and consulting services. Our assessment services are supported by LORIUS, LLC, an assessment, survey, and research firm.

LORIUS, LLC provides applied organizational research, workforce evaluation, surveys, and analytics to help managers and leaders transform data into actionable business intelligence to drive and improve their organization's business outcomes.

For information about the science and analytics behind K. Hass and Associates' Business Analysis Practice Maturity Framework, read these whitepapers at <a href="https://www.LoriusLLC.com">www.LoriusLLC.com</a>:

- BA Workforce Evaluation: Get Off the Couch and Help Your BAs Achieve Optimal Fitness
- Review of the Integrated Business Analysis Practice Maturity Assessment Framework: Is That What's Really Happening in my Organization?



## Learn more from K. Hass and Associates

The first step in implementing a mature BA Practice is learning about our *BA Practice Maturity Framework* and how it can help your organization. K. Hass and Associates offers assistance in every aspect of *BA Practice Maturity*, from level-1 maturity to the levels needed to meet your business goals. For more information, contact Kitty Hass at kittyhass@comcast.net or visit us online at www.kathleenhass.com.

## **About the Author**



The Award Winning Author, Consultant, Facilitator, and Presenter

Kathleen Hass is the president of Kathleen Hass and Associates, Inc., a consulting practice specializing in practice maturity assessments, workforce evaluations, strategy execution, and the business analysis and project management disciplines. Ms. Hass is a prominent presenter at industry conferences, an award winning author, and keynote speaker. Her expertise includes IT strategic planning, implementing and managing PMOs and BACOEs, facilitating portfolio management, leading technology and software-intensive projects, executive coaching, building and leading strategic project teams, and managing large complex programs.

Ms. Hass has over 25 years experience providing professional services to Federal agencies, the intelligence community, and various Fortune 500 companies. Certifications include: SEI CMM appraiser, Baldrige National Quality Program examiner, Zenger-Miller facilitator, and Project Management Institute Project Management Professional. Ms. Hass serves as Director at Large and chair of the Chapter Governance Committee for the International Institute of Business Analysis, a member of the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge committee and lead author of the Enterprise Analysis Chapter.

Kitty has authored numerous white papers and articles on leading edge PM/BA practices, the renowned series entitled, *Business Analysis Essential Library*, a compilation of six titles on critical BA practices, the groundbreaking and award winning book, *Managing Project Complexity - A New Model*, and she contributed to the book released in 2009 entitled *The 77 Deadly Sins of Project Management* all published by Management Concepts, Inc.

Kathleen B. (Kitty) Hass, PMP Senior Practice Consultant

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS ANALYSIS PRACTICE

Tel: 303.663.8655 Email: kittyhass@comcast.net

Member of the IIBA Board of Directors and Chair of the IIBA Chapter Governance Committee
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS ANALYSIS
Kitty.Hass@theiiba.org