Chapter 3
The Role of the Business Analyst in Green ICT

Adriana Beal
Beal Projects, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the role of business analysts in the green initiative of an organization. As corporations become more environmentally conscious, business objectives such as decreasing energy use and producing fewer emissions require adjustments in processes and rules governing how ICT solutions are designed and implemented. For example, optimizing the process of buying an airline ticket from a green perspective might require changing the rules for online purchase and designing an ICT solution to switch the process to a paperless, secure electronic ticketing system. The entire optimization of a process such as passenger ticketing requires analysis of the solution, its alternatives and its associated risks. This is what a business analyst does. In the past decade, the role of business analysts has rapidly evolved in multiple directions to encompass activities such as business evaluation, risk management, process modeling, dealing with metrics and measurement and undertaking acceptance testing of solutions. This chapter discusses how business analysts can provide an invaluable contribution to the process of developing environmentally sound ICT practices within and around the organization. Organizations need to get their green credentials in order (Information Age, 2007). They also need to take a strategic, long term view of the environmental factors affecting their business. A business analyst, as discussed here, helps bring together myriad variables into a cohesive and comprehensive plan to address the various long-term and strategic aspects of greening ICT processes in the broad context of the corporation, the industry and the overall business ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

Business analysts play a pivotal role facilitating organizational changes. As corporations become more environmentally conscious, business objectives such as decreasing energy use and producing fewer emissions require adjustments in processes and rules governing how ICT solutions are designed and implemented. For example, optimizing the process of buying an airline ticket from a green perspective might require changing the rules for online purchase and designing an ICT solution to switch the process to a paperless, secure electronic ticketing system. The entire optimization of a process such as passenger ticketing requires analysis of the solution, its alternatives and its associated risks. This is what a business analyst does. In the past decade, the role of business analysts has rapidly evolved in multiple directions to encompass activities such as business evaluation, risk management, process modeling, dealing with metrics and measurement and undertaking acceptance testing of solutions. This chapter discusses how business analysts can provide an invaluable contribution to the process of developing environmentally sound ICT practices within and around the organization. Organizations need to get their green credentials in order (Information Age, 2007). They also need to take a strategic, long term view of the environmental factors affecting their business.

A business analyst, as discussed here, helps bring together myriad variables into a cohesive and comprehensive plan to address the various long-term and strategic aspects of greening ICT processes in the broad context of the corporation, the industry and the overall business ecosystem.

THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS ANALYST IN GREEN ICT

Business analysis is the discipline of identifying business needs and determining solutions to fulfill those needs. Thus, business analysis is essential to the process of turning a corporation's vision and strategy in reality. Such analysis ensures the alignment of organizational needs with the capabilities delivered, helping avoid the common issue of disconnectedness between what a solution team builds and what the business needs.

For companies in the process of establishing more environmentally sound practices, and particularly green ICT initiatives, a well developed business analysis capability can be instrumental to realizing successful outcomes. This because of the shift in perception of business leadership (HBR, 2009): what is a good, optimized, green business process is also an efficient business process that is good for the organization's bottom line. Business analysts (BAs), regardless of the actual job title, can help organizations devise a broad green ICT strategic direction, develop and shape specific actions in pursuit of this direction, and support measuring and reporting to ensure that the expected results can be seen, evaluated, and realized. BAs can work at varying levels, focusing entirely on the evaluation of business alternatives (irrespective of the underlying technical solutions), or analyzing the situation from the point of view of a software system. The role of a BA is vital in understanding and converting business needs for Green ICT into requirements and process models for the system.

ENTERPRISE ANALYSIS OF GREEN ICT

At the enterprise level, "going green" creates the need to analyze the current state of an organization from an environmental perspective. Such analysis makes it possible to identify gaps in organizational capabilities, develop models to describe the desired future state of the corporation, and convert these models into viable business transformation projects that fit together to improve the organization's environmental input/output balance.

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