

# Forrester: 6 Attributes every Business Architect should display

A sound understanding of business principles and concepts. Most IT types think understanding the business is all about understanding the business processes, but this is not what business leaders are interested in. Business architects should understand how the market context affects the business, how value is created, what differentiates their company from its competitors, and how products are created, marketed, and sold. They should have a good understanding of how business strategy is developed – even if it is never articulated.

An ability to think about business processes outside of the technology context. Even business people have a hard time with this. I have had more than one business architect share his frustration with business project people who continually talk about business process in terms of how their applications work. Though a business architect needs to understand how to leverage IT for business value, he needs to be able to draw a wide, heavy line between business processes and the technologies that enable them.

A really strong consulting mind-set. Building a good business architecture is more about listening and hearing between the lines than selling a concept or framework. At the end of the day, the successful business architecture will be one that resonates with business leaders. Business architects should see themselves as business consultants looking for problems to solve.

A strategic point of view. Business architects need the ability to challenge people's thinking, to get them out of the current issues and current systems and into thinking about the possibilities of the future. As one of my clients so eloquently put it: "It's not so much about thinking outside of the box as it is thinking outside of YOUR box."



Good at design thinking. I want business architects who can bring order out of the typical strategy chaos at most companies. That means that they can listen to lots of ideas and create a view that resonates across a wide part of the organization. It means they have the ability to see what others are missing and can create a clear line of sight between business intention and business action.

A catalyst for change. At the end of the day, business architecture isn't worth the napkin it is scribbled on if the organization doesn't change. A business architect should see himself as a change agent first and an architect second. He should use business architecture as a tool to agitate for action.