

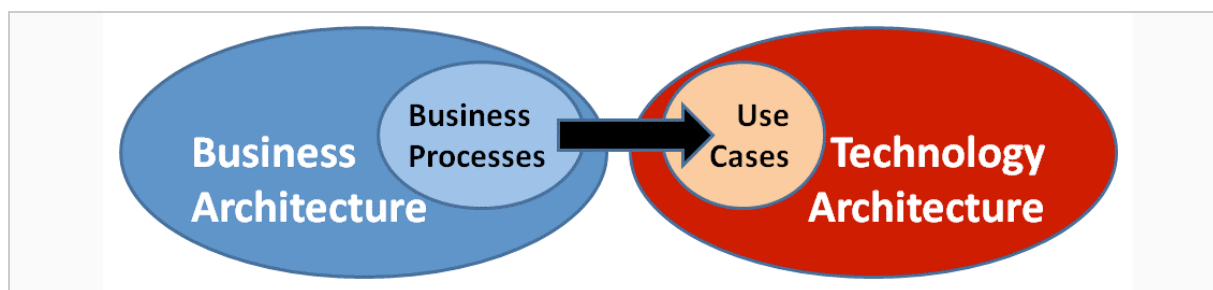
Business Architecture: The Missing Link between Business Strategy and Enterprise Architecture

Most would agree that the field of enterprise architecture was officially established in 1987, with the development of the Zachman Framework¹. Since then, various IT standards bodies, government agencies, industry analyst groups and enterprise practitioners, have defined and refined enterprise architecture. Three widely recognized definitions are from The Open Group's Architecture Framework (TOGAF)², the United States General Accounting Office (GAO)³ and the MIT Sloan Center for Information System Research (CISR)⁴.

TOGAF describes enterprise architecture's purpose as supporting the business "by providing the fundamental technology and process structure for an IT strategy." The GAO defines EA as "a blueprint that describes an organization's or a functional area's current and desired state in both logical and technical terms, as well as a plan for transitioning between the two states." MIT's CISR defines EA as "the organizing logic for business processes and IT infrastructure reflecting the integration and standardization requirements of the firm's operating model." While the wording varies, the underlying common themes are:

- a) enterprise architecture exists to optimize and align IT resources with business goals/objectives,
- b) enterprise architecture is manifested as a set of inter-related models, and
- c) these models are characterized using a prescriptive meta-model, such as Zachman's original work or one of CISR's four operating models⁵.

For an IT organization to thrive, and for an EA program to succeed, it must understand the business it supports. Thus, EA frameworks and definitions, including the above three, incorporate some form of business architecture.



Typically, the business architecture practices and artifacts in enterprise architecture frameworks focus on business processes and business uses cases. This is not surprising, since these artifacts and practices are a prerequisite to IT-based business solution delivery.

However, this is not sufficient. To reap the benefits of business architecture – business visibility and agility – the business architecture must reflect the entire business design, from the point of view of business designers and owners, rather than IT solution delivery.

¹ <http://www.zachmaninternational.com/index.php/the-zachman-framework>

² <http://www.opengroup.org/togaf/>

³ <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-06-831> and <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-08-519>

⁴ <http://mitsloan.mit.edu/cisr/>

⁵ <http://www.architectureasstrategy.com/book/eas/>

Business Architecture Overview

What is business architecture?

The EA2010 working group defines business architecture as *the formal representation and active management of business design*. Expanding this definition, business architecture is a formalized collection of practices, information and tools for business professionals to assess and implement business design, and business change.

Business Design. Business architecture must encompass the entire business design, from the business designers' and owners' points of view. This point of view begins with business motivations, includes key business execution elements – such as operating model, capabilities, value chains, processes, and organizational models – and transcends information technology representations, such as business services, rules, events and information models.

By existence alone, all businesses have a business design. That design may be intended, explicit and effective, or may be an implicit amalgamation of past actions, and underperforming. Business architecture is the formal representation of business design, with the intent to apply the business architecture information and supporting techniques to optimize the business design, and facilitate on-going change.

Formal Representation. Business architecture is formally represented via a variety of artifacts, including business motivation models, capability maps, value chain maps, process models, policy documents, organization charts, and product catalogs. The techniques used to produce and manage these artifacts vary by situation. Organizations focused on eliminating waste may employ Lean practices⁶, while organizations focused on competitive advantage may employ value chain analysis.

Active Management. For ease of accessibility, the business architecture artifacts should be managed in a repository. While business professionals are the primary creators, and full owners, of these artifacts, IT is typically the caretaker of the business architecture environment, including underlying repository, information storage, user access, and optionally, business performance integration.

Why business architecture?

Organizations need reliable and cost effective operations. Business architecture provides the mechanism to clearly illuminate how strategy, processes, business structure and staff can best be utilized to deliver reliable and cost effective operations. With this clarity business can enable new functions and services, with the right resources and technology, effectively and efficiently.

Technology enablement is key to the majority of new functions and services. Business architecture helps organizations define the technology requirements and capabilities clearly, yielding IT plans and projects that align with business priorities and goals.

The following scenarios demonstrate how business architecture serves to improve operations and the alignment of technology to business needs:

Focus on value to the organization and the customer: Business architecture can help organizations analyze key value chains. Value chains are the functions and services that yield the most economic value for

⁶ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_manufacturing, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_services and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_software_development