COMPARISON OF THE ROLES OF BUSINESS ANALYST, PROJECT MANAGER, AND SYSTEMS ANALYST

Comparison of the roles of business analyst, systems analyst, and project manager

*"Since I am doing all three roles, what is the difference between the **project** manager, the systems analyst, and the **business** analyst?"*

	Business Analyst	Project Manager	Systems Analyst
Primary Communication	Communicate with **business** and **product** stakeholders and the project manager	Communicate with everyone	Communicate with the **technical** and solution teams
Define Solution	Define solution to **business** problem	Define solutions to **project** problems	Define solutions to **technical** problems
Identify Problem	Identify **business** problem	Identify **project** problem(s)	Identify **technical** problem(s)
Provide Justification	Justify the problem solving effort by defining or creating the **business** plan, C/BA, ROI analysis, **project** charter	Justify the **project** and changes to the **project** scope: time or resources	Justify the solution design and **technical** changes
Scope Definition	Define **Product** Scope	Define **Project** Scope	Define **Technical** Scope
Address Trade-offs	Confirm **business** trade-offs or trade-offs that affect the **product**	Handle **project** trade-offs, e.g., budget, schedule, scope, risk	Identify design or **technical** trade-offs
Create Change	Be an agent of change for the organization	Be an agent of change for both **business** and **technical** aspects	Be an agent of change for **technical** aspects and architecture
Analyze and/or Manage Risk	Define and manage **product** risks and risks to the **business**	Define and manage risks to the **project**	Define and manage **technical** risks
Plan	Plan the requirements definition	Plan the entire **project**	Plan the **technical** solution

	Business Analyst	Project Manager	Systems Analyst
Monitor and Control		Monitor and control staff and resources	
Analyze and Manage Stakeholders	Define and manage **product** stakeholders	Define and manage **project** stakeholders	
Manage Expectations	Manage customer/user/ **business** expectations	Mange management (IT and **business**) expectations	Mange **technical** expectations
Identify Requirements	Identify **business** requirements (WHAT)	Identify **project** requirements: resources, skills, etc.	Identify system and **technical** requirements (HOW)
Analyze Impact	Analyze **product** / **business** impact	Analyze **project** impact	Analyze **technical** impact
Test	Test the **product** (acceptance testing)	Test the **project** plan	**Technical** testing
Evaluate Alternatives	Evaluate **business** solution alternatives	Evaluate **project** alternatives	Evaluate **technical** alternatives
Estimate	Estimate the time and effort to define the **product**	Estimate the time and effort to successfully complete the **Project**	Estimate the time and effort to develop the **Technical** aspects of the implementation
Perform Project Close Activities	Conduct **business** analyst retrospective and requirements definition lessons learned	Conduct **project** close and retrospective **Project** lessons learned	Conduct **technical** retrospective and lessons learned
Perform Pre-Deployment Activities	Conduct **product** training and familiarization to ensure smooth transition	Manage **project** turnover activities	Define **technical** changes necessary for deployment (migration, conversion, etc.)
Perform Deployment Activities	Assess organizational readiness to receive **product**	Manage **project** cut-over into **production**	Handle **technical** issues during cut-over

	Business Analyst	Project Manager	Systems Analyst
Perform Post Deployment Activities	Assess use of **product** in the **business** environment		
Mediate	Mediate **Product** disputes among **business**, IT and upper-level management	Mediate **Project** disputes among team members and others	Mediate **Technical** issues among team members or other **technical** personnel
Obtain Sign off	Obtain sign off for solution document and for final deliverable **product**	Obtain sign off for **project** completion	Obtain sign off for **technical** solution
Analyze	Analyze **business** processes and status	Analyze **project** processes and status	Analyze **technical** processes and status
Report	Report status of **product** and solution to **business** and **project** manager	Report status of **project** to upper-level management and others	Report status of **technical** solution to **project** manager and others

As can be seen by the table above, the business analyst, project manager, and systems analyst or technical lead basically perform the same activities with few exceptions. This is where all the confusion arises. A business analyst does risk analysis and so does the project manager and systems analyst. The project manager defines scope, but so do the business analyst and systems analyst.

The difference among the three roles is one of focus. The business analyst focuses his activities and tasks on the business or product. The project manager focuses her activities and tasks on the project. The systems analyst focuses his activities and tasks on the technical aspects of the solution.

The project manager has the overall authority and responsibility for the project and its success. The systems analyst or technical lead is responsible for the technical aspects of the implemented solution. The business analyst is responsible to ensure that the originally defined business problem has been solved completely and at the expected quality.