Transcript for Session 006

Listen to the podcast session, see resources & links:

http://chandoo.org/session6/

Transcript:

Hi everyone. Welcome to chandoo.org podcast where it's all about making you awesome in data analysis, charting, dashboards and automation using Excel.

Thank you so much for joining me in session 6 of the podcast. You can visit http://www.chandoo.org/session6/ to access the show notes, transcript, links and resources of this podcast. In this show we are going to talk about how to be a better Analyst in your work.

Quite a lot of our audience - people visiting the website to read articles, people who are joining my online classes, or people who are tuning into our podcast episodes - a majority of you are working as either analysts or managers. Quite often I get emails from readers saying, "Hey, I recently joined a job as an Analyst in a company and I would really like to be good at my job - how do I go about it?"

These are the same kinds of questions that I see on my online classes or when I conduct live training programs. Sometimes people who are still in college, graduate school or undergraduate school and are considering Analyst positions in their placements give me a call and ask for advice on how to direct their career. I would like to address these concerns today and I would like to talk about how you can be a better Analyst.

Before we discuss the road map for a better Analyst, I just want to make a quick announcement. - If you are listening to this podcast in either the last week of April or in early May 2014, then you can participate in a virtual Easter egg hunt that we are running on http://www.chandoo.org. Every year around Easter time, we publish an Easter egg challenge on our website. The Easter egg hunt is Excel themed - so we usually have an Excel workbook where the Easter eggs are hidden, or they could be hidden in the blog post-its. This year too I have hidden a few Easter eggs and you'll have to solve three puzzles to unlock those Easter eggs. It's quite interesting and quite a few people have commented saying that they loved it and enjoyed the nice deviation from the regular Excel challenges that they get. So if you want a little adventure and want to learn a little more about Excel (that you may not know), then head over to http://www.chandoo.org/session6/ to find the Easter egg challenge link. You can go to that page, download the workbook and try to find the Easter eggs.

Moving on to our episode on how to be a better analyst - I assume that as a podcast listener on http://www.chandoo.org, you are more or less working in a job where Excel is used quite often and quite heavily. That's the kind of people who are tuning into our website and eventually into the podcast. So I don't have to tell you why it is important to be a better analyst. That kind of question never arises for someone like you, because you are taking time to learn and listen to the podcast so that you can be awesome. So, I don't have to really tell you why you need to be a better analyst.

Let's move on to the topic of how to be a better analyst. To be a better analyst, I have devised a framework. Before I get in to the framework, let me tell you how I went about it. As some of you may know, I used to work as a Business Analyst with an IT company in India before I quit the job to work full time as an entrepreneur running the business of chandoo.org. In my prior role as a Business Analyst, all I was really doing was analyzing data and presenting results to management. That was my work. Analysis of work used to happen in Excel and presentation of results used to happen in PowerPoint. - Those were the two tools that I would use quite often and how I developed an interest in Excel to begin with. In the time that I worked in that job (about 3.5 to 4 years), most of what I learned, I've tried to put it into this framework. Even as an entrepreneur on chandoo.org and even though I call myself the CEO of the company - the reality is that I am like a glorified analyst here too! Apart from the articles I write on the blog, a lot of analysis goes on in the background. I need to analyses which topic would work well for our audience, how do I encourage people to take an interest in reading the content I am posting, what themes are working well with people, what kind of sales pages are doing well, what kind of products being offered are doing well - all of this is nothing but raw analysis work that lets me make better decisions. So even today I consider myself an Analyst, even though my visiting card says that I am the CEO of this company!

I think, inherently, we all want to be better analysts. Using all this experience of several years of analyzing data, I created a small framework that will help you become a better Analyst. I call this framework the 'BETTER' framework. For lack of any other word, I am using the word 'BETTER'. It's an acronym and I will explain what each of those 6 letters mean. As an Analyst, I think our life has 6 components and I try to put those into the 'BETTER' framework.

As you know, the spelling of better is B-E-T-T-E-R. So, as a better Analyst, I would imagine somebody focusing their time on all the six aspects:
B for business knowledge
E for examination
T for thinking
T for tools (of the trade)
E for expression, and
R for refinement.

These are the three aspects that you need to focus on if you want to be a better Analyst. Let me now get to each of these 6 aspects.

The first one is business knowledge. If you want to be a better Analyst, I think it is a good idea to start focusing on your particular industry or your area of work and understand it even better. It's not important to learn Excel or any other tools that you may use for analysis of data for that matter, for example Tableau, R, SPSS, SAS, SQL server or PowerPivot, because it doesn't matter how proficient you are in any of these, if you have zero business knowledge. If you cannot distinguish between credit and debit, you won't be able to make even a simple financial model regardless of how much Excel knowledge you might have. It's very important to have thorough and in-depth business knowledge. How would you gain business knowledge as a fresh Business Analyst who has started working in the last 2-3 months or a year? - How would you gain that kind of knowledge as a graduate entering the industry?

From my past experience, one of the things that work best is that you can learn from your peers. In the first one month when I joined as a Business Analyst, I was actually asked to sit with a bunch of other Analysts who had been working in similar roles for about 1-2 years. I am more of an introvert by nature - so if you put me in a room full of people and you just leave me there - I won't go ahead and talk to anybody by myself, but I'll probably indulge myself in a book or something like that! Or, I'll probably keep thinking about things in my mind because I am a little shy and I don't go and talk to people when there isn't anything to talk about.

So I was sitting with these fellow analysts (from a different department) and for the first week or two, I didn't talk much with them. I knew what their names were and we went for a couple of coffee breaks and lunches, but that's about it. I didn't really talk to them about their work or anything like that. But I could see that they were using Excel and PowerPoint all the time and as a new Analyst, my boss wouldn't trust me with any work. - So, she would just ask me to do some trivial work. - It was very important to help me learn things, but for her they were probably very trivial.

After a week or two, I hit a problem at work because I didn't know what to do with a question that my boss asked how to analyses. Eventually, I mustered up the courage to go and ask one of my colleagues and she was quite helpful and helped me understand how to model that particular scenario - and, I was able to impress my boss! So the first and best advice I can give you is to learn from peers - they know what kind of work is required and how to do it better. It's easy to gain the industry or business knowledge from them. You may be able to learn technical or book knowledge from college, graduate school or undergraduate school, but no amount of college education can teach you how your particular industry or company works and how they make decisions. That's where peers or colleagues will help.

The other aspect that I really think works well is to study the competition. But, how would you go and study what the competitor is doing? You don't have to go and sit in their office to study them, but you could (for example) study their annual reports. That would tell you a lot about how they are running their business, what their entire business model is, how they make money, how they spend money, how they hire people, what kind of projects they work on, what things are they excited about, what things are they depressed about etc. That gives you good knowledge when you eventually want to model a business, project or any other kind of analysis situation in your work. So, study the competition.

You can also get some mentorship. That's something that I did because after a couple of months in my job, I started getting some serious projects and I had to deliver them with high precision because there were a lot of expectations. So I thought it would be a better idea to find mentors and I approached a couple of seniors who were very welcoming. They said, "Come on, Chandoo, we will help you out and guide you how to do this." Getting mentorship is very important especially if you don't have good business knowledge.

The other thing that is important to understand especially when you are starting at your Analyst job or if you moving to an analysis domain from another domain is that there is a difference between 'ideal' and 'practical'. So when you are in a college or any other area of work (and not in analysis and decision making), we tend to think that all things should be done ideally. Especially when you are doing case studies in college or when you are trained to answer a question of how a certain thing should be manufactured or sold, we usually go with the 'ideal' scenarios. We would say that if it is selling 10 units per month and we give a discount of 10%, it would probably sell 11 or 12 units per month. This is an

'ideal' scenario. However, when you eventually start analyzing data and giving decisions to the decision makers, they will make 'practical' decisions even though they might not be 'ideal'. They may be deviating from what your Excel workbook or model says or what your presentation suggests. This is the difference between ideal and practical. As an analyst, you need to understand how your company draws the line between what is ideal and what is practical.

For example, when I was doing my summer internship as part of my MBA degree, I had to conduct a survey of a bunch of dermatologists and collect their opinions on various things and present the results to the management. I then realized that there is a little bit of disconnect even at the level of what happens in the field (i.e. how the dermatologists behave) and how the company makes decisions. However, the greater disconnect is between what my MBA degree textbook teaches and what is happening in the field. Eventually, I realized that whatever you are learning is the ideal framework or solution, but on the field a lot of things like human nature, sales person interactions, targets and pressures come into the picture. They play a role in making a different type of decision. So you need to understand the difference between what is ideal and what is practical, if you want to gain good business knowledge. In a nutshell, this is how you can be a better Analyst by gaining business knowledge.

We've covered the 'B' part of the acronym. The summary of it is to learn from your peers or a mentor and observe what is being done and what the ideal scenario is. The ideal scenario is same for all companies, but each company reacts differently to the same amount of information and market situation. You need to differentiate between ideal and practical, and as an Analyst, you need to adopt more of the practical side.

The second thing is examination and it is really an important part. Once you start analyzing data, all you're really doing is trying to answer questions that someone else has. If you want to succeed in your job as an Analyst, you need to put users first. You need to deliver what the user wants - that's the job of an Analyst. As an analyst you need to assume that the users are your first priority. How do you deliver what they want? You should grill them and constantly examine them with a barrage of questions. That's what a successful Analyst would do. I say that in order to be a better Analyst, you need to especially ask this particular question - "Why do you need that information." I am not saying this in the sense that if you're the Director of a BI and a subordinate comes and asks you to show him a secret file named F2345, that you'd ask him, "Why do you need to see that?" - As an Analyst you need to ask this question more to understand the motivation behind it.

For example, if your manager asks you to tell him the average sales in the last three months, as an Analyst you need to ask him, "Why do you want to know the average? What kind of decision are you trying to make based on the average?" If the manager comes back and says, "Hey, based on the average sales, I would like to do some forecasting", then you can give him some better information. You can tell him that, "Hey, if you want to forecast the sales then considering just 3 months average is probably not going to help because the last three months were the beginning of the year (January, February and March) and so naturally there was a dull momentum since we make toys and we sell a lot of them at Christmas time." You can tell him that by taking the data for those three months and trying to project it won't give an accurate picture. You will get a better picture if you try to project the data for the last 12 months.

This kind of information can only be given if you ask the right questions. That's why I say - ask the

question - "why do you need that information?"

Another thing that you should try to focus on as an Analyst is to make as many mistakes as possible early itself. Let's say you are handling an analysis project, and for the sake of hypothesis let's say you will make ten mistakes in this project. - You will save a lot of time and you will also impress a lot of people if you make all those ten mistakes very early in the project. What happens when you make mistakes early? - You will correct early, and you will also improve your model or analysis output as you go. Whereas if you make the mistake at the very end of the analysis, you will have to backtrack all the way back and then change the course. That's why I feel it's very important for an Analyst to make mistakes early in their career, or while trying to examine user requests and trying to understand what they want better.

One way to avoid mistakes is to do validation. This can be done by going back to the users and validating what they said or what they're looking for, before you jump in to the work. In a nutshell, this is what examination means.

In 'B' you are focusing on business knowledge and in 'E' you are trying to focus on the users and examine their needs and motivations so that you can deliver a better analysis output.

Now we come to 'T'. - This is when you are thinking as an Analyst. As an Analyst the kind of analysis that you need to produce depends on your job profile, industry and the kind of work you are doing. Broadly, when we talk about data analysis, there are many types of analysis that can be done. There is statistical analysis, financial analysis, operational analysis, sales and marketing analysis, and strategic analysis etc. A lot of different types of analysis are possible with the same type of data. For example, let's say you are a Production Analyst in a manufacturing plant where they are making cars. As a Production Analyst your job is to understand what kind of supply you are providing in terms of the output, what kinds of KPI's you're able to meet, how many errors per million etc. These are the things that you are focusing on as a Production Analyst.

However, in the same manufacturing plant, there is also somebody analyzing budgets, sales and marketing efforts. A Marketing Analyst for that car company would focus more on things like how many new leads a particular advertising campaign is giving or how many new prospects they are able to generate through a recently posted Facebook message. It's the same company with the same kind of the data, but the analysis needs differ. As an Analyst the kind of analysis that you need to do depends a lot on the kind of job profile that you have. If you are a Budget Analyst then you will focus more the budget side, whereas if you are Marketing Analyst then you will focus more on the marketing side.

Depending on the kind of analysis you are doing, you need to answer your user questions and address their information needs. If you are making a report for the CEO of a company, you would address their strategic needs or high level details with action points or clear indications of when something is failing or when they need to sit up and take notice. And, you would provide insights accordingly. No matter what kind of thinking is involved in your mind when you are analyzing the data, you need to ensure that there is a little bit of play involved in your eventual output. As humans we are very excited when we can play with data or anything! If you leave a bunch of kids in a room without even a single toy, they won't know what to do. But, if you throw in a single ball or even a small teddy bear into that room, they will be excited. That's not just true for kids alone - even as adults we like to play. The same applies to analysis of data and decision support also. When you are analyzing, try to think of the user needs and how you can

introduce some kind of playfulness in to the outcome. In the next part, I will tell you how that playfulness can be added. So, the third aspect is thinking. How do you think? - You need to think based on the kind of job you are doing and the kind of analysis that is expected for that particular assignment.

The next aspect is 'tools'. For the sake of our podcast, we can assume Microsoft Excel to be the tool. - That's the software that we will be using to analyses the data. But, the tools can include any of the analysis software like Tableau, SPSS, database software, PowerPivot or any of those things where you are analyzing the data to provide the output.

When it comes to Excel, I think that you need to focus on these 6 aspects to be a better analyst. The first aspect is work specific functions. Let's say you are a Statistical Analyst, then you would need to be familiar with all the statistical analysis functions and formulas that are available in Excel. Otherwise, you would be an illiterate when it comes to Excel. You may know how a financial function works, but because you are a Statistical Analyst you won't be able to do a good job. Depending on the work that you are doing, you need to be familiar with the aspect of Excel functionality that is going to help you most. Excel has a ton of functions and features and, in general, learning about all of them a little bit will help you. But, depending on the area of work that you are doing, you need to deep-dive into the particular set of features that will help you most.

You need to also learn about your data and databases. Your data and databases may not be in Excel - they may be in a database system like Oracle, SQL server or MySQL. Regardless of where it is, you need to understand how the data is structured, how it is linked to each other and what it means. For example, there is a column in your database that says "PRDID" and you don't know what it means - then what kind of analysis could you possibly do. You might end up averaging it, when all it really means is Product ID! No one calculates the average of a Product ID column, right? It's important to understand what each and every column and table in your database means and how they connect with each other.

If you are working in a large company, you might even have thousands of tables and databases. I suggest that you should focus more on the things that you need to deal with, i.e. just the subsets of databases and data that are important for you. That's an important aspect that you need to understand.

The third aspect is that you need to understand how the data will be structured in Excel. This is where a powerful feature of Excel, namely tables, will help you. I will provide a link to Excel tables in the show notes so that you can learn a little more about it, how it works and what it does. Please visit http://www.chandoo.org/session6/ for that. You need to understand how to structure and arrange the data in Excel in order to analyses it better.

You also need to understand a little bit about the various ad hoc analysis features that are available in Excel. Although you can do a lot of full-fledged and full-blown analysis in Excel, sometimes you don't have the time or luxury. For example, if your boss is on the line and she wants to know what the variance of a particular project's budget is or something like that - when that kind of a question is asked, you don't have the luxury of saying, "Okay, hold on, I'm going to make a dashboard and send it to you after 3 weeks!" That'll be too late. So, you will need to be familiar with various ad hoc, quick, cut-copy-paste kind of things that are available in Excel. These are filtering, pivot tables, slicers and quick analysis tools feature in Excel 2013. Filtering, pivot tables and slicers work in Excel 2010; filtering and pivot tables work in Excel 2007 and Excel 2003 as well. Whereas, the quick analysis feature (added to Excel 2013) is a

very useful new feature. Be familiar with these things, and use them often when you have a time-crunch or when you need to quickly give answers.

The fifth aspect is charting and reporting. - How do you present the insights in a beautiful chart or report format after the analysis is done? There is no quick shortcut to do this. I will provide some links in the show notes, but all of these aspects will take quite a bit of time. Keep that in mind and learn as you go.

The last aspect is automation. As an Analyst, you don't want to make mistakes because your mistakes tend to be costly. If you are making a report for the CEO and you make a calculation mistake or a judgmental error somewhere, it would affect the way your company will react and make decisions. I'm not exaggerating here, because you can actually see in the print media that a company lost a hundred million dollars because of a calculation error in an Excel workbook. These kinds of stories are published in news media quite often. However, what goes unpublished is how many bad errors all the companies around the world are making because of small errors that Analysts are making when they are working.

To avoid errors, you need to focus on how much of your work can be automated. If something can be automated, you remove the chance of error and save yourself a lot of time. Especially as an Analyst, we tend to produce the same report with different data every month or week, so there is a chance of error. - You are making the same things every week and out of boredom, laziness or oversight, you can make a mistake. That's where automation can help. - Just make it once and automate the steps for the next time. This is where VBA and macros come in to the picture.

So the six aspects of Excel that you need to focus on to master the tools of the trade are:

- work-specific functions
- learn about your data and databases
- understand how to structure the data inside Excel (Excel tables)
- be familiar with ad hoc analysis tools in Excel (filters, pivot tables)
- understand how to prepare charts and reports, and
- assess the possibility of automation and implement it as much as possible.

I will provide links to all these aspects in our show notes. Please visit http://www.chandoo.org/session6/.

So far we've discussed business knowledge and how to gain it, how to examine your user needs and how to think about analysis, and how to apply that thinking into Excel using the tools of the trade. We've talked about all these four things.

The fifth part is expression. As an Analyst, after you've gained industry knowledge, you've asked your users what they want and you've thought about how to analyses it and you've prepared an Excel workbook, the next step is to express your results and communicate them to your users. This is where it is important to make beautiful looking workbooks. I am not saying beautiful as in 'really good looking but shallow', instead what I mean is 'really good looking and really good in terms of content and communication'.

It's not enough if you get the answer right, you also need to present it in a beautiful way. - That's what I'm trying to get at. - Beautiful charts play a very vital role and there is no single simple and shortcut way

to make good looking charts and reports. However, you can take inspiration from various published sources that are available. On http://www.chandoo.org itself we probably have more than 200 dashboard samples and hundreds and hundreds of charting examples, workbook models and lots of things. Just visit a website like ours and you'll be able to gain a lot of inspiration and ideas for your next analysis report, dashboard or chart.

It is also important to focus that your output (the presentation or workbook that you are making) has no fluff. It should have a very high data to ink ratio. Sometimes we tend to focus more on the fluffy bells and whistles kind of aspects. It is important to keep one or two of those things because it'll make it look good and create that wow impression. But, as an Analyst, you want to focus on how much insight is provided. That's what data to ink ratio means - i.e., if I print this entire report, how much ink am I spending versus how much insight am I gaining.

It's also important to create interactive, usable workbooks. By interactive what I mean is – "can the user talk to the workbook and get better answers or the answers that she is looking for?" For example, if you are making a monthly report and the month is set to April 2014, and your user is wondering what the figures for March 2014 or April 2013 were. - It would be better if she doesn't have to call you back and ask you for another report - instead, if she can change the month somewhere in the report and the report fetches the data for the other months. That's what we mean by interactive.

In the previous episode of our podcast (session 5), I interviewed Debra where we talked about form controls which are a way to provide interactivity. If you haven't listened to that, please listen to it to find out how you can add these interactive features to your workbook. I will also provide a couple of links in the show notes about how to make your workbooks and dashboards interactive. Another aspect of good expression and communication is that it makes it easy to discover. It puts the user in the front seat so that they can actually play with the data and discover the things that they want. They can play with the data if the workbook is interactive, but the ability to discover really means that you choose the right kind of charts and provide a right medium of the data there. If you are making a pie-chart, it probably makes discovery of anything very difficult. But if the same data is presented as a bar or line chart, you would be able to uncover things and trends that are not visible by the pie-chart.

As a better Analyst, it's important to understand how to make it easy for your users to discover things that are not immediately visible.

A few other considerations to keep in mind to be a better Analyst are whether your workbook or output are printable, error free and auditable - as an example - can somebody look at your workbook and ask a question like "is the total sales of 3.7 million right or wrong" - and then go and find out the answer themselves without having to call you back. It's important to have few or no errors in the output and also make it in a way that makes it easy to audit and validate things.

Is it easy to maintain? What happens after you're done with the analysis and your boss likes it so much that she gives you a promotion! - So you're no longer the Analyst, you're the Chief Manager of the floor and somebody else comes to analyses the data and they inherit you workbook. - Can they maintain it easily? Can they understand what all you've done in terms of your formulas and VBA? Can they inherit it without too much trouble?

Another aspect is whether it can be published or emailed.

We can often assume ideal conditions when we talk about giving the file to your colleague or boss, i.e. they will also be using Excel and so they can see what you are seeing. But in some scenarios = for example if you are publishing this workbook on a SharePoint server so that somebody at the other end of the world can see it or if you are publishing the workbook so that somebody can read it on an iPad using 'Office for iPad' app or something like that - in such cases, not every feature or type of thing that you are using in Excel is supported on the publishing platform. So you need to be aware of these things. This is a little bit about expression.

To summarize, in order to be a better Analyst, you need to focus on how to make good-looking, informative, interactive and insightful output (like charts etc.). You also need to make it easy for your users to discover hidden trends and messages very easily by uncovering them in your output. And, you also want to keep in mind a few other considerations like - is the workbook printable, auditable and error-free etc. - That is about expression.

So far we've talked about business knowledge, examining user needs, how to think about analysis, how to use the tools of the trade and how to express our output. These are the five aspects of a better Analyst.

The last aspect is 'R'. 'R' stands for refinement. As a better Analyst, you don't want to stop after learning these five aspects and say "I'm good enough; I don't want to learn anymore." You want to learn constantly to be a better Analyst, and that's what refinement means. I feel like I am preaching to the choir when I talk about refinement, because people (like you) who want to learn take time out of their day to tune into a podcast like this to lean new techniques and ideas. So there is no need for me to convince you that you need to focus on refinement as you are already there. However, just to give you an idea how you can refine yourself as an Analyst, I would say that there are at least four important steps:

- **Take some time to learn from books, blogs, videos and podcasts** - this is usually very low cost or often free. All you have to do is sign up for a couple of good blogs out there, tune in to a podcast like ours or visit YouTube channels of 'Excel is fun', chandoo.org YouTube channel, Mr. Excel YouTube channel or Contextures YouTube channel and you can learn a ton of wealthy, good, solid information on data analysis, presentation of results and other aspects.

- **Attend a class** (whether it is a live or online class) - This is especially useful if you want to learn a lot of information and gain a lot of knowledge in a short period of time. In a live class you would probably emerge better, stronger and more knowledgeable in a matter of just one or two days. In an online class this would probably be done in 6 to 8 weeks' time. It is highly condensed knowledge that you are gaining, as opposed to learning on a blog or from a book which would take several months (and sometimes you still won't understand fully). So attending a class would help - of course you would spend some money but it's not much money in consideration to the gains you will get as an Analyst.

- **Share your knowledge** - This might seem a little bit counter-intuitive, but knowledge is something that multiplies when you are sharing it. Let's say you are learning a cool technique of how to apply conditional formatting for a certain scenario and you're excited about it and you think, "Hey, I know

it and I'm going to keep it to myself so nobody else in the office knows about it." What happens in such a case is that after a while you tend to forget it, either because you are not using the technique often or you are learning something else and this kind of fades into the background. Whereas if you share this technique, then by nature your mind is making it an interactive experience.

Learning is more or less passive - it's coming from the other end and you are storing it in your memory to access it in the future. Whereas when you are sharing, you're making it interactive - you're explaining it and someone else is understanding it and asking questions - you're kind of going back and forth. So it becomes easy for you to remember it and use it better. By sharing it, you might even see more possibilities of how to use that technique.

If you don't believe that this sharing technique works, you have an example right in between your ears! I have started improving my Excel knowledge exponentially once I started the blog. Before that I knew about 1% of Excel. After starting the blog it grew from 10% to 15% to 20% and today I am really happy to say that most of what I learned was because I talked about it and shared what I knew. In return, people commented, and gave me more information. Sharing is a very powerful way to refine yourself.

- **Don't assume the 'know-it-all' pose** - You will stop refinement at any point if you say, "Oh, I know enough about Excel and I don't want to learn anymore." This is true not just about Excel, but also of data analysis, business, industry or the office environment. If you stop learning then you stop refining yourself.

In a nutshell, the six aspects of a better Analyst are:

- gain business knowledge **(B)**
- examine your user needs and understand why they are looking for certain types of information and what they will do with it **(E)**
- think about analysing the data and choose the right kind of framework or model depending on the area of work or analysis **(T)**
- understand the tools of the trade better which includes Excel knowledge, VBA, PowerPivot or database knowledge **(T)**
- express the results using various communication platforms like presentations, Excel charts, reports etc. **(E)**
- focus on refinement, i.e. constantly learn and share so that you can be a better Analyst **(R)**

That's what I call the 'BETTER' framework. I hope you find it useful. When I was working as an Analyst, nobody told me what this is, but I was passively following it. When I wanted to record today's podcast episode on 'How to be a better Analyst', I made a mind-map of what entails a better Analyst. I put Analyst in the middle and started drawing bubbles around that to identify various aspects of a better Analyst. I ended up with six bubbles. I looked at them and thought that it would be cool to create an acronym around them. And, that's how I came up with the 'BETTER' framework. It's just common sense really.

I hope you enjoyed this 'BETTER' framework and that you'll apply it to your work to be a better Analyst.

Thank you so much for listening to this podcast. - I know you're awesome because you're already taking time to learn. - You're on the track to becoming a better Analyst, or you're already there! No matter where you are, I highly encourage you to learn a few things and share them with your colleagues and friends so that you could refine and become even better.

That's about it. Please visit http://www.chandoo.org/session6/ for the show notes, resources and links mentioned in this podcast.

Thank you so much for your time and attention. Have a great day ahead. Bye.