Chapter 9 – the Business Analysis Function

What functionality should the CRM system provide to each job category? How much content should be shown on any individual screen? How much look-up information is needed by each job role and at each step of a work process? These and related questions need to be asked of operational employees, leads and managers so that any new IT system can actually support operations and improve them and provide the ‘great leap forward.’

The specific needs of system users (and management) must be emoted, elicited, and recorded (and prioritized) so that they become system requirements that become functionality of any implemented system. It is the job of the *systems analyst here called the business analyst*.

System requirements are gathered via meetings, seminars, prototype development, vendor presentations, and most commonly interviews. This means the systems analyst needs to be a very good listener and recorder to customers needs. Is this a core competency (empathy) of the IT people you know?

Systems analyst (perform design, architecture and project mgmt.)

Deep technology, Programmers, Systems Developers, DBA, maybe internal, maybe external teams (India), maybe external Vendors

Business Analyst or Business Manager  
(internal customer)

Agile Development uses 2 week sprints of systems development and implementation of functionality (IT assets). There should be no long time gaps of communication. Systems analyst is the liaison and sits in both the Technology and Business worlds.   
  
Systems analysis, requirements definition is learned in the MIS major but anyone can learn

Questions

1. Page 101 says 66% of projects fail due to lack of communication between managers and IT specialists. IS this your experience as well?
2. Many managers say that they don’t know exactly what new features they need in an information system enhancement. How is this possible?
3. It is wise to use rapid prototypes to bring new functionality. Working prototypes allow the elicitation of the real system requirements. Have you seen this approach used in your company? Or are your IT systems relatively frozen in functionality?
4. Does your firm have liaison employees working as systems analysts?
5. IS your IT support considered internal partners or subservient sub-humans (just kidding)?

Assignment:  
Discuss at your company how system changes are performed, and how the communications with IT staff occur. Are system requirements defined carefully, and checked? Discuss any improvements you may have after reading chapter 9.

