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HOW TO SUCCEED WITH BUSINESS ARCHITECTURE



An Interview with Amélie Régimbal, Practice leader for business architecture at a large Canadian financial institution

From the podcast "Business Architecture Practice Leader Series (7 of 9)"

WHYNDE KUEHN: It is a pleasure to introduce Amélie Régimbal. Amélie is Director of business architecture at Desjardins, the leading financial cooperative in North America, where she's in charge of orchestrating the practice and leads a team of business architects to support enterprise-wide transformations as well as the banking business sectors. Let's start with positioning. What is the value proposition of business architecture for your organization – what unique outcomes are you focused on delivering?

AMÉLIE RÉGIMBAL: When I discuss my service offer, I first indicate that we're there to help them make the right decisions. Like others, our organization must transform at an increasingly rapid pace in an increasingly complex environment. To deal with this, we need to have a better overview of the implications and links between the changes to be adopted.

As business architects, we support that by ensuring consistency and traceability between strategic ambitions and actions. How? By increasing the relevance and realism in the selection and sequencing of initiatives, by reducing inconsistencies and redundancies and by speeding up decision-making thanks to our global perspective.

WHYNDE KUEHN: What do you think are the key factors that have made business architecture successful within your organization? And how did you gain buy-in and with whom?

AMÉLIE RÉGIMBAL: I would say we need to first establish some key winning conditions. The very first is the Senior management support. The trigger for us was the setting up of major transformation programs. We were able to demonstrate our value in action by supporting the reflections and decisions upstream, before falling into a list of projects and IT solutions. Then senior management decided to create units responsible for business architecture, within the business sectors and near of strategy and portfolio management teams. However, being well positioned in an organizational chart is only the beginning of the journey!



Another important step was to ensure a common practice, tools and language and solidify governance, in partnership with Enterprise architecture. To achieve this, we've set up a center of excellence in business architecture which allows us to have an overview and to be consistent with each other.

Once this is in place, we may be the best-in-class in the know-how, stakeholder buy-in is created mainly through the business architects themselves. They must know the organization to quickly understand the impacts and speak the same language as decision-makers. They should be able to clarify and understand their needs and be proactive in finding a solution. Their actions must be perceived as relevant and in support of the challenges that arise, without imposing. For me, humility, active listening and adaptability are key interpersonal skills.

I'll end with our complementary position with the other professions. We needed and continue to properly establish our role. We can't carry out our work alone, and it's also important that the partners see that we aren't doing their expert's work. Working together with the enterprise and solution architecture teams, with a single voice, is also essential.

Of course, for being able to implement this enterprise-wide model, I'm well surrounded by a team who believe in it. I'm also fortunate to count on the expertise of my colleagues in charge of sectoral teams.

WHYNDE KUEHN: What has surprised you most about the business architecture journey?

AMÉLIE RÉGIMBAL: 3 years ago, when I was given the mandate to build and solidify the profession, I believed that it would be done in one year. The vision was very clear and pretty easy to sell. Putting it in place is quite another story. It takes time! Even today, we continue to evolve and to adapt. In addition, even if we have senior management buy-in, stakeholders will not automatically adopt the model and see our added value. The trust placed in us must be maintained and credibility is not a given.

WHYNDE KUEHN: What advice would you like to share with people out there who are starting and growing business architecture practices within their organizations?

AMÉLIE RÉGIMBAL: We're still facing some challenges and I'm sharing my four main learnings with you:

- First, As I said before, don't minimize the efforts to build credibility. If it works in one area, it's not guaranteed that it will automatically work elsewhere. Be clear about your value proposition and demonstrate it concretely.
- Second, use practice as a means and not an end. Decision-makers expect advice, recommendations and help in order to see things more clearly. They don't need to be exposed to our methodology and the approach has to be adapted to just-enough and just-in-time architecture.
- Third, it's essential to have a team with different profiles, skills and backgrounds. The roles and profiles required are different according to the mandate. Don't attempt to have the same types of people carry out everything in one generic job.
- Finally, take small steps, do not attack everything at the same time. Focus on one action at a time and build around it. Avoid scattering around and saying yes to everything just because we're called upon. Choose the mandates that have the right conditions for success to maximize your positive impact.

WHYNDE KUEHN: Amélie thank you so much for sharing your journey with us and all of these incredible insights. Congratulations to you and the team on all that you have achieved, and we wish you all the best.

AMÉLIE RÉGIMBAL: Thank you, the pleasure was for me.