



This is your place.

bizarchmastery.com

HOW TO SUCCEED WITH BUSINESS ARCHITECTURE



An Interview with Theresa Fannin, practice leader of business architecture and business process architecture at a US-based health insurance carrier

From the podcast "Business Architecture Practice Leader Series (1 of 9)"

WHYNDE KUEHN: Kicking off our series is Theresa Fannin. Theresa is a business architecture practice leader for a US-based health insurance company where she leads a team of business and business process architects focused on strategy enablement and business transformation. So, Theresa, how do you position the value of business architecture? What unique outcomes are you focused on delivering?

THERESA FANNIN: Business architecture provides value in so many ways across organizations, but I truly believe that the superpower of business architecture is that common language that allows us to connect the dots and see the entirety. I think it's safe to say that we all can see what's in front of us pretty clearly and intuitively. We know when a change is going to have a significant impact on our organization, but we can really accelerate that change and avoid some big mistakes through the lens of business architecture when we can see the entirety. And it's always amazing to me, Whynde, when I see how one small reveal, something so tiny, can lead to so much better early decision-making and sometimes a course correction that just makes all the difference in the world.

WHYNDE KUEHN: So, what do you think are the key factors that have made business architecture successful, and how did you gain buy in and with whom?

THERESA FANNIN: A CIO once told me that I can get you a seat at any table, but you have to earn the right to keep it, and that's been something that's really stuck with me on this journey. I believe that every successful business architecture practice must create strong partnerships with the many, many partners and players across the strategy to execution value stream. And those relationships and that trust are not only foundational, but they're critical to the success of any business architecture practice. I like to gain by in using a top-down and bottom-up approach in building those relationships, meaning that the value proposition or the *what's in it for me* is very different. If I'm sitting in the C-suite versus a business unit versus on a delivery team. So you need to be prepared to talk about the value for that stakeholder. And at that time and then and I can't really stress this enough. Whynde, follow it up immediately with value delivery. I think you'll find that people understand what you're saying when you're socializing it and you'll see a lot of head nodding in those conversations. But there is nothing more powerful than business architecture in action.



And then lastly, my mantra on this journey has been to start where your friends are. We all have relationships. I like to leverage those relationships and make connections by speaking the same language. It's a whole lot easier when you can say, I need to reach out to Jane about this thing versus I need to find someone in Compliance and Ethics to talk to.

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

THERESA FANNIN: The thing that has been most surprising to me is how it varies so much, not only from organization to organization, but also from engagement to engagement. And I think that's one of the things that I love most about my job, is that business architecture gives you the flexibility to have a different approach, but grounded in the business architecture and really meet the business where it is to move things forward.

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

THERESA FANNIN: I would say first start with your friends, where you already have that trust and those relationships built. Don't start from scratch or aim for perfection. Just go leverage reference models that are out there where you can and then finally celebrate every win and build those evangelists. One success at a time. Change is hard, but when you show the value and insights of business architecture, people really start to rally behind your story. And pretty soon you'll find that they're telling the story for you and you have more business than you can handle.

WHYNDE KUEHN: I love it. Theresa, thank you so much for sharing your journey and your words of wisdom with us. Congratulations on all that you've achieved, and we just wish you all the best.

THERESA FANNIN: Thank you so much, Whynde.