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The Business Analyst (BA) Authority News Letter

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Preparing for Joint Application Development (JAD) Sessions:

A JAD Session is a structured workshop conducted to capture Business and Functional Requirements and/ or define project scope. It is attended by carefully selected key stakeholders and subject matter experts. JAD Sessions promote trust, mutual understanding, and strong communications among the project stakeholders and project team members. *A well – run JAD Session is a well – planned JAD session.*

How do you plan a well – run JAD session?

STEP 1: Define the JAD session objectives and identify session deliverables.

Evaluate the project in its entirety and break down functionality into manageable processes.

If time allows, processes that have commonality may be covered in one JAD session. Otherwise, conduct one JAD session per process.

The deliverables produced at JAD Sessions directly affect other phases of systems implementation.

Plan to generate the following deliverables:

- Business Requirements
- Business Rules
- Assumptions
- Constraints
- Tabled Items

These are items that are directly related to the subject but require further discussions.

These items should be placed on an 'Open' or 'Action to be taken' list.

Parking Lot items

These are topics that are not directly related to the session's objective, but do relate to the project. A list of these items should be retained for a future JAD Session.

STEP 2 Invite Right and Tight:

Invite Right:

Invite key decision makers, Subject Matter Experts and other participants who have first - hand knowledge of the subject. Your list of attendees should always include those persons who will or currently work directly with the process. Create a RACI Chart.

Invite Tight:

Keep the number of attendees at a minimal. *Remember too many cooks spoil a pot.* When you have too many attendees it is difficult to control any meeting. If you must invite more than fifteen people, conduct multiple sessions.



Helpful Hint: *Include the names of expected attendees and their project roles on the meeting invitation. This will reduce the Agenda time allowed for Introductions.*

STEP 3 Create an agenda that will guide your session.

- Keep Attendee Introductions at a minimal
- The time to introduce the session, its objective, expected deliverables and session rules should be a separate agenda item. Do not include it with Attendee Introductions.
- In case there is not enough time to cover all of the items on your agenda, list the most important items first.
- Allow time on the session conclusion so that you can give an overview of the session and explain what happens next.



Helpful Hint: *Although session rules are not covered in this article, they should be established and communicated prior to or at the beginning of the JAD Session.*

Having problems or special situations with JAD Sessions, please let us know via email. Your response may appear in 'Readers Feedback'.

Step 4 Select the right scribe

The right scribe is the key to useful and successful deliverables. The scribe ensures that the results of JAD Sessions are documented and delivered as expected. Think of a scribe as a reporter - listening, learning and taking notes. The scribe should have enough IT knowledge to identify deliverables. If necessary, have a separate meeting with your scribe to discuss what is expected. The scribe should not participate in the JAD session discussion unless to clarify points.

Step 5 Select the right facilitator

It all depends on the effectiveness of the facilitator. The skillful facilitator is a good listener, communicator, friendly and non-threatening. Making the attendees feel comfortable is imperative. The facilitator should have knowledge of the subject but must refrain from being the primary influencer. The facilitator and scribe must enforce the session rules.

In future issues learn how to NOT let the JAD session be derailed by the negative people in the group (who might be high level managers), how to structure the outcome so that the stakeholders are truly accountable in ways that are visible to the organization, and how to separate the key requirements from the bells and whistles.

***Read more in The upcoming BA Authority Diaries:
More details will be provided in next month's News Letter***

