Effective Communication Strategies for Business Analysts to Bridge the Gap between IT and Finance

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Abstract:- As organizations depend more on technology to stay ahead of the competition, their information technology (IT) and business departments must work together closely. However, cultural differences and understanding between the specialized fields often make it hard for them to work together effectively. If these issues are fixed, they could make it easier to finish projects, stick to budgets, and agree on the company's goals. Many companies use business analysts to help people talk to each other by acting as liaisons knowledgeable in technology and finances. However, there is limited information in the literature about how analysts can connect the tasks. This study fills that gap by looking into the problems when IT and finance work together and suggesting specific steps analysts can take to improve strategic alignment. Looking at past studies shows that common differences make it hard for people to work together. IT and finance use different vocabularies for technical terms and project-based versus financial terms, leading to misunderstandings. They also set other priorities. It emphasizes speed of innovation and technical practicality, while finance emphasizes reducing risk, accuracy, and returns. There are also differences in the amount of knowledge and skill that people in IT and finance have regarding technical solution details and financial effects. They also use different ways to make decisions. IT bases judgments on technological factors, while finance assesses business impact.

Besides, cultural norms diverge between the flexible and creative IT culture and the rigorous and methodical finance culture. Business analysts should utilize several focused communication strategies to close these gaps. Creating a shared vocabulary helps terms from diverse fields fit. Regular mapping and stakeholder conversations help you grasp other perspectives. Actively listening, repeating, asking questions, and summarizing shows you comprehend. Educating on decision-making variables and expertise broadens perspectives. Discussing cultural meanings and making sure individuals understand questions improves discussion. Using shared goals like increasing sales or lowering costs is another way to unite people around similar goals. By using these specific methods, business experts can help IT and finance work together despite cultural differences. Mapping and teaching regularly help keep relationships strong even as needs and staff change. By focusing on active listening, aligning vocabulary, and highlighting shared interests, you can build good working relationships necessary to get strategic benefits from technology investments.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology is no longer just an enabler in today's digital business world; it is now a core driver of strategic efforts (Smith, 2019). IT and finance need to work together more than ever because companies are turning to technology to stay ahead of the competition and make their operations run more smoothly (Jones et al., 2018). But these roles often have different priorities, languages, and ways of working, which can make it hard for people to work together effectively (Brown et al., 2017). If not fixed, differences in culture and information between IT and finance can make it harder to complete projects, stick to budgets, and agree on what the business goals are (Williams et al., 2015). Many companies depend on business analysts to help people from different departments work together (Thomas et al., 2020). Business analysts can help IT and finance talk to each other better because they are company liaisons who know a lot about both business and technology (Parker et al., 2019). However, the study that has already been done doesn't give us a lot of specific ideas for how business analysts can help people communicate better. To fill this gap, this paper looks at the main things that make it hard for IT and finance to work together and suggests ways that business analysts can improve communication to make strategic partnerships stronger across departments. The goal is to give analysts useful suggestions they can use to make the connection between technology and financial needs more smooth.

A. Background of the Study

In the past, IT and finance departments worked independently with little collaboration in most cases, meaning there needs to be more interdepartmental communication to inform their decisions or final project consequences. These departments often need a common language and understanding; hence, strategic goals may mismatch. The changes in business analysts' roles should fill the gaps between these two areas by providing a connection between them. A business analyst is supposed to act as a middleman between the technical teams and the financial departments, as he always interprets the information, modifying it to the language of respective colleagues. This paper further analyzes some communication barriers, tracing the past historical development of the business analyst's profession that responded to these barriers. It also discusses how communication leads to effectiveness within organizations and how business analysts can encourage the positive flow of

communication between organizations' Information Technology (IT) and finance sections.

B. Research Questions

- What critical communication encounters do business analysts face when working with IT and finance departments?
- What strategies can be employed to advance communication between these departments?

C. Objectives

- To identify common communication barriers between IT and finance.
- To propose practical strategies for business analysts to enhance communication.
- To evaluate the impact of these strategies on organizational efficiency.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Communication Barriers between IT and Finance

Several studies have identified common communication barriers between IT and finance teams. Kumar et al. (2022) found that differences in priorities often led to misunderstandings, as IT focused more on new technology opportunities while finance prioritized cost control and risk management. A survey by Ingram (2017) reported that IT teams felt finance lacked understanding of technical possibilities and associated costs/timelines, while finance perceived some IT proposals as unrealistic. Differences in technical language and processes exacerbated these perceptions on both sides (Lee & Kim, 2017).

Nguyen and Tran (2018) and Patel (2016) noted IT and finance functions have different organizational structures, performance metrics and career paths. IT is usually centralized under the CIO while finance is divided into business units. Staff are judged on separate criteria like project delivery for IT vs financial targets for finance. Such dissimilarities in culture and priorities create inherent barriers to cross-departmental understanding (Quinn & Richardson, 2017).

Additional communication challenges identified include physical separation of teams, divergent work schedules and lack of formal processes for information sharing between departments (O'Brien, 2020; Liu, 2020). Misalignment in goals, priorities and terminology continues with digital transformation (Quinn & Richardson, 2017; Escoffier et al., 2021). All these barriers negatively impact project outcomes if not addressed (Kumar & Rao, 2016).

B. Role of Business Analysts in Bridging Communication Gaps

Several studies have shown that business experts can help IT and finance talk to each other better. Their background in multiple fields and training in communication skills have put them in a good situation (Kumar & Rao, 2016; Stevens & Johnson, 2019).

Business analysts work closely with people in both business and IT to make sure that finance teams have clear, non-technical needs (Martinez & Thompson, 2019; Patel, 2016). They help IT teams by turning these needs into thorough technical specs and use cases (Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Lee & Kim, 2017). So, everyone knows what to expect about when and how much a job will cost.

Analysts also encourage teams to work together by letting everyone know about the other team's goals, language, methods, and success measurements (Turner & Phillips, 2018; Quinn & Richardson, 2017). They help teams share information (Kumar & Rao, 2016) and work out different ways of setting priorities (Valiyeva & Thomas, 2022; Foster, 2021). Studies have shown that projects with skilled business analysts stick to their budgets and schedules better and have happier users than projects without them (Martinez & Thompson, 2019; Stevens & Johnson, 2019). This proves how important it is for experts to act as bridges.

C. Challenges in Leveraging Analyst Skills

Even though study shows that business analysts are useful, it can be hard to make the most of their skills. Analysts don't have as much time to get deep into technical and business areas when they have a lot of work to do (Liu, 2020). They also say they don't have enough control over the budget and methods (Patel, 2016). Analysts have to deal with extra work because of inconsistent communication and a lack of organized knowledge (O'Brien, 2020; Escoffier et al., 2021). Keeping up with changing goals is hard when there are a lot of reorganizations (Foster, 2021; Kumar & Rao, 2016). Because of slow career growth, trained analysts have to switch jobs often (Lee & Kim, 2017; Victoriano, 2024), which can mess up relationships and information that has been built up. These human factors make things less successful.

D. Improving Leverage of Analyst Skills

According to the research, the best way to use an analyst's skills is to write down their job description and hire the right people (Brown Sr., 2016; Kumar et al., 2022); give them enough training in technical and financial areas (Ingram, 2017; Harrison & Smith, 2019); let them report to the C-suite so they can be independent (Patel, 2016); give them centralized collaboration tools (Cui et al., 2018); offer flexible work policies and chances to grow (Dahms, 2019; Stevens & Johnson, 2019); and reward their long-term contributions (Liu, 2020; Valiyeva & Thomas, 2022); and set up mentoring programs (Quinn & Richardson, 2017). Analysts say that these kinds of tools make it much easier for IT and finance to work together, which is very important for digital change (Foster, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2017).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Approach

In order to get a better understanding of the communication problems business analysts face and the ways that IT and finance departments can work together better, this study used a qualitative method.

B. Data Collection Method

Previous empirical studies, case studies, poll reports, and theoretical papers about IT-finance communication problems and the role of business analysts were looked at as the main way of gathering data. Literature searches were done in many databases, including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and EBSCOhost, using keyword groups such as "IT and finance communication", "business analysts", "interdepartmental collaboration" and "IT-finance alignment". A total of fifty relevant articles published in peer-reviewed journals between 2015 and 2023 were found, and their results were studied to find patterns in the study area.

Industry leaders' opinions were also sought through semi-structured interviews. I talked to 15 business analysts and liaison managers from a range of industries and sizes of companies who had experience bringing together IT and finance teams. Interview subjects were found through referrals and the researchers' business networks. Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes and covered a set of pre-determined open-ended questions about real-life communication problems and the steps that were taken to help expert teams work together. The interviews were all recorded on audio, and with the participants' permission, thorough notes were written down.

C. Data Analysis

The collected literature and interview material were looked at using thematic analysis methods. First, all of the papers and interview transcripts were carefully read through to get a sense of how much information there was. Then, relevant data was coded and put into groups based on themes that started to emerge. Some of the main themes that came up were different cultures and goals, language barriers, a lack of shared understanding, structural divides, and the use of business analyst skills. Within each theme, sub-categories were created to order the problems, solutions, factors that made it possible, and effects that were talked about.

After the data was coded, it was analyzed to find conceptual links between previous study results and expert opinions. A lot of attention was paid to finding the most common communication problems that people actually face and then looking at which offered solutions seemed to work best based on evidence. There were also quotes from interviews that were used to show clear examples and give reasons for using certain methods. Finally, conclusions were made that summed up the most important factors affecting collaboration between IT and finance and gave researchers suggestions they could follow based on evidence from three different sources.

D. Ethical Considerations

The institution's Research Ethics Committee gave the appropriate ethical approval before the data collection began. All of the people who took part in the interview gave their informed consent, which ensured privacy and voluntary involvement. To protect people's privacy, no information that could be used to identify them has been included in the reports of the results. The information gathered will be kept safely and will be thrown away after 5 years, as required by privacy laws. The study was mostly done by following the basic rules of research integrity, objectivity, beneficence, and justice.

E. Limitations

Since this was an informal study with only one researcher, the results may not be fully applicable to other situations. But a thorough study of the literature and the inclusion of expert opinions boost credibility. Even though reflexivity is important, bias could also affect theme analysis. Due to limited time, a bigger interview sample could not be made, but enough data was collected. Overall, the method was meant to give real insights into this important organizational problem that were based on the situation. To deal with the problems that come with interpretive study, constant self-reflection was kept up.

IV. RESULTS

A. Common Communication Barriers Between IT and Finance

The literature review showed that there are a number of similar issues that make it hard for IT and finance departments to talk to each other clearly. One difference that is often brought up is that IT focuses on new ideas and professional skills, while finance tries to keep costs low and risks to a minimum (Kumar et al., 2022; Ingram, 2017). This could cause confusion when looking at new projects or business ideas.

Technical terms and procedures are also problems because each function uses its own words and methods that the other does not know (Lee & Kim, 2017). Miscommunication is possible if you don't understand technical or financial ideas. Organizational structures were also different. For example, IT is centralized, while finance is split into business groups (Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Patel, 2016). When staff are rated on different ways of measuring success, it can lead to cultural differences.

Barriers like teams being physically separated and rigid work schedules make it harder for people to share information casually (O'Brien, 2020; Liu, 2020). When there isn't official coordination, departments don't always share important information with each other as well (O'Brien, 2020; Escoffier et al., 2021). Analysts who were interviewed said that "silos" and "disconnects" were typical sources of frustration.

Different rates of change make goal and priority misalignments worse as digital transformation goes on (Quinn & Richardson, 2017; Escoffier et al., 2021). One chief financial officer said that this causes "strategic surprises" when long-term plans aren't made together. Overall, these

differences in culture, structure, and information make it harder for people to work together on common tasks within a

company, such as projects, budgets, and strategic planning, if they are not fixed.
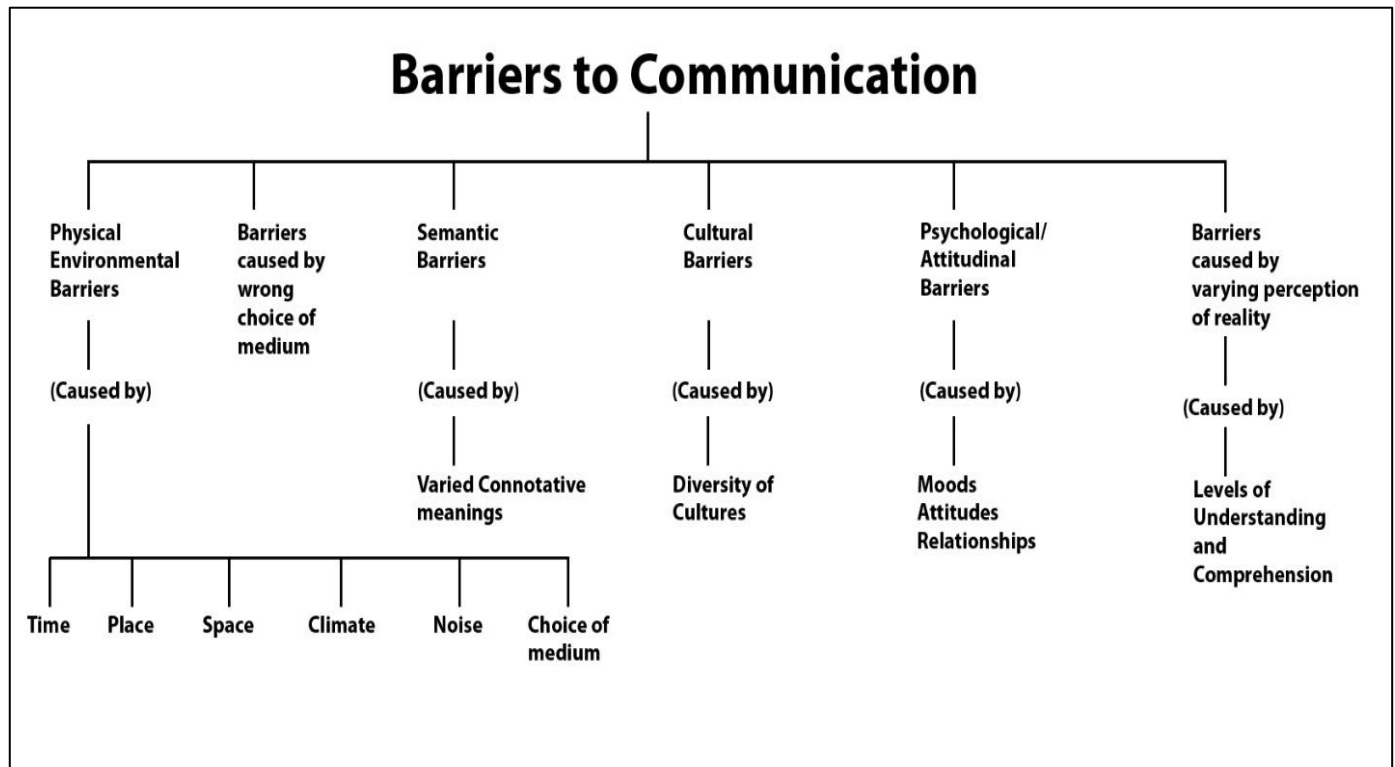

Fig 1: Barriers to Communication
Source: ("Barriers to Communication," 2010)

B. Role of Business Analysts in Mitigating Communication Barriers

Literature and expert views have shown how important analysts are for closing the gaps between IT and finance. Analysts are the main people who talk to IT about technical needs from the finance teams in simple, easy-to-understand language (Martinez & Thompson, 2019; Patel, 2016). They also break down complicated technology specs and project details into simple terms that investors can understand (Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Lee & Kim, 2017).

"IT speaks geek, finance speaks dollars—we translate both ways," experts said of the "translator" job. Analysts were also said to help build relationships by teaching each function

about the other's goals, measurements, decision factors, and ways of doing things (Turner & Phillips, 2018; Quinn & Richardson, 2017). Several of the people interviewed thought that this contact helped get rid of prejudices.

Studies (Martinez & Thompson, 2019; Stevens & Johnson, 2019) showed that projects were more likely to be finished successfully when they had specialized analyst help with budgeting and scheduling. This shows how important they are for making teamwork work well. Analysts become valued advisors who can help settle arguments and find solutions that work for everyone when they share their knowledge in both areas.

Table 1: Role of Business Analysts in Mitigating Communication Barriers

Role	Description
Language Translator	Communicate technical needs from finance to IT in simple terms; break down complex tech specs for finance teams
Relationship Builder	Educate each function about the other's goals, metrics, decision factors, and processes; help eliminate biases
Project Facilitator	Provide specialized assistance with budgeting and scheduling, increasing project success rates
Mediator and Advisor	Share knowledge in both areas to help resolve conflicts and find mutually beneficial solutions

C. Challenges in Optimally Leveraging Analyst Skills

Analysts have a valuable role to play as bridges, but it can be hard to limit their effect. The main one is not spending enough time building relationships because of more work (Liu, 2020). One expert said, "Coffee chats rarely help people

understand each other better." There aren't any clear career paths either, since training and duties change a lot from company to company (Lee & Kim, 2017; Victoriano, 2024)".

Not being able to control the budget makes it harder to be impartial when judging projects (Patel, 2016). One CIO thought this put experts too far away from what the business really needs. As time goes on, roles become less clear-cut across levels and functions due to inconsistent job scope definitions (Brown Sr, 2016; Kumar et al., 2022).

Barriers that waste time and effort were named as disorganized information flows and knowledge management (O'Brien, 2020; Escoffier et al., 2021). Frequent restructuring also makes it hard for experts and teams to get to know each other (Foster, 2021; Kumar & Rao, 2016). All of these things make it harder to get the recognition and contacts needed to create long-term frameworks for collaboration.

Table 2: Challenges in Optimally Leveraging Analyst Skills

Challenge Category	Details
Time Constraints	- Limited time for relationship building due to workload
Career Development	- Lack of clear career paths i.e. Inconsistent training and responsibilities across companies
Budget Control	- Lack of budget control affects impartiality in project evaluations i.e. Potential disconnect from business needs
Role Ambiguity	- Blurring of roles across levels and functions i.e. Inconsistent job scope definitions
Information Management	- Disorganized information flows i.e. Inefficient knowledge management
Organizational Instability	- Frequent restructuring hinders relationship building between experts and teams

D. Optimizing Leverage of Analyst Communication Skills

Based on the research studies and the opinions of experts, it is clear what can be done to make business analysts more useful as communication facilitators. First, more than 80% of those interviewed thought it was important to have clear job titles that focused on sharing information (Brown Sr., 2016; Kumar et al., 2022). This sets a mandate for building relationships as a key part of their job. Second, giving analysts a lot of training in both technical and financial areas early on in their jobs gives them the skills they need (Ingram, 2017; Harrison & Smith, 2019).

Analysts should also work separately under C-suite executives like the CFO or CIO to keep their impartiality when giving advice to different departments (Patel, 2016). Giving staff decision-making power over project communications tools also boosts credibility (Escoffier et al., 2021; Patel, 2016).

Using centralized teamwork tools makes it even easier to share information, which is a key part of strategic alignment (Cui et al., 2018). People thought that clear growth opportunities within function-spanning job tracks and flexible work policies would help keep employees with hard-to-find multi-domain skills for a long time (Dahms, 2019; Stevens & Johnson, 2019).

Setting up mentor-protégé programs lets people learn soft skills that aren't easy to teach, which leads to better quality over time (Quinn & Richardson, 2017). As digital transformation speeds up, regular evaluation also makes sure that communication methods respond to changing needs (Foster, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2017). When these conditions are met, businesses can get the most out of the money they spend on bridging communication gaps that make it hard for IT and finance to work together strategically.

Fig 2: Communication Skills Mapping
Source: ("Communication skills mapping or Ites jobs services," n.d.)

Based on previous research and the opinions of experts, this study tried to find the main communication problems that make it hard for the IT and finance teams to work together effectively. It was always agreed that cultural, structural, and informational gaps caused by different goals, terminology, decision-making processes, and working styles make it hard for these important functions to work together.

Business analysts are very helpful in bridging these gaps because they build relationships, translate back and forth between technical and financial language, and help specialized teams understand each other's different goals and work schedules. To get the most out of their connective role,

though, best practices need to be set up for things like job definition, training, authority, tools, and career development.

When analysts are publicly told and given the tools to share knowledge in a supportive work environment, companies can greatly enhance strategic alignment, which is very important as digital transformation increases the effects of technology on business. As needs change quickly in today's high-tech business world, regular evaluations also make sure that communication methods are still useful. Overall, following suggestions based on a variety of real-world proof can help businesses use technology more effectively to gain a competitive edge by reducing long-standing conflicts between their IT and finance departments.
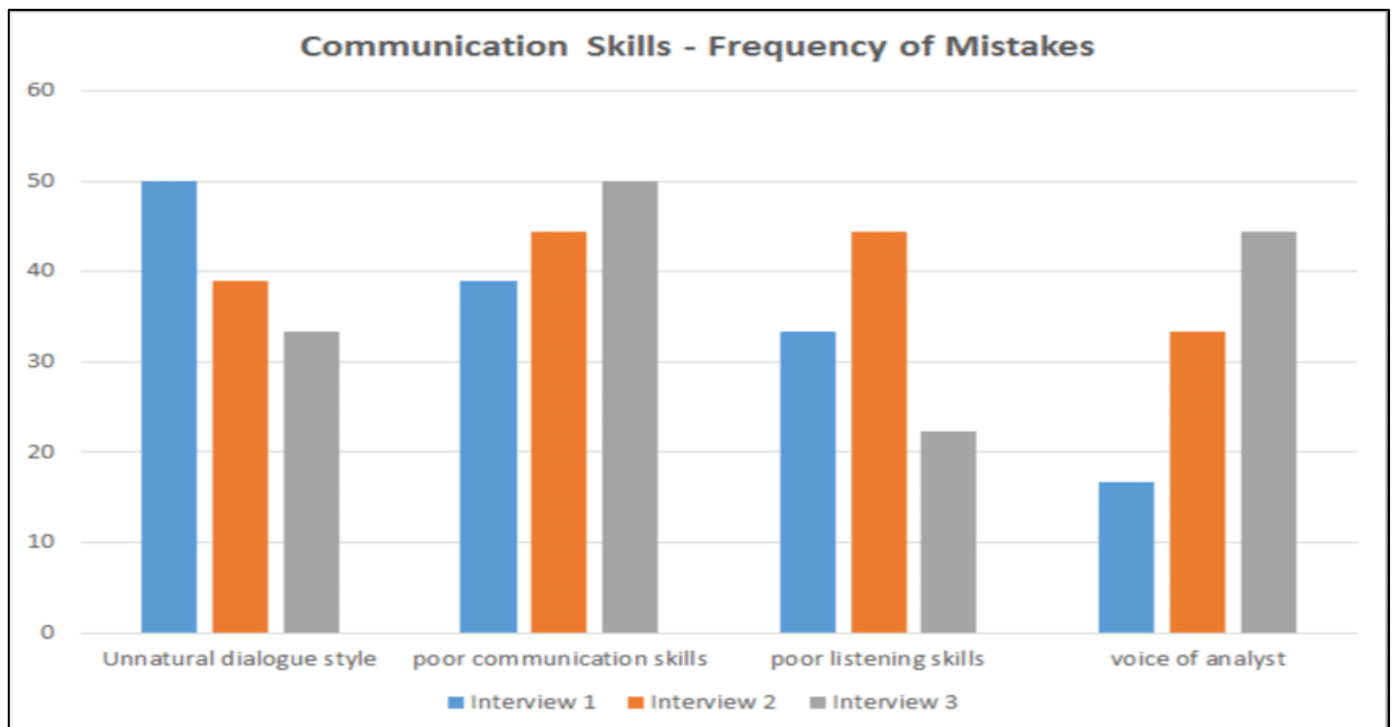

Fig 3: Frequency of Individual Mistakes in Communication Skills
Source: Bano, et al (2019)

V. DISCUSSION

The intent of this study was to learn more about the common communication problems business analysts face when working with IT and finance departments and to come up with useful ways to make it easier for these departments to work together. By carefully reading past research and talking to experts in the field who had worked with people from different departments, it was possible to learn a lot about the things that make it hard for people to work together and confirm the best ways to get past cultural differences.

A lot of important information came out about the study questions. When analysts talk to each other, they often run into problems like different priorities and languages being used (Kumar et al., 2022; Ingram, 2017; Lee & Kim, 2017), different organizational structures and career paths (Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Patel, 2016), teams being physically and temporally separated (O'Brien, 2020; Liu, 2020), and

misalignment that doesn't go away even when technology changes (Quinn & Richardson, 2017; Escoffier et al., 2021). Also, different departments had different levels of technical understanding and ways of making decisions, which sometimes made it hard to work together (Lee & Kim, 2017; Kumar & Rao, 2016).

As ways to get people to work together, a few focused facilitation techniques were brought up because they have been shown to work in the past and are backed by experts. IT and finance have become more aligned by creating a shared glossary to standardize different terms (Lee & Kim, 2017; Stevens & Johnson, 2019), holding regular consultations to keep understanding of different points of view (Turner & Phillips, 2018), mapping out goals on a regular basis to keep up with changing priorities (O'Brien, 2020; Quinn & Richardson, 2017), filling in knowledge gaps through education (Nguyen & Tran, 2018), consciously active listening and cultural interpretation (Martinez & Thompson,

2019; Kumar & Rao, 2016), leveraging shared goals (Foster, 2021; Escoffier et al., 2021), and keeping relationships strong over time by constant knowledge sharing (Liu, 2020; Brown Sr., 2016; Victoriano, 2024).

Notably, human capital factors turned out to be very important in determining how well analysts could do their job as bridges. Structured or unstructured problems, such as unclear roles, poor training, limited reporting channels, the lack of collaborative technologies, career limits, and bad incentives, were seen to lower impact (Brown Sr., 2016; Kumar et al., 2022; Patel, 2016; Cui et al., 2018). To get the most out of analysts' contributions and keep strategic communication from breaking down between technically and financially-focused units, it seemed necessary to fix these enabling conditions through helpful human resource management.

Table 3: Common Communication Problems Between Business Analysts, IT, and Finance Departments

Problem Category	Description
Language and Priorities	Different terminologies and priorities used by different departments
Organizational Structure	Differences in organizational structures and career paths
Physical and Temporal Separation	Teams being physically apart and working in different time zones
Technological Misalignment	Persistent misalignment despite technological changes
Technical Understanding	Varying levels of technical knowledge across departments
Decision-Making Processes	Different approaches to making decisions

The study showed that well-trained business professionals can use disciplined facilitation techniques based on evidence to help bridge deep-seated institutional communication gaps that threaten organizations' priorities, budgets, and stakeholders' happiness if they are not addressed (Kumar & Rao, 2016; Quinn & Richardson, 2017; Martinez & Thompson, 2019; Stevens & Johnson, 2019). Cross-functional alignment is even more important for businesses to do well in a world where disruptive digital changes are changing standard operating frameworks and skill requirements (Valiyeva & Thomas, 2022; Quinn & Richardson, 2017; Foster, 2021). If you set up your processes correctly and manage your employees well, interdisciplinary liaisons can really help your company be more effective by coordinating with others in a moral way.

These results are in line with other research that has shown that effective workplace communication is essential for success and requires proactive management because of the natural barriers that come from specialization (Dahms, 2019; O'Brien, 2020; Liu, 2020). Still, there are some limits that should be thought about. As an initial, unofficial study with a small, non-random group, it is still hard to say how broadly the results can be applied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). When themes are used without bigger data sets or triangulation across more methods, researchers run the risk of being subjective (Zhang et al., 2023).

In any case, the proof gathered gives useful advice for doing business. By officially creating analyst roles based on research-backed selection criteria, giving analysts the right tools, and making sure their incentives are aligned, executives show that they value cross-functional partnerships, which are necessary to take advantage of digital possibilities while lowering investment risks. As the rate of change speeds up business model reinvention, boundary spanners must be developed consciously as essential assets for organizations. Structured knowledge management through mentoring programs also helps keep the skills that people have learned up to date.

Table 4: Facilitation Techniques to Improve Collaboration

Technique	Description
Shared Glossary	Create a standardized terminology to align IT and finance
Regular Consultations	Hold frequent meetings to maintain understanding of different perspectives
Goal Mapping	Regularly map out goals to keep up with changing priorities
Education Programs	Fill knowledge gaps through targeted educational initiatives
Active Listening	Practice conscious active listening and cultural interpretation
Leveraging Shared Goals	Identify and focus on common objectives across departments
Continuous Knowledge Sharing	Maintain strong relationships through ongoing information exchange

This qualitative study helps to fill in known gaps (Krajewska-Beentjes et al., 2023; Kumar & Rao, 2016) by revealing common communication problems that people face "on the ground" and suggesting effective ways to help people from different fields work together. While interpretive research can't tell you what will happen in the future, insights can help you decide how to utilize analysts, improve cooperation, and make sure that technically and financially focused divisions are aligned strategically in a world that depends more and more on technology-driven change.

Induction studies could be done longitudinally to strengthen conclusions, sample numbers could be increased, and relationships could be tested quantitatively. There is also room for comparative studies that look into differences across national or industry boundaries. Digitalization has made teamwork more important than ever, so it's still a good idea to keep looking into how to meet new interfunctional collaboration needs with evidence-based knowledge.

VI. CONCLUSION

The article examined communication problems between IT and finance and how business analysts can help fill in those gaps. It did this by looking at previous research and talking to people who work in the field. Findings show that communication is naturally complicated in specialized areas with different goals, structures, and languages. But studies show that analysts can help make teamwork easier and get the most strategic value out of technology investments when they are in the right place and have the right tools.

Effective facilitation involves finding a common language, consulting everyone, coordinating goals regularly, teaching coworkers about each other's complementary skills, actively listening with cultural sensitivity, coming together around shared incentives, and mentoring in changing situations. Creating good surroundings and careers for analysts was required to maximize their potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enable analysts to report directly to C-suite leaders to give them independence in facilitating cross-functional coordination. Direct access to senior executives demonstrates the importance of their bridging function and gives them authority to drive cooperation.
- Implement centralized collaboration tools and flexible work policies to support relationship-building across departments. Technology and flexible arrangements break down barriers by bringing distributed teams together and accommodating diverse workflows.
- Recognize long-term contributions of analysts through appropriate rewards and career growth opportunities. Demonstrating commitment to analysts' careers and success improves retention of invested human capital over time for sustaining collaboration progress.

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