**Systems Analyst Roles**

As organizations and technology have become more complex, most large organizations now build project teams that incorporate several analysts with different, but complementary, roles. In smaller organizations, one person may play several of these roles. Here we briefly describe these roles and how they contribute to a systems development project.

The ***systems analyst*** role focuses on the IS issues surrounding the system. This person develops ideas and suggestions for ways that IT can support and improve business processes, helps design new business processes supported by IT, designs the new information system, and ensures that all IS standards are maintained. The systems analyst will have significant training and experience in analysis and design and in programming.

The ***business analyst*** role focuses on the business issues surrounding the system. This person helps to identify the business value that the system will create, develops ideas for improving the business processes, and helps design new business processes and policies. The business analyst will have business training and experience, plus knowledge of analysis and design.

The ***requirements analyst*** role focuses on eliciting the requirements from the stakeholders associated with the new system. As more organizations recognize the critical role that complete and accurate requirements play in the ultimate success of the system, this specialty has gradually evolved. Requirements analysts understand the business well, are excellent communicators, and are highly skilled in an array of requirements elicitation techniques (discussed in Chapter 3).

The ***infrastructure analyst*** role focuses on technical issues surrounding the ways the system will interact with the organization's technical infrastructure (hardware, software, networks, and databases). This person ensures that the new information system conforms to organizational standards and helps to identify infrastructure changes that will be needed to support the system. The infrastructure analyst will have significant training and experience in networking, database administration, and various hardware and software products. Over time, an experienced infrastructure analyst may assume the role of ***software architect***, who takes a holistic view of the organization's entire IT environment and guides application design decisions within that context.

The ***change management analyst*** role focuses on the people and management issues surrounding the system installation. This person ensures that adequate documentation and support are available to users, provides user training on the new system, and develops strategies to overcome resistance to change. The change management analyst will have significant training and experience in organizational behavior and specific expertise in change management.

The ***project manager*** role ensures that the project is completed on time and within budget and that the system delivers the expected value to the organization. The project manager is often a seasoned systems analyst who, through training and experience, has acquired specialized project management knowledge and skills. More will be said about the project manager in the next chapter.

The roles and the names used to describe them may vary from organization to organization. In addition, there is no single typical career path through these professional roles. Some people may enter the field as a more technically-oriented programmer/analyst. Others may enter as a business-oriented functional specialist with an interest in applying IT to solve business problems.