



Carval Swaby YOU
 Strategy, Enterprise
 Architecture, BPM Consultant
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Describing the Business Architecture: Business Capability or Business Process?

Many Enterprise Architecture (EA) practitioners would agree (at a minimum) with the formula: $EA = BA + ITA$ -- where BA = Business Architecture, and ITA = IT Architecture (which encompasses information, application, infrastructure/technology architectures). Basic translation: an enterprise is essentially partitioned into business aspects and information technology aspects [Note: There is a third aspect which I will be covering in a later post].

While much information and tools abound for the ITA segment, not so when it comes to the BA side of the house. Consequently, there are more ITA followers than BA followers -- resulting in the frequently misguided view that EA is primarily about ITA. So what can be done to help boost interest in the BA segment of the EA? Do the current BA approaches need a make-over or sprucing-up to attract more followers? Or, is it because BA describes enterprise aspects at a much higher level of abstraction which most EA practitioners don't find attractive or sufficiently satisfying?

From what I've noticed so far, there are two popular approaches being used in describing an enterprise's BA:

- 1) The Business Capability approach (focusing on the WHAT aspects of the enterprise)
 - 2) The Business Process approach (focusing on the HOW aspects of the enterprise)
- As to which one provides the most value-add to key stakeholders in the enterprise, is anyone's guess. However, what I would venture to say is: the Business Capability approach mainly functions at a higher level of abstraction to that of Business Process approach, plus it just happens to be the level at which key decision-makers are better able to relate, are more comfortable with, and are most interested in.

What's your perspective?

Posted 2 months ago |

Comments (40)



Jeffrey Hardin
 Principal Enterprise Architect
 at T-Mobile
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I support the Business Capability Approach for EA. I usually recommend hand over of the business process level to the solution architects and business analysts. Enterprise decisions rarely need to be that granular.

Posted 2 months ago |



Brenda Michelson
 Technology Advisor to
 Business Enthusiasts,
 Elemental Links
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Both, and more. From the SOA Consortium's EA2010 paper:

"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. 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. "

See: <http://www.soa-consortium.org/EA2010.htm>

Disclosure: I worked with the group and edited the paper.

Posted 2 months ago |



Carval Swaby YOU
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@Brenda:

I agree with many of the points made. Yes, there is tremendous value to be gained by business architecture (BA) practices holistically focusing on more fundamental business aspects. But as you have indirectly alluded, common BA practices now need a shift from their IT realms. This will require a shift in practitioners mind set as well.

For instance, to be holistically business-centric requires a completely different persona, one that's fixated on outcomes. These are the things movers-and-shakers in the C-suite are most focused on -- i.e. the outcomes (good or bad) of WHAT the enterprise does. As to HOW these outcomes get accomplished, this is the responsibility of another set of stakeholders at a lower level (e.g. business process management or BPM).

So practices and principles aside, this is the shift in mind set that might be necessary to elevate BA practices to the desired level.

Posted 2 months ago |



Syed Suhail Ahmad

Senior IT Strategist and Enterprise Architect
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We should limit doing any business process modeling or process analysis in Business Architect (BA) then its not architecture , its solution analysis that we do in the solution architecture. BA focus should be managing portfolio of business capabilities, organization structures, & outcome/business performance models.

Posted 2 months ago |



Kinshuk Adhikary

Experienced software bizapps leader - and a versatilist exceeding Gartner's definition...
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How can an Enterprise Architect describe the HOW and the WHAT scenarios ?

Without being a business practitioner himself or herself ?

Say, can any architect specify and describe the business processes related to customer loyalty programs, without being also an experienced marketing person in that specific customer and product segment ?

I find the idea of technology specialists trying to describe functional areas of the business somewhat absurd. Might as well have the EAs doing an MBA on the side and getting 5-10 years of sales experience before sitting down to do the description. And adding the IMPROVEMENTS to the WHAT and the HOW, because that is the next logical step.

I have been on both sides, so maybe I have a different view of the speed at which things change in the real world. Stick to ITA and do not bend over backwards just because the business guys say "IT is not working for business".

There are different kinds of "feel" required for different functions.

Posted 2 months ago |



Aleks Buterman

Tech-Savvy Business Leader and Technology Investment Management Adviser
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@ Carval -

The answer is both, they are at different levels of granularity. I think you may have seen a primer on our method (training workshop forthcoming, btw), and the basis is aggregating processes and services into capabilities. Without tethering to reality of business processes, a capability model is just shelfware.

@ Brenda -

Amen, and there is a way to get there without boiling the ocean!

@ Kinshuk -

I'm a big proponent of EAs (whether in business domains or technology domains) having an MBA, since the metrics by which their success is measured are mostly about management effectiveness. It's difficult to be effective when you don't speak the language. I'm also a big proponent of rotating solution architects between domains to ensure that they have requisite knowledge to become an EA. That being said, I hesitate to relegate EA to ITA only. I think organizationally, that may not be optimal - it seems the last thing organizations need is to create silos of Architecture.

As far as being a business practitioner... The railroads example is very instructive here. The business practitioners believed they were in the railroad business. In reality, they were in a logistics business. A capability model would have provided that insight - and may have even forestalled the rise of trucking companies that took business away from the railroads. So moral of the story - it's can be difficult for practitioners to have that insight when they are that close to the action.

Regards,

Aleks

Posted 2 months ago |

**Tom Graves**

Principal Enterprise Architect
at Tetradian Consulting
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@Aleks - "I'm also a big proponent of rotating solution architects between domains to ensure that they have requisite knowledge to become an EA."

Amen.

@Aleks - "I hesitate to relegate EA to ITA only. I think organizationally, that may not be optimal - it seems the last thing organizations need is to create silos of Architecture."

And also 'Amen'. :-)

I also very strongly agree with the thrust of your railroads example, though I'm not sure that what's usually described as a 'capability model' would have done all that much better than a process-model in explaining the need to shift from a 'railroads' perspective to a 'logistics' perspective. (We've disagreed slightly on this in the past, I know.)

I would prefer to go at least one or two steps higher, and ask what is the 'vision' that unifies all the players in the entire extended-enterprise - the WHY that comes before either WHAT or HOW. (The Business Motivation Model is useful for some of this, though again typically stops at the organisation boundary rather than modelling the broader enterprise - as is actually essential for decision-support by for business strategy.)

Process-modelling comes quite a long way down the stack: in Zachman terms, not until level-3, whereas capability (at least in Aleks' version, which I describe as 'mission') starts at level-2 or even level-1. To me a process is a path of interactions with services, and each service in turn a specific combination of function (HOW) and capability (somewhat different or lower-level than Aleks' 'capability', in effect a reworked version of Zachman's WHO) that calls on WHAT at WHERE in response to WHEN and, ultimately, WHY.

So the prioritisation I use for business-architecture modelling is:

1. Enterprise vision and values (i.e. permanent 'guiding star' for all players in the enterprise)
2. Role that organisation chooses within that overall vision
3. Current strategic 'vision' for organisation
4. Current/future set of 'missions' (Aleks' high-level 'capabilities')
5. Current/future set of (high-level) services within each of those missions
6. Current/future sets of functions, capabilities, assets etc that underpin those services.

Somewhere within 6, or even 5 in some information-centric organisations, we would start to consider IT - but note that it really does come into the picture a long way down in the list of priorities. Even in an information-centric organisation, placing IT as the centre of the enterprise-architecture is tantamount to architectural suicide - not recommended!

As a business/enterprise architect, I would expect to use all of the above in decision-support for business-strategies drawing from that organisational 'vision'.

Posted 2 months ago |

**Brian Hopkins**

Director - Enterprise
Architecture Center of
Excellence
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A key challenge to EBA (Enterprise Business Architecture) is introducing architecture methodology to the business; the idea of 'performing a systematic analysis of the business to determine the appropriate business capabilities required to achieve a desire future state' sounds like IT mumbo jumbo to many business executives. This undermines the potential value of BA to organizations -> they view IT as a "delivered what we order" shop and not as strategic partners.

In order to do BA successfully and therefore increase the credibility of the discipline of BA, you have to know the business AND think like a systems architect. It just so happens that most people with the predisposition and experience to be good systems architects gravitated to ITA space and therefore are not solid business people.

I've often thought this would be an interesting field of study to do one's dissertation in.

Nice chain...cheers.

Posted 2 months ago |

As it often seems in this type of discussion (and, of course, I have a vested interest), it comes down to the definitions . . . do we define a 'capability' as an end result or an activity? do we define a 'process' as an activity that is required to conduct business or as something done by some person, team, or system, as the organization is currently configured? (i.e., implemented)

Dan Bartoes

Data Architect at CIGNA
Healthcare
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In either case, I think it comes down to being able to identify the inherent structure of a business (enterprise) that is needed to participate/compete in the business for which it was intended -- granted, sometimes identifying the best 'business for which it was intended' can be challenging (e.g., the railroads example).

It also seems as though we have trouble learning from the past . . . Zachman, Spewak, and others defined a Business (or Information) Strategy Planning set of techniques and deliverables that addressed all aspects of the core of a business: Vision, Mission, Goals, Organization Roles & Responsibilities, Drivers, etc. and some techniques for pulling them together into a meaningful Business Model, including Blueprint type deliverables.

Call them functions, processes, or activities -- there are core things to be done, as well as core data, required to conduct any business. Identifying them before (or at least independent of) any specific implementation of those activities and data, is key to creating and understanding a Business Architecture.

Organizational Structure and Roles and Responsibilities should follow identification of the activities and data foundation, rather than drive it . . . So call it Capability or Process, if we focus on the core of the business, rather than turf and politics and automation, I think that makes for a solid Business Architecture . . . with IT several layers of concern down in the structure of the enterprise . . .

Posted 2 months ago |

**Kinshuk Adhikary**

Experienced software bizapps leader - and a versatilist exceeding Gartner's definition...
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@Railroad example

It is true that practitioners cannot see beyond a point. But it is also true that practitioners avoid many wrong turns, bloated expectations, and unrealism.

Re-engineering is a matter of "perspective". Perspective is a matter of height and time, seeing many things together.

Could truckers + railroads have been defined as a "logistics" business in 1940's ? What the "then" reality ? Was it, that the extensive laying of roadways after the depression hit '30s, and the stranglehold that the then railroad guys had on the political landscape - that led to the rise of the truckers ? Just another way that business processes and markets have of exceeding pre-conceived formulas.

Business is fluid and fast and there are so many dimensions to the perspective - how many will an EA tackle ? There is operations, there is finance, there is credit and risk, there is supply-chain, there is learning and skill-growth...and so on. And of course, the market and competition and political issues.

Better stick to a single or max. 2-3 perspectives, not too many. There is more value to everyone concerned this way.

Posted 2 months ago |

**Leonard Greski**

Director, eCommerce
Customer & Partner Solutions
at W.W. Grainger, Inc.
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@Dan

Given the variety of uses for the term business capability in the marketplace, it is difficult to use. I've defined it as a unique combination of people, processes, and physical assets that generates value. As such, a capability is more abstract than a process, and it also accounts for elements beyond business processes that are required to generate value. I've written a couple of articles on modeling business capabilities, which are accessible on the Architecture & Governance Magazine website (registration required) at: <http://bit.ly/mhJA8> and <http://bit.ly/8wtDpQ> .

Regarding your comments about the processes driving the organization, I see this as a level of abstraction issue. If the operating model of a business is its most abstract version of the organization model, then it is arguable which comes first: the operating model or the processes. An organization can make decisions about how its subunits are composed (geographic business units, organization around product lines, brands, etc.) before deciding which business capabilities are to be present in each business unit.

On the other hand, a rational case can be made to develop the business capabilities first, then develop the operating model.

I agree with your comment on our difficulty learning from the past. It is unfortunate that once an approach is no longer considered new and exciting, we seem to discard it. I continue to find new ways to apply techniques developed by John Rockart at MIT in the late 1970s, some of which were incorporated into the Information Engineering deliverables you referenced in your post.

regards,

Len

Posted 2 months ago |



Carval Swaby YOU
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@Kinshuk

The crux here is really about breath and importance, rather than just depth. Try as we may, it is almost impossible for any single EA practitioner to have deep or even shallow expertise in all the domains of the enterprise. The trick is to be able to identify those "architectural significant" domains or domain segments and deciding on how deep to venture.

In EA, it so happens that the business domain is THE CENTRAL domain that all other domains revolve around -- besides, without it there can be no enterprise. It is therefore befitting of all EA practitioners to have some knowledge -- not necessarily a depth of knowledge -- about key aspects of the business. Afterall, EA is about the architecture of the enterprise, not just parts of it.

So the question re Business Capability versus Business Process is really about degree -- or depth, if you wish -- on how best to describe the business architecture segment of the enterprise.

@Leonard

You wrote... "On the other hand, a rational case can be made to develop the business capabilities first, then develop the operating model."

I tend to favor this approach. Reason: A business typically starts off with 1) a VISION of what it intent on becoming, 2) a MISSION as to why it want to exists, and 3) a possible set of CORE VALUES it plans to live by while existing.

Having define these core tenets, it seems logical to then move on to crafting the strategies and desired capabilities needed to fulfil the vision and mission. The operating model, IMHO, comes afterward as mechanisms and protocols are put in place to realize the strategies and deliver on the intended capabilities.

Posted 2 months ago |



Nick Malik
Enterprise Architect at
Microsoft Corporation and
Owner, Malik Information
Services
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Some excellent discussion on this thread!

Just want to add one bit:

@Carval

You mention that operating model would come after the capability analysis. We have to be clear what we mean by the term "operating model" here.

A couple of years ago, Ross and Weill from MIT put out a book called "Enterprise Architecture as Strategy" that uses the term "operating model" to refer to an enterprise-wide approach to the structuring of standardized business processes and shared information.

If you mean to use the term "operating model" in the same context as Ross and Weill, then I would add some nuance to your statement that the capabilities are crafted first and then the operating model is determined.

In other words, yes and no.

The operating model is a set of choices that act as a form of operational strategy: "reduce redundancy in one place, increase flexibility in another, according to model Z." It is no more or less important than describing the vision for the company. It is the vision for the structure of the company.

Given that basis, I would suggest the following steps, in this order:

a) Develop Business Model -- who your customers are, what differentiating value can you offer them, how will they get that value, and how will you deliver it. Start-ups put this info into their business plan, but established businesses need to re-examine their business model(s) on a regular basis to keep pace with changes in the cooperative, competitive and regulatory environments in which they operate. At a high level, you will sketch in the capabilities that the business needs to exhibit in order to operate in that environment.

b) Determine the vision and values that you wish to use to guide you in operating in that particular business model (or models). These statements are critical to understanding the policies, culture, approach, offerings, pricing structure, partner environment, etc, that your company will go after. But they do not make money. They constrain behavior.

c) Determine the operating model (or update the existing operating model) to

reflect the realities of business. The operating model sets a high level vision for how the business will work with its own operating units, and how its customers and partners will perceive it.

d) Go back to the capabilities described in step (a) and expand on them. Evaluate the maturity of each of the capabilities in the organization and look for opportunities where the business needs a capability to meet its business model (now or in the future) but that capability is weak. This is where you craft the detailed strategies within the business to organize effort and drive behavior as needed to improve the capability.

e) Suggest the "programs" that group together specific changes into groups that make sense due to interdependencies within the capabilities themselves (people, process, information, systems in common). Work with the business to determine which of the programs to pursue and when. Create a roadmap that helps communicate when and how those changes will occur.

So the answer of "which comes first, the operating model or the capability model" is a fairly nuanced answer.

Posted 2 months ago |



Carval Swaby YOU
Strategy, Enterprise
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@Nick:
Just got a chance to respond.

Clarification and Explanation: My use of the term "Operating Model" is not in the limited context of Ross and Weill's book -- which btw I've also read a few years ago. It actually goes a bit farther and is more broader in scope. And btw, thanks for the procedural outline you have provided... I would probably shift a few of the steps around, but that's another discussion.

Now, my implied intent was to indicate that the suite of procedural decisions and/or mechanisms (e.g. procedures, logistics, business protocols, internal/external collaborations, etc.) that outline HOW the organization will/should operate, possibly should come after the high- or meta-level capabilities are defined.

For example, a fundamental capability (aka goal outcome) for most for-profit businesses is to "generate profit". This is probably the most significant WHAT that underpins the business mission and ensures its continued existence. What follows from here on, IMHO, are frameworks of HOWs (i.e. operating models involving people, processes, technologies, organization, management, partners, etc.) which detailed the way(s) the enterprise will/should operate to "generate profit".

I suppose this may constitute a shift in the way traditional business management approaches have been defining proper and effective execution of business models. It's like Pega System's BPM software suite, for example. Pega takes a rules-based approach (the HOW) to BPM solution implementation (the WHAT). The approach is a bit different from those of other BPM software vendors. Notwithstanding the pros and cons or other contributory factors, the software appears to be a profitable success for Pega so far.

Posted 1 month ago |



Casimir Artmann
Enterprise architect at Acando
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Make it simple and start with a why from a business perspective and for whom. Hopefully the business is for the customer and offering something the customer wants. I normally start an EA project by asking who is the customer and what services & products are the business offering to their customers.

Look at <http://www.slideshare.net/marknadsstod/energy-data-management-overview-1-0> for a business oriented enterprise architecture in less than twelve slides. The presentation is further broken down into three different areas; reason for change, changes to business and changes to IT. These detailed presentations will be published during next month.

Posted 1 month ago |



Graham Berrisford
Enterprise/Solution
Architecture Consultancy and
Training
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The distinctions between business capability, business function, business process, organisation unit etc are clearly made in the BCS/ISEB reference model for Enterprise and Solution Architecture (in text) and on my web site (more graphically). See "Functionality" under "Architecture Concepts" in the "Library" at <http://avancier.co.uk> .

The Library also contains a paper summarising a past discussion thread on business capability.

Posted 1 month ago |

**Nick Malik**

Enterprise Architect at Microsoft Corporation and Owner, Malik Information Services

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Hello Carval,

Thank you for your detailed reply. We have a simple terminology problem. Once resolved, it appears that we agree.

Step 1: know what it is you want to achieve.
 Step 2: figure out the high level elements needed to achieve it
 Step 3: figure out the details needed to make those high level elements work

You are calling the output of Step 2 the "Operating Model".
 I am calling the output of Step 2 the "Business Model" and I'm using the term "Operating Model" to refer to the output of Step 3.

hence the confusion.

I have documented a metamodel for that "step 2" space that you and I appear to share a passion for. Please feel free to review the following article in the Architecture Journal, April 2009:
<http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/architecture/aa699429.aspx>

Or visit my site:
www.motivationmodel.com

--- Nick

Posted 1 month ago |

**Graham Berrisford**

Enterprise/Solution Architecture Consultancy and Training

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Hi Nick

In my view, meta models of this kind will not become more than academic exercises in our life times - and perhaps never. They are overengineered for practical use today.

Look at the top left hand corner of "100 terms" at <http://avancier.co.uk> for a looser graphic of the same business motivation territory.

Look at "Granularity" in the same place for a mapping to the OMG's Business Motivation Model.

Look at "Architecture meta models" in the same place for several simple EA meta models which are already too complex for most people to maintain.

In practice, most enterprises cannot even define a balanced score card (a plain hierarchy of objectives) and get it to work properly.

There are many competing meta models.
 People need substantial training to learn and retain the distinction between the concepts in a meta model much simpler than yours.
 Most of the entities in these meta models are in practice defined by different people at different, incompatible, levels of granularity.
 Managers declare the top-level drivers, motivations etc - but lose interest or change them a few weeks later.
 Maintenance of the repository implied by such a meta model requires much larger resources than people imagine.
 Etc.

Posted 1 month ago |

Deepak Vij

Experienced & Result Oriented Technology Visionary & Evangelist

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In order to formulate EA and Business/IT alignment initiatives for the customers I have helped on a consulting basis, the following is a simplistic commonsensical EA methodology which I subscribe to. Essentially, it boils down to end-to-end cycle of Why -> What -> How. It all starts with "Value Levers" from shareholder's perspective (Why a change or transformation is needed). "Value Levers" determine what the corresponding "Operating Levers" are (What to transform and how to measure it - business processes and corresponding KPIs/Metrics). "Operating Levers", in turn, determine the "Transformation Initiative" & "Enabling Technology" (How to affect the transformation). The following example explains the end-to-end cycle.

Why

Typically shareholder's value levers could be "Gross Cash Flow" -> "NOPLAT = Net Operating Profit Less Adjusted Taxes" + "Depreciation & Amortization" + "Other earnings".

"NOPLAT", in turn, consists of "Operating Earnings" + "Taxes on Operating Earnings" etc.

"Operating Earnings", in turn, consists of "Revenue", "COGS", etc. etc. These value levers again can be further broken down to "Increase Revenue",

"Decrease COGS" etc. etc.

Now let us assume that we focus on the "Increase Revenue" value lever from shareholder's perspective.

What

Depending on the value lever, next step is identifying the operation levers (What). In the case of "Increase Revenue" value lever, operating levers could be "Increase Cross/Up Sell", "Streamline billing and Revenue Recognition" etc. etc.

"Increase Cross/Up Sell", in turn, determines what process areas are impacted ("Managing Install Base", "Call Center" etc. etc.). Affected Process areas define the corresponding KPIs/Metrics. As part of the overall business architecture, end-to-end Process value chain is defined.

How

Now let us assume that we focus on the "Managing Install Base" process area, as mentioned before. This particular process area could result into enabling technologies such as "Customer MDM", "Product MDM", Operational BI etc. At this stage, "Application Architecture", Information Architecture" & "Technology Architecture" information is defined for the whole enterprise.

The strategy consulting assignments I have been engaged in, this seems to work – Business & CIO groups are presented with relevant EA viewpoints at every stage. I hope this makes sense.

Deepak

Posted 1 month ago |



Graham Berrisford

Enterprise/Solution
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Deepak

It makes sense as set of interleaved goal/process/component cascades.

Not convinced by the Why, What, How labels attached to that.

See "Granularity" in "Architecture Concepts" in the Library at <http://avancier.co.uk> for discussion of how meaningless the What/How distinction is.

Posted 1 month ago |

Deepak Vij

Experienced & Result Oriented
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Let me try to explain it differently. Why/What/How is not all that important. What is important is that "Value Drivers" are determined in response to the business goals/objectives. Once determined, the next question is what needs to be transformed for the identified "Value Drivers". This, in essence, is expressed in terms of "Operating Levers" such as company business processes, KPIs/Metrics etc. And the final piece of the puzzle is the mapping of these "Operating Levers" to the "Enabling Technology" set, which are essentially IT assets.

It is quite commonsensical, after all what companies do in their IT organizations should be pretty straight forward not a rocket science. Net-net is that, as part of the business/IT alignment, architecture and design process should be directly mapped to the original business form:

- 1) Business Processes achieve business goals
- 2) Events trigger business processes
- 3) Business rules regulate business processes
- 4) Actors (System & Human) perform business processes
- 5) Business processes, in turn, operate on key business entities such as Customer, Product, Order etc. etc.

With the advent of architectures such as Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), the programming model is 1-1 mapped to actual business form not just a bunch of random programming code for tactically delivering some functionality in an adhoc manner.

My two cents...

Deepak

Posted 1 month ago |



Deepak

With the advent of SOA.?

Graham Berrisford

Enterprise/Solution
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With the advent of SSADM in 1981, people were taught to build their systems around a 3 layer software architecture, in which the middle layer featured modules (logical update processes) that modelled the business events in business processes.

The granularity of a service in SOA is a great deal less clear cut!

Posted 1 month ago |

Deepak Vij

Experienced & Result Oriented
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Yes, granularity of service is very important. That is why "Service Identification" phase is the most experience phase more that "Service Definition & Modeling", "Service Design", "Service Realization" etc. How to layer services depending on their granularity is the key goal of SOA. It all starts with "Business Architecture", "Process-to-Application". Anyway, have a good weekend, whatever is left of it.

Deepak

Posted 1 month ago |

Deepak Vij

Experienced & Result Oriented
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What I meant was that Service Identification is the most important phase not the most experience phase as I wrote earlier by mistake.

Deepak

Posted 1 month ago |

**Tom Graves**

Principal Enterprise Architect
at Tetradian Consulting
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Deepak - Good summary, though as we get closer to the real world we also need to add Location (Where):

6) Business processes take place at business locations (physical, virtual and/or human)

And, as you imply in your 1), there's another whole layer that precedes all of this, of which the outcome is 'Business goal' - see the slidedeck 'Vision, role, mission, goal', <http://www.slideshare.net/tetradian/vision-role-mission-goal-a-framework-for-business-motivation>

Posted 1 month ago |

**Khaled Hnidk**

Chief Solutions Architect at
GCSSD
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My take on this really depends on context:

- If this was the first iteration of EA practice within an organization(that does not currently practice EA), the BA focus should be on "WHAT" along with defining the value chain.
- Subsequent iteration may focus on How as in business processes.

This all relate to how to how you segment your scope, vertical per department, business unit etc.. or Horizontal per each value chain available within the organization.

Even with ITA, the focus shifts per iteration sometimes from solution constructions to optimizing ITSM activities.

I guess there is no absoluton for this.

Kal

Posted 1 month ago |

**Graham Berrisford**

Enterprise/Solution
Architecture Consultancy and
Training
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It is remarkably easy to write a new "EA" method. Management consultants do it all the time. Let me invent a new one by way of example.

1. Establish Context, Business Drivers, quantifiable Business Goals.
2. Define Principles, Standards, Regulations and other Constraints.
3. Outline a Vision and Business Case and obtain Authority to Proceed.
4. Design the changes to Baseline Processes, Functions (aka Capabilities) Organisations, Locations, Data, Applications and Technologies that will best meet the requirements and constraints from steps 1, 2 and 3.
5. Pan the Migration to the new Target State.
6. Govern the Migration.
7. Run a Change Management process throughout the above.

But I am not looking for you to comment on this! I have seen scores of methods like this. There are probably hundreds. The big IT service providers elaborate their method with hundreds of pages of advice (thousands in the case of Catalyst from CSC, which has grown over 20 years and more).

And I have two reservations about methods published by management consultants and individuals in this discussion group (including me.)

A. If we are to progress as a profession, we surely should be looking to consolidate discussion around the methods and standards published by professional bodies rather than management consultants?

Here for example, we could read and comment on the BCS/ISEB definition of "Business Capability" and related terms.

B. For me, the above is not an EA method! It is a generic Solution Architecture method for Enterprise Transformation of any kind and at any level.

Surely true EA is about defining the Architecture of the Enterprise in a way that is independent of any specific endeavour and will support impact analysis and management decision making?

And for a true EA method, we could better discuss Art Caston's Proact method and reference models, rather than the generic change management process outlined above?

Posted 1 month ago |



Brian Hopkins

Director - Enterprise Architecture Center of Excellence
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@Graham - agree, there are lots of EA methods. Most have the items you mention. I've been toying around with the idea of starting a working group to develop an EA BOK. Figure we have enough knowledgeable people on this network if we can find enough people who agree on what EA is... :-)

Posted 1 month ago |



Peji Kocabi

SharePoint Consultant
 MBA, PMP, MCTS
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[Follow Peji](#)

Good formula Carval, I like it

Posted 1 month ago |



Graham Berrisford

Enterprise/Solution Architecture Consultancy and Training
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@ Brian

Since the divergence of opinion is growing rather than shrinking (at least among those who turn up for EA training), it is hard to envisage our industry agreeing what EA is in the near future.

However, the reference model for Enterprise and Solution Architecture published by the British Computer Society was the product of a working party along the lines you propose.

Taking that as a core starting point - I have published a kind of EA BOK at <http://avancier.co.uk> . The "Library" there contains about 70 papers and presentations.

Graham

Posted 1 month ago |



Brian Hopkins

Director - Enterprise Architecture Center of Excellence
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@Graham - thanks, I'll take a look. Since, as you point out, the divergence of opinion is growing, do you think we risk dilution of the term if we cannot collectively agree to what EA is? While I don't think we will ever get unanimous opinion, if enough knowledgeable EAs with the right credentials came together and established a BOK, it might catch on and further our profession.

IOW - if we don't stop arguing and start agreeing on what EA is and what the best practices are, then we risk that it will mean nothing and therefore not be relevant.

This is what I had hoped the Center for Advancement of the EA Profession was going to do, but they seem to focused on EA Certification w/o any real standard about what EA is or how to do it. (Sorry CEAP readers, I really do support your work, but ...)

Posted 1 month ago |



Nick Malik

Enterprise Architect at Microsoft Corporation and

Hi Brian,

Please do not add to the confusion by starting another EA BOK effort. Please help to consolidate the information that is already published. If CEAP is not doing

Owner, Malik Information Services
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the work that you feel they should be doing, then go ahead and do that work, but please do it within the boundaries of one of the established bodies. Last thing we need is another political fight.

If you don't like CEAP, there's IASA. I'm sure there are others as well.

I like the idea of a good EA BOK, but consensus will be difficult.
 --- Nick

Posted 1 month ago |



Brian Hopkins
 Director - Enterprise Architecture Center of Excellence
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No worries about starting "another thing", it's better if done w/in scope of existing effort. Maybe CEAP is the place. More interested in comments on the need. Does anybody else see the dilution risk to which I refer?

My blog post, Evolution Was Bad for Neanderthals was along this line - <http://practicingea.blogspot.com/2009/11/evolution-was-bad-for-neanderthals.html>

Posted 1 month ago |



Khaled Hnidk
 Chief Solutions Architect at GCSSD
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Spot on, Nick

Kal

Posted 1 month ago |



Graham Berrisford
 Enterprise/Solution Architecture Consultancy and Training
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@Brian

Sad but true. "Working groups" without cross-industry body backing rarely make any impact.

"How to" architecture processes are easy to write. That's why there are scores of them. Many are not every specific about what things mean. Sometimes the authors don't realise how parochial their view is. Sometimes the authors don't want to narrow the range of potential process users. Always - the authors fail to get grips with different kinds and levels of abstraction,

"What is" definitions of architecture concepts are hard to write. The BCS reference model for Enterprise and Solution Architecture is the best I know of. It exposes multiple terminology meanings; it says what things are without telling you how to do them.

Bodies of knowledge related to EA have proliferated. TOGAF has a lot to offer. Mine is very different. I've been developing my web site "Library" with the help of various "architects" for 15 years now. It is in places politically incorrect - it tells you some things that adherents of CEAP, IASA, TOGAF etc. would be reluctant to say.

My view of what EA should mean is close to the view of Art Caston, expressed in his white paper on Proact, on his web site.

I meet many systems analysts, software architects and infrastructure architects with very different expectations about what EA means. Perhaps the biggest threat to my own meaning of EA is large number who think EA means Enterprise Technology Architecture. They have little interest in the business data beyond ensuring back up and recovery, little interest in security beyond the firewall and certificate storage, etc.

Another force shaping views of EA round here is TOGAF9, which turns out in practice to be a change management framework that promotes the role of architects of every kind, over any scope, and at any level above software architecture.

Posted 1 month ago |



Himanshu Shekhar
 Head Technology Architecture at Dubai Customs, EA & IT Strategy and Planning
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There were 2 moot points raised in the original thread.

1) Why Business Architecture is not so popular and what should be done in this regard?

I think there are 2 fundamental challenges related to that:

a) Challenges related to Discipline or practice itself

What I have observed is there is quite an overlap between this practice and some other practices like Enterprise Planning, Strategic Business Planning, BPR

etc. I am not going to debate which one is better as for me in the end organization stand to benefit from them all in one way or another though following a different path or method. Of course, ardent practitioners of BA might educate me on the nuances and how it is better than the others and believe me I would love and appreciate nothing less. So until this confusion is clearly dealt with and there is clear delineation of its role and benefits vis-a-vis other practices are established it will continue to dampen any efforts towards having a successful institutionalization of this discipline.

Some say "BA is too disciplined, too engineering like and too technical" which sounds real to me so that makes it less popular with Business.

b) Challenges related to its disciplines and their applications of BA method/practices.

Most of BA practitioner, don't want to debate the numbers, are from the technology or IT domain, like System Analyst graduating to become BA or a Technical Architect changing into BAs, given that this practice is considered to be a pre-condition for Data, Application and Technology Architecture practice (according to TOGAF) and stand to benefit most from it. Given there is no love lost between Business and IT team and existence of other overlapping practices, which are mostly run by SMEs, Business and management gurus, so it is bound to face resistance and political challenges. That makes this practice even less popular or appealing as compared to its IT cousin.

2) Which approach of Business Architecture is better?

Business Process or Capability based? Well both have their merits and demerits, call it strength and weakness. I suggest before we attempt to analyze this we should try to understand the organization, stakeholders and culture first. We need to understand what is it that we want to achieve or the expected outcomes, short-term or long-term, from this practice or who are we there to serve or whose life will be impacted by these outcomes. I have never been in a situation where we have been given complete latitude or blank cheque to implement a discipline in the manner prescribed by these approaches. To make stakeholders adapt to a different style or approach it is imperative that we maintain a layer of abstraction between Internal Model (BA Model) and Organization Models (Stakeholder Model). We should be flexible enough to adopt and adapt according to the organization maturity and never try to push or impose either extreme.

Posted 1 month ago |



Graham Berrisford

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2) Which approach of Business Architecture is better? Business Process or Capability based?

That's just a daft question. Business Architecture requires both.

Posted 1 month ago |



James Dowling

VP Southeast Region at
Accelare, Inc.

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Capability is the most useful perspective! "What capabilities does my organization need to fulfill its purpose, realize its vision, accomplish its mission, and attain its goals" comes before "how will I source, manage, and realize those capabilities" and before "what information do I need and how will I organize, inform, motivate, and measure my organization" and before "what leadership, culture, talent, facilities, information technology... do I need to pull this off now and in the long run."

It takes little to introduce anyone to Enterprise Architecture when you never use the word. Everyone seems to embrace capabilities. At first capability is confused with "knowledge, skill, and experience" or an individual's competence but once past that, the conversation general flows. Capabilities are self describing almost in title alone and are readily discoverable. If you are unfamiliar with this, visit the Marriott website and look up any property. Try to describe the process model, organization structure, or IT architecture for the hotel. Can't do it! Now list the capabilities that must be present and which ones need to be performed at world class levels. Not so hard.

This illustrated Rick's point about the Operating Model being a good representation of an organization. Jeannie and Peter examine the Business Model, also referred to as Corporate Strategy, Corporate Archetype, and Corporate Structure because it is revealing of supporting IT Architecture choices. Two organizations with nearly identical Capability Models may demand different IT Architectures depending on Value Proposition, Target Customer, and Growth Strategy. However, the process set and models will be nearly identical as well. I think this is the point that Deepak provides. Interestingly enough, a Service Model and a Capability model overlap 100% and use pretty much the same syntax and attribute set if fully developed.

To Kalhed's point, I suggest that informed choices are always better even if the "right" choice is passed over. Knowing that a network is being designed, a system is being configured, or a vendor is being chosen to fit the "wrong" operating model for expediency is better than not understanding the fit. IT takes 90 days or less to create a useful Capability-based Operating Model but years to dig out of an ERP implementation or outsourcing contract that fails to enable the operating model and it is often the ERP configuration or outsourcing arrangement that reveals the misalignment in the operating model.

My thanks to all contributors as well.

Posted 1 month ago |

**Wolf Rivkin**

Senior Director of Enterprise Architectural Transformation at HCL Technologies
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Why 'OR'? Business Capability is the capability of an Enterprise to execute its Business Model (EBM), i.e to run its Business Processes (BP). So, Enterprise Business Architecture must both logically describe and formalize EBM via BP (Flows) 'AND' identify physical structure that support its execution.

Voila! KISS!

Posted 1 month ago |

**Norman Caryl**

President, Caryl International
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I'm intrigued to learn how my colleagues are struggling to conceptually integrate the various elements of organizational structure...

I welcome you to visit our Web site for a clear, terse, and cogent overview of the components in action...

Norm Caryl

<http://www.caryl-international.com>

Posted 1 month ago |

For the latest update, go to... <http://www.linkedin.com/groupAnswers?viewQuestionAndAnswers=&gid=36781&discussionID=14455155>