HOW TO SUCCEED WITH BUSINESS ARCHITECTURE

An Interview with Chris Jarvis, Enterprise Business Architect at the UK Financial Conduct Authority

From the podcast "Business Architecture Practice Leader Series (5 of 9)"

WHYNDE KUEHN: I am delighted to introduce Chris Jarvis. Chris is the Enterprise Business Architect at the FCA or Financial Conduct Authority, a financial regulator in the UK. He has over 10 years of experience in government and public sector bodies and is a Certified Business Architect®. So, Chris, let's start with positioning. What is the value proposition if business architecture for your organization and what unique outcomes are you focused on delivering?

CHRIS JARVIS: Generally, the organization's understanding and exposure to business architecture is being true operating model design and implementation at project level. Now we can debate whether that is business architecture at all. Probably not a long debate, but our concerted efforts over the last few years have been, as listeners will appreciate, trying to move business architecture to the left, trying to shift business architecture upstream. Getting recognized as an integral part of the strategy, definition and collaboration and trying to get involved in. The business planning cycle particularly influencing it, portfolio prioritization.

WHYNDE KUEHN: So 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?

CHRIS JARVIS: We've invested a lot of effort in building out the enterprise reference models through the practice. We have the CIO and CTO backing for this. We sit in the technology department as a lot of business architecture teams still do. And what we do is an integral part of the concept that the organization understands as design integrity. That is the ability to see the traceability from strategic intent through business solution design, aligned to the IT landscape views, and the business analysis outputs also at all stages of the software delivery lifecycle.

I'm impatient, but sometimes you have to wait for the opportunity, you need the stars to align or a burning platform before business architecture and what it can do for the organization is given its head. We now have a strategic program of transformation. And when the appetite for change is on a sufficient scale, it's

ambitious, it's complex, it's difficult. It's more likely, as is the case with us. But people recognize that business architecture is uniquely positioned to bring disparate viewpoints of the business together and join the dots in the very real value-add way to support strategy and delivery ideation. In my last organization, a central government department with a global footprint, we got the C-Suite all onboard with a consolidated and coherent view of the mission. The business drivers and strategies mapped the necessary activities and consequent changes required to make that reality, prioritizing those things critical to meeting, spending, review commitments and helping the government process through which Treasury periodically sets investment levels and departments define their public service improvements. We will then be able to define plan and assure a four-year transformation roadmap.

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

CHRIS JARVIS: Business architecture is still relatively new. As we acknowledge, the lack of recognition is still somewhat surprising. Obviously, for us, it's self-evident. I think there is still a way to go for the discipline to get the recognition it deserves, relatively few people try to mimic what an application architect or an infrastructure architect, for example, brings to the table. But in contrast, maybe as a consequence of the fact that our currency is very much that of the business, you see a lot of what I call enthusiastic amateurs trying to get by without bringing is in.

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

CHRIS JARVIS: Business architecture is the archetypal long game and a lot of interests, understandably, and quick wins. It's an age of instant gratification, which goes against the wisdom and the purpose of business architecture. So what we have to do is ensure that any immediate action is recognized as a step in the right direction rather than the destination in its own right. In a way, I think there's sometimes an element of corporate attention deficit disorder and we have to keep them focused on the end goal and the big prize. In terms of how people should think about developing their products is key thing for me, find this to collaborate with, think about areas of mutual interest or shared concerns. If you think beyond your organization, look at partnerships, look at the wider ecosystem you operate in. For example, we have regular catch up with my counterparts at the Bank of England. Very rarely do you have a problem, a specific business scenario that is unique to you as an organization. And it may be more difficult in a commercial environment where firms are looking for a competitive advantage and edge, if you like. But in the public sector, certainly we can make the most of opportunities to compare notes and learn from each other.

WHYNDE KUEHN: Chris, thank you so much for sharing your time, insights and this wisdom with us. Congratulations on all that you've achieved and we wish you all the best.

CHRIS JARVIS: Thanks very much.