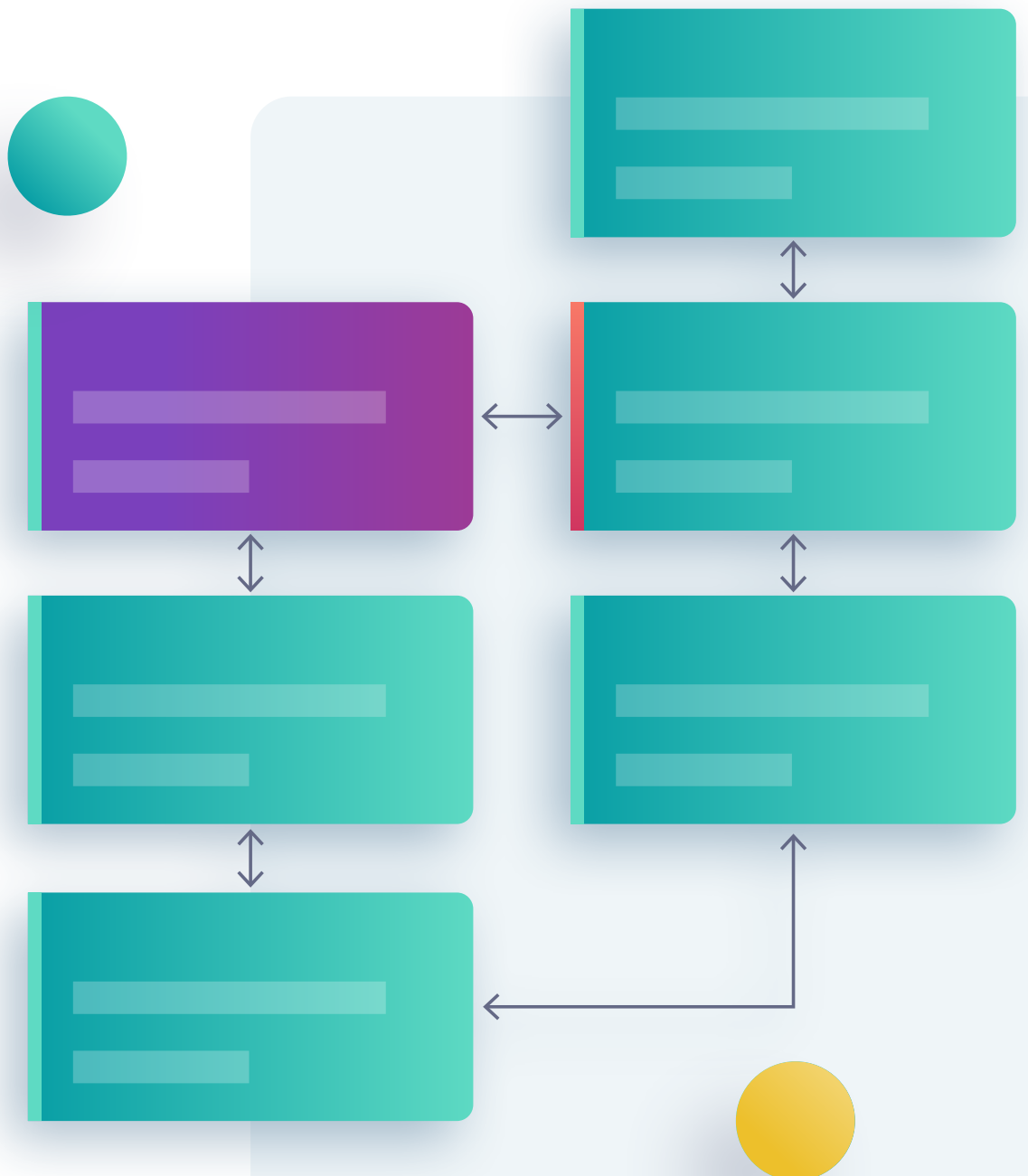**Orbus**Software

EA vs BPA -
Battle of the Acronyms

There is an absolute imperative for organizations to adapt quickly and anticipate change to stay ahead. What is needed is clarity of aims, actions and roles.

So when we see acronyms start to get in the way - it is time to do some clarification of our own.

Here we will attempt to wade through the acronym soup concerning Enterprise Architects (EA's), Business Process Analysts (BPA's), Business Analysts and Business Architects - and come up with ways to acknowledge the potential chaos and get to the good stuff.

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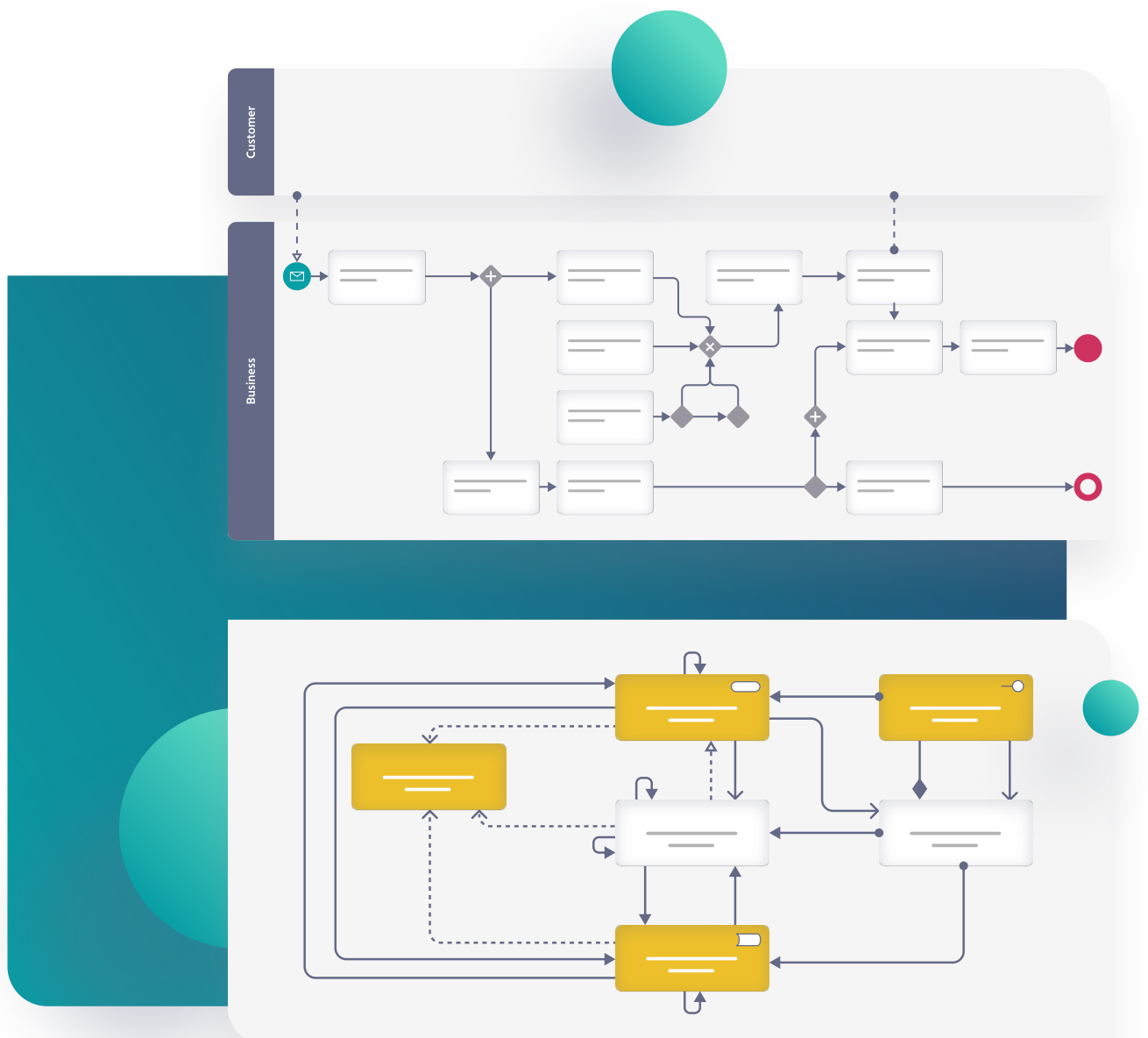
What is my role?

Every company has its own culture, speaks its own language, follows some sort of structure, possibly builds some models, and deploys its own particular framework, techniques and standards.

This can be rolled together as Architecture (although whether you call yourself a business, enterprise or organization is up to you).

Oversight of Architecture is not generally approached in a cohesive way. Even if the business does take Architecture seriously, the evolving nature of roles and responsibilities means many job descriptions persist and cross-over of expertise increases. In short, job acronym conflict results.

How did this acronym war come about? It is worth remembering that way before IT became the driving force of the economy, businesses were quite able to map value streams, capabilities, and processes and use what they learnt to gain competitive advantage. So business architecture can be considered the precursor to Enterprise Architecture.

But if we are now all digital businesses - does the separation of business and information still hold good? Probably not now and definitely not in the near future. **Digital Twins**[1] anyone?

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[1] Digital twins: Bridging the physical and digital | Deloitte Insights

Choose your framework - choose your title

To help address roles and responsibilities, frameworks such as TOGAF or Zachman created specific definitions of roles when implementing their frameworks.

There are many frameworks and titles and a lack of uniformity/consistency does exist. But it is vitally important that roles and frameworks align.

60%
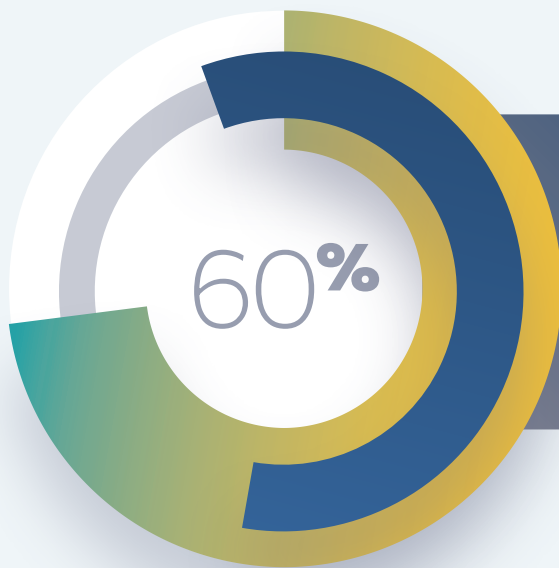
By 2023, **60%** of organizations will depend on EA's role to lead the business approach to digital innovation".

- Gartner

These practitioners approach their work from a lens of supporting the business strategy, people and systems. The leadership of organizations chose these frameworks because they believe it will support their business goals. EAs and BPAs take their role seriously and are committed to getting certified in their chosen frameworks. So choosing your framework is vital.

Enterprise architecture traces back through IBM's Business Systems Planning and the Zachman Framework for information systems architecture. It has always had a strong information bias and a focus on the systems and technology around information. Business architecture traces its origins through the quality process movement for reengineering corporations and organizational design. It has grown up being more process-centric and less information-centric than enterprise architecture - generally.

But life is more complicated than that. For example, in the absence of standardized architecture processes, governance and enterprise architects, business architects may find themselves needing to fill certain responsibilities commonly assigned to the enterprise architect.

So, you can see enterprise architects stating: "Well. I also consider the business."And business architects saying: "Well, I think about information needs too." And here is the important bit, yes they do, but not in the same way. It is all about different views and different lenses.
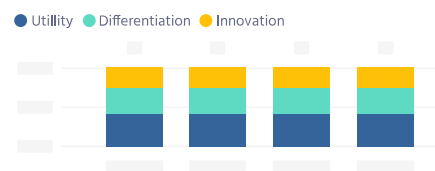
Does it matter in the end?

It does appear that much of the responsibility of BPAs can overlap with the responsibility of EAs. However, they both come at it from a different viewpoint with different skill sets.

Depending on the size of your organization and your particular industry, there may be any combination of EAs, BAs and BPAs. Each with their own history, skills and approaches.
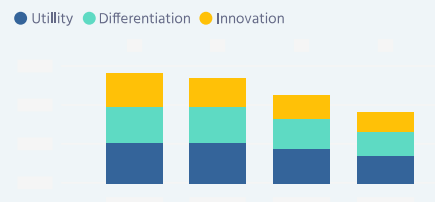
So whether acronyms matter or not - really depends on whether you are getting the job done - whether the business outcomes are what you expect. This is what Peter Drucker was talking about when he said "culture eats strategy for breakfast".

When faced with such "it all depends" answers - it is also good to consult the mathematical mind of **Charles Dodgson.**
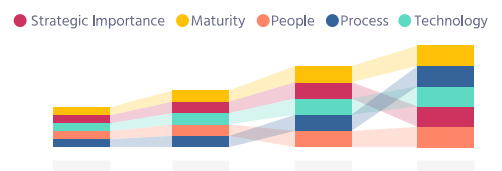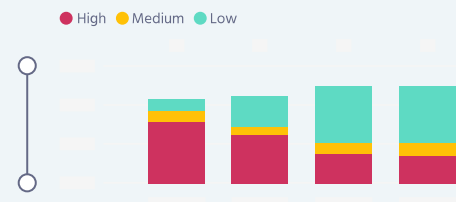
Business Capabilities by Layer over time
● Utility ● Differentiation ● Innovation

What is the evolution of Innovation Capabilities scores?
● Strategic Importance ● Maturity ● People ● Process ● Technology

Business Capability Total Cost by ayer over time
● Utillity ● Differentiation ● Innovation

Business Capability Risk by Layer over time
● High ● Medium ● Low

Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."
"I don't much care where –"
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

- Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Simplistically, to know where you want to go you need business architecture to guide what the business does while enterprise architecture looks after what the business knows.

Lose the battle – win the war

Let's start with a given. EA is no longer an IT function, isolated from the rest of the business and BA is not a process-driven view divorced from application and data needs.

Nowadays, they form a bridge between business and IT. They provide the strategic lenses for observing the entirety of your organization. You can't have one without the other - and generally the skills needed will be too much for one group to manage - especially if the devil is hiding in the business process detail.

What is needed is a way to blur the boundaries between these two separate but complementary disciplines and ensure they are also communicating together and with the rest of the business. This is where we believe tools such as iServer365 come into their own.

01 REDUCING COMPLEXITY

Most businesses operate as a mesh of systems and components. Shying away from facing this complexity isn't an option. iServer365 encourages you to adopt a proactive, outcome-focused approach. Through a selection of the right principles, tools, and standards, it enables architects and the rest of the business to measure and automate processes.

The result is nothing short of an enterprise-wide transformation. You suddenly are in the best position possible to align technical capabilities with business needs, enabling strategic change.

02 FLEXIBILITY

iServer365 enables you to govern and structure repository content. These metamodes are developed from industry best practices and experience of over 550 active deployments globally.

In this way you can avoid the limitations of last-year's models by configuring and extending the default metamodel to match changing organizational requirements. iServer365 marks the transition away from silo-based systems - and stops any IT or process view of the business existing in isolation.

03 STANDARDIZATION

By adopting an agreed industry standard notation or framework you can accelerate time to value with out-of-the-box metamodel solutions for key industry standards. These provide architects with a common ground of pre-configured object types, relationship types, attributes and document templates.

And iServer 365 will ensure all employees are on the same page. It's now easier to manage multiple business units, as well as networks. You can, for example, start to offer better software support and guidance than ever before.

04 SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH

iServer365 creates a single source of truth for your enterprise landscapes with assets spanning business, process, information, application, technology and risk domains. Architects can store assets as intelligent objects with metadata and relationships to help understand dependencies, impacts and risks, and effectively manage and visualize your transformation initiatives.

05 COLLABORATE

The key to implementing a business model and architecture is the ability to collaborate with business stakeholders. iServer365 ensures a wide contribution of information to enrich and validate repository content. It enables business users to add data via SharePoint or Teams conversations, as well as run review and approval workflows.

At the very least, it will increase visibility and ensure consistency and will support and create new ways of working. As a result, you will likely see decreased project, investment, and business risks.

Everything mentioned so far has been by nature rather high level. It's really just to start this conversation - there's obviously many resources and opinions out there to go into more detail. If you've found something interesting, why not **get in touch** to see how iServer365 can help you win the battle of acronyms and get to real value.

Create a central source of truth for your enterprise architecture landscape

Book a Demo and discover how iServer365 can help you win the battle of acronyms and get to real value.

Book a Demo

About Orbus Software

Orbus Software is a leading provider of cloud solutions for digital transformation. Our mission is to enable organizations to build operational resiliency. Our customers are predominantly global blue-chip enterprises and government organizations, and we focus on delivering technology innovation that accelerates our customers' success.
To learn more, follow Orbus Software on Twitter and LinkedIn.

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