Corporate Architecture,
an enquiry into properties of business architecture and business technologies

Considerans

Conceptually, organization science and business management studies today still theorize about the organization as a stable entity, build to last for an indefinite time.
But times are changing and new insights into the true properties of an organization and the capabilities of new technologies (climate, energy, IT, social media) have a challenging impact on missions and strategies.

As the modus operandi in many firms are the result of tradition and patchwork improvements usually existing business functions do not allow the organization to maneuver as required in today's hectic environments. The capacity to adapt to new requirements has to be constructed and that requires the availability of theories and skills to support the design and implementation of a new type of business functionality.
This represents my first mission.

Secondly, even if one would be able to construct business functions that can be changed in its properties overnight one still has to deal with IT legacy, as an expression in hardware and software of the way business was executed in the past. The second mission then is to develop theories and skills to allow the direct execution of properly constructed business functions into software applications that support business operations. As this direct execution of business functionality would become possible it not only enhances the organizations capacity to deal with change but would also do away with current complexities of time lapsed between the specification of IT requirements and the delivery of software applications. As a consequence financial investments in software development would be seriously reduce.

Central focus of thesis

I postulate that a new science domain emerges, positioned between current management sciences on the one hand and IT sciences on the other hand. This science domain, briefly named Corporate Architecture, covers the development of business design theories including the use of design frameworks, ontologies , modeling tools and construction "material" on the one hand and the development of technologies to directly execute business models into software applications on the other hand.

Organization of Research

A   In order to explore the potential of business modeling and the construction of business functions in a formal process I investigated the properties of the introduction of the WMO (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning) in four municipalities. This law was introduced by central government together with an extensive manual about how to organize the application of this new law in the modus operandi of these municipalities. Key question was to investigate to what extent the application of design and construction principles would be able to deal with the variance that inevitably occurred in organizing for this new task in each of these municipalities.This research effort was sponsored by a grant from Senter Novem (a government agency).

B   A second research effort was undertaken to explore direct model execution by designing, constructing and testing the link between business models and software applications, required to support business operations. This research effort was undertaken in close cooperation with Cordys Holding BV

Current status of thesis

The results of both research efforts are available now and I plan to submit the first draft of key chapters of my thesis to my promoters later this year.