

Solutions Communication

Sample Communication

Hi Sam,

Over the past week, I've had the opportunity to review my notes from our meeting, to research the problem in more depth, and brainstorm and analyze solutions. Here are the results of this work.

Commented [DPH1]: The first paragraph is important. It should show the work we've done since the meeting. It should also be optimized for the email summary that will show up in their inbox.

During our meeting, you said that the biggest problem your team is currently facing is *workload*. One of your Business Analysts resigned, and the team has had to carry this person's weight, while also ensuring that their own projects got completed. Hiring another person, the obvious first solution, is a non-starter because the company has a hiring freeze. Postponing in-flight projects is also not an option as it would create thorny conflicts with important stakeholders.

Commented [DPH2]: In this section, we are confirming to the manager what they told us. Note that some of the ideas we raised (hiring another person and postponing projects) are mentioned here to show that we were paying attention and disregarding options the manager already turned down.

In the course of my research, I first sought to find any best practices executed by other firms that could solve this problem. This was largely fruitless, as no firm or manager seems to have come up with a single best approach to the problem. However, I also categorized possible solutions into two areas: (1) Increasing individual BA productivity and (2) seeking out opportunities to reduce workload by eliminating unnecessary tasks. This approach was considerably more fruitful.

Commented [DPH3]: What we did for them... Our approach to solving the problem.

Increasing BA Productivity

The concept here is that making each BA individually productive will enable them to handle more workload. This is not bulletproof – there is a limit to how many projects can be run by a BA – but here are a couple recommendations that could make a sizable impact for your team:

- *Reducing meeting bloat* – Too often we BAs find ourselves in meetings which are informational at best. Cutting one unnecessary meeting per day can add an extra hour of productivity. Similarly, hour-long meetings can often be reduced to 30 or even 15 minutes, if they are kept tight and focused
- *Working at peak flow times* – Some BAs are morning people, and some are late nighters. Get to know your BAs and encourage them to work when they're at their best. This *may* introduce certain inefficiencies, so it should be carefully monitored

These actions can be taken independently of each other, and can be started with little upfront work.

Commented [DPH4]: Big chunk of value here. Here is our best recommendation for the manager. Keep it as short and punchy as possible, but give them maximum value.

Eliminating Less Valuable Tasks

Business Analysts – like everyone else – can find themselves working on low-priority tasks instead of higher value ones. In your current environment, this can have a major downward effect on the team's productivity. Here are some ways to overcome this:

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- *Would my manager pay me to do this?* Have your BAs ask themselves this question when planning their work, and again when they are about to start an activity. If the answer is not a resounding yes, then the work should be deprioritized
- *Prioritizing their work* – When making task or project assignments, it will be very helpful to your BAs to provide discrete prioritizations of the work. Statements like “This project is more important than project A, but less important than project B” can help your team to have a good-enough understanding of your priorities and help you to avoid unpleasant surprises. Also, train them to ask you for priorities when you forget to offer them yourself

Implementing these four tips *may* entirely recoup the productivity lost by your departing Business Analyst, but more likely they will only incrementally increase the team’s productivity. The team should be encouraged to look for other inefficiencies and overcome them as well.

Sam, I enjoyed our discussion last week and certainly hope you benefit from these recommendations as much as I did in learning about your team. As I mentioned in my first e-mail, I will soon be looking for a new Business Analyst role, and I would be delighted to discuss your needs further when the time arises. You have had the opportunity to see *some* of my capabilities in the last week, and I bring much more to the table.

Please feel free to call me at (212) 555-1212 at your earliest convenience.

Regards,
Don Hussey

Commented [DPH5]: Second big chunk of value/recommendations.

Commented [DPH6]: We aren’t overselling. We are being totally realistic in our assessment that our solution is only partial, and that more work will need to be done. Managers already will know this and respect our straightforwardness.

Commented [DPH7]: Our sales pitch. This won’t vary much from manager to manager, but it should highlight our capabilities.

Commented [DPH8]: The call to action.