



The Rise of Business Process Experts

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Agility is tantamount to success in today's fast-paced, hyper-competitive business environment and it is made manifest through business process innovation. Speed-to-rollout and clear communication between business and IT are indispensable to achieving sustainable agility through continual business process innovation. Herein lies the rub.

Historically, business and IT typically communicate marginally, at best, - and acrimoniously at worst. This is because business and IT have so often operated in separate, utterly dissimilar worlds. A line-of-business manager possesses little-to-no understanding of the skills needed to develop or integrate an application or service, just as an application developer is generally unfamiliar with the myriad processes that must be managed daily to drive business forward. This

traditional disconnect between business and IT, and the subsequent inability to communicate it engenders, has been the root cause of sluggish business process innovation and/or misaligned technology initiatives.

Today and for the foreseeable future, however, enterprise service-oriented architecture (ESA) is creating a paradigm shift in the way business and IT must relate, in essence, forcing a tight coupling of these worlds where once there was a great chasm. And who, in this new world, will be the masters of agility and drivers of business process innovation?

Enter the Business Process Expert - a unique individual who combines a mastery of enterprise technology architecture with deep expertise in global business process design and execution. Straddling both the IT and business worlds, the Business Process Expert is a skilled and capable translator who eliminates the friction between IT and business and facilitates meaningful and productive dialogue. Something of an über-consultant, a Business Process Expert combines business insight and IT know-how to bring business process innovation to

fruition quickly and routinely. A Business Process Expert is a natural evolution and melding together of several traditional disciplines, including business analyst, application consultant, process developer and business process architect.

According to a description posted on SAP's newly launched Business Process Expert Community (BPX) portal, the profile of a typical business process expert might look as follows:

- Deep knowledge of business-unit operations and core processes
- Expertise in gathering requirements and modeling business process flows
- Proficiency in MS Office, Visio, Excel, basic macros, and scripting
- Either a business person who has "gone technical" but has few coding skills, or a former application developer moving toward the business world
- Knowledge of using simple queries to extract information from data sources

- Strong expertise in configuring an application

Powered by SAP NetWeaver, ESA will facilitate unprecedented agility by virtue of its inherent capability to enable fast and efficient business process innovation. At its core, ESA consists of a unified business process platform housing a repository of well-defined, coherent services. Maximizing the value of these enterprise services requires in-depth knowledge of core SAP applications and extended components, as well as proven business process subject matter expertise. In short, the specialized skills and experience of a Business Process Expert are needed to harness the full potential of the ESA business process platform and to ensure that innovation happens at the speed of business.