10 Tips to ace your next Business Analyst Interview

THE BUSINESS ANALYST
JOB DESCRIPTION

When analysts are faced with a Business Analyst interview, they end up cramming hundreds of questions to ensure that they are ready for anything the interviewer asks.
However, most candidates fail to notice that there are some activities as important as the answers given by you.

Detailed below are carefully selected tips and suggestions to help you get through your next Business Analyst interview with ease and give your career the direction it deserves.

Tip 1: How you behave in the first 5 minutes largely defines the outcome of the interview

Like it or not but an interviewer makes a decision about your candidature in the *first 5 minutes* and for the remainder of the interview you are just proving his decision. The interviewers, owing to their experience spanned across many years, have developed an eye for the candidate with the right skills and all they need is just *5 minutes* to pick one!

So, during your next business analyst interview remember the following tips:
- **Entry to the room** – Ask for permissions to enter the room and walk up to the interviewer confidently
- **Handshake** – Ensure you have a firm handshake
- **Eye contact** – Look right into the eyes of the interviewer while speaking as well as listening
- **Body language** – Have your hands on your thighs, maintain an upright posture and make sure you are not fidgeting
- **Introductory pitch** – While introducing yourself, don't go on to ramble your complete work history (the interviewer can read that off your resume), instead, concentrate on highlighting your broad and diverse skill-set, accolades, along with the quality of your work experience

All the above activities, if carefully followed, subtly highlights your well-groomed personality to the interviewer.

Tip 2: Know exactly what the role demands. Study (not just read) the job description and responsibilities

Do you stand in a queue without deciding what movie ticket you have to buy?
Seems illogical. Right?

However, many people just walk in the business analyst interview *without* even knowing what exactly is expected of them and then just wait for the interviewer to throw buckets full of questions.

THE BUSINESS ANALYST
JOB DESCRIPTION

All this can be avoided by meticulously going through the job's description with a fine-toothed comb as most of the times the interviewer is trying to ascertain your feasibility based on the responsibilities and details mentioned under the job requirement.

It's also advisable to align your past experience with each requirement of the job and have it handy so that you can mention the same when asked in the interview.

Tip 3: Do a good homework about the organization – It Pays

If you are meeting somebody for the first time and he greets you by saying 'I looked up your LinkedIn profile and really admire your expertise on ERP systems' – you instantly start to develop an inclination towards that person.

Same is the case with an interviewer. If he notices that you already have spent some time trying to understand what the organization does, the verticals, the products and competencies, then you have already made a positive impression. However, ensure that you highlight this knowledge about the organization by subtly mentioning it during your conversation with the interviewer.

Tip 4: Don't try to throw everything at the interviewer to see what sticks

I have seen candidates trying to impress the interviewer by telling that they were the class Monitor in Grade 9. Well, that's good but it won't get you any points in the interview.

Interviewers are looking for *very specific* business analyst skill-set and all your examples, comments, statements and answers should reflect that. Any loose discussions or irrelevant details might impact your impression as a sound analyst.

If you carefully executed Tip no. 2 that you know *exactly* what you should speak about!

Tip 5: An effective communicator confirms what he/she has just heard - Be One.

Analysts are communicators as 80% of the time they are communicating and helping everybody get on the same page – through documents, meetings, diagrams and discussions!

You should display this integral business analyst skill by *rephrasing* what the interviewer has just asked you *'in your own words'*. This validation will help you give relevant answers and in turn, it will let the interviewer know that you are an effective communicator.

Also, listening is as important as speaking. Ensure you are letting the interviewers complete his sentences and not cutting them mid-way.

Tip 6: Speak what the interviewer wants to hear – like an analyst!

In the limited time interviewers have, they are trying to evaluate your knowledge, the level of your analysis skills as well as your work ethics.

Now, it's in your hands to make things easier for them by *using an analyst's lingo* and demonstrating that you know the concepts around elicitation, stakeholders, organization process, business flows, alignment with project scope, scope creep, change control, requirement management, critical success factors, business process modeling, comprehensive project artifacts, etc..

Tip 7: Have your stories ready well in advance (and rehearse them well)

I am *yet* to come across somebody who doesn't love a good narrative (analysts, management and clients included).

Have engaging chronicles, events and accounts around your work experience ready and ensure they touch your overall personality as an analyst (for example - how you gathered requirements from 6 different departments, your strategy to avoid scope creep, why you bagged the best co-worker award, etc..). Such anecdotes speak volumes about you as a well-rounded professional. To add up, you should make sure that the stories are well crafted and rehearsed beforehand to ensure you are conveying all that you wish to without pausing midway and recollecting or correcting any details.

Tip 8: Answer those unspoken questions

I love conversing with candidates who can anticipate my questions and answer even before I ask them.

Ensure you are able to vividly highlight some (or all) of the areas below, even without the interviewer explicitly asking about them:
- How you are the best fit for this job/why you should be hired
- Your knowledge about the different process around project management (like change/stakeholder/communication management)
- Quality of your experience
- In-depth knowledge of your past projects

- Latest trends in the information technology space
- Your strengths/USP

The key here should be to balance the level of details given by you while highlighting the above areas. Ideally, you should touch upon an area, give a brief (around 3-4 sentences) about how well you know about it and then ask the interviewer 'Do you want me to give more details around this subject?'. Then, the interviewer's response should determine the direction of conversation.

Tip 9: You are not expected to know everything – Learn to Say NO.

When faced with concepts they don't know/haven't worked on during an interview, some candidates just keep beating around the bush trying to make the interviewer believe that they know the concepts but just don't seem to recall it – a disappointing move!

Interviewer's inference to such instances – If this candidate can't say 'I don't know' to a question, *how* will she/he be able to say 'No' to the clients/customers when they request inclusion of requirements which are out of project scope.
Always remember, you are not expected to know everything in an interview and sometimes you are asked questions just to check whether you have to guts to say 'I don't know'.

Tip 10: Your closure questions should reflect your professional maturity – ask Wisely

At the end of the interview candidates are asked to clarify their doubts about the job by asking questions (ensure you get this opportunity if the interviewer doesn't explicitly says so). Since the complete interview conversation is a judging process, your closure questions are very much a part of it.

Asking relevant questions is an integral part of an analyst's job and you should showcase your skill by asking:
- The compliance and documentation standards of the organization
- The project management processes and procedures followed in the organization
- The domain and some details about the project you will be a part of
- The organization's reporting structure and details around the latest technologies used

Your questions should indicate the maturity of your project management knowledge and assist the interviewer in understanding that you bring experience and expertise that will help the organization raise their current standard around business analysis and project management along with adding value to the project you are a part of.