Master's Thesis – Business Analyst

IMPACT OF TELEWORKING ON COMMUNICATION AND ELICITATION PROCESS

ICHEC

BRUSSELS MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

ECAM

BRUSSELS ENGINEERING SCHOOL

MIVB STIB

Devroye Thomas

devroye.th@gmail.com

" I, Devroye Thomas, hereby declare that the attached dissertation is free of plagiarism and complies in all respects with the study regulations on borrowing, quoting and exploitation of various sources signed at the time of my enrolment at ICHEC, as well as with the instructions and guidelines concerning APA-compliant referencing in the text, APA-compliant bibliography, etc. made available to me on Moodle.

I hereby certify that I have read the above documents and confirm that the dissertation submitted is original and free of any borrowing from a third party not properly cited.
In the context of this online submission, the signature consists of the submission of the dissertation via the ICHEC-Student platform".

May the 19th,

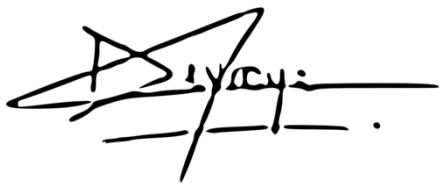


Table of contents

Thanks

Before starting my essay, I would like to thank several people without whom my internship and the writing of this thesis would not have been possible.

Mrs Catherine Rezette, for the trust she placed in me and for having given me the opportunity to put my skills as an apprentice business analyst into practice within her teams in the Sales Solutions department of the STIB.

Mr Donatien Grolaux, for his follow-up, his advice on writing and presentation, as well as for his patience and involvement in my work and research.

Mrs Sarah Gilis, for her kindness and having me made part of the project team from day one. For having put all her managerial experience to good use during my internship, to bring me from a beginner intern to a level of professionalism that would allow me to carry out commercial analyses in companies.

Mr Gaëtan Mostin, for his daily support in my tasks as an analyst, as well as his contribution in terms of customer engagement, which was very useful during sales meetings. As a Product Owner, he was the closest thing I had to a business analyst, giving me the broad outlines of my job, and allowing me to develop at my own pace.

Mr Jurgen De Block, for his sympathy and dedication to my learning on the IT side. For showing me the way at the beginning of my internship when my tasks were not yet precise.

The Connect 2 project team members allowed me to practice the theoretical concepts I have learned over the past two years. It allowed me to learn how to work in a group in an Agile way in a team that directly adopted me and believed in me and my skills.

Finally, I would like to thank the ICHEC Brussels Management School, the ECAM Brussels Engineering School, and the entire faculty. The learning and the course content brought me to where I am today from a professional and academic point of view.

Table of abbreviations

B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Customer
BA	Business Analyst
PM	Project Manager
PO	Product Owner
PSB2B	Pre-Sales Business to Business
SAP	Systems, Applications & Products in data processing
SF	SalesForce
SSo	Sales Solution
STIB	Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles
US	User Story
WFH	Work From Home

Introduction

In March 2019, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) impacted the whole world, stopping any business activities in Occidental Europe for almost two months. The pandemic forced the whole country to remain safe at home, preventing every "non-essential" function from exercising at the office. Such a situation, worthy of a sci-fi movie, was not complying with a thriven economy. Therefore, companies and their workers were obliged to adapt themselves by working from home. If some functions were already suitable for remote work, others appeared as a brand-new way of working.

Shifting its routine is never easy, and every worker had to adjust their tasks and working environment to keep their productivity as high as possible. From a spot for a computer on the dinner table to a whole dedicated room, everybody did undergo the lockdown. Even though efficiency seemed to be all right during the lockdown period, social isolation and loss of motivation came out, along with burn-out and mental issues. Those problems arose from the lack of social interactions with, on the one hand, friends and, on the other hand: colleagues. As a result, in 2021, the Belgian government decided to allow people to gradually return to work one day a week to keep both the economic and the social boats afloat. The number of days allowed to the office has fluctuated up to four throughout the year.

Nevertheless, according to the relaxation of health measures, a new practice emerged: Teleworking. Unlike the classic WFH, there is no obligation to work from one's legal home as long as productivity remains unspoiled. Provided the environment is suitable and has an internet connection. It allows, for example, people from different companies to share a coworking space or work from a potential cottage property. This practice does, however, optimise workers' morale by ensuring that they are not constantly cooped up at home when they are not in the office. It also invites companies to rethink their office management. As seen in this thesis, teleworking is a large proportion of BAs and IT consultants. Nowadays, after more than two years of whole or part teleworking, the situation has not regained its initial point. Even though the most significant part of the covid pandemic seems to be behind us, we are not safe from the future. Furthermore, we tend to have a hybrid way of working, making teleworking part of our routine.

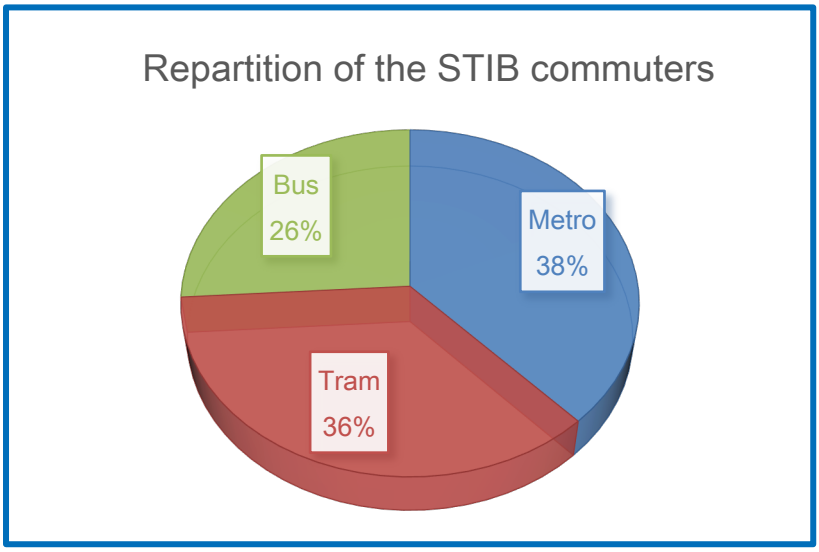
This master's thesis would define key aspects linked to WFH to assess its impact on business analysts' productivity. According to that impact, I intend to establish a framework of best practices to adopt for the future when we gather business requirements from home. The recent nature of the events makes the research of scientific lectures uneasy. Consequently, I decided to focus my essay on the return of experience and current business analysts' feedback.

Chapter 1: Contextualization

Presentation of STIB – MIVB

Through its public transport network, the "*Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles*" serves the nineteen communes of the Brussels-Capital Region and eleven more among the surroundings. Therefore, the company operates on a network of metro, tramways, buses, and several minibuses dedicated to commuters with reduced mobility (be.brussels, 2020).

Founded in 1954, the company remains today the leading public transport operator in the capital. Furthermore, public transport keeps attracting more and more people every day as commuters keep growing every year. The frequentation of the STIB network rose by 50% between 2009 and 2019 (be.brussels, 2020). The company's fleet uses approximately more than 630km. This area is spread between four metros, eighteen tramways lines, and no less than fifty buses and eleven-night buses.



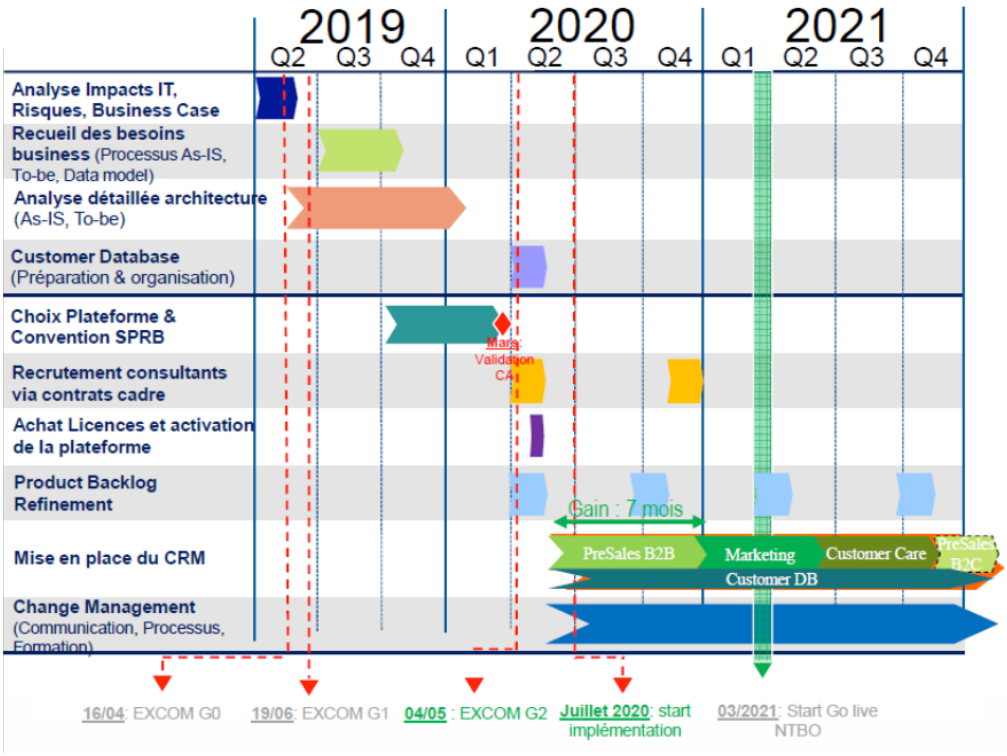
To keep up with this rising demand of its users, the *STIB* permanently modernises itself by adapting its services to the evolution of its environment: the behaviour and the expectation of potential commuters, the circulation flow, the new technologies, the "know-how", the flexibility, the adaptation with the other transport societies (*SNCB, de Lijn, TEC…*), the Uberization of our daily routine, or even the breakthrough on the market of new ways of moving like shared cars or scooters (Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles, 2021). Therefore, a new generation of vehicles, new lines, and news "*STIB-areas"* allow the company to reduce the travel time while improvements are also brought on the comfort aspect.

Connect 2 project

Since the beginning of my internship at STIB, I have been working in the Sales Solutions department and, more precisely, in the IT section. As a Business Analyst, I joined the *Connect 2* project team, helping them with the functional analysis. The objective of *Connect 2* resides in implementing a whole new Customer Relationship Management in a transversal way across the SSo division.

From the STIB point of view, implementing such software across the board is a considerable challenge. In the past, several attempts have been made to implement SAP, but without success. However, in an era where data is essential, and technology reigns supreme, it seems essential for a company that size to succeed in this implementation. Nowadays, the STIB aims for a single, shared view of every customer, partner, and commuter through this implementation.

Therefore, in 2019, an estimate of resources and a four-year budget have been allocated to the *Connect 2* project. The aim is to tailor SalesForce to the SSo department within two years and then use the remaining two years to improve and maintain the new CRM. Then, the product owner was appointed in the person of Gaëtan Mostin to establish and prioritise the main lines of the project. After initial analyses and meetings with the STIB business, the implementation was divided into four parts. As shown in the project planning, each working package was supposed to last six months to end up the transition to SF in time. According to the road map, the tailoring of the CRM should be ready by July 2022 (be.brussels, 2020).



Pre-Sales Business to Business.

a. Third-Party Payer
b. Clients Events
c. Resellers

Marketing

a. Market development
b. Campaign management

Customer Care

a. Customer service
b. Service Channel Management
c. Customer Data Management
d. Customer Relationship Management

Business to Customer

a. Sales
b. Ecommerce
c. Sales Channel Management

The objective of this project is to have à 360° view of the people who interact with the company. On the one hand, thanks to this CRM, the sales agents will have all their clients' commercial history and behaviour. On the other hand, the customer care agents will be able to follow all the interactions with their commuters. All that information means building up a robust dataset composed of one-shot STIB users and regular commuters.

When I started my internship, the project stood in the first phase (PSB2B). Even though the project was still pending in its first phase, it had already begun, making adaptation difficult. In that context, I delivered my first outputs inside the team. Due to its complexity, the project has been delayed and has slipped to 2022. Indeed, we are only at the analyses of the third phase (Customer Care). However, the project remains on track and should be completed by the end of 2022.

Methodology

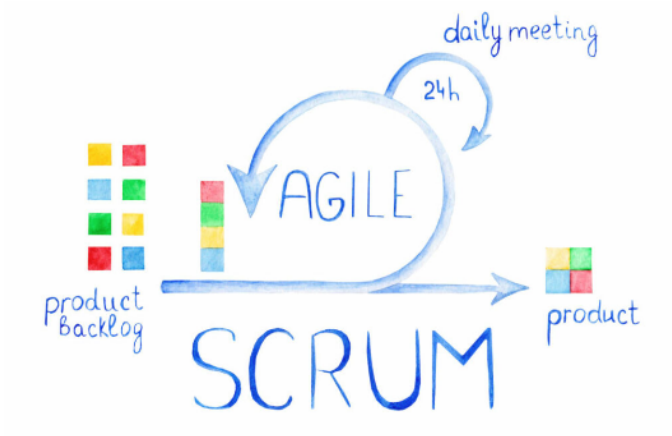
Agile Framework

The *Connect 2* team works, like most IT projects, according to the Agile methodologies and, more specifically, the empirical process control method: Scrum. Applying an Agile approach requires a flexible mindset that involves constant change, embodied in values and principles. Business analysts are active members of an agile team and often facilitate planning, analysing, testing, and demonstrating activities (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2015).

Daily, this is materialised through specific meetings. Each day starts with the "daily stand up", a fifteen-minute meeting allowing every team member to express him/herself by answering the following questions: "What have I done yesterday?", "What will I do today?" and "What are the impediments encountered?".

Another way in which the Agile method is applied is by segmenting the implementation of deliverables into a series of fixed-length iterations, called Sprints (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2015)

In the *Connect 2* development context, each sprint lasts three weeks. These sprints should be preceded by a "Sprint planning" and a "Backlog refinement" and followed by a "Sprint review" and a "Sprint retrospective". The Scrum framework focuses on an operational deliverable (Shippable Product) at the end of each sprint. The team must produce working software of a high enough quality that it could potentially be shipped or otherwise delivered to a customer (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2015).



Ahead of the beginning of the implementation, Sprint 0 usually sets up some of the think services and deliverables to help assess the business needs in the best way:

"At the end of a Sprint 0, we provide you with actionable plans in the scope of a ready to be built tool implementation" (asUgo, 2021).

Working on agile initiatives continually reassess, adapt, and adjust efforts and tactics, allowing flexibility for change. Detailed analysis work is not done ahead of time but just in time to effectively use the agile team. Agile business analysis ensures that information is available to the agile team at the right level of detail at the right time.

Such an application of the Agile framework should ease the answering of these questions:

- What need are we trying to satisfy?
- Is that need worth satisfying?
- Should we deliver something to satisfy that need?
- What is the right thing to do to deliver that need?

Business analysis work is performed continuously throughout an agile initiative and relies heavily on interpersonal skills such as communication, facilitation, coaching, and negotiation (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2015).

SalesForce

The implementation of the CRM requires a basic knowledge of the software in association with a Belgian consulting company: *asUgo Consulting*. The proposition value of *asUgo* revolves around mastering the software editor SalesForce (asUgo Consulting, 2022). The integrated CRM platform can be subdivided into four main activity sectors to bring companies and customers together: Marketing, Sales, Commerce, and Services (SalesForce, 2022).

As far as I am concerned, to understand the tool and to be able to work with/on it, I first had to follow a training course (SalesForce Trailhead). I was able to learn quickly and in a self-taught way. The SalesForce platform offers a series of free online training. The training program is called Trailhead and offers each user (new or not) the opportunity to build his Trail Mix according to the platform's features the developer wants to discover or master in SalesForce. Eventually, the goal of this training is to grant a certificate of mastery of CRM.

Chapter 2: Presentation of the thesis

Faced difficulties

In October 2020, I debuted my two-year internship at STIB as a Business Analyst. As we are talking, Belgium and most of the world as we knew it back then was plunged into a pandemic context due to the Coronavirus (a.k.a. Covid-19). Accordingly, teleworking used to be the norm to keep the economic and working situation stable. This situation represented one of the biggest challenges I encountered.

The pandemic had a considerable impact on the course of my internship. Although teleworking did not bother me from the working point of view, it did penalise my integration, especially at the beginning. The company I worked for is the biggest employer in Brussels, with approximately 10,000 workers covering around 300 functions. As you can imagine, it is never easy to find its way in such a prominent structure, and yet I had to, from my home desk.

I started my internship in a full teleworking context making contacts more difficult and colder with people I had never met before. Even though my direct colleagues made me feel more than welcome, it did not remain easy to grow my path among all the people I had to interact with as a business analyst. Consequently, I faced difficulties in structuring my work between the different actors. In concrete terms, this sometimes slowed me down in my search for information, as I first had to look for people I needed to talk to instead of directly asking the right person.

Where telecommuting took its toll was in meeting new people. As the saying goes, "do not underestimate the importance of the coffee machine" (Sylin, 2020). Given the circumstances, I had to wait until October 2021 to share my first "coffee experience". Back then, I had never been able to take advantage of this little moment of disconnection when we were no longer in a colleague-to-colleague relationship but human-to-human.

Furthermore, it is never easy to jump on the wagon of a running project. The first months were dedicated to the comprehension of the project. I had to catch up with the current situation of the implementation and the occurring events. As if it was not already complicated enough, I also had to face long forced hold periods such as summer holidays or Christmas exams (due to the part-time way of working), keeping me away from the project's progress. However, I must acknowledge and thank, at the same time, my colleagues, who were very welcoming and naturally integrated me into their work teams.

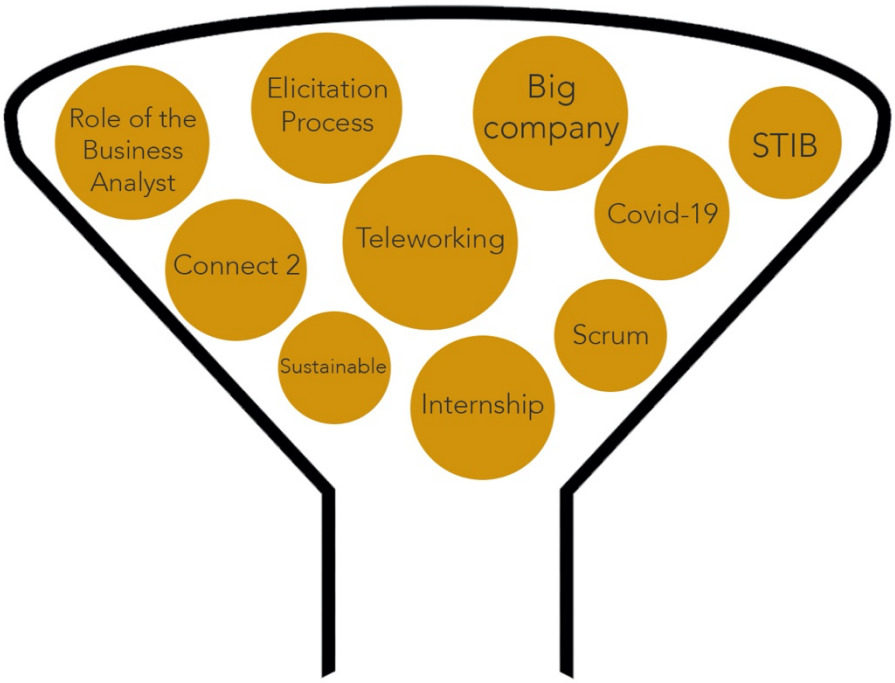
Finally, my lack of experience also amounted to a severe challenge. I had to improve my hard and soft skills to catch up with business reality and overpass the gap between school theories and work practices. In the beginning, it even affected my self-confidence, not being able to match with the expected output.

Thesis

As it stands, I wanted to study the thematic of teleworking around my business analyst position. Based on the difficulties I have been facing during those past two years, I found it interesting to develop my thesis around them. I shall therefore raise my thesis on the statement here below:

"Business requirements process stands for a pillar of business analyst's role. However, how to run a sustainable elicitation within a big company in a teleworking context?"

The first steps of my thesis will analyse the evolution of the working methods throughout the pandemic. The objective is to define the influence of teleworking regulations on the business analyst function. Afterwards, I will dig deeper by comparing the current situation at STIB with the previous situation we lived in before the pandemic to assess the impact of the lockdown. Then, I will propose a framework of best practices to be followed inside an IT project team to keep a high level of productivity despite the WFH context. The common thread of this thesis is made up of different concepts that interact with each other. This paper aims to decant these different themes and establish a clear view of their impact on the BA. Eventually, the aim is to address the negative aspects of teleworking to optimise the process of requirement elicitation.



Theoretical part

The theoretical part is composed of two different chapters. The first one consists of defining the fundamental concepts of my research question by collecting relevant information and reading scientific articles. Then, once defined, I will try to establish links between these different concepts to see how they influence each other. The second chapter will present the construction of a questionnaire submitted to twenty BAs. This survey aims to collect the experiences and reactions of IT workers forced to work from home because of the pandemic. Subsequently, through this survey, I will attempt to quantify the impact of teleworking on the skills of a BA.

Chapter 3: Literature review

Definition of the concepts

Role of the Business Analyst

To give a complete and correct definition of the function business analyst, I gathered several statements from different sources, adopting several viewpoints. The first approach focuses on its vital role in IT development projects. The Ichec Management School, according to the Ecam, talks about **an intermediary between users and IT specialists**. They need to define the expectations of an IT system with the users and then interact with the IT specialists to build and validate the system (Ichec Management School, 2017). Actually, BAs act as a "bridge", transforming the customer's requirements into a language intelligible to developers (Doucek, Maryska, & Nedomova, 2013).

They are focused on **digital transformation** by activating the most efficient digital technologies to optimise, formalise and automate business processes (Ichec Management School, 2017). Therefore, it requires a wide range of tasks as they work as **liaisons among stakeholders** to elicit, analyse, communicate, and validate requirements (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2015). They are expected to understand business problems and opportunities in the requirements to identify and communicate with users. The objective is to **formulate and produce a requirements specification for system creation and software solutions** (Doucek, Maryska, & Nedomova, 2013). Keep in mind that technology is decently used to achieve the organisation's goals (Richards & Marrone, 2014).

Business analysts need to be courageous, prepared, and willing to provoke changes to accept the challenge in their organisation (Hass, The Enterprise Business Analyst: Developing Creative Solutions to Complex Business Problems, 2011). Moreover, they are seen as creative leaders by deepening partnerships with their stakeholders across their organisation. They establish liaisons between the information systems department and the rest of the organisation, especially with employees and workers, as they **translate** into the specification, **constraint**, and **requirements** of **its information** and **system needs** (Laudon & Laudon, 2012). (Hass, The Enterprise Business Analyst: Developing Creative Solutions to Complex Business Problems, 2011)

According to Dr B. Gregory, professor and academic program director at Bellevue University, “Elicitation of requirements and using them to get IT onboard and understand what the client wants is one of BAs' biggest responsibilities". Furthermore, this function is all about **defining requirements and prioritising them** to get feedback and approval on requirements (Hammond, 2017). Therefore, every IT project should start with a business analyst asking the following questions to the client:

- What do the systems need to do?
- How do they do it?
- Whom do we need to get input from?
- How do we get everyone to agree on what we need to do before we go and do it?

The objective is to identify and then prioritise technical and functional requirements that top the business analyst’s list of responsibilities (Pratt & White, 2019). In order to have an accurate idea of what is expected from a "good" BA, I found it interesting to compare the consolidated definition of a BA to an accurate job description coming from Robert Half, one of the leaders in the recruitment sector (Robert Half, 2022). By combining both sources, I enumerated - non exhaustively – a list of soft and hard skills required:

- Oral and written communication skills
- Analytical thinking and problem solving
- Being detail-oriented and capable of delivering a high level of accuracy
- Knowledge of the business structure
- Stakeholder analysis
- Requirements engineering and processes modelling
- Team Spirit
- Understanding of networks, databases, and other technology
- Working in Agile
- Time focused (meeting the deadlines)

We can state that having a background in IT is not mandatory for BAs as long as they understand how systems, products, and tools work. On the other hand, some might have a strong IT background and less business experience. They will then face the other challenge of shifting away from “the IT guy” to this hybrid role (Pratt & White, 2019).

It is no coincidence that the business analysis profession rose in the 21st-century context of business challenges (Doucek, Maryska, & Nedomova, 2013). It is all about eliciting the needs of a business, helping them remain competitive, identifying creative solutions to complex business problems, bringing about innovation, and constantly adding value for the customer and revenue to the organisation. (Hass, The 21st Century Business Analyst, 2012). In a nutshell, we can identify a vital need for a high-level professional attitude and the ability to communicate specific ICT competence (Doucek, Maryska, & Nedomova, 2013).

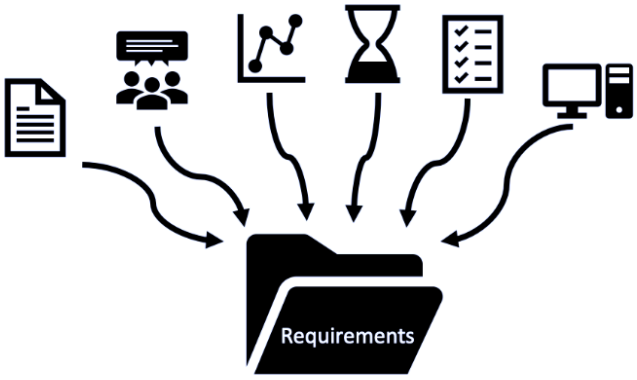
Finally, to link that definition with my project team, and thanks to the explanation of Mr Allan Kelly, I can establish a parallel between the role of the business analyst to the role of the Product Owner. Indeed, the core of both roles is understanding what is needed and communicating this to a development team: stakeholder identification and management, requirements analysis, specification, and communication. Most of the required competencies to be an efficient BA match the skills needed by a Product Owner (Kelly, 2019).

Business Requirement

Requirements can be seen as the entire conditions, capabilities, constraints and limits of a project outcome. In other words, gathering all those requirements is fundamental to leading solid project management. The activity called “requirements gathering” is the activity of **identifying, documenting, and managing the needs of the stakeholders.** The wishes formulated by the stakeholders and elicited by business analysts form the basis for building the project's scope (Nollevaux, 2020). Their gathering takes place for the first time in the early phases of the project. Nevertheless, it never really stops. Indeed, as we are working in an *Agile* framework, requirements collection keeps running **through the whole project** as we constantly need to **readapt the scope to match the business needs**.

Business requirements collection stands for a critical activity because it often determines the success or failure of a project. Therefore, **communication and transparency** should always apply in this part of the process. The way analysts interact with stakeholders and gather their requirements is essential for the flourishing of the project. Moreover, the process plays a key role as it establishes the detail of the schedule for planning the budget, the quality management plan, and the risk management.

The level of detail required in requirements gathering is the one that leads to a clear understanding of the deliverables expected by the stakeholders. Then, the scope should be documented and communicated to the stakeholders for approval via User Stories and Acceptance Criteria (Nollevaux, 2020).



Elicitation

The first description of the business analyst function comes from the *guide to the Business Analysis Body Of Knowledge* (BABOK). It defines an analyst as "the *responsible for* ***discovering***, ***synthesising***, *and* ***analysing information*** *from various sources within an enterprise, including tools, processes, documentation, and* ***stakeholders***. *The business analyst is responsible for* ***eliciting*** *the actual* ***needs of stakeholders***, *which frequently involves investigating and* ***clarifying*** *their expressed desires to determine underlying issues and causes"* (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2015).

Knowledge elicitation began in the mid to late 1980s in knowledge engineering for expert systems (Cooke, 1999). This discipline describes the tasks that BAs perform to obtain information from stakeholders and confirm the results. It also describes the communication with stakeholders once the business analysis information is assembled.

Elicitation is the drawing forth or receiving information from stakeholders or other sources. It is the main path to discovering requirements and **design information and might involve talking with stakeholders** directly, researching topics, experimenting, or simply being handed information. Collaboration is the act of two or more people working together towards a common goal. The elicitation and collaboration knowledge area describe how BAs identify and reach **agreements on the mutual understanding** of all types of business analysis information. Elicitation and collaboration work is never a 'phase' in business analysis; instead, it is ongoing as long as business analysis work is occurring. Information is elicited while performing any task that includes interaction with stakeholders and while the BA is performing independent analytical work. Elicitation may trigger additional elicitation for details to fill in gaps or increase understanding. Following the course of requirement engineering of Mr Van den Berghe, there exist three different main approaches to elicit them:

1. **Research, observations, and analysis of existing information: individual research without the actors via websites, books, or any other means of documentation** (Van den Berghe, 2020).

Knowledge elicitation often begins with observations of task performance by providing a global impression of the domain of interest. (Cooke, 1999)Observations can occur in the natural setting, thus providing initial glimpses of actual behaviour that can be used for later development of contrived tasks and other materials for more structured knowledge elicitation methods. The initial scope conceptualisation can identify any constraints or issues to be dealt with during further elicitation (Cooke, 1999).

2. **Collaboration: with stakeholders through interviews, workshops, and feedback** (Van den Berghe, 2020).

The most direct way to find out what someone knows is to ask them. Therefore, the approach of unstructured interviews is the most systematic elicitation method (Cullen & Bryman, 1988). Like observations, unstructured interviews are helpful for the early phases of a project when the business analyst is trying to learn about the area of expertise. Unstructured interviews are free-flowing, whereas structured interviews have predetermined content or sequencing. The "*how, what, why, who, where, or when*" form of structured interview imposes minimal constraints on the response to closed (Shaw & Woodward, 1990). In addition, question content can fluctuate as each target has a slightly different knowledge type. Thus, unstructured interviews can elicit a wide range of knowledge types depending on the specific task and expertise of the interviewed (Cooke, 1999).

3. **Experimentation: identify information unknown to the actors via observations, prototypes, and prototypes observations** (Van den Berghe, 2020).

Some tasks cannot be observed in natural settings leading to observing performance in a simulated context or using a contrived task (Hoffman, 1995). Aside from where they occur, observational methods also vary in terms of what is observed, the observer's role, and the method of recording (writing, video, photos, audio).

To consolidate those observations from the course, I am using Mrs Nancy Cooke's work describing a user-centred methodology called AKADAM (Advanced Knowledge and Design Acquisition Methodology), which integrates three different knowledge elicitation methods (Cooke, 1999). The theory resides in the fact that information is obtained directly from the expert and elaborated by the expert. The aim of AKADAM includes (McNeese, Zaff, Citera, Brown, & Whitaker, 1995) :

1. Shared communication between the business analyst and the expert,
2. The facilitation of unconstrained expression,
3. The resulting representations are compatible with the stakeholders' needs, capabilities, and limitations.

Sustainable

The concatenation of both the Cambridge and Britannica Dictionary defines the term “sustainable” as follows: “*able to last or continue for a long time*” (Britannica Dictionary, 2022) (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022).

To add another dimension to the definition, I will complete it with the Google statement: "*able to be maintained at a certain rate or level*" (Google, 2022). Here we introduce a qualitative notion.

Eventually, we will establish a clear and complete definition by using the fourth source, contextualising *sustainability,* and its limits in the business view; *“limits to sustainability are determined by physical and natural resources, environmental degradation, and social resources. Accordingly, sustainable policies emphasise the future effect of any policy or business practice on humans, the economy, and the ecology* (Mollenkamp, 2021).

To cut a long story short, we can postulate that the adjective “sustainable” in the business context can be defined as **the capability to endure an extended period while conserving its quality and acceptance level, all by complying with the available resources.**

Teleworking regulations

Since the pandemic, teleworking has become mandatory for both the private sector and public administrations, as far as possible (depending on the nature of the job or the worker's role). Then, starting from October 2021, one return day at the office per staff member per week was allowed. From December 13, the number of return days at the office was increased to a maximum of two per staff member (belgium.be, 2021).

As the situation changed, all workers had **to adapt to the teleworking** regulations. Even though most companies had long been familiar with structural WFH, with that new situation emerged new rights along with new obligations. If the operating rules remained relatively similar in most cases, workers were free to organise their work time, respecting their hours and workloads.

Workers' well-being represents an essential aspect of the deal as employers are responsible for the safety and health of their employees. Therefore, they began bargaining with trade unions to set out terms and conditions for providing equipment, covering expenses, and monitoring performance (Syndicat European Trade Union, 2021). Moreover, the government needed to draw up new policies to protect teleworkers from health and psychosocial risks, primarily due to isolation issues.

However, in November 2021, after more than a year of the pandemic situation, the decision from the Consultative Committee to keep teleworking mandatory for three or four days a week appeared to be "absolutely incomprehensible" for some employers (Chini, 2021). They were afraid of the consequences, fearing that it would lead us to an unprecedently economic crisis. In addition to the crisis, mental damage could not be underestimated as isolation kept, causing burn-out and an extra administrative burden.

According to the employer's organisation, companies used to be already organised in a Covid-proof way, aligning a combination of teleworking, limited staffing, social distancing, face masks, and ventilation. Altogether, this had already led to almost no infections work area. On top of that, at term, endless WFH starts **weighing on business operations**, puts pressure on services, and has a significant impact on the mental well-being of employees.

Furthermore, the regulations were judged as "not substantiated," as the infection figures show that the Coronavirus had hardly passed on in companies, partly thanks to the high vaccination rate in Belgium.[1] (Chini, 2021).

[1] NB: this thesis has no medical purpose. I chose not to talk any further about vaccination leaving everyone their own opinion. The only objective of this essay is to analyse the impact of teleworking, not its cause.

Big company

The size criteria determine the format that should be used for filing annual accounts (National Bank of Belgium, 2022). Regarding the law of December 18 2015, in Belgium, the company[2] is considered “Big” if it exceeds two of the three thresholds listed here below:

1. A workforce of 50 Full-Time Equivalent
2. A turnover of 9,000,000 €
3. A Balance sheet total of 4,500,000 €

In its 2020[3] annual financial reports, the STIB is corporately described as follows:

1. A workforce of **9,843** Full-Time Equivalent
2. A turnover of **214,000,000 €**
3. A Balance sheet total of **3,018,000,000 €**

As it exceeds the three thresholds, the **STIB is considered a “Big” company** in compliance with the Belgian financial regulations (STIB - MIVB, 2021).

Income from passengers traffic (in €)

TOTAL	**213,554,295.5**	**285,787,871**
Direct income from the traffic	**152,902,295.5**	**225,135,871**
Tickets	16,728,495.1	36,384,181.5
Passes	20,479,604.0	40,789,524.2
School season tickets	7,063,645.0	7,319,170.3
General season tickets	105,848,688.0	131,306,717.7
Discount on sales	-51,399.1	-33,010.7
B-Post Transports	76,738.8	485,278.3
Taxibus	189,536.3	265,971.4
Other (1-day tickets)	1,417,477.1	5,536,077.5
Right of use	1,019,949.2	2,022,880.0
Events	129,561.1	1,059,080.7
Indirect income from the traffic	**60,652,000**	**60,652,000**
Endowments for preferential rates	60,652,000	60,652,000
Net income from traffic/trip	0.87	0.67
Operational cost/trip	3.13	1.69
Sales revenues		
Advertising	5,110,146	7,594,082
Rental	4,848,836	7,973,252

Income from passengers traffic in € for 2020 (STIB - MIVB, 2021)

According to my thesis, the only criteria that matters is the "Full-Time Equivalent". The turnover and the balance sheet have no impact on the BA role in the context of my research.

[2] In the case of parent companies, size is assessed on a consolidated basis. This applies solely to the parent company and not to the affiliated parent companies if they are not parenting companies themselves (National Bank of Belgium, 2022).

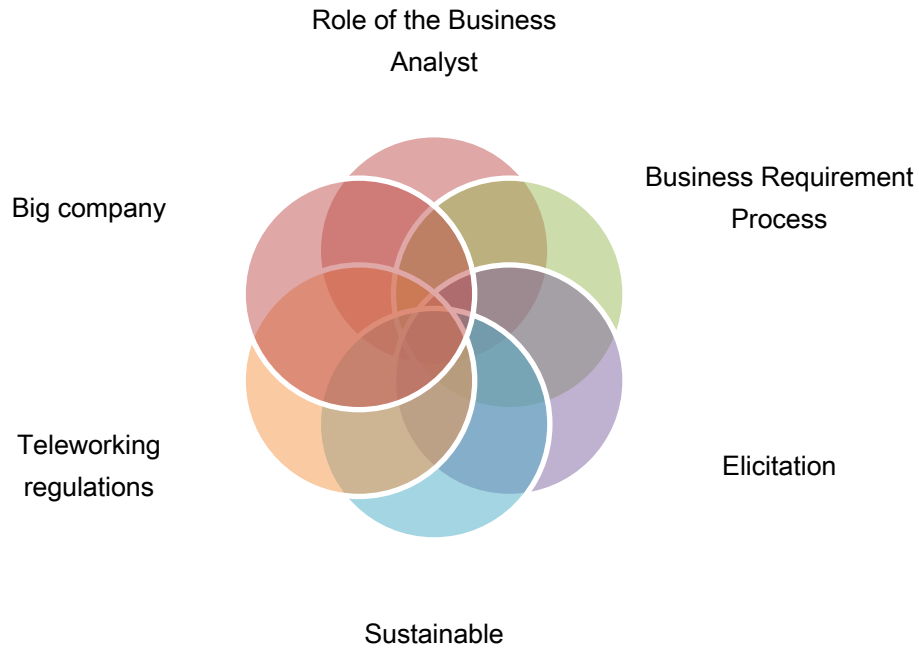
[3] By the time this thesis was written, the 2021 annual report had not been published yet.

Confrontation and interaction between the concepts

The first and most apparent cross appears in the description of the business analyst function. According to the Ichec definition of the function, their first role is to optimise, formalise and automate business processes (Ichec Management School, 2017). As we constantly discuss stakeholders' needs identification, it directly links us to explaining the business requirement process.

Moreover, by looking at the highlighted skills to be a “good BA”, like *problem-solving, oral and written communication skills,* or *stakeholder analysis*, we can easily match them with the competencies needed to achieve a performing process of business requirements.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the “elicitation” concept can be seen as a final subdivision of the business requirement process branch. In that branch, analysts must be sure about the information they collect to deliver an accurate solution regarding the business need. Plus, as we established before, the elicitation part of the process is the more accurate one. Consequently, the expertise in *analytical thinking and problem solving, high accuracy, and requirements engineering,* which are entirely part of the business analyst function, define the elicitation concept's professionalism.



On the one hand, we have the three first concepts that mix each other through their definition, but on the other hand, we have contextual concepts that are not directly related to the BA role. Though, in the context of my thesis, they will cross each other's paths.

We defined "*sustainable"* as the capability to endure an extended period while conserving its quality and acceptance level, all by complying with the available resources. However, how do we maintain a sustainability threshold when resources tend to lack? Since 2020, many people have also experienced the fear of social death. The luckiest who did not lose their jobs have experienced WFH, which can be destabilising. Our life is, as our identity, composed of two parts: one professional, the other private, and our balance requires them to be clearly identified. Working in a different place from our home helps us to do this. Significantly as we benefit from social interaction, from the gaze of colleagues, which gives meaning to work, and from possible progression. In teleworking, even in good conditions, we are deprived of this. Therefore, many people have broken down to the point where they can no longer work (Halmos, 2021).

In a crisis, employees need strong points of reference. They need to be informed about what is happening internally and externally. Good morale enables them to cope with difficult times and manage these events without their impaired capabilities (Granger, 2022).

We have demonstrated that communication is a pillar of the business' wishes clarification. Good internal communication creates a climate of trust and strengthens the dialogue between the different levels of the company. Nevertheless, teleworking has been heavily impacted as workers had to adapt to the new regulations even though it weighed on the business operations. The impact is also reflected in reduced absenteeism.

On top of that, we added the dimension of the big company as I faced difficulties finding my way through the robust structure of the STIB. In a turbulent environment, the company must more than ever take care of its internal communication to bring a certain stability to its teams, as internal communication is a vector of success for the company (Granger, 2022). Often neglected compared to its big sister, external communication, internal communication has nevertheless become a strategic skill. The stakes for organisations are high as they must know how to communicate their shared values and objectives.

In conclusion, we can establish that the contextual concepts come disturbing the perennity of the business analyst activities. The continuation of this essay intends to explain how the context influences and impacts the sustainability of the elicitation process of a BA despite the company's size.

Chapter 4: Quantitative data collection

Form

This second chapter of the theoretical part will be allocated to building a qualitative form. The objective is to collect experiences and feedback from twenty Business Analysts, Product Owners, or IT Project Managers from different companies to establish a good practices model for the business requirement process. The data I collect will answer the following statement:

"How to run a performing work from home?"

The content of the form will be settled regarding the different highlighted terms in the definition part. This form will be composed of open questions, multiple choices, and linear scales.
The first step is to identify my audience by asking about their working status, function title, and responsibilities. Then I asked them about their client to contextualise their answer.

1. *What is your current working status?*
    - *Employee*
    - *Self-employed*

2. *Can you describe in a few words your job's title, the purpose of your function, and the company your work for (or if you are self-employed, what client are you working for at the moment)?*

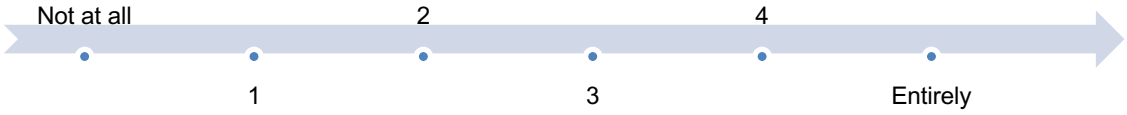
3. *Is your client considered a "big company"? (>50 FTE)*
    - *Yes*
    - *No*
    - *Other (precise)*

The second step is to compare the skill list from the theoretical part with the reality of the workers.

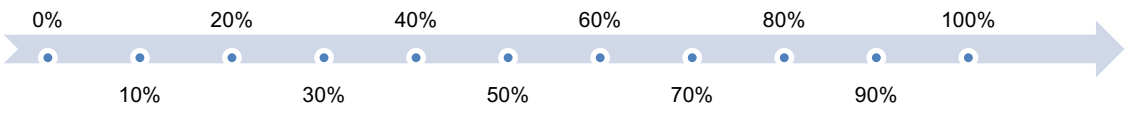
4. *Which of the following words describe the best the skills expected from your function?*
    - *Oral and written communication skills*
    - *Analytical thinking and problem solving*
    - *Being detail-oriented and capable of delivering a high level of accuracy*
    - *Knowledge of the business structure*
    - *Stakeholder analysis*
    - *Requirements engineering and processes modelling*
    - *Team Spirit*
    - *Understanding of networks, databases, and other technology*
    - *Working in Agile*
    - *Time focused (meeting the deadlines)*

The third part of the form introduces the teleworking context. I am using two linear scales to assess the impact of WFH on their daily working routine. The objective is to ensure that my audience is pertinent. If they are not home-working, their answer would not be relevant to my research.

5. *Has teleworking impacted your daily way of working (from "0: not at all" to "5: entirely")?*



6. *Today (2022), what percentage of your meetings/calls are made in a teleworking context (from "0%" to "100%")?*



Then, I dig deeper to understand how far it changed their working methods regarding teleworking. Did they adapt themselves, or were they already prepared for it? Did they make some changes in their tasks, and how do they manage social distancing?

7. *What software are you using now (2022) to keep working in a distance that you maybe did not know of their existence back in 2019?*

8. *Did you make some arrangements at home to push teleworking to its peak of productivity (new material, new space)?*

9. *How do you establish and keep good communication with your customers, whom you barely get to see?*

10. *How would you describe the teleworking situation regarding your function?*
    - *Horrible, I need to be at the office to be productive.*
    - *One day a week is practical, but I would rather be at the office.*
    - *Two or three days a week, it feels good to stay home, I am more productive, but I miss the social interaction.*
    - *One day a week at the office is enough to ask my colleague/clients what I need.*
    - *A pleasure, I could stay home every day as I do not need more social interaction to work.*

Through the four following questions, I intend to look at the positive and negative aspects and their impact on the current situation. The question I would like to answer here is: "*Is forced teleworking only a bad thing?*".

11. *What positive aspect has teleworking been bringing to you so far (both from a professional and a personal point of view)?*

12. *What negative aspect has teleworking been bringing to you so far (both from a professional and a personal point of view)?*

To be more specific, I try to target the main activities of a business analyst to be more accurate on the potential impacts of working from home.

13. BEFORE the pandemic and HW situation, these actions were:

0 (Non used) - 1 (difficult) - 2 (could be optimized) - 3 (easy) - 4 (optimized)

- *Stakeholders' analysis (interview)*
- *Communication*
- *Agile method application*
- *Knowledge of the client business structure*
- *Team Spirit*
- *Problem-solving through experimentation and tests*
- *Accuracy of the deliverable*
- *Requirements elicitation (analysis)*
- *Teams - Skype - Zoom etc.*
- *Meeting of the*

Then, I compare the pandemic context through the same criteria.

14. DURING the pandemic and HW situation, these actions were:

0 (Non used) - 1 (difficult) - 2 (could be optimized) - 3 (easy) - 4 (optimized)

The objective of those two-in-one questions is to quantify the influence of WFH and establish a radar graph allowing a clear *before/after* view.

To conclude the form, I want to see what they think about their future; how do they see the "tomorrow way of working"? Depending on their answer, I will be able to state if they will be willing to continue to do so or not.

15. How do you see the future of your job (when the pandemic stops)?

- *Full office*
- *Full home*
- *Hybrid system (2-3 days)*

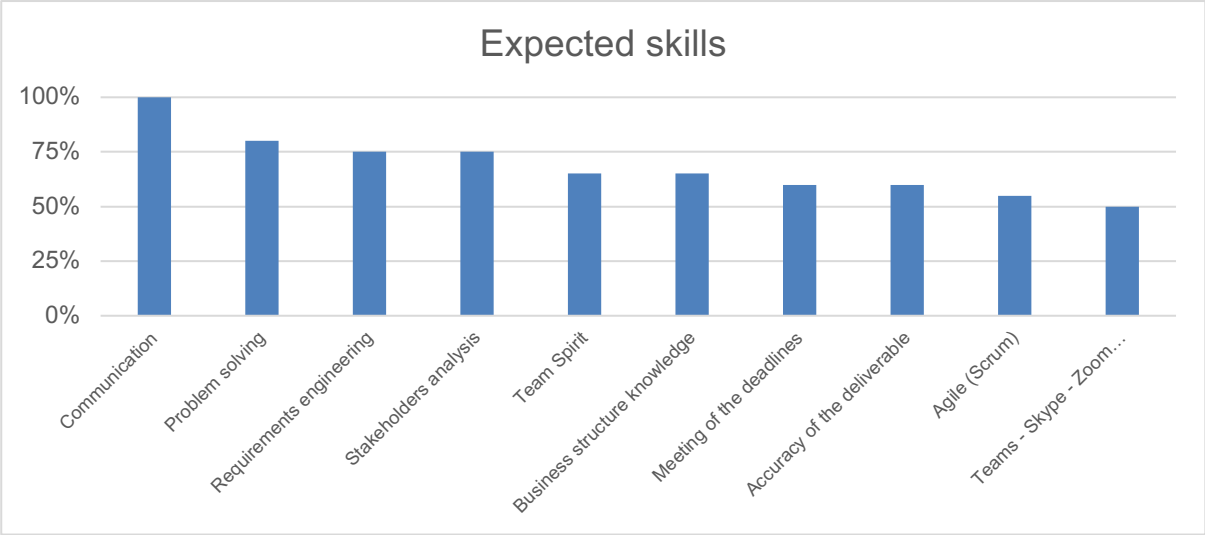
Analytic review

Audience

Through my survey, I gathered more than twenty feedback from business analysts, product owners, and IT project managers from different companies with various domains of activities. My audience mainly comprises employees, with only 10% self-employed, working for 90% of them in a big company (>50 FTE). As a result, my audience's feedbacks are relevant to my thesis.

Expected skills

First, starting from the Robert Half skills list, I wanted to highlight them by comparing theoretical expectations with the reality of the function (see details of the figures in annexe n°1).



As a result, the first observation is that c*ommunication* skill has been identified as critical by 100% of the respondents, making it an essential competency in business analysis. Then, we can see from the bar chart that *problem-solving*, *requirement engineering* and *stakeholder analysis* are the four most valuable skills for a business analyst, according to 75% of the respondents.

However, as I stated in the presentation of my thesis[4] Competence abilities such as *team spirit* and *business structure knowledge* represented critical difficulties in my business analyst function (here judged helpful by 65%). Therefore, I will not dismiss them as I want to assess the impact on those skills too.

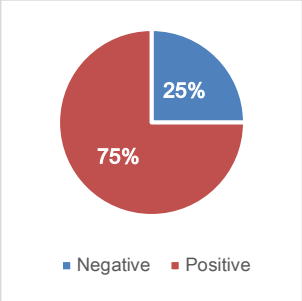
[4] See « *Faced difficulties », chapter 2.*

Afterwards, the last four competencies, including *Meeting the deadlines, accuracy of the deliverable, Agile (Scrum),* and *understanding of technology* lack behind around 50%, making them less relevant for the rest of the research. This lower rate can be partly explained by the fact that these competencies are not only sticking to the business analyst function. In other words, those skills can be excepted by every teammate working on an IT project (from de developers to the project managers).

Pandemic's influence

I oriented the form around the WFH context. It has significantly impacted more than 85% of the audience regarding the survey. This high rate comes from the fact that 90% of them have been working from home at least four days a week since the beginning of the pandemic. Those figures speak for themselves as teleworking did impact the workers. Nonetheless, we still need to determine whether that impact represents a burden or an opportunity.

Therefore, the first step to analyse is that for 75% of the audience, WFH does not represent a constraint in their function to be productive even though it impacts the way of working. Still, 20% think that it is practical but not productive. The last 5% cannot stand the situation and feel terrible about being forced to work from home.



This high rate of 75% surprised me, so I decided to dig further into my analysis by asking them about the positive aspects that teleworking has been bringing since March 2019. I established a list of the positive aspects of the pandemic from a working point of view.

Positive aspects

The main factor justifying this high rate of 75% is the better work-life balance, allowing people to spend time for themselves or with their family. In other words, they feel free to organise their day as they wish (as long as their work is done and the meetings fruitful).

Moreover, they point out that they are more focused as if they were working from an open space at the office. This can be explained by some arrangements made at home to reach a working-friendly environment. The comments around the question mention that some of them had bought new furniture like desks, chairs, or a second computer screen. On top of that, some interrogated people confessed that they even moved away to get a more significant living place, allowing them to have an entire room dedicated to work (bureau).

Another recurring fact is that they are glad not to waste time in traffic jams or public transportation, and fuel costs are dramatically reduced. Plus, the time they do not spend commuting can be used to rest a bit more, making them on top form.

Finally, as surprising as it is, WFH has been bringing quicker interaction with colleagues, as everybody is supposed to sit with his computer all day long.

In a nutshell, the flexibility allows them to suit their workday to their private by never losing time in the traffic, bringing them more freedom and quality time to focus. This self-control and organisation bring them self-confidence even though they never get to see their colleagues.

Negative aspects

Nevertheless, 25% still see teleworking as a burden, with some solid negative points pointed out. The most repetitive answer is the lack of social interaction with colleagues and clients. What is highlighted here is not the lack of communication, even though it appeared in the feedback, but the chitchat around a coffee or during lunchtime. People are just executioners behind their screens instead of human beings.

Another recurring fact is the counterpart of freedom, translated by difficulties in getting a good work-life balance during workdays remaining too much in the same environment. Disconnecting its laptop can become problematic as it always remains available. In addition to that aspect, distractions can easily interfere during the day, such as noisy neighbours or family members staying home. Consequently, the absence of an official working framework jeopardises concentration and, thus, productivity.

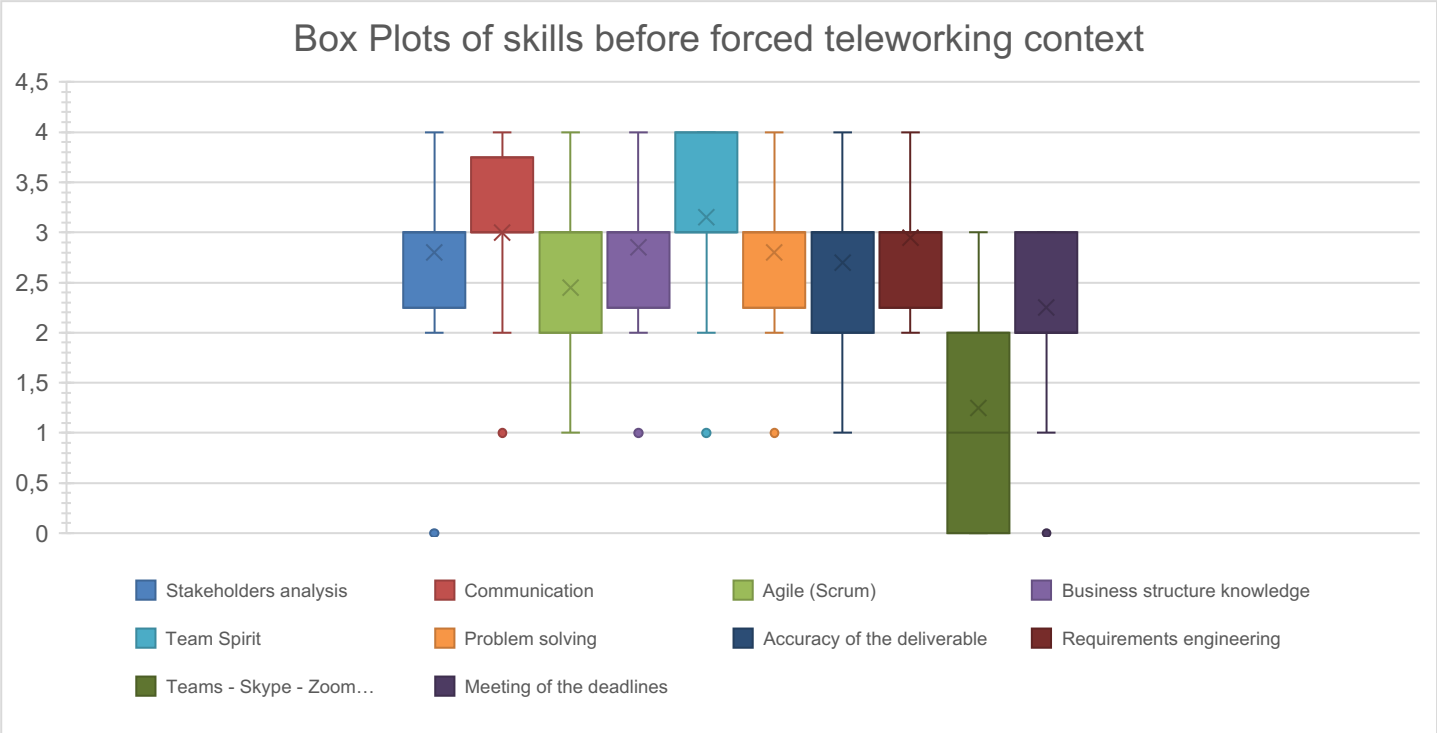
Lastly, starting in a new environment is no easy thing, especially when the project's scope or the area of application of a team needs to be studied away. Besides making a parallel with my own experience, In the beginning, I did not know my clients and teammates so well, so I was never sure of their expectations, intentions, and reactions. This brought me a lack of self-confidence that I had to erase to remain productive in my deliverables.

It is always easy to get carried away at home to resume the negative aspects, acting less productive and impacting daily routine. Moreover, it is hard to stick to the schedule from home because it seems complicated to stop working. Finally, the lack of human presence feels awful, and feeling lonely affects the confidence, thus the quality of the deliverables.

Box Plots

It appears challenging to quantify the application of methods, skills, or frameworks. Accordingly, I created a scale from 0 to 4, trying to associate numbers with the situation (figures in annexe n°2-3). The objective is to compare the situation before the forced work from the home context with the actual teleworking. Therefore, I will use box plots representing statistical data in which a rectangle is drawn to represent the second and third quartiles, usually with a vertical line inside to indicate the median value. The lower and upper quartiles are shown as horizontal lines on either side of the rectangle (Oxford Languages, 2020).

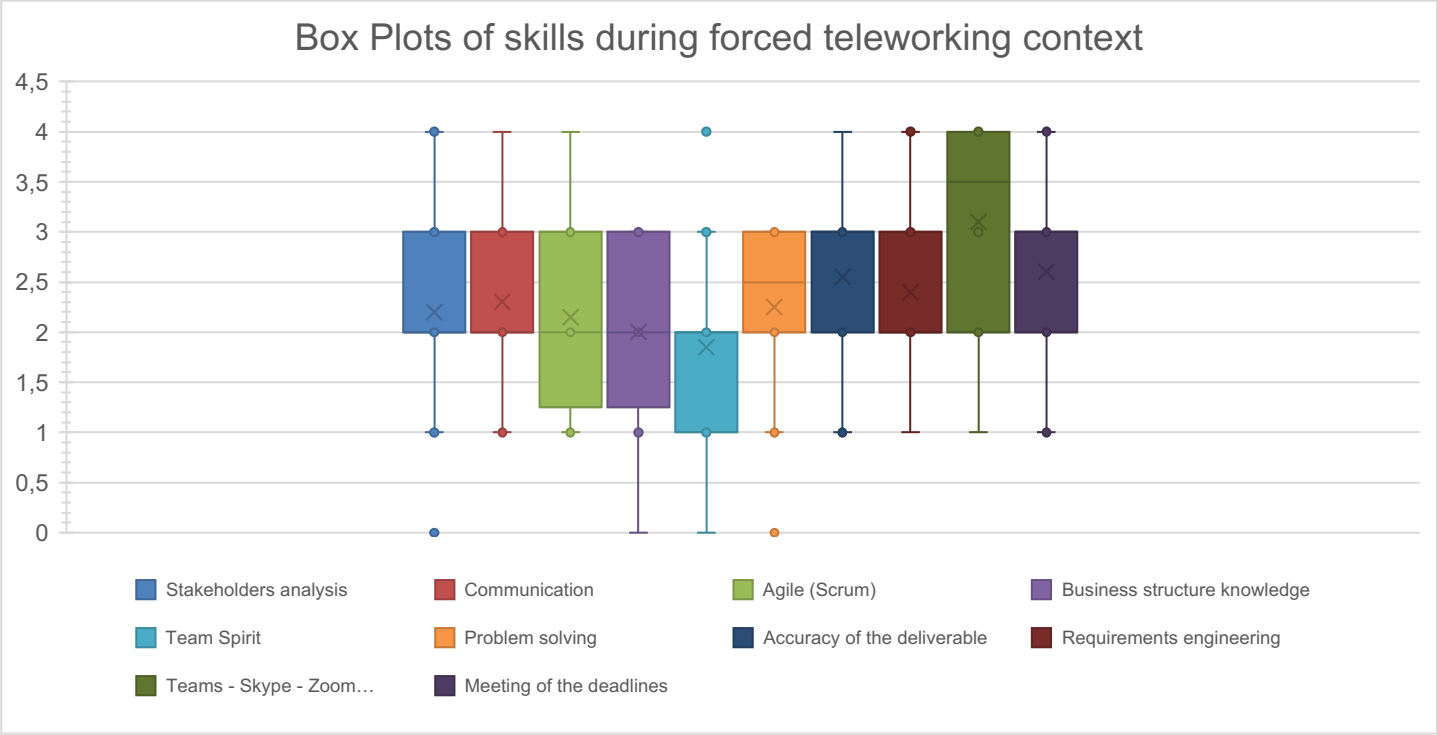
Observations before the pandemic



"0 (Non used) - 1 (difficult) - 2 (could be optimized) - 3 (easy) - 4 (optimized)" [5].

- Even though every process is not optimised, they are all used by my audience.
- Most of the means are situated between 2.5 and 3.
- The highest means are *Communication, Team spirit, Problem-solving,* and *Requirements analysis* which all stand as the pillar of a good business analyst.
- *The Agile method* shows a lower trend, signifying that everybody does not use that specific framework (which sounds normal, depending on the company or the project). Still, its mean is above 2, meaning that it works where the framework is applied.
- The plot of *Teams – Skype – Zoom* extends itself evenly from 0 to 3, meaning that as many people use these tools as people who do not. Yet, we see a median of 1.2, meaning that half of the business analyst does not use them significantly.

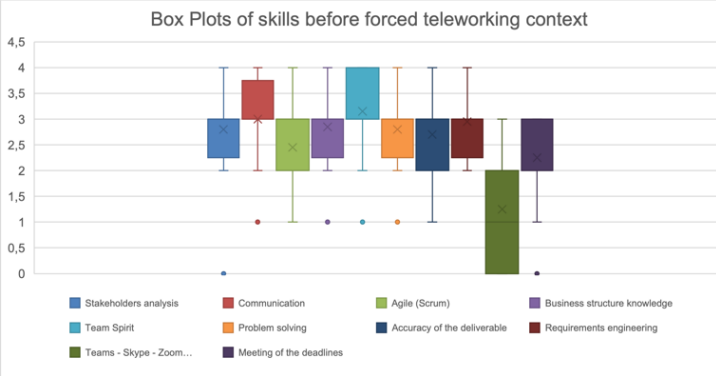
[5] See *Quantitative Data Collection* paragraph

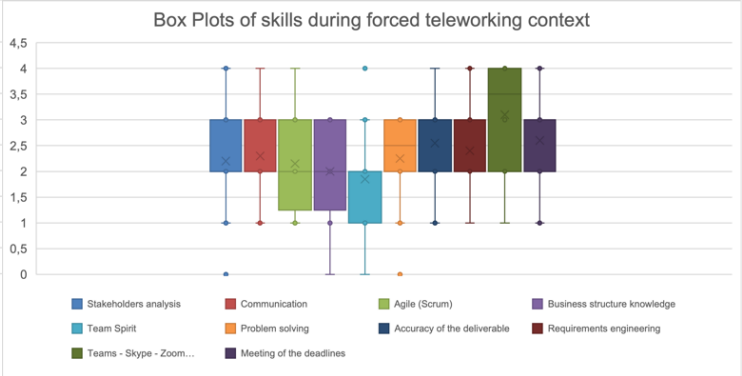


"0 (Non used) - 1 (difficult) - 2 (could be optimized) - 3 (easy) - 4 (optimized)".

- Even though every process is not optimised, they are still all used by my audience.
- Most of the means are situated between 2 and 2.5.
- The highest mean is *Teams – Skype – Zoom* with 3.1.
- *Team Spirit* shows a lower trend between "difficult" and "could be optimised".
- Except for the *Teams – Skype – Zoom* plot, none reaches the threshold 4, meaning that every process could still be optimised.

Critics and comparisons





The first impression is that every instance decreased except for the *Teams – Skype – Zoom*. Unlike all the rest, it has risen from a mean of 1.25 to 3.1, winning almost 2 points. Moreover, the exciting fact is that in the second plot, every business analyst had used one of the communication tools, while before the teleworking, some of them never did. Consequently, the median equals 3.5, whereas it only amounted to 1 before the pandemic. Half of the BAs interrogated switched from *"difficult"* to "*easy"* due to WFH.

Paradoxically, the *Communication* plot tends to slow down, with a median of -1 point due to the work from home. Passing from *"easy"* to *"could be optimised".*

Unsurprisingly, the most critical drop-off is the *Team Spirit* plot, with its mean plunging from 3.15 to 1.85, losing 1.3 points. The same variation appears when we look at the median, signifying that everybody evenly shares the trend. It does not appear like a surprise, as we lose every social contact with our teammates from home.

Regarding the two other main skills previously identified[6]. We can also observe a decrease in both *Problem Solving* and *Requirements analysis.* Indeed, their means have respectively decreased from 2.8 to 2.25 and 2.95 to 2.4, and their medians decreased respectively from 3 to 2.5 and from 3 to 2. On average, the four primary skills that define the function of the business analysts have all reached the *"could be optimised"* sill due to teleworking.

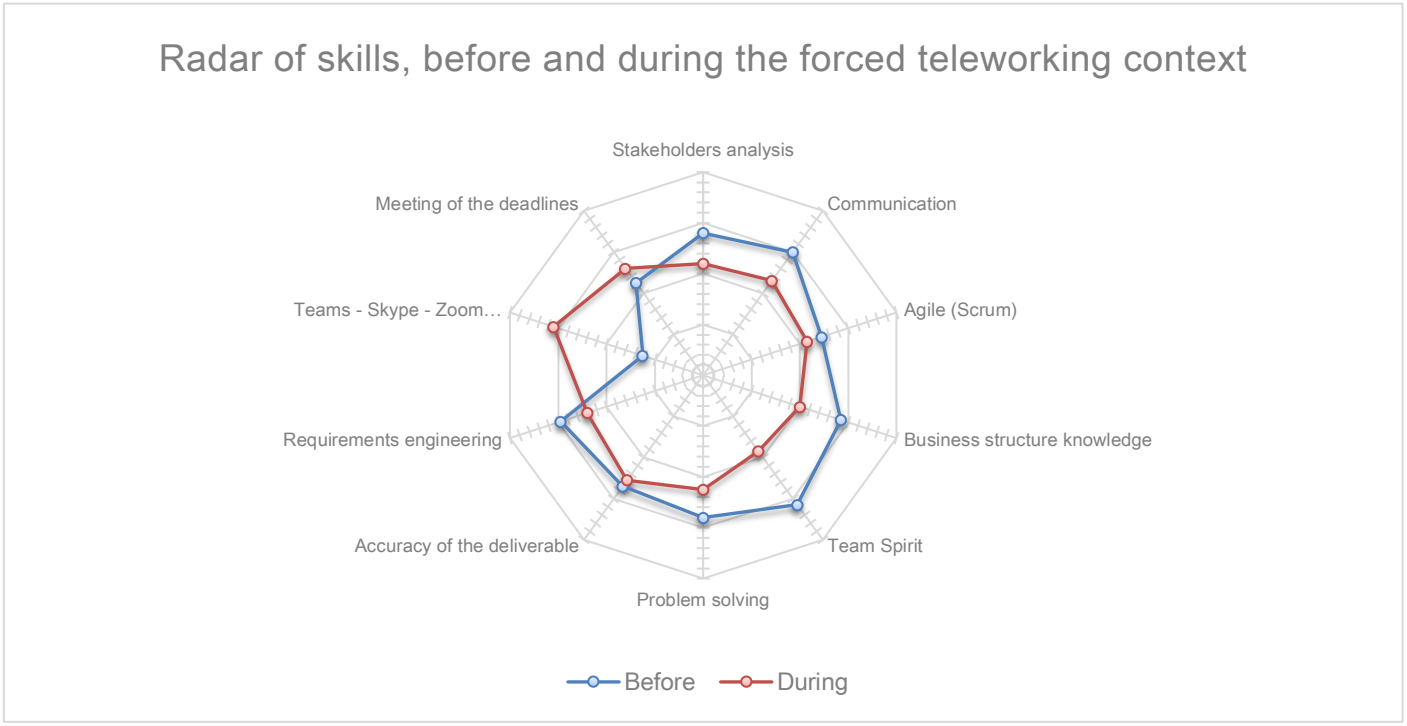
As a conclusion of the box plots, we have faced five significant variations, where four of them are negative. Nonetheless, despite a downward trend, the other figures remained steady. Consequently, we state that WFH has no reel impact on the general productivity of a business analyst. According to the survey, this is mainly because working from home offers more focus. Teleworking has not impacted the *stakeholder's analysis* as the plot shows us no variations, allowing BAs to keep the elicitation process on track. Even though it significantly impacts *communication* and *team spirit*, we can observe that the accuracy of the deliverable has not been impacted. The emergence of new communication can partly explain this and information sharing

[6] See "*Excepted skills*" chart

tools in the business sector like *Teams and Skype.* Furthermore, we even guess a slight improvement in the deadline meetings during the pandemic.

Radar of evolution

Another way to visualise the impact of teleworking is the radar chart. This radar has been established based on the means of each skill both before and during the pandemic. It will reflect the same trends as the box plots but without a numerical scale. What is essential to understand in this chart is the variation between the two contexts. The greater the space between the two radars, the more significant the impact of WFH on the skill (figures in annexe n°4).



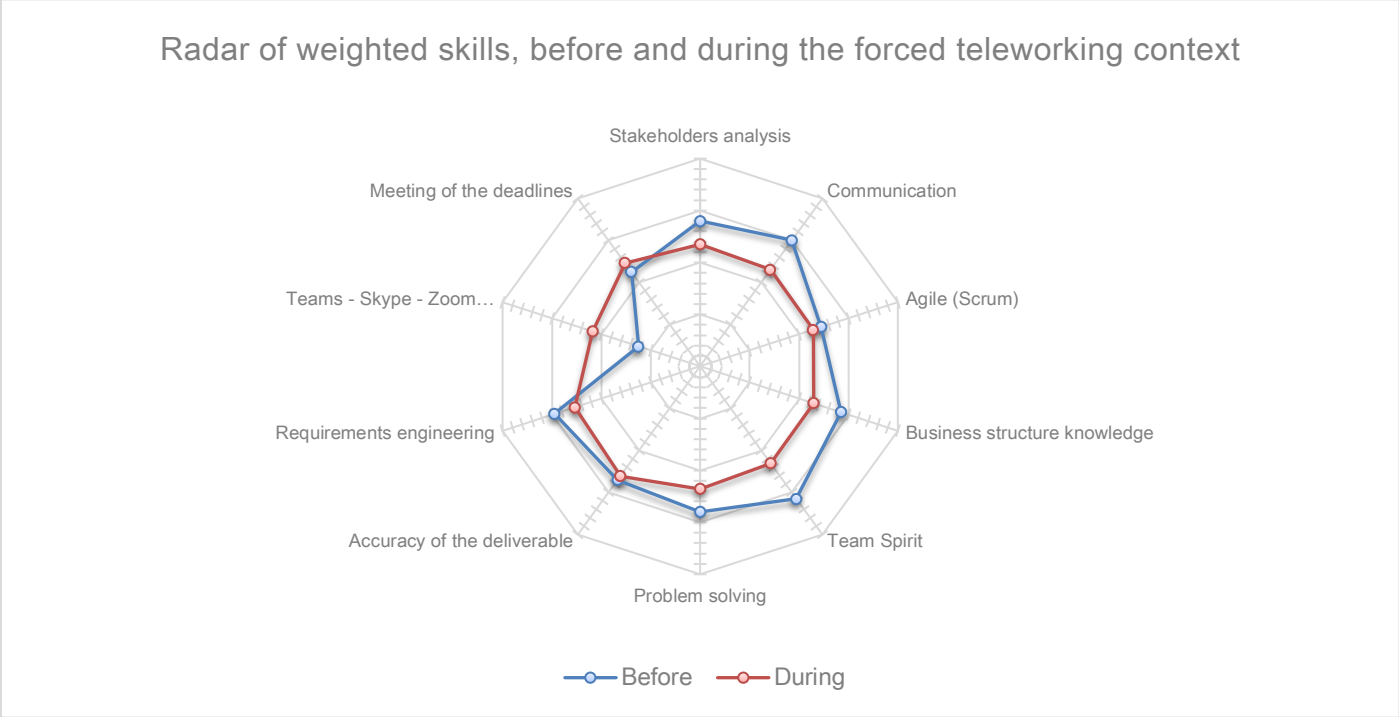
As forecast, thanks to the previous plots, we see a sizeable negative variation for *Communication, Team Spirit, Business structure knowledge, Problem-solving,* and *Requirements engineering.* This might sound alarming as we saw that those elements represented the most valuable skills for the BA function.

On the contrary, we see a significant improvement in using the tools *Teams, Skype and Zoom*. Then we guess slight upgrade concerning the *meeting of the deadlines*. We certify a light lowing trend as we look at the orange curb compared to the blue one. Nevertheless, some points such as *accuracy of the deliverables* and the use of the *Agile* framework attest to only a tiny impact, sometimes not event relevant, of teleworking on the function of business analysts.

In a nutshell, the impact of the WFH context is damaging and is assessed at -10.69% on the business analyst job. This figure compares the average skills application of 2.62 before the lockdown and 2.34 during.

However, is the most important variation necessarily the most impactful? To draw relevant conclusions, I decided to estimate the different variations in a meaningful way by weighting the calculated results using their importance coefficient defined earlier in the questionnaire. For example, the representation of the variation in the application of the Agile framework, judged to be paramount by 55% of the BAs, will be more representative of reality by being weighted than that of the communication judged to be 100% useful.

In this way, we can precisely see the variations and their impact on the business analyst function (figures in annexe n°5).



This weighted view shows that the five skills considered essential for business analysts have declined due to working from home, although the use of new e-tools (*Teams, Skype, Zoom)* has improved considerably. That means that there are still new ways to be found to redress that trend. It is crucial to straightening up the level of communication as it represents a pillar for the function of an analyst, as we saw in the definition of the key concepts:

"Business requirements collection stands for a critical activity because it often determines the success or failure of a project. The way analysts interact with stakeholders and gather their requirements is essential for the flourishing of the project. Therefore, communication and transparency should always apply in this part of the process".

Compared to the raw variation, the impact of the WFH context remains negative but is assessed at -9.62% on the business analyst job. This figure compares the weighted average skills application of 2.62 before the lockdown and 2.37 during.

Chapter 5: Conclusion of the research

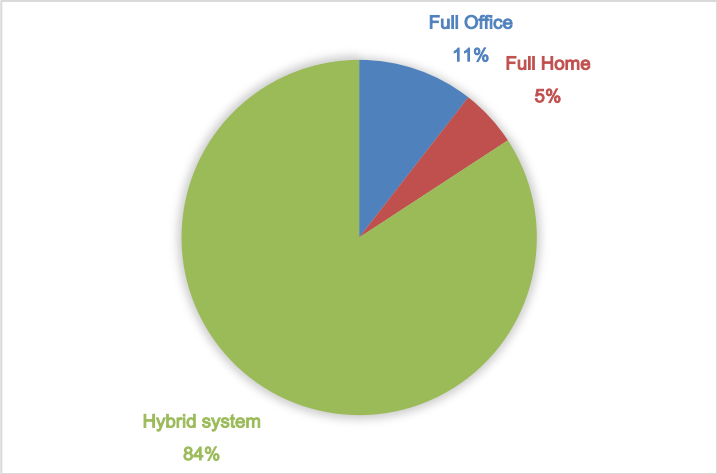
The main point of this research is that teleworking is not seen as a threat from **big companies'** point of view but as an opportunity. More than 88% of the interrogated people see WFH as a positive aspect of their function. Regarding the survey's results, even though the **pandemic context** has impacted the business analyst function, the productivity has not. People who previously worked at home occasionally and then increased the intensity of their WFH experienced an increase in productivity. On the contrary, during the pandemic, those who did not increase the frequency of WFH or who had never worked from home before experienced a significant decrease in productivity. (Ben Etheridge & Li, 2020).

Communication is the most evident issue originating from teleworking. It represents a pivotal point in the relationship between business analysts and their clients, and it is vital to keep it acceptable between the stakeholders and the project team. Nonetheless, it does not mean that everything runs perfectly. Indeed, **business requirements and elicitation** process rely on a clear mutual comprehension.

After following up with respondents to determine what they meant by communication, the learning team identified specific topics, including virtual and face-to-face meetings, formal presentations, team skills, email, and interpersonal communication. It identified eight soft skills that senior managers believe contribute most to employee performance, with communication topping the list. Senior managers complained that IT employees were generally uncomfortable. At the same time, they talked, had difficulty getting their ideas across and spoke over the heads of their (non-technical) business partners. When speaking to colleagues and team members, they had difficulty identifying key points and often got lost in the details (Hynes, 2012).

From a future-oriented point of view, this issue is to be tackled seriously as we intend to establish a **sustainable** way of working. Indeed, complying with the **teleworking regulations**, more than 84% of BAs forecast themselves working in a hybrid system. They should only be at the office for two days a week. The three others would be dedicated to WFH. On top of that, 5% see themselves working from home every day. In other words, almost nine business analysts out of ten will need to improve their communication skills as they intend to telework.

This graph tells us that, although telework has not impacted the BAs' efficiency and way of working, there is a certain willingness to come back (two-three days a week) to work face-to-face, keeping full-remote work away.



According to the OpinionWay barometer, the psychological distress of employees seems to have improved since they were able to return to their workplaces. On the other hand, burn-outs keep rising to 25% more. The explanation does not lie in performance but might lie in mental health and well-being at work.

Practical Part

Chapter 6: Solution design

Introduction

As the context and the way of working have changed completely, business analysts have had to adapt to the telework regulation. This new situation has brought new rights and obligations in which workers are free to organise their working time, respecting their schedules and workload.

According to the theory and the key concepts' definition part, communication stands as a critical factor in the success of a digital transformation, as it is a whole, comprising several daily tasks of business analysts. Their objective is to formulate and produce a requirements specification for system creation and software solutions. They are to create liaisons among stakeholders to elicit, analyse, communicate, and validate requirements. Yet, the most direct way to find out what someone knows is to ask them. Therefore, communication and transparency should always apply in this part of the process.

Via the form, we also retrieved that the soft skill "communication" was daily required by 100% of the respondents. The second observation reveals a strong impact in the context of a large company on the communication level and the Team Spirit linked to forced WFH. However, as Team Spirit is not specific to the business analyst function, it is difficult to assess its influence in the context of this thesis. Some elements of response can be provided in this solution design, but it is a social aspect that reflects a feeling of belonging. It goes without saying that this feeling is undermined by social distancing, but this text focuses on the function of the business analyst and business requirements. Although the subject is essential, my paper is not relevant enough to deal with this sociological issue.

Finally, the last graph shows that future working methods will be in a hybrid framework, which will lead people to continue teleworking. These findings lead me to seek solutions to reduce the negative aspects of teleworking on communication to sustain project management and, more specifically, the elicitation process in a hybrid work context.

Hybrid System

Implementing a hybrid system with its advantages and disadvantages requires a certain rigour in the organised workload. Indeed, not all tasks are optimised for remote working, so work sessions must be split according to their content, objective, and audience. For example, asking functional questions about the software to be delivered can quickly be done from a computer, without being face-to-face with people. On the other hand, carrying out a production start-up or a demonstration of the deliverable can pose several problems in the event of a remote malfunction. It is essential to prioritise your tasks to know which ones can be done remotely and which ones are less easy, and therefore to favour face-to-face sessions to tackle them. As the figures in the previous section showed, new online tools have been created in recent months and years. In order to help us in the way we work and to communicate questions, requests, concerns or remarks, there are different collaboration platforms made available by companies for their business analysts.

E-collaboration tools

After two years of hybrid activity, leaders will need to rethink physical spaces and cultural norms to make time in the office worth commuting to. This means determining who, why, and where to meet in person and ensuring that physical spaces are designed to help hybrid teams feel connected and engaged. To this end, several platforms have recently been created (*Teams, Skype Enterprise, Zoom*).

On top of that, new e-tools have emerged to keep remoted productivity at its peak. The objective hereafter is to adopt and adapt those e-tools to the elicitation exercise for a good business requirement process. I intend to establish a non-exhaustive list of those relatively new tools.

Teams (Skype and Zoom)

Software from the Microsoft Office suite allows meetings to be held remotely, through one's computer, each on one's own (at home or in a meeting room). The platform was launched five years ago and has become a must in Belgian companies (and worldwide) following the pandemic. Back then, video conferencing was not the norm, but today *Teams* has become a true hub for collaboration and teamwork. Combining asynchronous and synchronous collaboration in a single product represented a unique opportunity to reimagine how we work, learn, and connect with others (Herskowitz, 2022). As a result, today, more than 270 million people rely on *Teams* for hybrid work, and over 50% of organisations have standardised on *Teams*. On top of that, Microsoft also launched a mobile app, allowing 80 million users to follow their calls and meetings from everywhere, like a standard phone call (Microsoft, 2022).

It is never easy to be in the spotlight. It is challenging to make powerful presentations without a real audience. For this reason, it is advisable to present a call with visual support. These video conferencing platforms'

"screen sharing" feature is so valuable. It replaces the traditional whiteboards and projectors in meeting rooms.

What differentiates *Teams* from its competitors is its ease of planning. Indeed, being part of the giant Microsoft and the online messaging system *Outlook*, it is effortless to schedule a call or a meeting with your professional contacts in your company address book (colleagues, customers). On the contrary, *Skype* and *Zoom* require an email address, which you do not always have. Also, to help coordinate work time with teams, Outlook allows you to respond to meetings and indicate real or virtual presence.

PowerPoint

The best example of visual support for a videoconference is the PowerPoint presentation. Well-constructed, it facilitates the structure of information and clarifies the understanding of a message. Like all software, it requires practice, but once mastered, PowerPoint allows for an infinite number of possibilities to present ideas, projects, or even figures and graphs (Microsoft, 2022).

Miro

Miro is an online program that, like PowerPoint, allows you to provide visual support during video calls. However, the platform offers a different and innovative functionality based on simultaneous input. It allows all stakeholders to participate in meetings through easy integration and various contributing ways, such as comments, votes, and diagrams. In addition, it makes workshops more interactive with sophisticated facilitation tools and step-by-step templates for everything from design sprints to journey mapping. By sharing the full context of a project on Miro boards, stakeholders can add content and comment remotely to collaborate with the teams at their own pace, whether at the office or home (Miro, 2022)

Finally, replacing talking heads with interactive and energising meetings where participants can state takeaways, ask questions, and engage with speakers as they are presenting. This will create a baseline for team projects in which all project workflows are seen to converge in one place, from development to marketing.

Jira

Jira Software is the number one software development tool used by agile teams. It was designed so that everyone on a software team can plan, track and release quality software. Its planning tool

allows you to create user stories and problems, plan sprints and allocate tasks within your software team in a backlog. It also allows you to track project progress and workload to prioritise and discuss the team's work in context and with complete visibility. With continued collaboration, projects are dispatched with confidence, knowing that the information available is always up to date (Altassian, 2022).

Jira offers customisation by choosing an existing ready-made workflow or creating a custom workflow. In this way, each team uses a unique process for sending their software. Finally, real-time visual reporting data can improve the project team's performance.

Confluence

Confluence's main strength is creating a single, centralised source of truth for software documentation. Confluence pages can be integrated with Jira to keep all work in one place and reduce context switching. The objective of combining the two platforms is to align project teams on common goals. This keeps the team in sync, from whiteboard to release, with a centralised space to organise work packages, release notes, goals, and tasks. With faster production and seamless collaboration, product requirements and user stories are translated into outputs more quickly. Growing projects can have complex workflows. The combination of Jira and Confluence makes tracking possible. For example, to follow the evolution of the current version or to insert a changelog for versioning (Altassian, 2022).

Finally, it saves time as dynamic reports and roadmaps automatically keep your stakeholders informed of the status and progress of the project.

« 76% of Jira Software customers said they shipped projects faster after adding Confluence » (Altassian, 2022).

SharePoint

SharePoint unlocks and maximises collective knowledge through dynamic and productive team sites for every project team, department, and division. The software enables seamless collaboration through sharing files, data, news, and resources. With secure content sharing and management, knowledge and applications foster teamwork by finding information quickly (Microsoft, 2022).

Unlike other file sharing platforms like *Google Drive* or *Dropbox,* SharePoint accelerates productivity by transforming an organisation's internal processes, from simple tasks like notifications and approvals to

complex operational workflows. It delivers rich digital experiences with customised forms, workflows, and applications for every device. In addition, you can customise your space to streamline the work of each team.

Trello

It is an e-tool for centralising project management, task organisation and team building. Trello is a board of lists and cards that the user can customise by adding other features as the project develops, such as task assignments, calendars, productivity indicators, attachments, and comments (Trello, 2022).

The application allows any team to quickly set up and customise workflows and provides a timeline view for project planning, combined with a Dashboard. This software will make it easy to manage deadlines, track feedback, assign tasks and pass on information.

Trello's strength is its compatibility with other project management and communication software such as *Confluence, Slack, Dropbox, Google Drive and Evernote.*

Slack

Slack is a communication and task completion platform. It organises and focuses project activities by grouping conversations, files, tools, and people into specific spaces. Slack's features work together to allow users to facilitate collaboration. Communication streams are on the same platform, allowing for coordinated efforts and decisions through channel aggregation. Collaboration with external teams is straightforward to set up, unlike other software in the *Microsoft suite*, via a messaging and video calling service (Slack, 2022).

Slack's most significant advantage is its ability to create a workflow for repetitive tasks and communications so that you can focus on non-automatable tasks. In addition, the platform easily integrates with services such as *Google Drive, Office 365*, and others. This simplifies certain information and content exchanges.

Evernote .

Evernote is a paperless cloud-based solution that helps you take better control of your work by organising your notetaking. The platform keeps essential information at your fingertips and allows you to work anywhere via automatic synchronisation on all devices. In addition, notetaking can be enriched with text, images, audio, scans, PDFs, and documents.

Creating and assigning tasks within notes with due dates, flags, and reminders prevents the information from being lost. Meetings are put into context by grouping notes, tasks, and calendars, and nothing gets lost in the shuffle (Evernote, 2022).

Finally, integration with applications such as Google Drive, Slack, Outlook, MS Teams, Zapier, and Gmail is entirely possible with Evernote..

OneNote

OneNote allows you to organise your ideas, whether they are scribbled on paper or filed in folders. The application is used like paper, where you type, write or draw freely, with the ability to enhance your notes by searching and capturing content from the web to shape your ideas. Handwritten notes can be converted into typed text for easy reading. In addition, the main ideas can be highlighted with colours or shapes (Microsoft, 2022).

Finally, content extraction can be done anywhere, even in offline mode. So you can start on a laptop and then update your notes on a tablet, as OneNote is compatible with all devices and platforms.

Optimisation

The idea that work is an activity tied to a specific location is a deeply ingrained cultural norm. As any team collaborating thanks to online tools knows, the physical locations where we perform our work are not the same as where the work gets done, which is often in a purely digital space (Spataro, 2021). However, the months we have been spending in all-remote mode have uprooted the notion that work must necessarily be tied to a single address. Therefore, several e-tools should follow a few standards to remain efficient and productive.

As we saw through this essay, communication is essential for business analysts. The challenge is to keep an acceptable level of communication during teleworking by using new tech. Based on my personal experience, confronted with feedback retrieved from BAs, I drew up a framework of good practice from the use of these new methods of collaboration. This framework aims to establish sustainable e-collaboration behaviour for the project teams to thrive despite the distance and WFH.

Choosing the right e-tool

Although it may seem obvious, choosing the right tool is essential to work appropriately and involve the right people in the project. It is essential to check the compatibility of the platforms used and the target audience's understanding and mastery of these platforms. Indeed, as we have seen in the description of the different software above, some of them are incompatible.

Secondly, some applications are more limited and sometimes do not cover all the workers' needs. On the other hand, some applications are too developed and drown the user in their functionalities. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that you have a good command of the tool you wish to use and that it meets your needs.

The most obvious example is the comparison between *Teams* and *Skype*.

Suppose you want to contact a colleague or organise a meeting with several people in the same company. In that case, *Teams* will be more efficient because everyone will be notified directly in their e-calendar and will not risk losing the invitation to the meeting in the emails, as would be the case for a *Skype* call. On the other hand, if the remote meeting is composed of members from outside the company, it will be preferable to meet via a Zoom call that offers better inter-company compatibility.

Preparing a visual support

Staying focused throughout a meeting is not always easy, and it is even more difficult in a remote setting where concentration is not always effortless. A visual aid is the best way to keep everyone focused on what is being said to overcome this obstacle.

Visual support can be in PowerPoint slides, a representation via a diagram or schematic, or even a simple screen share. You immerse your audience in the context in a compelling way.
It is also advisable to participate in calls and meetings by turning on your webcam (if possible) to see each other. This will encourage callers to remain focused on the presentation's content, indirectly observed by their colleagues, as in a traditional face-to-face meeting. It is more difficult to be distracted by something else and not pay attention to what is said.

Interacting with audience

Beyond providing visual support, it is essential to interact with your audience so that they feel involved in the content presented. Without this, it is tough to follow a long meeting.
There are different ways of involving your colleagues to keep them attentive, such as asking them if they have any questions or comments or asking their opinion on what has just been said or presented. Another way is to force them to be the actors of the content themselves via software like Miro presented above. The interaction offered by Miro is beneficial for expressing feedback or for visual brainstorming.

Taking the minutes

Notetaking is essential during a meeting. It replaces paper-based notetaking, which can quickly become disorganised. It ensures that you do not forget the information given orally when you return to the topic. Therefore, several platforms allow you to structure the input you receive. Even if some are easier to use than others, the advantage is the centralisation of information and the possibility to share it.
The organisation of notetaking is also essential when you want to share the knowledge gained in a meeting. Of course, during the meeting, it is not always possible to take the time to formulate nice sentences, but it forces us to read over the notes while the subject is still fresh in our minds to clean it up. This kind of attitude will avoid asking questions that have already been answered, avoiding thus all the repetition, waste of time, and frustration of the parties.

Recording the meetings

To complement notetaking, it is always interesting to record virtual meetings. Remote meeting platforms usually offer this possibility. Meetings can be reviewed by people who would like to listen to an explanation again, or even if a colleague is absent that day. Thanks to the recordings, it is possible to keep up to date so that no critical information is missed.
In principle, these recordings are easily shared and can, if necessary, be used as reference material or as evidence when questioned about a procedure.

Right scheduled meeting

Planning meetings is essential to maximise their productivity. This means paying attention to the time slot allocated to the meeting, respecting as much as possible the office hours in your absence (9 am-6 pm), and avoiding lunch hours. Another vital thing is not overloading your employees' agenda with too many long meetings. It is better to plan a two-hour meeting rather than a four-hour block to guarantee sustainable productivity. The workload should be broken down into "work packages", which should be handled intelligently from a timing point of view.

In addition, it is essential to ensure that the right people are present in the right meetings. This is important for the relevance of the information obtained and to avoid frustration if you forget to invite colleagues or stakeholders to a decision or project review.

Creating a dedicated space

While working from home seems more accessible and comfortable for most business analysts surveyed, it is also a significant source of distraction.

It is easier to become distracted in an environment that is not always optimised for work. This is the result of several factors, ranging from keeping children occupied, to household chores, to pets that are happy not to be alone all day. To alleviate this problem, many people have created their own workspace, sometimes even moving to a new location to remain productive at home and minimise the distractions of working from home.

Finally, one should not neglect one's working position and physiological well-being. It is advisable to find a suitable working position, either sitting or standing behind the screen. Some studies even show that stretching is essential for workers to concentrate. So do not hesitate to get up from time to time to stretch or walk around to get back to work at 100% and not be overwhelmed by your body's symptoms of tiredness (Gijs & Vrayenne, 2020).

Hardware

Teleworking seems to be part of our daily lives, and it is essential to set up well. From a practical point of view, it is essential to have a suitable computer with a powerful enough processor to juggle several activities and a significant memory to save all the entries created.

A second monitor has become essential to increase productivity and minimise the time wasted moving from one screen to another. 50% of business analysts surveyed said they had purchased a mouse, keyboard, or headset to increase the comfort of remote meetings and facilitate electronic collaboration.

In addition to this, it is important to have a good internet connection, whether wi-fi or cable and a good working environment (Gijs & Vrayenne, 2020). Good working conditions include not being too hot or too cold, not being too noisy or too dark. For example, daylight plays an essential role in workers' mental health.

Recommendation for the elicitation process

In defining the key concepts, we have seen that needs elicitation can take three different forms:

1. Research, observations, and analysis of existing information.
2. Collaboration: with stakeholders through interviews, workshops, and feedback
3. Experimentation: identify information unknown to the actors via observations, prototypes, and prototypes observations

The challenge is to combine the hybrid work system with these three techniques to achieve a quality business requirement process, similar to face-to-face work. Using the communication and collaboration tools seen earlier, I will establish theoretical best practices for increasing productivity at a distance.

Research, observations, and analysis

The beginning of the elicitation process is often characterised by observations and the performance of each task to establish an overall schema of the domain of interest. This first step generates an initial conceptualisation of the scope's constraints and opportunities.
Basically, this research is done individually, without the stakeholders, to create a clear and unspoiled picture of the initial situation of "As-Is". There are, of course, different ways of documenting a project via websites, internal reports, or observation of the daily operations. Observations provide glimpses of actual behaviour that can be used for later development of contrived tasks and other materials for more structured knowledge elicitation methods.

Observations are difficult to be made remotely. Therefore, it is preferable to focus on the time spent in contact with the client to make good and conclusive perceptions. Even if this first part should not allow interactions between the client and the analyst in order not to bias the investigation, it is nevertheless important to directly clarify the performed tasks and the "As-Is" vision. However, if confrontation with the field is impossible, the customer can always perform a video conference demonstration of his daily tasks. This will allow a tangible view despite the distance.

Furthermore, as a business analyst works in a team, it is important to document all observations to keep track of them. This allows the analyst to re-read his or her notes to clarify a situation and allows a third party to understand the context in which one works. This is called "knowledge management". To do this, it is important to use the right tools to avoid losing information along the way. Obviously, the easiest way to do this is to

take a piece of paper and write it down. However, to optimise the process of sharing information, it is better to move towards collective note platforms.

Based on my personal experience at STIB, all my observations were transcribed and written down via shared note software (*Evernote or OneNote*). The first analyses were documented and filed on *Confluence* pages. The rigorous use of this platform allowed all project team members to document and access the collected information. The durability and multilateralism of information remain crucial in this first phase of the elicitation process and throughout the whole project in which the BA will act as an intermediary between the client and the developers.

Collaboration

As agreed in the theoretical section, the most direct way to find out what someone knows is to ask them. Like observations, interviews and collaboration are useful for the early stages of a project and can elicit a wide range of knowledge depending on the specific task and the interviewee's expertise.

This second part of the elicitation process is easily adapted to the hybrid system. Indeed, thanks to e-tools, it has become easy to conduct interviews, organise collaborative workshops or collect feedback from a distance. This phase represents the context of the business requirements and is not limited to information gathering or observation of daily tasks. This phase often involves sharing entire documents, records of decisions, visual displays, or a functional diagram of the software to be developed.

Collaboration means two-way communication and information sharing. This can be applied in two different ways. On the one hand, from the business to the analysts, and on the other hand, from the analysts to the business. In the first case, the business will share its expectations and fears regarding the objectives that the software to be developed must achieve. In the second case, the analysts must return to the business with the details and documentation of the identified needs once the analyses have been carried out.

First, functional analyses describe and detail each customer's wishes, using User Stories associated with a context and acceptance criteria on which to base a solution. Secondly, modelling by using diagrams via the UML language to identify the different Use Cases, interactions, and functionalities of the software as well as any associated impediments. Those US are gathered in a backlog to get sorted according to their importance and priority.

The objectives of such collaboration are to ensure that the client's requirements are correctly identified and reassure the client that they are being listened to and that the project seems to be moving in the right direction. Each collaboration must be concluded by validating the acceptance criteria related to a need expressed by the customer. In this way, the understanding of the training received is verified. In this way, the functionalities that meet these needs can begin to be developed and put into production.

In order to validate these criteria, it is important to present the backlog and each US to the business so that they can see that their requirements have been translated into acceptance criteria. Beyond that, if diagrams have been drawn up based on analysis, the client must also validate them to ensure that no important information or details are missed. From my experience at the STIB, I realised that it was sometimes difficult to translate a series of information into a tangible need. On the other hand, thanks to modelling or schematisation tools such as Miro or thanks to PowerPoint visual aids, schematising the information made it easier to understand and, therefore, to validate the analysis by the client.

Experimentation

The last phase of requirements elicitation arises with the presentation of the first deliverables. We are entering the experimentation phase, where we will present the client with the first solutions provided by the developers. These prototype observations enable rectification of unexpected behaviours and settings of the platform that one would not have thought of, that one would not have been able to think of before starting to build the software. Thanks to these prototypes, the business analyst can confront the client with his product and needs to make modifications and corrections if necessary.

In the experimental part, the role of documentation takes all its meaning. Indeed, adding comments and documentation related to the different versions of the product allows a versioning of the system and a complete follow-up of the evolution of the requirements. In order to meet this need for documentation, the project team must agree on the use of a shared platform where each member can contribute.

In my STIB contribution, as mentioned, I was led to use *Confluence*. Initially, the use of this platform was used to summarise the content of observations or information to structure the desires and constraints of the business. Then, once the prototypes were developed and presented, it was necessary to dive back into the *Confluence* documentation. The aim was to rectify the content based on the client's feedback and remarks. This adjustment phase is therefore essential. This is one of the reasons why the agile methodology, particularly the Scrum framework, is so widely used in IT implementation, as it allows for a minimum viable product to follow a continuous improvement.

Chapter 7: Conclusion of the best practice

The content of the practical part is designed to bring solution paths to the issue of efficient hybrid business requirement process as it requires continuous collaboration and transparent communication between both parties. Regrettably, as soon as the pandemic arrived and we started working remotely, this communication was undermined, impacting stakeholder analysis, business structure knowledge and Team Spirit.

The theory resides in the fact that information is obtained directly from the expert and elaborated by the expert (McNeese, Zaff, Citera, Brown, & Whitaker, 1995). Consequently, business analysts had to adapt their working techniques to keep a high analysis quality level and deliverables. This goes along with implementing a hybrid conversation system to keep communication acceptable despite the distance. However, you must always make sure that you target your audience correctly, whatever the context, so as not to frustrate anyone on the project by unintentionally excluding them from the discussions.

The arrival of new e-tools has facilitated this adaptation from a professional point of view, but these instruments are not to replace human contact. Therefore, it is essential to spread out the workload in a hybrid system to take advantage of the office days when everyone is willing to share with their colleagues. It provides exchanges and instructive human-to-human conversations to move forward in the project. Eventually, those exchanges might elevate Team Spirit and encourage people to return to the office.

In the business requirements context, face-to-face meetings are characterised by question-and-answer sessions organised in a dedicated room to get a better feel for the different points of view than through a computer screen. On the contrary, anything that requires visual support can easily be presented remotely (using tools such as PowerPoint or Miro) as it requires the same level of attention as a face-to-face session. Beyond that, teleworking should favour individual tasks such as workshop or interview preparation.
Furthermore, it is vital to document your analyses and share the information gathered through platforms such as OneNote Evernote or Jira (to document the US with their acceptance criteria and solution design), regardless of the elicitation context place.

In a nutshell, adaptation is one of the qualities expected in the definition of the business analyst, so this new hybrid business model should not disrupt the profession's sustainability. The three key elicitation phases remain accessible as long as face-to-face observation is encouraged, proactive collaboration is maintained at home, and feedback and comments on experiments and prototypes are constructive, listened to, documented and rectified.

Feedback on the internship

Chapter 8: Personal assessment

Skills targeted by the training

Analysing and modelling

In October, I joined a large organisation. Thus, I had to analyse the company's department. Moreover, I was not working with my trainee teacher daily, so I had to integrate myself. And to make things even easier, I directly joined a team of externs at the STIB. In the beginning, I had to study the functioning of both the STIB and my colleagues to participate actively. At the beginning of my internship, the big challenge was understanding the context in which the Connect 2 project would be implemented. CRM is a new practice adopted by the STIB.

Designing and developing solutions

When developing the User Guides, the aim was to support the technical teams during acceptance testing to ensure that the solutions that best meet the needs of the Connect 2 platform's users are followed up and implemented. Although it is easy to understand and handle, the platform is new, and a user manual had to be written. This manual can be used by the current B2B team members but is also intended for future employees who will join the business team.

Optimise

The creation and implementation of the different templates (cf. Internship missions, contract templates p.) led to several teams (internal or external to STIB) working together. Indeed, a "Legal" team oversaw drafting legal contracts, the business team, a developer team, and finally, a "Scriptura" team whose role was to implement and automate the templates. The high number of intermediaries between the start (the business team) and the finish (automation of the deliverables) led to minor problems due to misunderstandings, lack of explanation, or clarity. As a business analyst, I ensured that all parties agreed and worked in the same direction. In the first instance, the discussion process had to be optimised, so the team implementing the templates agreed with the business' wishes. Indeed, it was difficult for me to impose myself initially, which sometimes led to mistakes or a lack of communication. But then I asserted that the work was delivered on time and to a high standard.

Project Management

During my presentation in February, I was asked to focus more on project management. I followed his instructions, starting by following training courses on the role of project manager at the STIB. This training opened new doors for me at the STIB. I was also taken under the wing of our project manager, thanks to whom I met several STIB project managers and understood how they work daily to manage their budget, deadlines, constraints, and teams.

Collaborate

First, for my integration and the smooth running of my work. As a Business Analyst, I must work well with the business on the one hand and with my developer colleagues on the other. Collaboration was crucial during my first year as an intern. On a day-to-day basis, this collaboration has resulted in applying the Agile method. The advantage of such a method is that collaboration is fluid and natural. All the team members were therefore involved in the progress of the project.

Difficulties and limitations encountered.

Meeting deadlines

The first difficulties I had to face were those related to respect for the project schedule. Indeed, this manifested itself in the context of Users Acceptance Testing (UAT), preceding a product launch and a release. We had allocated two weeks for these tests, but we ran out of time according to *Connect 2*'s overall schedule. As project managers, our Product Owner asked us to reduce the time taken by the tests to meet the initial deadlines. This presented us with a challenge, as the time allocated to testing had been reduced from two weeks to four days. However, the challenge was that the quality and reporting of the tests could not be compromised. Therefore, we had to rethink our entire UAT schedule and work later and more efficiently, dividing up the tasks to be tested to cover more US in a minimum amount of time.

Access to information

The STIB is a company with 9,000 employees (staff, workers, and management). Within my own SSo department, more than a hundred employees work together every day. Therefore, it is impossible to get to know everyone, let alone one year. This makes it difficult when I need information from a specific person or group. During the first months of my internship, I had to learn about the people around me who could potentially help me in my daily work. Now I know all my colleagues' roles and responsibilities, and I can address them directly.

Lack of clear communication and misunderstanding

In order to achieve the deliverables I was asked to produce, I had to go through meetings via *Teams* to bring people involved together. Consequently, I sometimes attended passively, or I led the discussions to arrive at the necessary information or a decision essential for a deliverable's progress. However, the role of the Business Analyst at STIB is to gather the needs, constraints, and decisions of the Core Business. Some of these decisions are not always clear or communicated correctly. This meant that sometimes we had duplicate deliverables or that the same deliverable had to be redone several times because the business did not agree internally or even changed its mind. I learned to be more procedural, write down meeting minutes and notify intentions to change before making them.

Lack of certainty

Afterwards, I sometimes felt a lack of certainty and assertiveness in my projects. I lacked precision in my deliverables, as I was no longer 100% sure I was going in the right direction. Indeed, following these changes of opinion in the business, I felt a little lost, and my lack of experience led me to be a little more passive in making decisions. Now I know that to move forward, I need to understand the business requirements 100% and be sure that I have mastered them before I start making deliverables and involving other people.

Chapter 9: Future perspectives

As the details of the different deliverables I had to produce during my internship show, the function of a Business Analyst at the STIB requires versatility and adaptation. Beyond the professional integration, I needed to be well integrated within my team in these socially complicated times to produce quality work. As far as the project is concerned, I regret that it takes time to be delayed, as I would have liked to be there when it was finalised. However, the project was extended for several months due to the pandemic. Indeed, we are only at the customer care part, which was supposed to be completed by the beginning of 2022. There is still the whole B2C part to be analysed and then only developed so that I will not be here for its conclusion.

From a more academic point of view, the variety of tasks carried out during these nine months enabled me to cover almost all the skills defined as essential to the BA function. However, in hindsight, I can see that the competence of "participating in the governance strategy" was not addressed. Perhaps in large companies like the STIB, this is not within reach of a trainee; however, I think this is an opportunity to be seized for the rest of my career.

Honestly, I thought that my adaptation to the job would be complex as I did not have an IT background, and I was afraid of being a "burden" to my team members. However, they were able to integrate me into projects and tasks that were well within my reach, and if necessary, they pushed me to share their knowledge and experience to achieve my goals.

Finally, from a personal point of view, an internship is a way of confronting reality, and in my case, the business world. I also think that beyond the educational and professional aspects of such training, what is important is to realise whether the chosen study path is suitable or not. In my case, the diversification of activities and knowledge that the function of a business analyst imposes on me have reinforced my choice of this master's degree and this path of IT consulting.

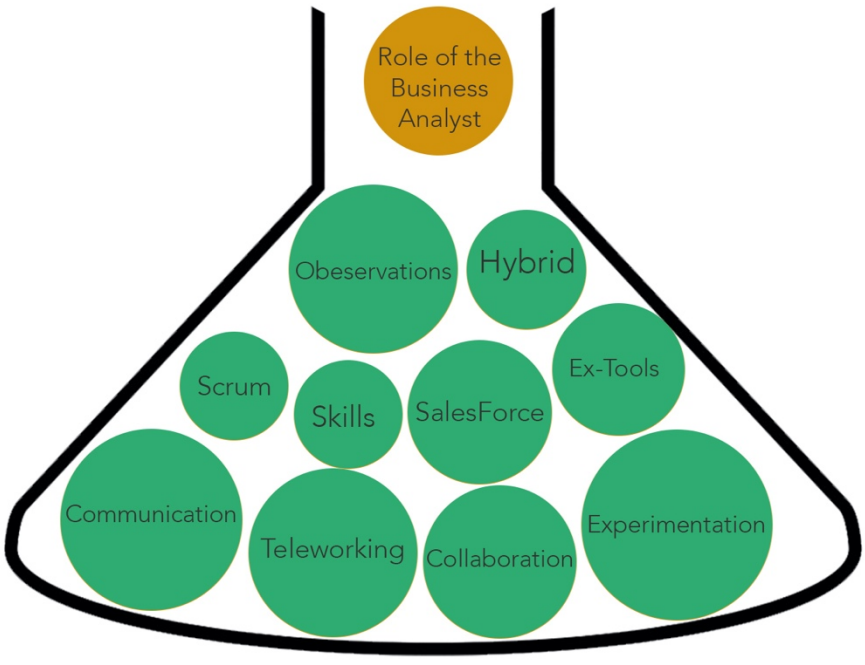
Conclusion

The business world, and more specifically the IT sector, is moving towards a hybrid system in the years to come. The business analyst is no exception in this ecosystem. Indeed, in his role as intermediary between users and IT specialists, he must more than ever remain the bridge between the customer and the development teams in a context where communication is no longer optimal.

The way analysts interact with stakeholders and gather their requirements is critical to the project's success. Collaboration between the client, analysts and developers is challenged but remains essential to achieving a common goal. For this reason, business analysts had to adapt to the situation, using new e-tools.

As the elicitation and collaboration work is never a "one-shot phase" of the project, it is essential to keep the information gathered and the requirements identified sustainably. In the context of my internship at the STIB, we can clearly see that the project has suffered from this collaboration gap resulting from social distancing since it is a year behind the initial schedule. What was supposed to be finished in Q2 2021 is still in progress in Q2 2022.

Nevertheless, the business analyst function is not in danger with the new teleworking rules and some adjustments to achieve a user-friendly working environment. The economic boat is still afloat; however, we must ensure that the hybrid system does not slowly sink the social boat in the future. Indeed, suppose we have raised the importance of the “coffee experience”. In that case, it will not be enough to prevent a large part of the workers from sinking into social depression due to being too far away from their colleagues and lacking Team Spirit.



Bibliography

Altassian. (2022). *Conluence*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from Altassian.com: https://www.atlassian.com/software/confluence/jira-integration

asUgo. (2021). *Transversal Services*. Retrieved Mars 2022, from asUgo.com: https://www.asugoconsulting.com/transversal-services/

asUgo Consulting. (2022). *asUgo Consulting*. Retrieved Septembre 2021, from asUgo Consulting: https://www.asugoconsulting.com/

be.brussels. (2020, Avril 3). *Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles (STIB)*. Retrieved Novembre 2020, from be.brussels: https://be.brussels/a-propos-de-la-region/les-organismes-regionaux/societe-des-transports-intercommunaux-de-bruxelles-stib

belgium.be. (2021, Novembre 17). *Consultative Committee: extended use of face masks and mandatory teleworking*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from belgium.be: https://www.belgium.be/en/news/2021/consultative_committee_extended_use_face_masks_and_mandatory_teleworking#:~:text=4.,per%20week%20will%20be%20possible

Ben Etheridge, Y. W., & Li, T. (2020). *Worker Productivity during Lockdown and Working from Home: Evidence from Self- Reports.* Institute for social and economic research . Colchester: University of Essex.

Britannica Dictionary. (2022). Sustainable. United Kingdom.

Cambridge Dictionary. (2022). Sustainbale. United Kingdom.

Chini, M. (2021, November 18). Belgium's four-day teleworking obligation 'absolutely incomprehensible'. *Brussels Times*.

Cooke, N. J. (1999). Knowledge Elicitation. In N. J. Cooke, *Handbook of applied cognition* (pp. 479–509). Las Cruces, California, U.S.A.: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Cullen, J., & Bryman, A. (1988). The knowledge acquisition bottleneck: A time for reassessment? In J. &. Cullen, *Expert Systems* (Vol. 5, pp. 216-225).

de Meeûs, B. (2020). CEO SITB.Brussels. (Trends, Interviewer)

Doucek, P., Maryska, M., & Nedomova, L. (2013). *Development of Requirements on the Role Business Analys* (Vol. 161). (Verlag, Ed.) Berlin, Allemagne: Springer.

Evernote. (2022). *Tame your work, organize your life*. Retrieved from Evernote.com: https://evernote.com/intl/fr

Gijs, T., & Vrayenne, C. (2020, Octobre). Télétravail: le guide de survie. *Test Achats*, pp. 12-14.

Google. (2022). Sustainable. U.S.A.

Granger, R. (2022, Février 25). *Réussir sa communication interne*. Retrieved from Manager GO.com: https://www.manager-go.com/marketing/communication-interne.htm

Halmos, C. (2021, Novembre 6). Le burn-out des salariés est en nette progression. (F. Info, Intervieweur)

Hammond, J. (2017, Aout 7). Business analysts: What do they do for software implementation projects? (S. Sen Gupta, Interviewer, & CIO, Editor)

Hass, K. (2011). *The Enterprise Business Analyst: Developing Creative Solutions to Complex Business Problems.* Oakland, California, U.S.A.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Hass, K. (2012, Janvier 10). *The 21st Century Business Analyst*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from BAtimes: https://www.batimes.com/articles/the-21st-century-business-analyst/

Herskowitz, N. (2022, Mars 16). *3 ways to meet new hybrid expectations with Microsoft Teams and Microsoft 365*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from Microsoft.com: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/blog/2022/03/16/3-ways-to-meet-new-hybrid-expectations-with-microsoft-teams-and-microsoft-365/?culture=en-us&country=US&culture=en-us&country=US

Hoffman, R. R. (1995). Eliciting knowledge from experts: A methodological analysis. In R. R. Hoffman, N. R. Shadbolt, A. M. Burton, & G. Klein, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (Vol. 62, pp. 129-158).

Hynes, G. E. (2012). *Business Communication Quarterly.* Sam Houston STate University. Huntsville: Association for Business Communication.

Ichec Management School. (2017, Septembre 15). *Master : business analyst - Alternance ICHEC - ECAM*. Retrieved Mars 2022, from Ichec.be: https://www.ichec.be/fr/master-business-analyst-en-alternance-ichec-ecam

International Institute of Business Analysis. (2015). *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge.* Toronto, Canada: IIBA.

Kelly, A. (2019). The Business Analyst Role. In A. Kelly, *The Art of Agile Product Ownership.* Berkeley, California, U.S.A.: Apress.

Laudon, K., & Laudon, J. (2012). *Management Information System.* (P. France, Éd.) New York, U.S.A.: Pearson.

L'Echo. (2020, Juin 2). Une année 2019 record pour la Stib avant le gros coup de frein de 2020. *L'Echo*.

McNeese, M. D., Zaff, B. S., Citera, M., Brown, C. E., & Whitaker, R. (1995). *AKADAM: Eliciting user knowledge to support participatory ergonomics.* International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics.

Microsoft. (2022). *Microsoft Teams*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from Microsoft.com: https://www.microsoft.com/fr-be/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software

Miro. (2022). *L'espace de collaboration des équipes à distance*. Retrieved from Miro.com: https://miro.com/fr/

Mollenkamp, D. T. (2021, Novembre 15). *Sustainability*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from Investopedia: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/sustainability.asp

National Bank of Belgium. (2022, Janvier 1). Size criteria for companies. Brussels, Brussels, Belgium.

Nollevaux, G. (2020, Novembre). Gestion de projets informatique. *Collecte des exigences*. Brussels, Belgium: Ichec Management School.

Oxford Languages. (2020). *Box Plot*.

Pratt, M. K., & White, S. K. (2019, Avril 17). *What is a business analyst? A key role for business-IT efficiency*. (T. v. leadership, Producer) Retrieved Avril 2022, from CIO.com: https://www.cio.com/article/276798/project-management-what-do-business-analysts-actually-do-for-software-implementation-projects.html

Richards, D., & Marrone, M. (2014). *Identifying the Education Needs of the Business Analyst: An Australian Study.* Macquarie University. Sydney: Australasian Journal of Information Systems.

Robert Half. (2022, Avril 1). *Business Analyst - Job Description*. Retrieved Avril 2022, from Robert Half.be: https://www.roberthalf.be/fr/offres-emploi/business-analyst

SalesForce. (2022). *What is SalesForce ?* Retrieved Mars 2022, from SalesForce.com: https://www.salesforce.com/

Shaw, M. L., & Woodward, J. B. (1990). Modeling expert knowledge. In M. L. Shaw, & J. B. Woodward, *Knowledge Acquisition* (Vol. 2).

Slack. (2022). *Une plateforme pour communiquer avec votre équipe et réaliser vos tâches*. Retrieved from Slack.com: https://slack.com/intl/fr-be/features

Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles. (2021). *Rapport d'activités 2020.* Bruxelles: STIB - MIVB.

Spataro, J. (2021). *Beyond the Binary: Solving the Hybrid Work Paradox*. Retrieved from Microsfot.com: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/beyond-the-binary-solving-the-hybrid-work-paradox

STIB - MIVB. (2021). *Rapport Financier 2020.* Brussels: Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles.

Sylin, M. (2020, Mai 25). Le télétravail va-t-il rester la norme ? *Télétravail: "Il ne faut pas sous-estimer l'importance de la machine à café"*. (C. Tonero, Interviewer) RTBF - CQFD.

Syndicat European Trade Union. (2021). *Rules for teleworking in Belgium*. Retrieved from etuc.org: https://www.etuc.org/en/rules-teleworking-belgium

Trello. (2022). *Trello helps teams move work forward.* Retrieved from Trello.com: https://trello.com/en

Van den Berghe, T. (2020, Novembre). Ingénierie des exigences. *Elicitation des egiences*. Brussels: Ichec Management School.