INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT MCBRIDE

Lindsey Green:	Hello and welcome to the Biztech Report's Internet Radio. Hi, I'm Lindsey Green and today we present the next installment in our IT Solutions Series, Doing More With Less, sponsored by IBM. In today's report, we once again discuss the challenges IT managers are facing and explore the latest trends and approaches being used by leading edge organizations around the world to accomplish organizational objectives. Here to bring us another discussion on how organizations in today's economy are doing more with less is Biztech Report's editorial director, Lane Cooper.
Lane Cooper:	Thanks, Lindsay. The topic of enterprise architecture has been a subject that's received a lot of attention in the industry press, probably because it contains so much promise in how enterprise architectures and systems can become more effective. But with that promise has also come the flip side, a little bit of confusion. Here to shed some light on the dos and don'ts and some of the key issues that people should consider as they explore their enterprise architecture options, is Scott McBride, IBM's pre-eminent expert on enterprise architecture management. Scott, thanks for joining us today.
Scott McBride:	It's my pleasure, Lane. Thank you for having me.
Lane Cooper:	Excellent. Well Scott, let me start by throwing you the tough question right off the bat. Do enterprise architecture initiatives, the so-called EA initiatives, do they have a solid track record of success? And when they don't, what do you consider to be the primary reason for it to perhaps get off center or off track?
Scott McBride:	You know, Lane, I think that's a question a lot of people are asking, because like with a lot of other things that we've seen in the last 10 or 15 years, frankly there is a mixed track record. But I can tell you this, that those EA initiatives that are successful are those that targeted business problems. It is relatively rare for an organization to do EA for the sake of EA, and be successful. The reason you're doing architecture is because you have pain points. You either want to take advantage of opportunities, you're in a competitive, regulated environment. There are all kinds of reasons to do it, but you have to be very clear on why you're taking an architectural view toward long term planning with your IT resources.
Lane Cooper:	Well that's interesting, Scott, because I think that a lot of the focus on enterprise architecture, seems to me at least, has been on the IT

side. Folks that have tended to have the enterprise architecture titles tend to come from the IT community. Do you see a problem there, or is it a question of emphasis and a need to sort of bring other disciplines into the equation?

Scott McBride: There really is a need to bring in, to have more kind of an ecumenical view of enterprise architecture, and it is after all *enterprise* architecture. I think the reason why you see a lot of the initiatives coming out of the IT shops is because the skillsets, the biggest need is really first of all, IT. Understand where are we putting our investment? Most organizations have a yearly investment cycle and what EA brings to the table first of all is a very strong methodology to help align an organization's investment decisions with their mission, their strategy, standard technologies, so they make the right choices.

Lane Cooper: Well, Scott, you know, we've been writing about IT alignment with business objectives for what seems like decades. What's different about enterprise architecture as a discipline to sort of hone and bring those two areas together? What has happened in the last few years to make this a compelling opportunity for enterprise?

Scott McBride: I think, Lane, a couple of things have happened. First of all, tools and business solutions have matured to the point that we can now provide views of the architecture that business people are comfortable with, that technical people are also comfortable with, and there's now the architect as a profession. Enterprise architecture truly as a profession is starting to grow, starting to gain traction, and these individuals in their roles are able to, basically, bring different constituencies together. So that the technical people can understand exactly what the business needs are and vice versa.

Lane Cooper: That's interesting. So they're sort of like a diplomat of sorts between these two cultures, I guess it would not be too strong a word to say, between the technical and business cultures of an enterprise. That raises the question, who should become the enterprise architect? Does it need to come from one side or the other, or is it just someone that has the joint skills to bring these two worlds together?

Scott McBride: We do quite a bit of training in enterprise architecture and that question often comes up. I get historically a lot of the architects come out of the IT realm because they have a good solid base of

the technology and they may have even been solution developers at some time in their lives. But communication is absolutely essential, good communication skills. In some respects, I would rather take someone who has a really solid understanding of business, and they understand the business, how it works, how it lives, how it breathes. And then also a good understanding of technology. They do not have to be technical experts or gurus in the area, but they need to be able to bring the parties together, and they need to be able to create sometimes what we call line of sight views that show how a particular strategy or vision or goal is met or not met by different levels of the organization.

Lane Cooper: Scott, that discussion of the joint skillsets requirements sounds like it presents an opportunity for IT managers to develop a new career path. Is that how you see it?

Scott McBride: I definitely think that there is an opportunity for a career path. And it is really a career path. Organizations that have had, especially in the federal government and some of the large companies that we've worked with for a number of years, they have teams that have been in place for some time, and it is certainly an opportunity for individuals who want to be involved both sort of in the business world as much as technology to really refine their skills. And not only that, but to really help the organization achieve the strategic alignment. Now as you mentioned, this is something that we've been trying to do for a long, long time.

Lane Cooper: I wanted to shift our discussion to the impact that enterprise architecture can have on an enterprise. And I guess the focus of our series has been doing more with less. What specifically can an enterprise architecture or framework do to provide some immediate gains, especially as ROI cycles shrink and people expect to get those returns in shorter timeframes. What do you see the role of EA playing in helping organizations get to those metrics faster?

Scott McBride: Exactly, and I think that's really unfortunately where a lot of organizations are today. One thing I would like to say and I will answer your question here is I don't think we have the luxury to jettison some of the disciplines and the standards that enterprise architecture does bring to the table. And if I can say this, if we're in a particular economic environment, it forces us to make choices. Instead of having A and B, we can either have A or B and not both. We really need solid metrics. We need a methodology. We need a way to make sure that when we make those decisions, and we're

	really talking about investment decisions, maybe product decisions, what capability to roll out. We can only typically do one thing at a time, even at an organization level. Having an architecture to help to make informed decisions I think is more important than ever before.
Lane Cooper:	Interesting. Now the other big complaint that comes from the enterprise community has been that there are so many – that things are so heterogeneous and so complex that there tends to be a lot of sort of technological redundancy. How can EA corral that complexity and better manage it?
Scott McBride:	I think of enterprise architecture as turning our walls into glass, glass walls. And what I mean by that – when we have a view of the enterprise and we create different views, that we're looking at a process view, we're looking at data up and down the organization, we're looking at different segments and lines of business. We see both the gaps and we see the redundancies. And until you have that sort of holistic view, end to end, top to bottom – and I will say this, that it does not have to be 100%. It could be a 50% effort or a 60% effort and I can still see oh – here's where we have some redundancy. Here's where we have some underutilized computing capability. Here is an opportunity for server consolidation. There is where the great benefits lie, and we can begin to harvest some of the benefits and to reap the value from enterprise architecture in the near term rather than the long term.
Lane Cooper:	Excellent. So you can give us an idea a little bit of what IBM is doing to try to make their investment in enterprise architecture pay off as quickly as possible?
Scott McBride:	I'd love to, Lane. IBM does offer some significant business solutions in this area, specifically with System Architect, which today is the pre-eminent repository-based EA [inaudible] tool. And in concert with other tools and the Rational and other IBM products, we are able to provide enterprise architects with the tools to be able to model, to analyze and to publish the results. And typically enterprise architecture is practiced in a framework of governance. We also have business solutions that will address that as well.
Lane Cooper:	That's interesting. Could you give us a little more detail on the relationship between governance and enterprise architecture? It seems like they're fairly related topics, and perhaps illustrate how an IBM solution can help optimize those activities?

Scott McBride: Yes – governance – enterprise architecture without governance I would even say might even be dangerous. It certainly is risky. Governance is an instance of policy, and typically policy is driven by various factors. But the governance aspect is very important because the governance is always specific for the organization. It's really how decisions are rendered, how issues are escalated, how you make this choice between A and B and to provide a standard way for evaluating business cases and deciding whether or not to invest in a particular proposal.

Lane Cooper: Excellent. So bottom lining it out, what are the key pieces of advice that you would offer listeners on how to get the most out of these activities, and how to, in effect, do more with less, given that that seems to be the reality that most of our audience is dealing with today?

Scott McBride: What I would say as a take away from today's talk is that knowing exactly where your organization needs to go, in other words, some of the pain points I talked about earlier – use that as the basis for saying let's use just a few of the techniques, the practices, the business solutions that we provide to help us to wrap ourselves around it. The first thing you need to do in addressing any problem is understand what that problem is. Enterprise architecture does not require you to have a full set of models for the enterprise, but just enough so that you understand the dependencies and some of the causes of particular issues. Then, when we begin to see opportunities for either consolidation or growth, or of other solutions, then we do so in a knowledgeable way that significantly reduces the risk of actions we might take.

Lane Cooper: Outstanding. Scott, thanks so much for taking the time to chat with us today.

Scott McBride: Well thank you, Lane.

Lane Cooper: You can learn more about the role of enterprise architecture by keeping your eye on the webpage that brought you to this podcast. We'll be visiting these and other issues, and Scott, I hope to be able to bring you in on further discussions on how EA fits into the broader spectrum of managing an enterprise system in an effective and efficient manner. For Biztech Reports, this is Lane Cooper. Lindsey, back to you.

Lindsey Green: Thanks Lane. Today's Biztech Report podcast is sponsored by IBM, where the big blue team is working with clients to develop new business designs and technical architectures that enable the flexibility required to compete in today's economy and global landscape. For Biztech Reports, this is Lindsey Green.