

the organization and provide the organization's customers with the necessary services, products and information to maintain loyalty. Value chains are the foundation of an organization's ability to compete and grow in dynamic market conditions. Clearly understanding these value chains will help remove roadblocks, reduce risks and improve efficiency in processes and technology, resulting in better bottom line results and customer loyalty.

Find synergies in generic processes: By highlighting the steps of business processes and their dependencies, organizations can eliminate duplicate operations, processes and technologies across business units and functions. By consolidating and standardizing on common operations, organizations can redirect budget, technology and staff to focus on the organization's value-chains.

Provide the blueprint for business transformation: Many organizations are dealing with disruptive changes in markets and customer needs. They must make rapid and significant changes to remain competitive and to deliver goods and services that meet the new market and customer requirements. Business architecture provides the methods to analyze and plan how the organization should morph its structure, processes, technology and staff.

Who does business architecture?

According to the Business Architects Association⁷, business architecture is “performed by cross-organizational generalists who possess professional skills for transforming corporate strategy into business designs that enable corporations to increase market share, profit margins and flexibility, while reducing risk.”

While we strongly believe that business architecture is a business thing, the most likely origin of a business architecture practice is within IT. Our thinking revolves around the silo-like nature of business, versus the cross-enterprise perspective of IT. Obviously, the danger of this approach is that the business may be skeptical about the value of IT or worse refuse to participate.

As such, each enterprise architecture group must take an honest look at the existing relationship between IT and the business before embarking fully on a business architecture effort. The nature of relationship will dictate the level of effort required in finding the correct champion, garnering business participation, and delivering to objectives.

A key to business architecture success is the business IQ of the enterprise architecture team. Enterprise architects must be equally comfortable with both business and IT executives. He/she must possess business acumen to translate business partner strategies to IT groups as well as possess IT acumen to translate IT strategies to business groups.

As the enterprise architecture team strives to reach the business-alignment goal, other additional benefits accrue: appropriate levels of integration between business applications and data, improved IT delivery, lower IT costs, lower IT complexity, and, perhaps most importantly, lower IT operational risk. That is, IT becomes better, faster, cheaper, which clearly is of significant value to the business.

⁷ <http://baainstitute.com/>

Business Architecture in Action

Google Your Business

Businesses are constantly exploring new strategies to increase efficiency or find new sources of revenues by introducing new products or services or by making acquisitions. The impact of implementing these strategic changes cannot be left to chance. Having access to business process definitions, organizational and other business information and their interrelationships can greatly enhance the chance of success.

In addition to strategic change, business may also need business architecture information for day-to-day activities to streamline operations or identify optimization opportunities, such as in the supply chain.

One of the primary value propositions of a business architecture practice is to facilitate change. Having accurate information at the fingertips of executives, line managers and process owners facilitates change. The nature of information required will vary by the need of the consumer of business architecture information. For example, a CFO might be interested in understanding the costs associated with various business processes. Sales and marketing managers might want to know all about their customers and processes associated with managing customers.

We envision a mechanism by which business stakeholders can quickly search the business architecture repository to come up with answers needed to meet the information needs of business stakeholders. A keyword-based search should yield:

- Artifacts in order of relevance
- Links to related artifacts
- Fact based answers

This search mechanism must apply policies to govern access to sensitive information.