Running Head: BUSINESS ARCHITECT

Business Architect: Functions and Responsibilities

Jered McClure

Walden University

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A Business Architect (BA) is a person who wears many hats. However, their primary concern is ensuring the success of the organization through process management. As such, the BA acts as oversight on projects to ensure that process changes align themselves with organizational strategic goals. Another concern of the BA is in ensuring organizational units do not become silos through vertical organizational communication. Acting as a liaison, the BA opens horizontal communications across departmental boundaries, thereby increasing process efficiencies.

Process modeling is a key factor in managing process changes. As such, the BA is skilled in modeling organizational processes in both their As-Is state and there To-Be state, ensuring that the To-Be state aligns itself with strategy. This is done through effective process redesign. Finding where the faults and inefficiencies exist in the current state, or even where a process should exist and does not, then designing a plan whereby the organization can move towards strategic alignment.

Without a BA, change management and implementation can still occur. However, the defining factors of the BA are in project management, change management, and strategic alignment. That is, the BA acts as a central hub for these three organizational units. Without the BA, the change could still be implemented, but there is likely to be a measureable gap in terms of what the change is supposed to be and what it ends up becoming.

No organization is an island, or if so, not for long. In so much, Business Architects monitor industry competitors and develop effective strategies for relating organizations to their changing environments. In other words, they define where the organization sits within the industry and relate that to the organization’s processes and their alignment within strategic goals.

When it comes to evaluating Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and their use within an organization, a BA can ensure that the system is not wasted on processes that are better suited to in house software. The goal of an ERP is to make processes easier to manage, faster to complete, and cheaper to operate. However, if the processes are so specialized to the organization, an out of box ERP is likely useless in creating value for the process. This is not to say an ERP is completely out of the question, only that an industry standard ERP is likely not a value adding system the organization should use.

The BA is able to highlight these faults through active knowledge of the overarching business process model. While the ERP may be good for one process area within an organization, it may not meet the needs in another. In these cases, rather than wasting funds which will increase costs through out of box modifications, in house proprietary software can be developed. This is a dual edged knife, ensuring that business processes remain in-house secrets, and that processes get exactly what they require in terms of automated support.

Reference

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