

## What Is Business Architecture? Business Architecture Simplified and Differentiated

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## Audience

This Cutter Consortium white paper is primarily designed for business architecture practice leaders and business architecture practitioners. It is also helpful for executives (or any other business or IT roles) who would like to gain a more in-depth understanding of what business architecture is and is not.

## At a Glance

- **The scope of business architecture is defined by an industry standard set of core and extended domains.** If a concept is not represented by one of the domains in the ecosystem from the *BIZBOK® Guide* (shown in Figure 1 of this white paper), it is outside the scope of business architecture.
- **Business architecture is captured in a reusable knowledgebase. Blueprints are generated from it to support various business scenarios and decision making.** While a minimum baseline of business architecture is necessary to effectively apply it in practice, a knowledgebase can be built and refined over time. In the end, the emphasis should always be on applying business architecture versus building it.
- **Business architecture has some unique characteristics that distinguish it from other disciplines.** Business architecture has an enterprise scope, is created at a high level of detail, and is a reusable asset.
- **Business architecture (as a part of enterprise architecture) is the bridge between strategy and execution.** Architecture is not yet formalized as part of strategy execution in many organizations. However, when in place, it enables a truly business-focused, top-down, and cross-business unit approach to designing, planning, and executing change initiatives. To fully leverage its value, architecture should be positioned appropriately within an organization's strategy execution lifecycle.
- **When scoped and positioned correctly, business architecture does not overlap with any other teams — in fact, it helps them operate more effectively.** There is always mutual benefit when teams work together. When clear boundaries are drawn, business architecture is much more likely to be adopted, valued, and sustained.

# Introduction

Many great minds, organizations, and professional associations have worked to establish the concept of business architecture. While business architecture owes its roots to many different people and techniques over the years, it started to formalize as a discipline around 2010, driven by the Business Architecture Guild®. There is now an established body of knowledge, certification, and an accredited training program, as well as events and communities all over the world, supported by a growing market of professional associations, research analysts, and organizations that offer related services and tools. It's catching on faster and wider than ever as new organizations, industries, and countries engage.

Even though a fair amount of formalization has taken place, confusion still exists about what business architecture is and is not. Sorting through the myriad content available on the topic requires precious time and effort to piece it all together — time that could be spent practicing business architecture and advancing the discipline.

One of the first and pivotal activities that occurred with formalization was to define business architecture and its scope. This harmonized the existing perspectives and drew clear boundaries delineating what business architecture was and was not. It is important to note that the resulting definitions were not one person's or one organization's theory of what business architecture is, but rather a reflection of what the global community of business architecture practitioners believes.<sup>1</sup> While some debate and differing opinions currently exist related to what is right and wrong, there is *what works* — and the definitions have stood the test of time in practice.

As a result, this Cutter Consortium white paper aims to distill what business architecture is, piece by piece, using the established business architecture body of knowledge, the *BIZBOK® Guide*, as its basis. It is grounded in business-focused perspective and experience and addresses many of the typical questions and misconceptions that exist around business architecture.

This white paper is sharply focused on providing clarity for the business architecture concept and its scope because this is foundational for more advanced dialogue and usage. Its ultimate goal is to provide another perspective that can shed additional insights on what business architecture is and is not, allowing business architecture leaders, practitioners, and consumers to spend their precious time applying the practice versus rediscovering it. This clarity can help new business architects get up to speed more quickly, help colleagues working in related functions and disciplines to see how business architecture strengthens — not competes with — what they do, and allow the

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<sup>1</sup> This is reflective of the member-driven, collaborative team structure used by the Business Architecture Guild to develop and refine the body of knowledge, which is called *A Guide to the Business Architecture Body of Knowledge®* (*BIZBOK® Guide*).

global community of architecture practitioners to accelerate progress and advance the discipline together.

## What Business Architecture Is

**A clear, industry-wide definition of business architecture must serve as the starting point for understanding and evolving business architecture. While there have been a variety of definitions suggested over the years, collaborative efforts across architecture disciplines have resulted in a solid definition that can be adopted.**

## How Is Business Architecture Defined?

According to the Federation of Enterprise Architecture Professional Organizations (FEAPO), business architecture is defined as follows:

*Business architecture represents holistic, multidimensional business views of: capabilities, end-to-end value delivery, information, and organizational structure; and the relationships among these business views and strategies, products, policies, initiatives, and stakeholders.<sup>2</sup>*

This definition represents agreement among all architecture disciplines and clearly defines exactly what business architecture is. Many previous definitions of business architecture, including the one used by the Business Architecture Guild, contained common ideas such as referring to business architecture as a blueprint (to be discussed later in this paper), as a way to facilitate common understanding, and with the purpose of bridging strategy and execution. The value of business architecture has been a source of much discussion and some definitions of business architecture became obscured as a result. However, as the FEAPO definition clearly communicates, business architecture is indeed a specific collection of information — a “thing” — though the real potential is in how it can be leveraged in business decision making and a variety of scenarios.

The value of business architecture is a broader topic covered in other papers<sup>3</sup> and case studies; however, it is generally recognized that the heart of the value proposition is in the ability to translate business strategy into plans and business and IT execution, in a

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<sup>2</sup> Prior to the existence of this definition (adopted on 14 January 2017), the Business Architecture Guild used the following: “Business architecture is a blueprint of the enterprise that provides a common understanding of the organization and is used to align strategic objectives and tactical demands.”

<sup>3</sup> For example, see: Kuehn, Whynde. “The Value of Business Architecture.” White paper, S2E Consulting Inc., March 2017.

coordinated way across business units. The Business Architecture Guild defines the value of business architecture as follows:

*The value of business architecture is to provide an abstract representation of an enterprise and the business ecosystem in which it operates. By doing so, business architecture delivers value as an effective communication and analytical framework for translating strategy into actionable initiatives. The framework also enhances the enterprise's capacity to enact transformational change, navigate complexity, reduce risk, make more informed decisions, align diverse stakeholders to a shared vision of the future, and leverage technology more effectively.<sup>4</sup>*

## What Is the Scope of Business Architecture?

The scope of what business architecture represents is shown in Figure 1.<sup>5</sup> Each box represents a different business domain. The four core domains are shown in the center, and include capabilities, value streams, organization, and information. In particular, capabilities and value streams form the foundation of an organization's business architecture, providing the key lens and connection point into the rest of the business architecture domains as well as other related domains (e.g., system applications). Capabilities show a "business at rest," while value streams show a "business in motion." Value streams provide the context for capabilities, showing where they are used to provide business value.

The extended domains are shown in the outer circle. The extended domains capture additional perspectives, such as an organization's products and stakeholders. They also capture the information necessary to trace strategies through to the initiatives that implement them, connecting through the core business architecture domains in between. The business architecture domains, and the relationships made between them, provide a tremendous range of options for analyzing an organization in support of various business questions and scenarios.

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<sup>4</sup> From *BIZBOK Guide*, Part 1.

<sup>5</sup> This figure has been visually redesigned, but the content is from Figure 1.1 of the *BIZBOK Guide*.

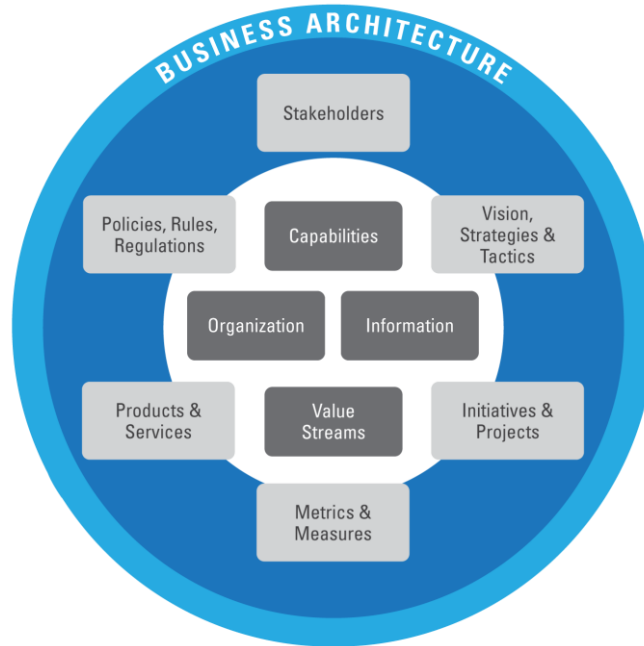


Figure 1: Business Architecture’s Representation of the Business Ecosystem.

A description for each business architecture domain is below. Definitions sourced from the *BIZBOK Guide* are indicated.

Domain	Description
<b>Capability</b>	<p>A particular ability or capacity that a business may possess or exchange to achieve a specific purpose or outcome. (<i>BIZBOK Guide</i>)</p> <p>Capabilities define “what” an organization does at progressively lower levels of detail, usually not to exceed more than six levels. An organization typically has one enterprise capability map that encompasses the entire scope of its ecosystem, except in special cases such as for a conglomerate.</p>
<b>Value Stream</b>	<p>An end-to-end collection of activities that create a result for a customer, who may be the ultimate customer or an internal end user of the value stream. (<i>BIZBOK Guide</i>)</p> <p>Value streams are product- and business unit–agnostic, and their scope usually crosses more than one business unit. Organizations typically have one to two dozen value streams, though there may be more for those with complex business models.</p>
<b>Organization</b>	<p>The key component that is mapped and related to other domains (e.g., capabilities, policies) is the business unit.</p> <p>Organization: A social unit of people, systematically structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals on a continuing basis. (<i>BIZBOK Guide</i>)</p> <p>Business Unit: A logical element or segment of a company (such as accounting, production, marketing) representing a specific business function, and a definite place on the organizational chart, under the domain of a manager. Also called department, division, or functional area. (<i>BIZBOK Guide</i>)</p>

Domain	Description
<p><b>Information</b></p>	<p>The key component that is mapped is the information concept. Information concepts are the nouns of the business (e.g., customer, product) and can be related to each other or to other domains (e.g., capabilities). Information concepts provide the vocabulary used by the rest of the business architecture.</p> <p>Information: Data that has been verified to be accurate and timely, is specific and organized for a purpose, is presented within a context that gives it meaning and relevance, and that can lead to an increase in understanding and decrease in uncertainty. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Information Concept: A way in which to represent business terms and semantics within the context of business architecture. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p>
<p><b>Vision, Strategies, and Tactics</b></p>	<p>Visions, strategies, and tactics provide the business direction necessary to operate and enact change. The key component that is mapped and related to other domains (e.g., capabilities, value streams) is the objective.</p> <p>Strategy: The pattern or plan that integrates an organization’s major goals, policies, and action sequences into a cohesive whole. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Tactic: A course of action that represents part of the detailing of strategies. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Objective: A quantitative, measurable result that defines strategy. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p>
<p><b>Policy, Rules, Regulations</b></p>	<p>A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Policies include both external perspectives (e.g., regulations) as well as internal ones (e.g., internal policies or business rules).</p>
<p><b>Stakeholders</b></p>	<p>An internal or external individual or organization with a vested interest in achieving value through a particular outcome. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Stakeholders in business architecture are mapped at a higher level of detail compared to typical role definitions.</p>
<p><b>Products and Services</b></p>	<p>Product: The overall experience provided by the combination of goods and services to satisfy the customer’s needs. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Service: Intangible service products such as accounting, banking, cleaning, consultancy, education, insurance, expertise, medical treatment, or transportation. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Organizations frequently use the term “product” to encompass both products and services.</p>
<p><b>Metrics and Measures</b></p>	<p>Measure: A number or quantity that records a directly observable value or performance. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>Metric: A standard of measurement by which efficiency, performance, progress, or quality of a plan, process, or product can be assessed. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>When related to objectives, capabilities, value streams, and initiatives, metrics/measures can be used to assess business performance and initiative results. Business architecture also contributes additional metrics to capture various aspects of effectiveness for capabilities and value streams.</p>
<p><b>Decisions and Events</b></p>	<p>Event: Occurrence happening at a determinable time and place, with or without the participation of human agents. <i>(BIZBOK Guide)</i></p> <p>The dynamic rule-based routing maps referenced in the <i>BIZBOK Guide</i> (related to case management) provide a key decision and event structure.</p>



Domain	Description
<b>Initiatives and Projects</b>	<p>For simplicity, the <i>BIZBOK Guide</i> uses initiative to encompass all concepts including programs, projects, etc. When changes are needed to any aspect of the business architecture, they are delivered through initiatives.</p> <p>Initiative: A course of action that is being executed or has been selected for execution. (<i>BIZBOK Guide</i>)</p> <p>Project: A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service. (<i>BIZBOK Guide</i>)</p>

## How Is Business Architecture Built and Used?

Some background on how the business architecture domains discussed above are actually captured and used provides additional insights about the nature of business architecture.

### Building Business Architecture

Every organization has a business architecture. It may not be written down in an industry standard format or designed intentionally in all cases, but it exists. In particular, the content for the core business architecture domains may or may not be documented. These are typically the starting point when an organization decides to start a new business architecture practice. The business architecture team works with business subject matter experts to facilitate the creation of this content, often with an initial focus on capabilities, value streams, and information. Content for the extended business architecture domains typically already exists in different sources, but may need to be adjusted in format or level of detail before incorporating into the business architecture. It is important to note that while the business architecture team may help to document and “steward” the business architecture content in the knowledgebase, the business “owns” it.

For each domain, the mapping process typically includes documenting domain names, attributes, and relationships to both business architecture domains as well as other domains. For example, when documenting capabilities, a list of capability names would be identified (e.g., Customer Management, Product Management) along with the attribute information for each (e.g., description). Each capability would be connected to the relevant business units, value stream stages, products, and so forth, as well as domains outside of business architecture such as system applications and business processes.

All of the business architecture content is stored in a knowledgebase.<sup>6</sup> A knowledgebase should logically contain one enterprise view of the business architecture for the whole organization, except in special cases (e.g., for a conglomerate). It should not be fragmented by business units, projects, or any other segmentations, though of course the relevant portion of the business architecture may be viewed for any scope. A knowledgebase may be a set of Visio, Excel, and PowerPoint files, a lightweight business architecture tool, a robust enterprise architecture tool, or any combination of tools. Most organizations start with the Microsoft Office suite and then migrate to a lightweight business architecture tool and then later to a more robust tool(s), typically selected together with team members from the rest of the architecture disciplines.

Building a business architecture knowledgebase takes time and should be approached strategically. The first step is to determine which domains and relationships will be captured<sup>7</sup> and then create a plan for documenting and refining them over time. These decisions and the appropriate timing should be driven by the expected value proposition and usage scenarios for business architecture within the organization. As mentioned earlier, most organizations begin by mapping the four core business architecture domains initially and then mapping the extended business architecture domains over time as needed to support the scenarios in which they are currently applying business architecture. The same strategic approach typically applies for connecting the business architecture to other domains.

*Your business architecture knowledgebase should include content for each business architecture domain that you have determined to be applicable for your organization (most or all usually apply). The content for each domain includes names, attributes, and relationships to business architecture domains as well as other domains (e.g., system applications). The knowledgebase can be created and refined over time.*

## Using Business Architecture

Once business architecture content is captured in a knowledgebase, the key is being able to generate useful views and reports from it for communication or analysis purposes. These views and reports need to be tailored to the scope and relevant information for the business question or scenario being addressed. Visual views, often called “blueprints,”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The *BIZBOK Guide* defines a knowledgebase as a facility that is used for storing, evolving, and managing business architecture artifacts, from which business blueprints may be produced or derived.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to the metamodel in Section 5.1 and Appendix B.4 of the *BIZBOK Guide* for the full superset of options.

<sup>8</sup> The *BIZBOK Guide* defines a blueprint as a graphical representation of one or more aspects of an extended enterprise, which may extend beyond organizational boundaries.

can be produced as well as reports containing textual or graphical information. While the *BIZBOK Guide* is principle-based and does not require specific blueprints to be used, there are a common set of visuals that are frequently used such as the “box in box” view of a capability map. Blueprints can depict one business architecture domain (e.g., a capability map) or multiple business architecture domains (e.g., a capability/value stream cross-mapping). Reports can also depict one or more business architecture domain in almost countless combinations. This concept — that blueprints are generated from a reusable business architecture knowledgebase in support of business scenarios — is encapsulated in the Business Architecture Framework from the *BIZBOK Guide*, as shown in Figure 2.<sup>9</sup>

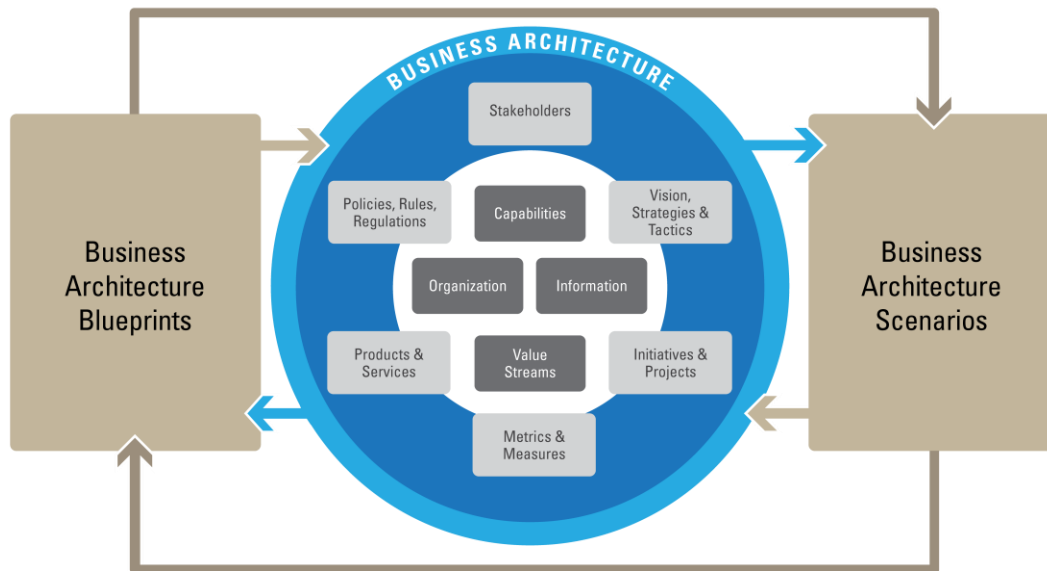


Figure 2: The Business Architecture Framework.

*Business architecture content is maintained in a reusable knowledgebase. Blueprints and reports may be generated from the knowledgebase in support of many different business scenarios and questions.*

<sup>9</sup> This figure has been visually redesigned, but the content is from Figure 1.3 of the *BIZBOK Guide*.

## Some Nuances

There are a couple nuances in terminology to clarify. The first is the use of the term “map” versus “model.” Many sources use “model” though the *BIZBOK Guide* uses “map” consistently throughout. The terms are equivalent in this case. For example, some sources refer to a capability model, while the *BIZBOK Guide* refers to a capability map.

The second nuance, which can seem like it is in conflict to the Business Architecture Framework in Figure 2, is that new business architecture teams may actually start their mapping work by creating some blueprints (visuals). In this case the “blueprints” actually exist before the reusable knowledgebase does for a short time. However, this is a good practice and there are no implications to doing so.

## Time Spent Building Vs. Using Business Architecture

Some of the lack of clarity about what business architecture is, or what business architects do, is because of some confusion related to building versus using business architecture. Some people believe that building business architecture is the main focus of every business architect. This misconception can discourage some organizations from starting practices because there is a perceived lack of immediate value if this is the primary responsibility of the business architect role. However, as shown in Figure 3, over the lifetime of a business architecture practice,<sup>10</sup> a relatively low amount of time and effort is spent creating the business architecture. The majority of time and effort should be spent applying the business architecture and refining the knowledgebase as needed. There are also different skills required for business architecture creation versus application. Applying business architecture in various scenarios, such as for strategy translation or transformation, requires a much broader set of knowledge, experience, and skills. Having a diverse business architecture team comprised of people with different personas, experience, and skills can be beneficial for this reason.

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<sup>10</sup> This assumes a business architecture practice stays in place indefinitely once it has been established.

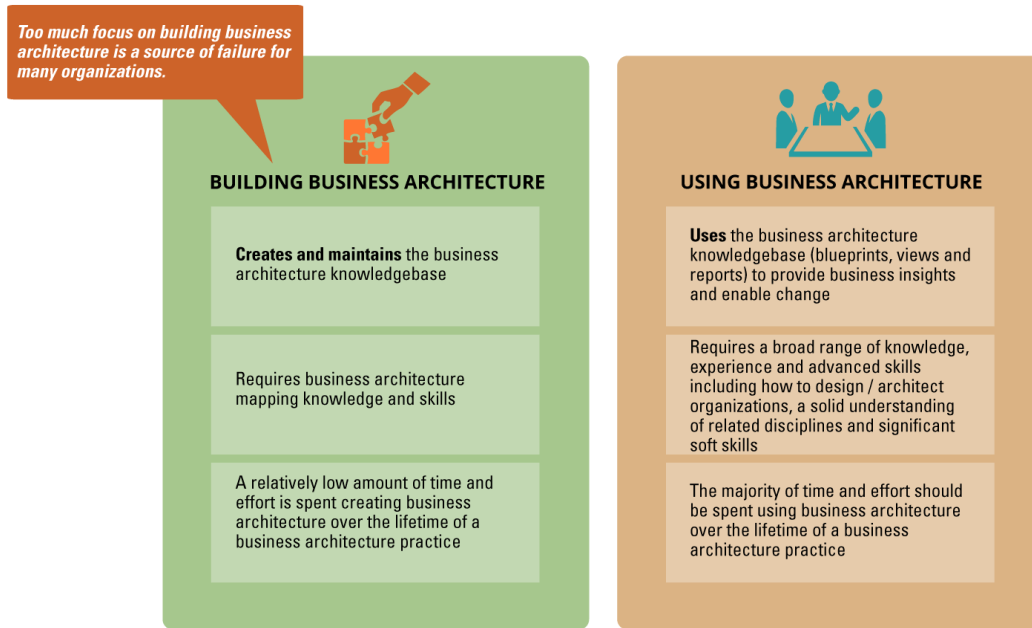


Figure 3: Comparison of Key Aspects of Building Vs. Using Business Architecture.

At times, it can seem as if the business architecture industry has placed more emphasis on mapping the business architecture versus applying it. This is due to a number of factors related to the relative newness of the discipline. The first is that focus was initially needed to standardize and then teach business architects how to build a business architecture. While the *BIZBOK Guide* has been solid for some time, many practitioners are still learning how to do business architecture and this will occur for some time. In addition, most organizations do not have a documented business architecture, so before using it, at least some level of baseline needs to be created first. Finally, the nature of some practitioners is that they truly enjoy and are enriched by the mapping process, so it does become a topic of discussion in many forums. However, it is important to note that building a business architecture is a means to an end — not an end in itself. As the discipline matures and more people begin to practice business architecture within their organizations, the conversation will continue to shift more and more to how business architecture can best be applied to deliver value.

# Distinguishing Characteristics of Business Architecture

There are a few unique characteristics that distinguish business architecture from other disciplines and guide its creation. These include the following:

- **Enterprise scope.** The scope of business architecture encompasses an entire organization's ecosystem. For example, if an organization is comprised of multiple legal entities, the scope of the business architecture includes them all (except for a conglomerate). The scope of business architecture also includes both internal and external perspectives. For example, an organization's capability map would include all capabilities performed, even if they are outsourced. Value streams and organization maps may include external parties such as customers, partners, or regulatory bodies. While business architecture blueprints and reports may be tailored for a specific business unit, product, initiative, or other scope, there is one business architecture for an organization — not multiple business architectures owned by different business units or some other segmentation.
- **High level of detail.** Business architecture describes an organization at a higher level of detail than other operational techniques such as procedures, processes, or requirements. This is necessary because of its enterprise-level scope; otherwise it would be challenging and time consuming to document and maintain all the content. This is also by design because business architecture provides a unique view that allows people to understand an organization at a higher level, seeing "the forest for the trees" before pursuing more focused analysis. Business architecture must be built at level of detail that is reflective of an enterprise perspective, not from a business unit perspective or some other segmentation. For example, the information concept of "customer" would reflect an enterprise meaning where customers are the external individuals or organizations who have purchased or could potentially purchase a product or service, even if some business units refer to each other as "customers" from an operational perspective.

- **Reusable.** The business architecture that exists in the knowledgebase is a reusable asset. This is why it is built in a way that is business-focused (not solution-specific), enterprise-level, and at a high level of detail. Unlike some artifacts, which are created for a specific initiative, the business architecture persists over time. The reusable nature of the knowledgebase saves substantial time that would otherwise be spent rediscovering how the business works in order to evaluate issues, opportunities, and change impacts.

These characteristics make business architecture a powerful tool for any type of impact analysis, such as for a new strategy, innovation idea, transformation, acquisition, or regulatory change. Business architecture allows impacts to be methodically pinpointed so that the appropriate actions can be taken, without extra time for rediscovery or dependence on tribal knowledge. For example, the impact of a new strategy can be assessed by identifying the capabilities and value streams impacted, which can further identify the business units, stakeholders, and products that are impacted as well as operating model impacts such as business processes and system applications, and even any in flight initiatives.

## Business Architecture in Context

Further clarity can be gained about what business architecture is by understanding its context within enterprise architecture and the strategy execution lifecycle.

## How Does Business Architecture Fit Within Enterprise Architecture?

Enterprise architecture is comprised of multiple foundational domains including business architecture, application architecture, data architecture, and technical architecture.<sup>11</sup> (“IT architecture” is a term used to collectively describe the application, data, and technical architectures, so at a higher level, enterprise architecture can also be said to be comprised of business and IT architecture.) Enterprise architecture can be thought of as an umbrella concept for these domains, where there are formal mappings between the architectures and close relationships between the architects. Business architects have a unique role in that they are a part of the business, but they are also a part of the enterprise architecture team. As a result, strong partnership is required on both sides, no matter where the business architecture team reports, whether it is within the business or to the enterprise architecture team.

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<sup>11</sup> This concept is from Section 6.2 of the *BIZBOK Guide*.

Figure 4<sup>12</sup> illustrates this enterprise architecture concept. As the authors of the diagram state in their corresponding article,<sup>13</sup> “Business architecture links strategy, initiative, product, policy, and customer to technology investments and solution deployments.” Furthermore, “it means that the scope and impacts of strategies, product plans, initiatives, and investments are clearly defined from a business perspective first, and only then from an IT perspective.”

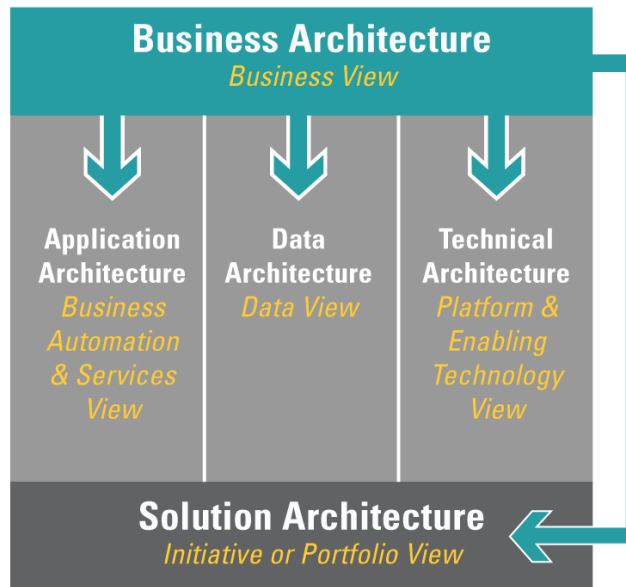


Figure 4: Enterprise Architecture Concept.

## How Does Business (and Enterprise) Architecture Fit Within Strategy Execution?

Business architecture provides a flexible framework that can be used on its own for various types of analysis, decision support, and alignment, but one of its most critical roles is to serve as a bridge between strategy and execution. Figure 5 shows an enterprise-level strategy execution perspective and the role of business architecture

<sup>12</sup> Ulrich, William, and Richard Soley. “Business Architecture: Putting ‘Business’ into Enterprise Architecture.” *CIO Review*, February 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Ulrich and Soley (see 12).



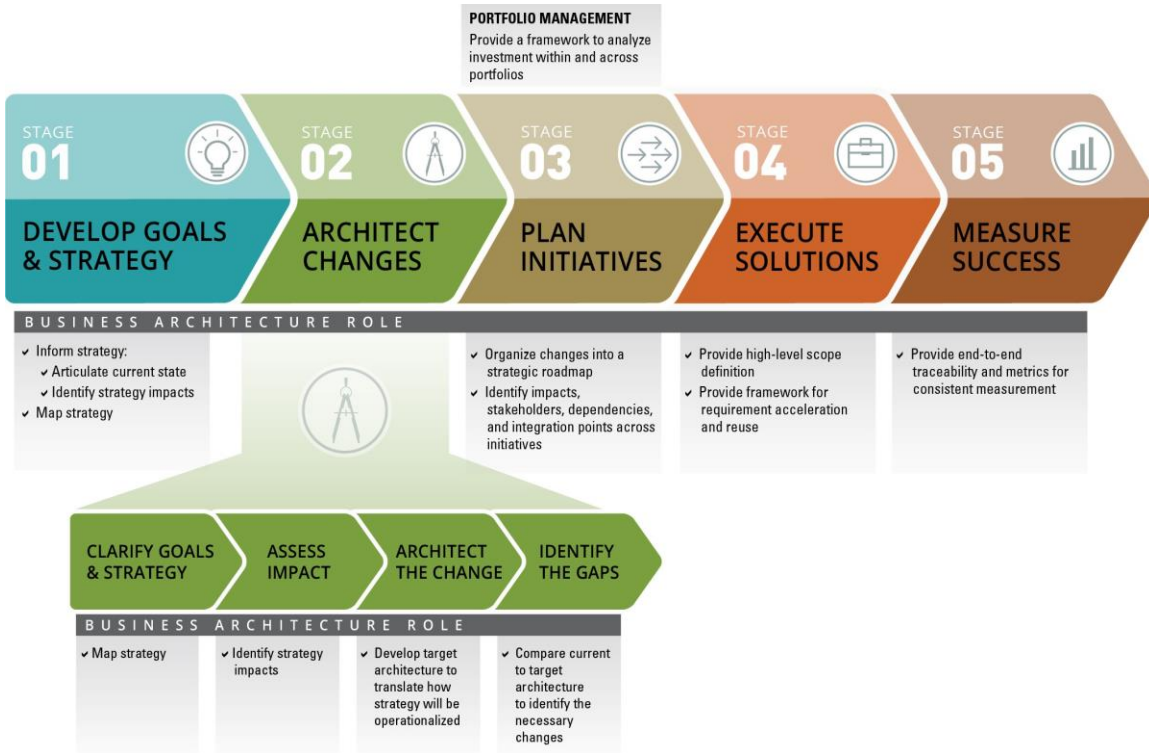


Figure 5: Strategy Execution and the Role of Business Architecture.

within it. (Note: This diagram focuses on business architecture, but IT architecture would play a similar role starting in Stage 2 and increasing further downstream.)

A defined strategy from Stage 1 is “translated” during Stage 2 into the architectural changes necessary to make it real. The absence of Stage 2 in many organizations can lead to redundant and conflicting initiatives as business units implement strategy in silos. In Stage 2, the necessary changes or additions to the business and IT architecture are identified, assuming that a business architecture knowledgebase is in place and aligned to the IT architecture. The impacted components are then rearchitected and can be communicated visually through a target state architecture that aligns the organization to a common view of the future. In Stage 3, the target state architecture is broken down into initiatives (organized into a visual roadmap if desired), which are scoped and framed within an architecture context and input into the planning process. The architecture associated with each initiative becomes the common key for reconciling and integrating initiatives across the enterprise. Each initiative may result in business solutions (e.g., organizational changes or process changes) as well as IT solutions, which are executed in Stage 4. In Stage 5, the results of the initiatives are measured against the original objectives, assuming that traceability exists from the strategy and objectives through the business and IT architecture to the initiatives.

This approach represents a true top-down, cross-business unit, and business-driven method for designing and planning change initiatives, which can then lead to a coordinated set of actions for downstream business and IT execution. When done well it has the potential to increase speed to market and ensure that an organization is working on the highest-priority initiatives, scoped and sequenced in the most efficient way. It also provides a way to quickly reprioritize and replan initiatives on an ongoing basis to adjust for strategic or operational changes. However, while this approach defines what is possible, it can take some time to implement within an organization, especially as it may require a paradigm shift.

## What Business Architecture Is *Not*

Finally, a discussion of what business architecture is *not* further illuminates what it is. Business architecture is commonly confused with some other disciplines, which can make articulating its unique value a challenge and can also lead to the perception that it overlaps or competes with the responsibilities of other teams. However, the reality is that when scoped and positioned correctly within an organization, business architecture does not overlap with any other teams; in fact, it helps them to operate more effectively.

A significant amount of work has been done over the years through collaboration between the business architecture community and various other communities of practitioners to identify the connections and integration points between disciplines. The conclusion continues to be that the relationship between business architecture and other disciplines is always of mutual benefit.

In term of scope, if a domain is not included within the ecosystem shown in Figure 1, it is not business architecture. Some of the aspects that are most commonly confused to be part of business architecture are described below. (Note: this is not a fully inclusive list of related functions and disciplines.)

- **Business architecture is not strategy formulation.** Business architects work with business leaders and/or strategy teams to inform strategy formulation as well as map strategy if it is not written down or detailed enough. However, the key role that business architects (in partnership with IT architects) play is to use the business architecture to translate strategy into the business and IT changes needed for implementation. There are some business architects who play a more significant role in strategy formulation, but this is more related to an individual wearing multiple hats versus the intent of the business architect role. Strategy can be mapped to the business architecture (especially capabilities and value streams) through objectives.

- **Business architecture is not business model formulation.** Similar to strategy formulation, business architects work with business leaders or other teams to inform business model formulation or redesign as well as create documentation if it is not written down.<sup>14</sup> The business model is also used by business architects to translate business model changes into the business and IT changes necessary to make them real. Each of the nine components of the business model canvas can be mapped to various aspects of business architecture.
- **Business architecture is not customer experience design.** Business architects work with customer experience teams to inform customer experience design (e.g., journey maps) and then along with the business objectives, business architects translate these designs into the business and IT changes necessary to make them real. Customer journeys can be mapped to business architecture value streams and capabilities.<sup>15</sup>
- **Business architecture is not operating model design.** Business architecture is more strategic and focused on enabling an organization to realize their business model, while the operating model — often described as inclusive of people, process, and technology — has a more detailed focus.
  - *Business architecture is not business process modeling or management.* Significant collaboration occurred between the business architecture and business process communities to establish the relationship and mutual benefits between the two disciplines. Business architecture provides a top-down perspective and framework for processes, and processes can inform the business architecture and carry out any detailed changes to it. Processes can be mapped to business architecture capabilities (as the primary relationship) as well as to value streams.<sup>16</sup>
  - *Business architecture is not organizational effectiveness (or organizational design or organizational development).* Business architecture does not replace the important discipline necessary to make sure that an organization and the people of which it is comprised are working most effectively related to aspects such as organizational structure, talent management, and culture. The business architecture and organizational effectiveness

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<sup>14</sup> Many teams have adopted the business model canvas as a way to document an organization's business model. See: Osterwalder, Alexander, and Yves Pigneur. *Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers*. John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on the integration between business architecture and customer experience design, see: "Business Architecture and the Customer Experience: A Comprehensive Approach for Turning Customer Needs into Action." Business Architecture Guild, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on the integration between business architecture and business process, see: "Business Architecture and BPM — Differentiation and Reconciliation." Business Architecture Guild, 2014.

disciplines (which may report to Human Resources or otherwise) can and should work closely together as both can provide inputs to each other and benefit from collaboration at various points during strategy execution.

- *Business architecture is not requirements management.* Business architecture is enterprise level and precedes initiatives, where requirements are typically detailed and initiative-specific. Business architecture can be used to define the scope of an initiative and requirements can be written to directly use the business architecture terminology such as stakeholder names, capability names, and value stream stage names. Requirements (regardless of methodology) can be mapped to business architecture capabilities, which not only help to tie them back to the business objectives, but also enable them to be reused across initiatives. Business architects work with business analysts to guide requirements authoring and mapping back to the business architecture.<sup>17</sup>
- *Business architecture is not IT architecture or solutions.* As described earlier, the business architecture and IT architecture disciplines work closely together, both in terms of the architecture and the roles. Business architecture is purely business-focused and can provide the business lens for IT architecture and decision making. System applications and services can be mapped to capabilities. Value streams can be used to provide context for how services are orchestrated. Business architecture information concepts can be mapped to the data architecture.

Figure 6 overlays each team mentioned above on the strategy execution perspective for context.

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<sup>17</sup> For more information on the integration between business architecture and requirements, see: "Leveraging Business Architecture to Improve Business Requirements Analysis." Business Architecture Guild, 2014.

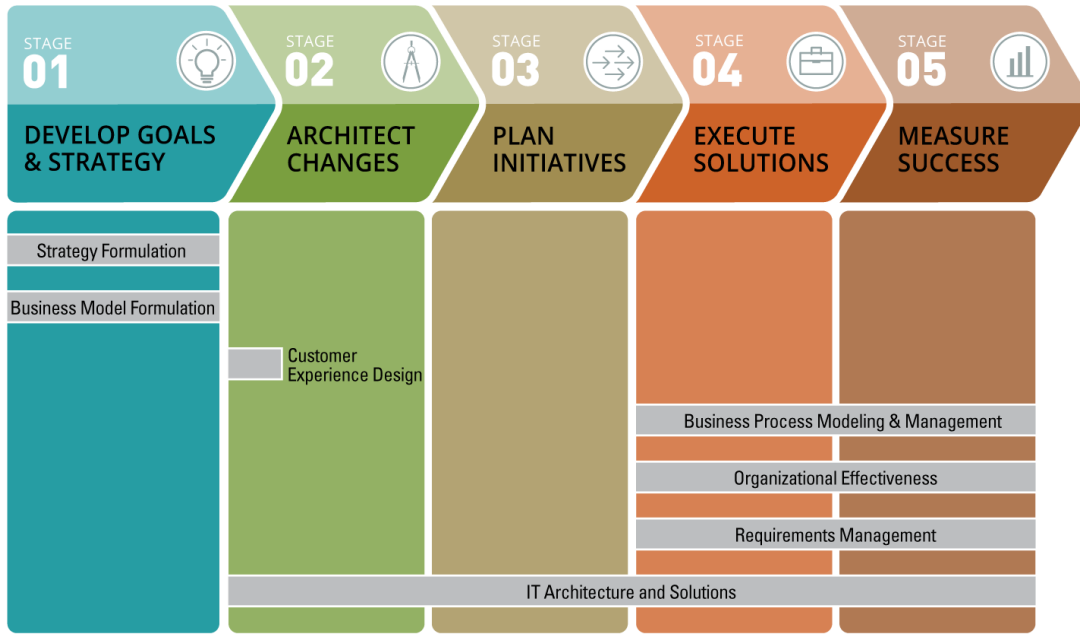


Figure 6: Related Teams in a Strategy Execution Context.

It is critical for a business architecture team to develop strong relationships with each related team in the organization. A best practice is to identify and document all related teams in an engagement model, which shows the inputs and outputs between teams. The business architecture team should then meet with each team to confirm the interactions and develop a working relationship. In many cases, there should be a formal mapping between business architecture domains and other domains. This is usually done in close partnership with the related team. For example, a business process analyst may map a set of processes to capabilities, with guidance from a business architect. Over time, formal integration can occur where necessary, to ensure that each team’s roles and processes are adjusted to reflect how they interact with others.

*When scoped and positioned correctly, business architecture does not overlap with any other teams — in fact, it helps them to operate more effectively. There is always mutual benefit to working together.*

## Moving into Action

Whether you are starting a new practice or maturing an established one, there are steps you can take to act upon the information discussed in this white paper.

### **If you are starting a new business architecture practice within your organization ...**

*Easy.* Leverage what you've learned from this white paper, read the *BIZBOK Guide*, and train and certify your business architects. This will allow you to start your practice with the right foundation.

### **If you have an established business architecture practice but have defined business architecture with a limited scope ...**

*Harder.* The first step is to identify the business architecture domains and relationships that are missing but needed, based on the value proposition and usage scenarios for business architecture within your organization. Your biggest challenge may be obtaining buy-in and explaining the shift in thinking. For example, if you have defined business architecture primarily as capabilities, you will need to communicate that there are other domains in the ecosystem and the value of documenting them. Another challenge may be reallocating time for both business architecture team members and business subject matter experts, who are likely committed to other high-priority work.

### **If you have an established business architecture practice but have defined business architecture with a misaligned scope ...**

*Hardest.* If you have defined the boundaries of business architecture differently than what has been described here and in the *BIZBOK Guide*, this does require some changes to be made to ensure your practice is adopted, effective, and sustainable. For example, you may have defined business architecture as inclusive of processes, requirements, and/or various IT perspectives. The first step is to reconcile your current domains with the industry-standard business architecture domains. Identify those that you need based on the value proposition and usage scenarios for business architecture within your organization and identify which of your current ones should be out of scope. Start conversations about why it is important to make these changes and create a plan to get there over time. The change could entail activities such as creating content for new domains within your business architecture knowledgebase, transitioning content that no longer applies to other teams, adjusting the business architect role definition and the team composition, adjusting the team structure, providing additional training for the business architecture team, communicating to business architecture stakeholders, and selecting a more appropriate business architecture knowledgebase tool. In addition to leadership buy-in and communication, partnership is also very important in this scenario. For example, if the business architecture team is currently responsible for detailed process mapping, this work could be transitioned to a more appropriate team or a new one could be created.

## About the Author



Whynde Kuehn is a Senior Consultant with Cutter Consortium's [Business & Enterprise Architecture](#) practice and a *Summit 2016* speaker. She is passionate about bridging the gap between strategy and execution. Ms. Kuehn is a long-time business architecture practitioner, educator, and industry thought leader, who takes a business-focused and results-oriented approach to business architecture. She has extensive experience in enterprise transformation and planning and was a key player in one of the largest business transformations in the world. In addition to her role at Cutter Consortium, Ms. Kuehn is Principal of S2E Consulting Inc.

Ms. Kuehn most enjoys helping clients build their business architecture practices. She has a track record of creating successful teams that become embedded into their organizations. Ms. Kuehn also provides business architecture training. She has developed and taught comprehensive, large-scale business architecture training programs via in-person and online formats, both for the public and in-house for clients. She is a recognized thought leader in business architecture, regularly speaking, writing, and chairing/cochairing conferences and events that advance best practices and facilitate community across the world. She is a cofounder and board member of the Business Architecture Guild, a not-for-profit organization that is advancing the discipline, and serves as its Editorial Board Chair. Ms. Kuehn also founded a New York Business Architecture Community.

Passionate about using business as a force for good and systematic change, Ms. Kuehn also founded Metanoia Global Inc., which helps social entrepreneurs to start, scale, and sustain successful businesses, with a focus on Africa. Through her work with Metanoia Global, pro bono efforts, and the other nonprofit boards, Ms. Kuehn has the pleasure and honor of seeing firsthand how business can focus on purpose as well as profit and how enterprises can be a solution to poverty. She can be reached at [wkuehn@cutter.com](mailto:wkuehn@cutter.com).



## About Cutter Consortium

Cutter Consortium is a unique, global business technology advisory firm dedicated to helping organizations leverage emerging technologies and the latest business management thinking to achieve competitive advantage and mission success. Through its consulting, research, training, and executive education, Cutter Consortium enables digital transformation.

Cutter Consortium helps clients address the spectrum of challenges technology change brings — from disruption of business models and the sustainable innovation, change management, and leadership a new order demands, to the creation, implementation, and optimization of software and systems that power newly holistic enterprise and business unit strategies.

Cutter Consortium pushes the thinking in the field by fostering debate and collaboration among its global community of thought leaders. Coupled with its famously objective “no ties to vendors” policy, Cutter Consortium’s *Access to the Experts* approach delivers cutting-edge, objective information and innovative solutions to its clients worldwide.