

Management abstract

Now more and more organizations decide to outsource one or more of their services the question rises how the architecture function should be organized in order to optimally manage the provision of services during the different phases of the outsourcing process. This research, which is performed in close collaboration with the Dutch Outsourcing Platform, focuses on two important questions regarding the organization of the architecture function in the context of outsourcing: how is the architect population to be shaped if an organization decides to outsource one or more services, and about which subjects do these architects communicate with each other?

In order to provide an answer to these questions interviews have been conducted with eleven representatives of outsourcers, service providers and consultancy firms. All interviewed persons have supported one or more outsourcing deals and dispose of much knowledge and experience of the subjects of outsourcing as well as digital architecture. By means of the Sourcing Life Cycle, formulated by the taxonomy study group of the Dutch Outsourcing Platform, these persons gave their opinion about the positioning of the different architect types and the activities that they fulfill during the phases of the sourcing process, namely the decision-making, selection, transfer, transformation, provision of services and termination phase. During the research a distinction has been made between three types of outsourcing, namely an 'as is' transfer, the integration of the processes and tooling to the standards of the service provider and transformational outsourcing.

The results of this research are used to formulate a model which is validated by a second group of organizations, once again consisting of outsourcers, service providers and consultancy firms. The results show that the positioning of the different architect types is strongly dependent on the phases of the Sourcing Life Cycle and the type of the outsourcing deal. Furthermore this research provides an overview of the activities that the architects should fulfill during the different phases of the sourcing process.

The results show that architecture is an indispensable tool for the successful management of an outsourcing deal and the enforcement of the quality of the provision of services. In practice however architects cannot always dispose of a clear mandate and important decisions are sometimes made without the architects being consulted or even informed. Also, for a successful outsourcing the service provider(s) should be willing to embed the provision of services on a high level within their own organization. For this reason the use of a mature architecture and the focus on innovation should be rewarding for the outsourcer as well as the service provider(s).

The results that are described in this thesis are highly interesting because of the newsworthiness of the subjects of outsourcing and digital architecture, the representation of a large number of outsourcers, service providers as well as consultancy firms and the implementation of an external validation. Because of these aspects the results of this research are important for organizations that are currently in the process of a sourcing deal as well as organizations that are still situated in the decision-making phase of the sourcing process.