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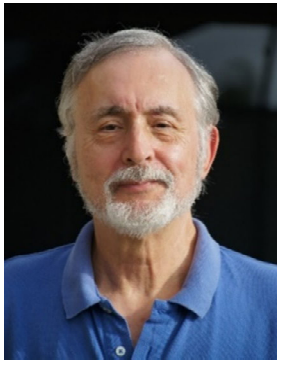
The Side Hustles of the Successful Business Analyst

Presenter:

Steve Blais, PMP, PMI-PBA

Author, Consultant, Teacher and Coach

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Steve Blais, PMP, PMI-PBA, is an author, consultant, teacher and coach who has over 55 years' experience in Information Technologies working as a programmer, project manager, business analyst, system analyst, general manager, and tester.

He is the author of Business Analysis: Best Practices for Success (John Wiley, 2011) and co-author of Business Analysis for Practitioners: a Practice Guide (PMI, 2014) and a contributor to the Business Analyst Body of Knowledge, V3 (IIBA, 2015). His new book, The Digital Transformation of Business Analysis, published by IIBA Press, will be out at the end of the year.

Side Hustle

- **A side hustle is a job that someone does in addition to their primary job to earn extra income**
  - Work that you do that is not on your job description
- **For the Business analyst:**
  - Other jobs you may not know you do
  - Other jobs you probably should be doing
  - A pathway from business analysis
  - A resume fattener

Can I perform business analysis without actually having to be a business analyst?

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New Year questions

I feel stereotyped as a business analyst . What other jobs use my skills?

I've gone about as far as I can go here as a business analyst. Is there something else in the organization that my experience will qualify me for?

Will I be asking these same questions next New Year?



This Photo by Unknown

My company is moving to another city and I don't want to go there. What jobs are available to me now?

I have working as a business analyst for the last 17+ years, I am too old to be retrained. Are there any jobs for which I am already qualified?

I like the company, and I like the people and the location. I really don't want to change. But I really would like a new challenge...

Business analyst:

- Elicits information
- Analyzes business information
- Assesses and defines business problems
- Analyzes business processes
- Analyzes business data
- Negotiates with all parties
- Assists in decision making
- Provides clarification and explanations
- Facilitates
- Helps resolve conflict
- Clarifies business requests and solution team responses
- Represents the business stakeholders on the solution team
- Acts as the solution team ambassador to the business

What other positions or job titles in the organization required these kinds of skills and knowledge?

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The Big Picture

- **The primary focus is on solving the business problem**



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Roles of the Business Analyst

- Conflict resolver
- Data analyst
- Decision Support Specialist
- Facilitator
- Information gatherer and organizer
- Mediator
- Negotiator
- Problem analyst
- Quality assurance analyst
- Requirements analyst
- Systems or process analyst

What is your specialty? Which of these are your strengths?

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Skills and Knowledge





Skills & Knowledge to Solve the Problem

- **Empathy**
- **Information gathering**
- **Analysis**
- **Problem identification and solving**
- **Communication**
- **Facilitation**
- **Decision support**

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Empathy

- **Three types of empathy**
  - Cognitive empathy
  - Emotional empathy
  - Compassionate empathy

I understand your experience,
I understand what you are going through
I know how you feel
I feel for you

What can I do to help?
What if we did this…? Would that help?



The business analyst is versed in all three types

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Information Gathering

- **Four levels of information gathering**
  - Raw information — Unfiltered, unanalyzed (reading, observation)
  - Interviewing — Ask questions Get answers
  - Elicitation — Ask questions Get answers
Ask more questions to understand the answers
  - Engagement — Ask questions, observe, to understand why
Be a part of the problem domain

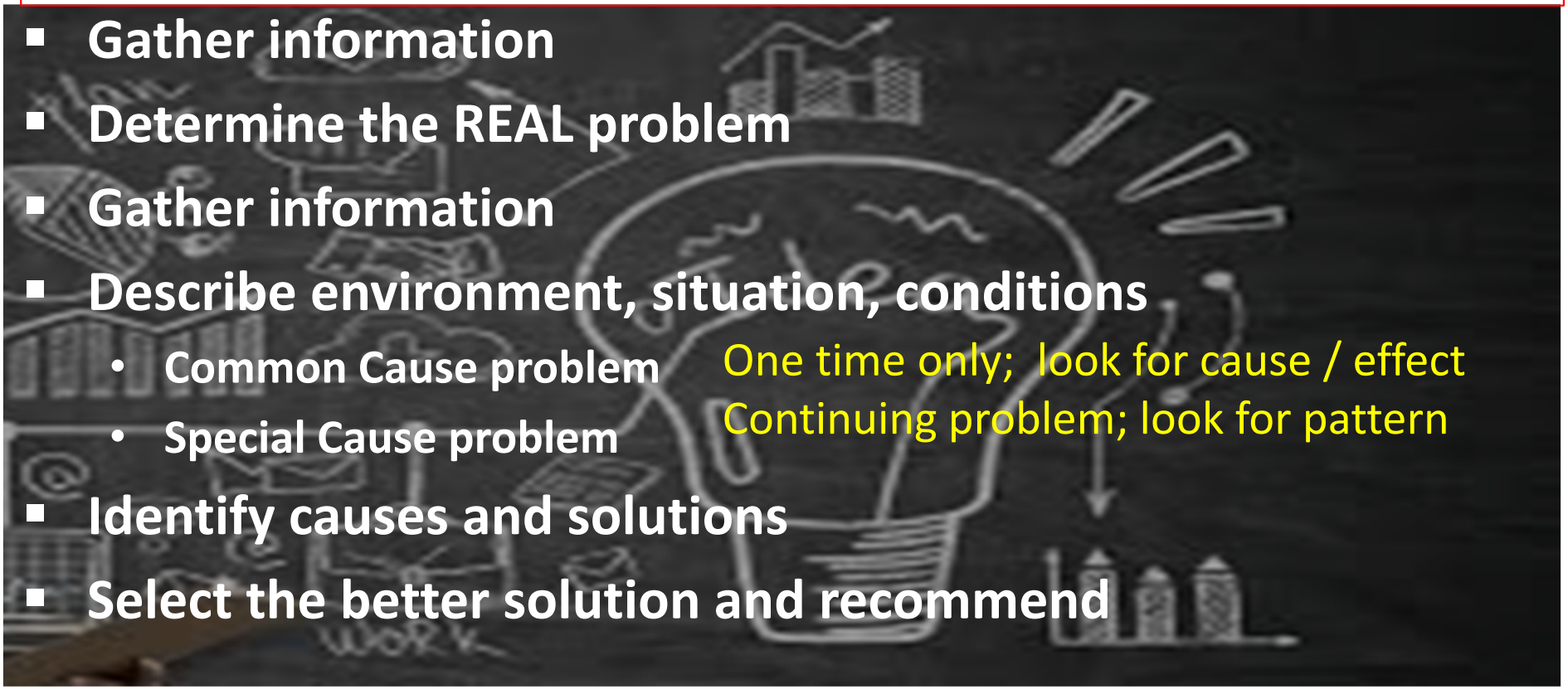
Expand the focus to the entire problem domain
To learn the unarticulated problems

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Problem Solver

Identifying and analyzing problems; weighing relevance and accuracy of information; generating and evaluating alternative solutions; making recommendations.

Source: Office of Personnel Management



- Gather information
- Determine the REAL problem
- Gather information
- Describe environment, situation, conditions
  - Common Cause problem
  - Special Cause problem

One time only; look for cause / effect
Continuing problem; look for pattern

- Identify causes and solutions
- Select the better solution and recommend

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Decisiveness



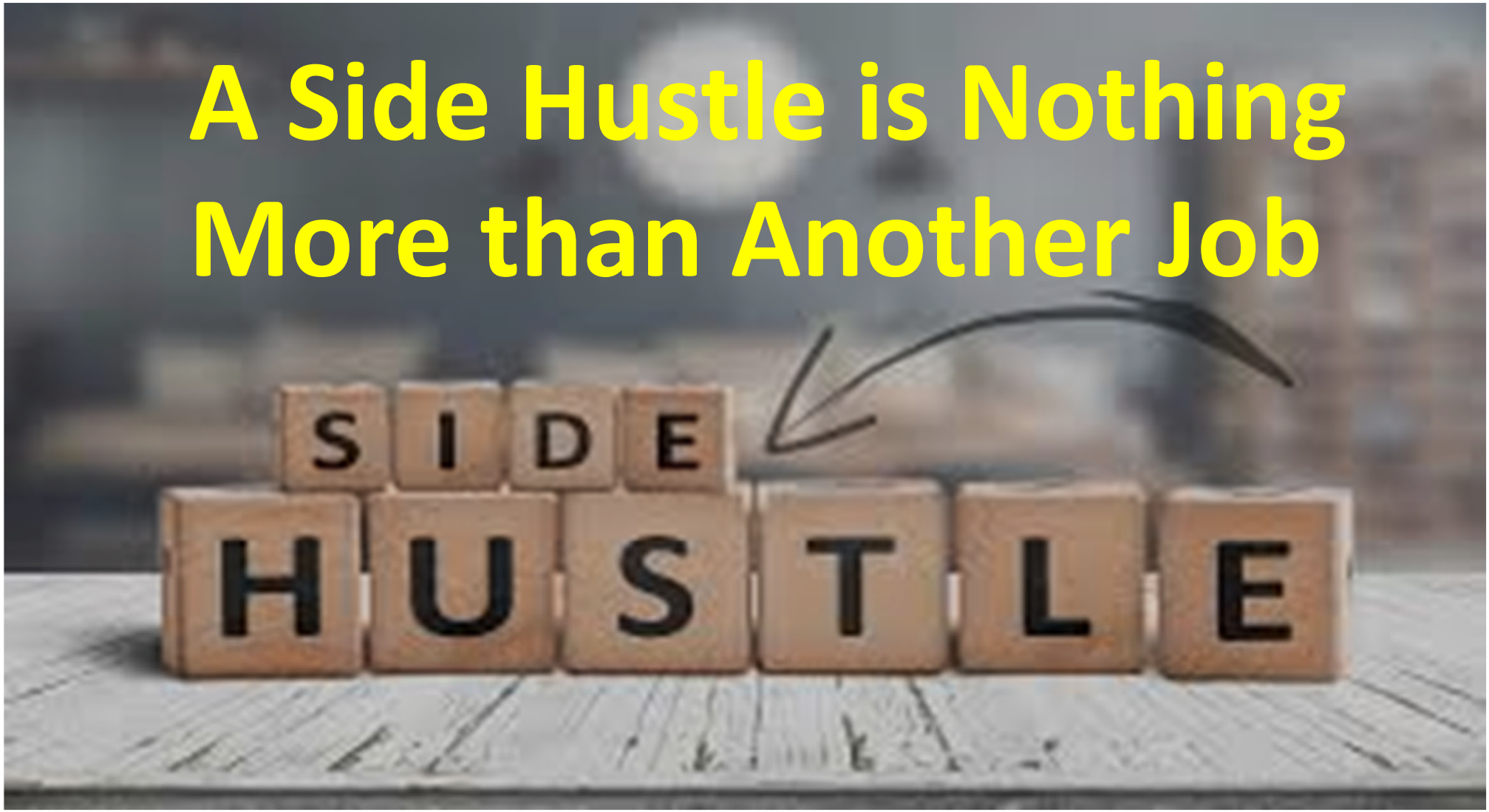
- **Three roles necessary for business decisions**
  - Decision maker
  - Advisors
  - Information providers
- **All business problems result in decisions**
- **Decisions need to be tracked**

Making well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited, or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceiving the impact and implications of decisions.

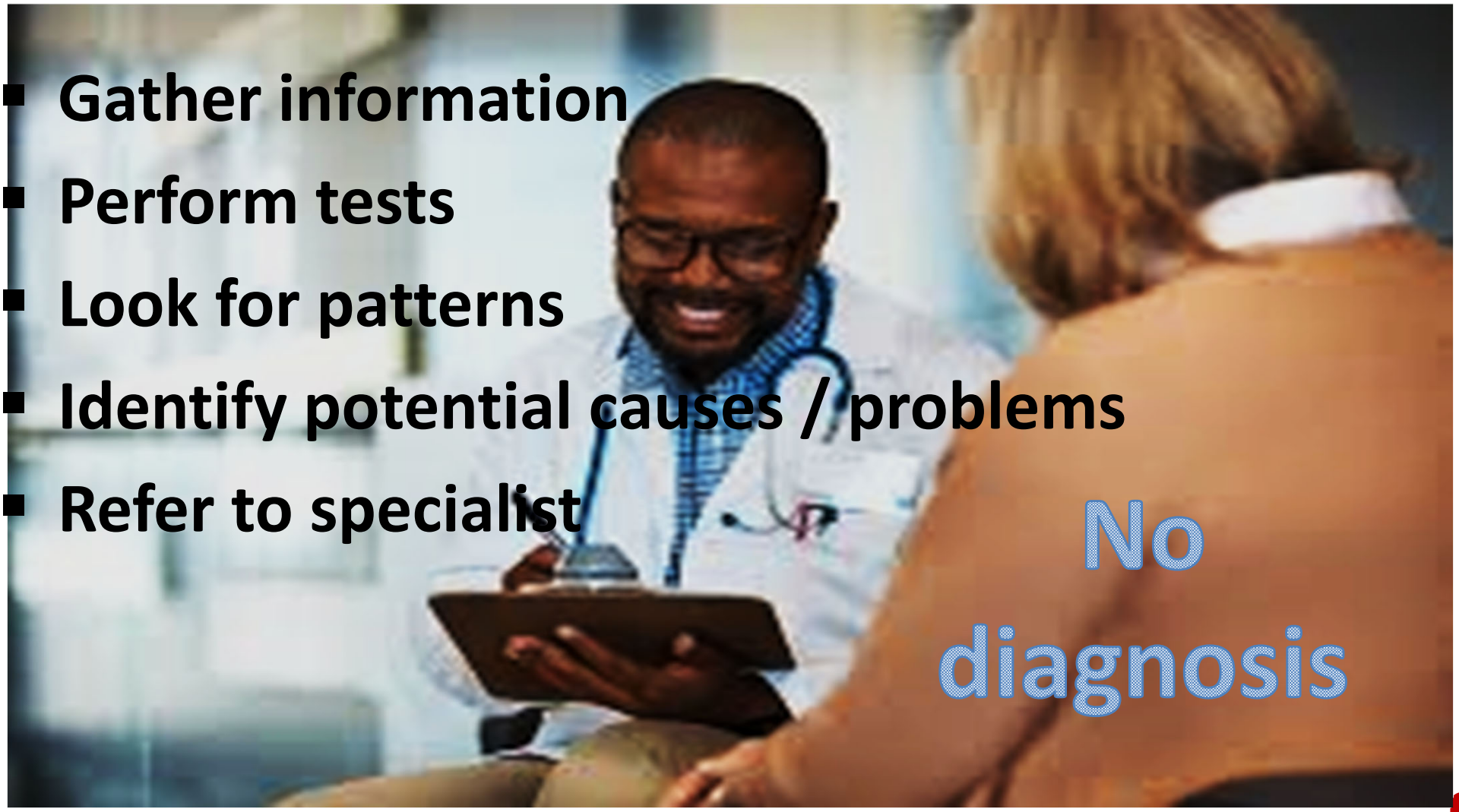
Source: Office of Personnel Management

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Sidelines and Side Effects



Business Internist



- Gather information
- Perform tests
- Look for patterns
- Identify potential causes / problems
- Refer to specialist

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Business Continuity

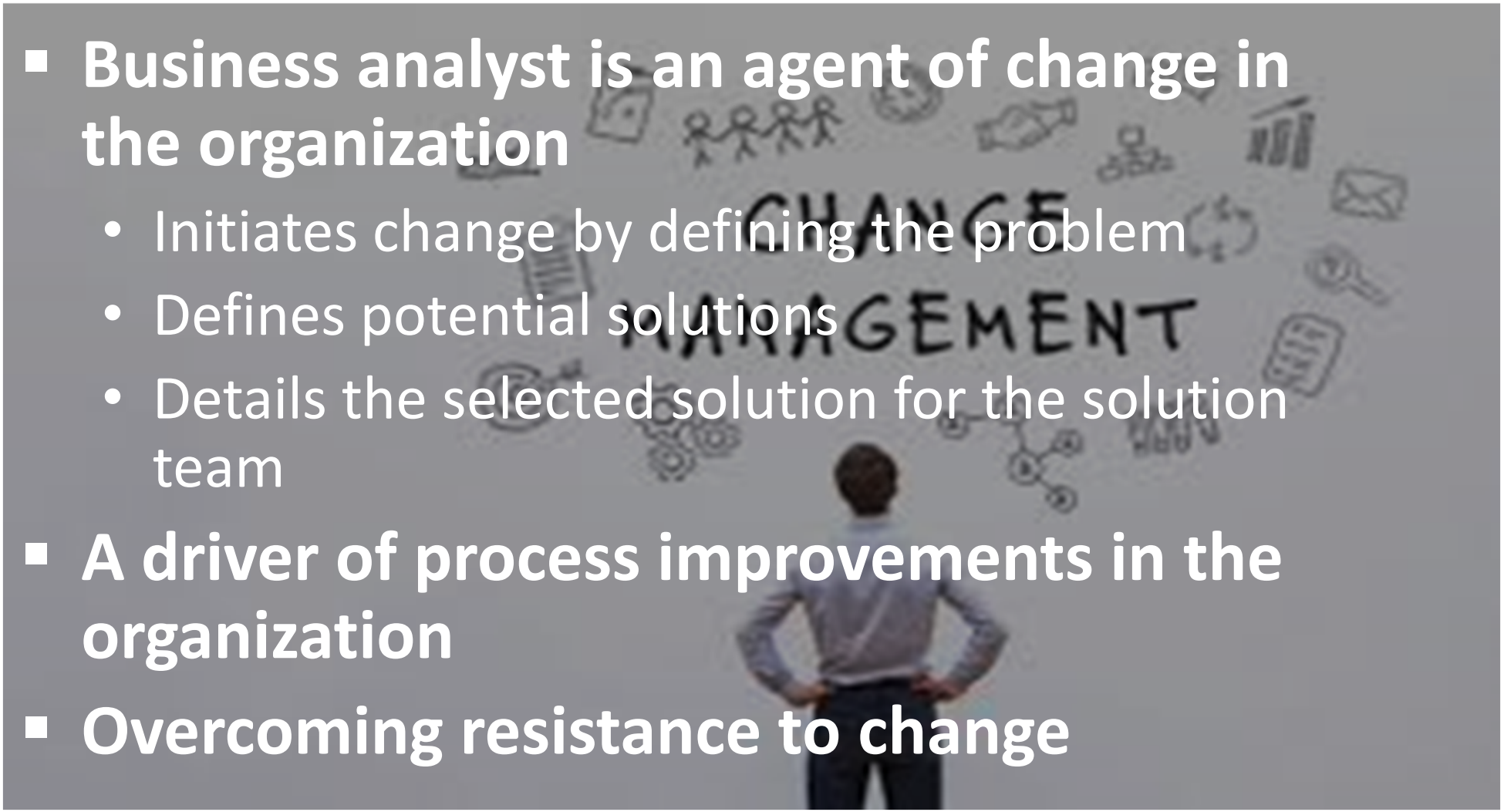
- **Assure the organization continues operating despite disruption by identifying risk**
- **Assess the business processes, system dependencies, and technological infrastructure**

Business Impact Analysis



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Change Agent



- **Business analyst is an agent of change in the organization**
  - Initiates change by defining the problem
  - Defines potential solutions
  - Details the selected solution for the solution team
- **A driver of process improvements in the organization**
- **Overcoming resistance to change**

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Product Management

- Assess customer needs
- Define the problem a new product will solve
- Analyze competitive business and the market place
- Provide an innovative environment
- Define product vision



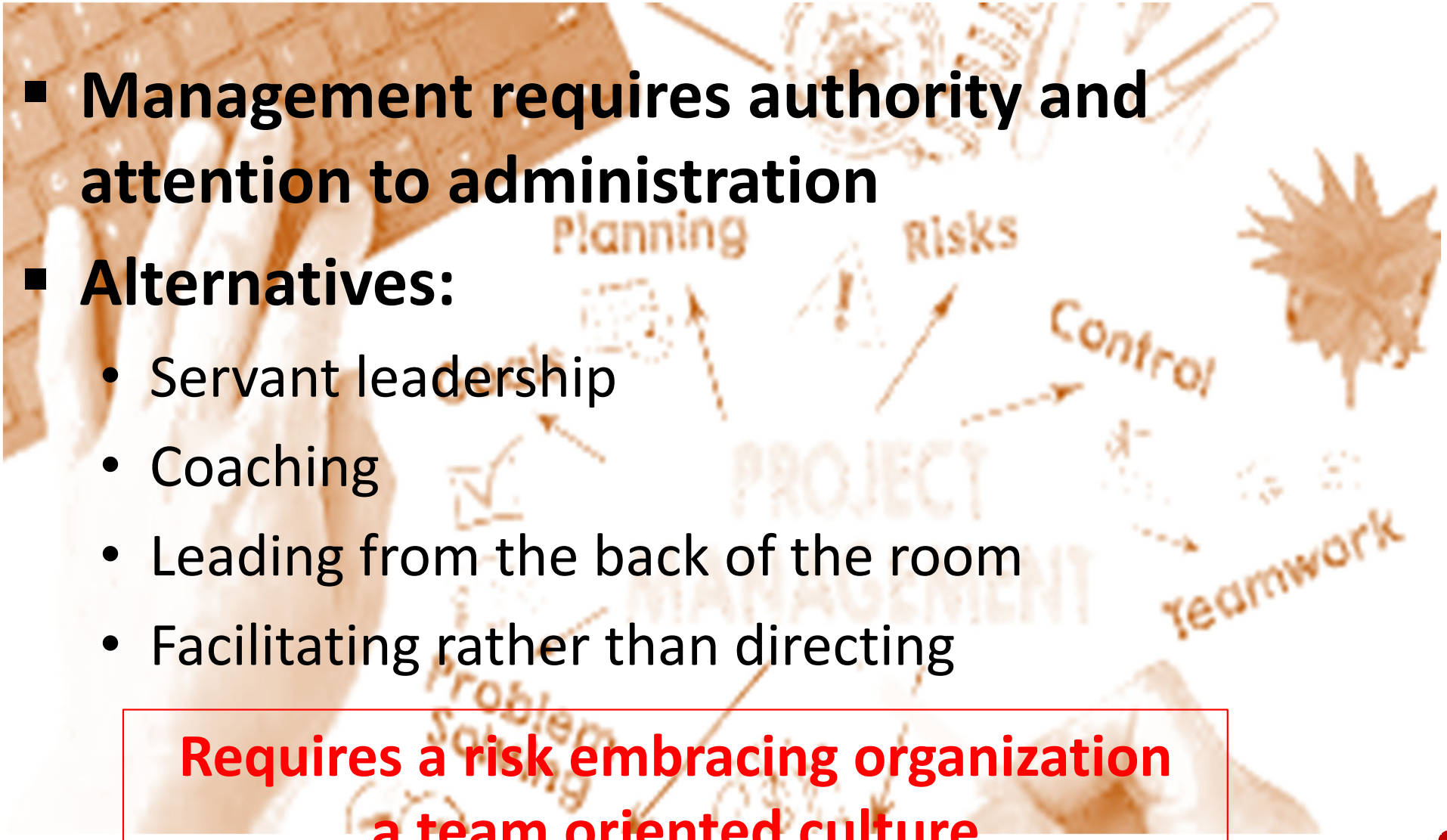
Emissary / Liaison

- **Ensures clear communication among all parties**
- **Resolves conflicting requirements among the business stakeholders**



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Project Management



- **Management requires authority and attention to administration**
- **Alternatives:**
  - Servant leadership
  - Coaching
  - Leading from the back of the room
  - Facilitating rather than directing

Requires a risk embracing organization a team oriented culture

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Data analytics, AI, machine learning



- Gather information
- Empathize with the business stakeholders and the organization's customers
- Determine what questions need to be answered
- Identify the data that will have the answers to those questions
- Present the information to the solution team

What about Agile ?



Communication

Empathy
Problem solving
Negotiation
mediation

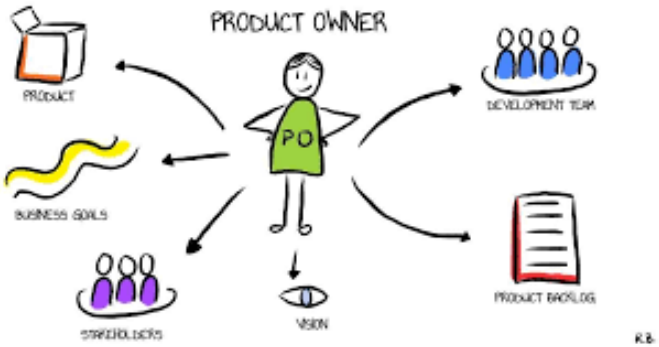
Scrum Master



Communication

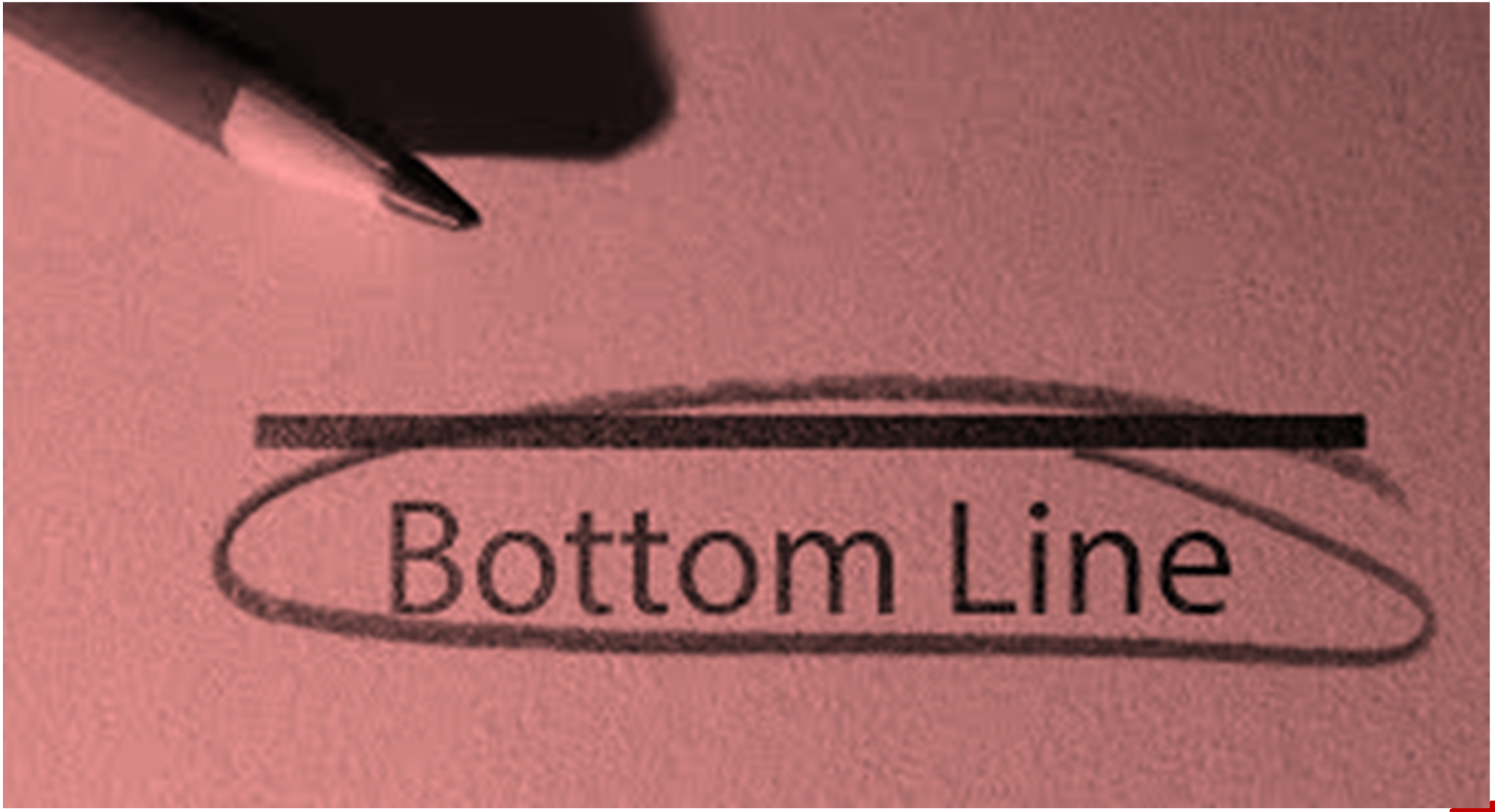
Product knowledge
Business community relationship
Organizational skills

Product Owner



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The Bottom Line



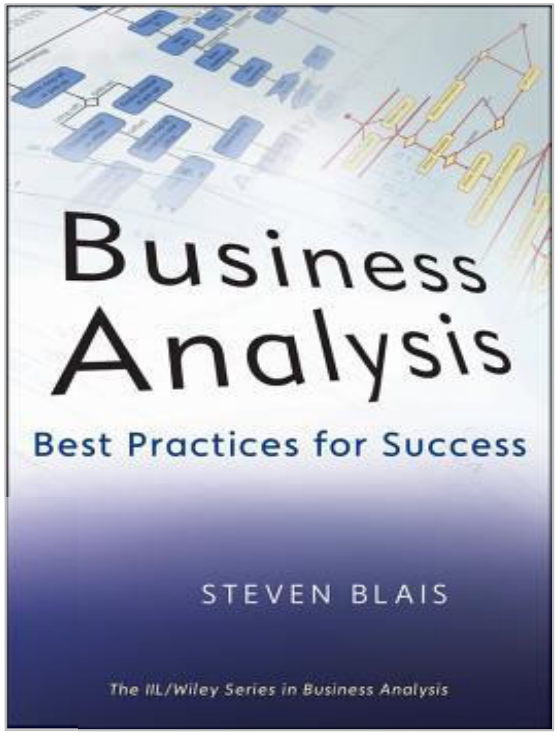
Ultimately: Executive Suite



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Questions and Contact Slide

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