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Roger Evernden has been an Enterprise Architect since 1984, specializing in the highly practical use of EA to manage enterprise transformation.

He acts as advisor, mentor and coach on enterprise architecture initiatives, leads training workshops, and writes regularly about strategy and architecture. His work has been the basis for more than 400 business and IT architecture initiatives worldwide. As author of the Information FrameWork (IFW) – an architecture framework originally developed for the financial services sector – Roger pioneered many contemporary techniques, including the use of industry reference models, business capability analysis, and component-based architecture building blocks.

Enterprise Architecture and Business Process Analysis fit well with many other management, business and technology frameworks and techniques. But the one that, arguably, offers some of the most interesting opportunities is the one that is often overlooked. Even when the connections between EA and BPA are made, there remain some possibilities that get ignored. In this paper I'm going to look at some examples to highlight the key similarities, differences and synergies between EA and BPA.

The Differences between Enterprise Architecture and Business Process Analysis

I'm going to start by talking about their differences. I could go into great detail, but instead I'd like to highlight a couple of common distinctions – which are summarized in *Figure 1*. For many organizations, the EA team is IT oriented and located within the IT department, while the BPA teams are business oriented and located within business areas. And in scope, EA operates in an enterprise-wide context, while BPA focuses on examining a process-specific context.

Now as with all generalizations, I am opening myself to criticism and ridicule, but bear with me while I show how these common differences can influence how the two disciplines work together.
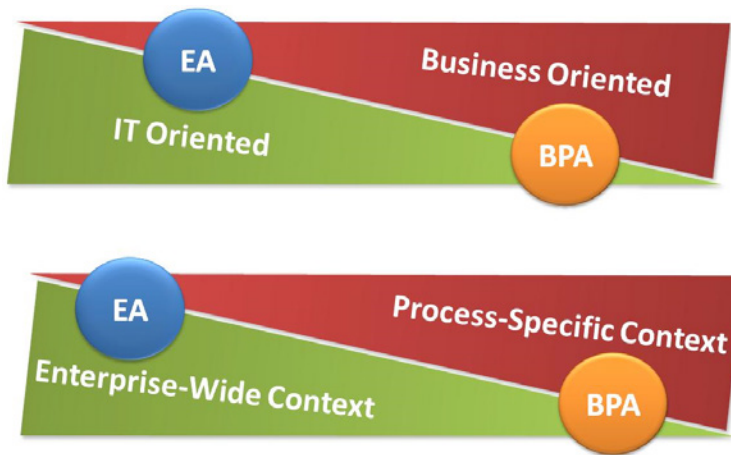
Figure 1: Differences between EA and BPA

TIP: Explore the differences between disciplines to find opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefit.

Many EA teams recognize that they should be as much business as IT oriented, but find it difficult to switch allegiance. In a bank the EA team took a deliberate decision to join forces with the BPA team to their mutual advantage. The EA team gained a better understanding of the business and found that they were accepted more by the business community, while the BPA team learned about technical and architectural constraints that prevented them from meeting their goals. Together they worked on an approach that was both IT and business oriented.

In an insurance company the BPA team had long recognized that processes for different types of insurance product were very similar, but didn't have the techniques or organizational standing to do much about it. When they embarked on a similar collaboration with the EA team they gained access to stakeholders with enterprise-wide accountability who understood the opportunity for process standardization. They collaborated with the EA team to create process templates that served as archetypes for key activities in each product area. Before this collaboration, the EA team had not had the opportunity to apply techniques such as standardization, classification or parameterization to business processes. The architectural analysis of processes to form a Process Architecture is an area with the biggest potential for improvement for both EA and BPA.

In both examples, a simple exploration of difference led to opportunities for collaboration and learning between the disciplines of EA and BPA, not to mention the significant savings and benefits for the organization.

The Similarities between EA and Business Process Analysis

Let's move on to similarities. Now many readers might be expecting me to complete a blow-by-blow breakdown of each discipline to show where they use the same techniques or process. If that was your expectation, then I'm sorry but I am going to disappoint you! Instead I'm going to emphasize three of the more obvious similarities, because these are the ones that are most frequently overlooked. The three similarities that each is involved with making changes that bring about improvements and that to make these changes successful, both EA and BPA require a degree of change governance.

Figure 2: Similarities between EA and BPA

If you are using TOGAF as your EA development process, then it is clear that an iteration of the Architecture Development Method (ADM) is about change, that the gap between current and target architectures is all about capability improvement, and that the latter phases are about governing the implementation of the required architectural changes.

It is also clear that the early phases of the ADM – from the Preliminary Phase and Architecture Vision through the Business, Information Systems and Technology Architecture phases (A to D) are about understanding and defining the required architectural changes, while the remaining phases are about implementation of a solution. In other words – the emphasis is on the key distinction between architecture and solution, which is also an important focus of the Enterprise Continuum.

If your EA approach is not based around TOGAF, it is still likely that there is a strong emphasis on a process that starts with architecture and moves on to solution. This encourages a strong bridge between EA and IT, and between EA and project management, as it is IT and project management that complete the implementation. Right?

Wrong!! There are vast hordes of people that need to be involved other than project management and IT. And business process analysis is a good banner for considering this. It is the business process team that will be making changes to business processes, including training of staff in new procedures, integrating changed with remaining workflows, and dealing with usability issues from a staff and customer perspective.

I recently worked with an EA team in the travel industry that was so intent on following the TOGAF ADM that they missed some obvious change management points. This team had been around two iterations of the ADM, and in each case they discovered issues after the "completed implementation". I put "completed implementation" in quotes because the planned architectural changes were fully implemented in that the supporting technologies were installed and operational – but in both cases the changes to business processes, to training programs and to the customer experience hadn't even started. By looking at the similarities between EA and BPA this team realized that they really needed to collaborate throughout the ADM process, and in particular this meant during the governance and implementation phases. This revelation positioned EA in a broader framework – governing change for enterprise transformation and improvement. The EA and BPA teams now work together under this broader, common goal.
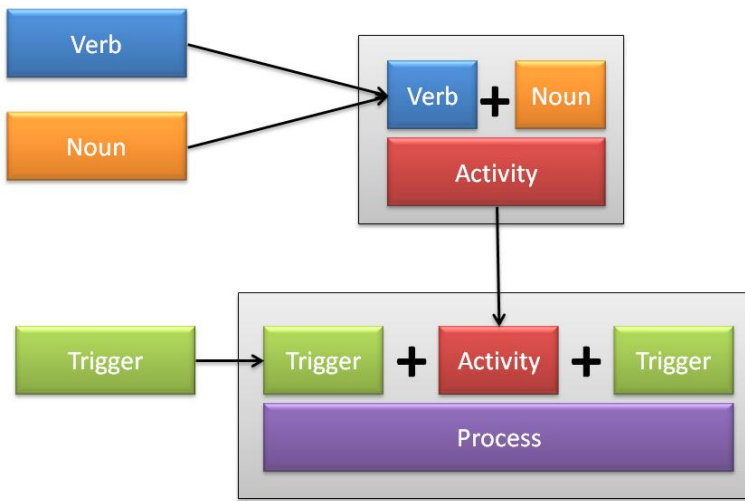
Figure 3: Key Components in Process Architecture

The Synergies between EA and Business Process Analysis

I've talked in a fairly general way about the similarities and differences between EA and BPA, because it is at this fundamental level that the opportunities for collaboration between the two disciplines is so often overlooked. But once the two disciplines recognize this opportunity, how do they collaborate to deliver significant and practical benefits. Here are three key quick win synergies.

EA is good at defining the structural components and relationships for a domain to maximize reuse and allow future adaptability. *Figure 3* shows the key components in process architecture. Applying this simple MetaModel to process components and their relationships brings an architectural dimension to process analysis and modeling. For example, a process analysis team in a government department knew that there was significant process redundancy, but didn't have an easy way to document unnecessary overlaps or duplication. The EA team had a quick solution: rename or provide an alias name for each activity using a Verb plus Noun formula, where each Noun was an object that was already defined in the enterprise data architecture and the Verb was drawn from a standard set defined by the EA team. Using this approach made it easy to discover duplications that had previously been hidden because processes were named using inconsistent names.

After they had produced a standard set of activities, they conducted a similar analysis to find out what events triggered each process. This time they reused the list of activities and gradually built a hierarchical, architectural list of all of the triggers.

A bank conducted similar analysis, and used the outcomes to define a new set of processes that were simpler and more consistent. They did this by adopting the architectural notion of a hierarchy of related components – in this case by defining a generic process template for key processes such as Open or Close Account. They also identified the criteria that differentiated one process from another – for example, the difference between Open Mortgage Loan Account and Open Credit Card Account – so that the template could be parameterized to fit all of the products that required the Open Account process. By doing this the two teams also catalogued the business rules and
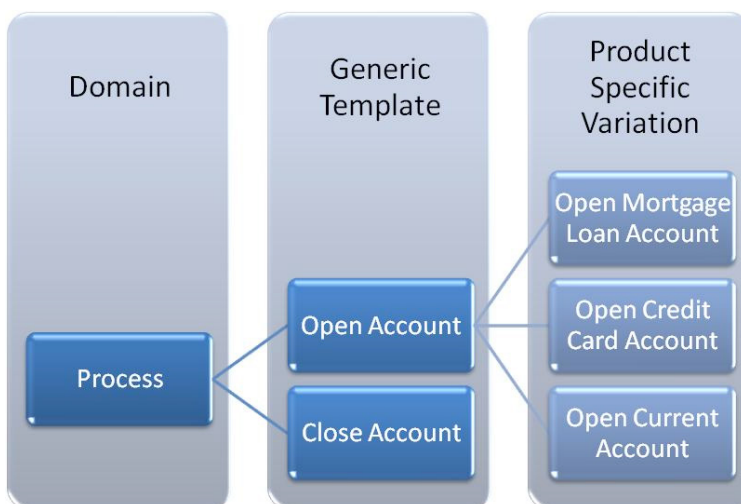

Figure 4: Example Process Hierarchy

conditions that differentiated each type of product, which ultimately made it easier to create new products or variations on existing products (see *Figure 4*).

Conclusions

The big barrier against synergy between EA and BPA is that organizational structures tend to keep these two teams apart from one another. Looking at their similarities and differences and seeing how these complement one another is the starting point for getting the two teams together.

Once they are working together, the quickest win is to apply some basic architectural techniques – defining a common MetaModel, using consistent language, identifying opportunities for standardization, simplification and reuse, and grouping components into class hierarchies. This approach takes detailed content provided by the BPA team and adapts it to create a Process Architecture using EA techniques. This is a win-win-win situation – a win for the BPA team, a win for the EA team, and a win for the enterprise team!

BPA, because of its process-specific context, frequently operates independently from EA, whereas EA should always encompass BPA in the Business Architecture. The onus is therefore on the EA team to drive better cooperation between EA and BPA.

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