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A Systems Analyst's Career: Useful Technologies, Tasks, and Traits

[By Roshan Tolani]

Systems analysts research, plan, and recommend software and system choices to meet their client organizations' business requirements. Systems analysts primarily function as links between vendors and organizations. They develop cost analyses, system designs, and implementation schedules. They also study the feasibility of computer systems before recommending them to management.

Work Profile of Systems Analysts

Systems analyst professionals evaluate client organizations' business models, determine the precise nature of problems, and assess organizations' business needs. They design IT solutions that can do those tasks. The designs can include many computers, software, and tools. Before finalizing solutions, analysts try different tools and processes until they decide upon system solutions that are appropriate, fast, easy, and cost effective.

Throughout the testing phase, systems analysts consult management to confirm that the management agrees with them on the benefits of selected systems. Once clients approve the systems, analysts prepare specifications and instruction manuals for end users and programmers. Furthermore, analysts coordinate the implementation of systems and participate in trial runs.

Systems analysts may be responsible for organizations' entire systems or may operate on individual-project bases. In the business world, computer applications are so varied and complex that systems analysts specialize in specific types of systems. This trend affects organizations as well when choosing the appropriate professionals.

Typical Tasks of Systems Analysts

Depending on the sizes and natures of organizations and projects, systems analysts' work involves:

- co-coordinating extensively with external or internal clients
- writing project-feasibility reports
- turning client needs into project briefs
- exploring potential solutions and evaluating them for both technical and business suitability
- developing logical and innovative solutions
- presenting solutions to clients for approval
- coordinating with developers and end users to ensure technical compatibility
- monitoring the testing and implementation of new systems
- creating instruction manuals for end users

- training end users to operate the systems
- maintaining and monitoring new and existing systems
- expanding or altering systems to improve work flow
- acquiring the latest technical knowledge and applying it to their work

Useful Technical Knowledge for Systems Analysts

To be successful professionals and improve the efficiency and productivity of client organizations, systems analysts need to possess diverse technical knowledge of the following software:

- configuration-management software
- database-management system software
- development-environment software
- object or component-oriented development software
- program-testing software
- web-platform development software



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In addition to mastery of these software types, knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware is essential for systems analysts.

Good command over mathematics and awareness of business environments will certainly also enhance one's chances of success in the field.

Essential Skills for Systems Analysts

Because of rapidly changing technologies and the increasing complexities of business operations, organizations look for professionals who possess broad education backgrounds and diverse ranges of skills. The systems analysts who, in addition to technological expertise, possess the following skills have edges over their competitors:

- **Quick learning:** systems analysts must understand the implications of new information.
- **Good interpersonal skills:** these skills help systems analysts

understand their clients' needs, advise management on IT solutions, and negotiate salaries.

- **Communication skills:** systems analysts have to deal with technical personnel as well as non-technical staff.
- **Problem-solving skills:** these skills help systems analysts recognize system problems, determine the causes of errors, evaluate options, and implement solutions.
- **Critical thinking:** this allows systems analysts to verify different aspects of conclusions and to develop corrective actions.
- **Service orientation:** systems analysts must explore different ways to assist their client organizations.

Advances in technology, new computer applications, and increasingly complex system designs are expected to create more job opportunities for systems analysts.

On the Net:

Systems Analyst
www.bls.gov/k12/computers06.htm

Systems Analyst
www.prospects.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/Explore_types_of_jobs/Types_of_Job/p!eipaL?state=showocc&idno=481&pageno=1

Career: Systems Analyst
www.princetonreview.com/cte/profiles/dayInLife.asp?careerID=210

Occupational Guide: Computer Systems Analyst
www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occguide/COMPUSYS.HTM

Computer Systems Analysts
studentcenter.ja.org/asp/findingcareer/career2.aspx?industryid=3&pathwayid=17&careerid=118

Summary Report for Computer Systems Analysts
online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/15-1051.00

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