

A Business and Solution Building Block Approach to EA Project Planning

Graham McLeod
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Background

Large Telco (Bandwidth / ISP) HQ in Johannesburg

Provide most of business connectivity in Southern Africa

Expanding into Africa

Aggressive Growth Plans - Double Revenue in 5 Years

Strategic Plan in Place as a “Sketch”

Many Projects Kicked Off, but Poorly Scoped / Resourced

Fledgling EA Function

The Situation

Project to improve the Quote to Signed order process

In Parallel:

Business Analyst appointed to draw up requirements using a traditional BRS
“victorian novel”

Agile Development Team set up to deliver a solution

Oversight by Strategic Programme office and Systems and Controls Group

Much Activity but also much confusion

New EA Function asked by Project Sponsor (CFO) to
“Audit” the Project

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Problems Experienced

No Consensus on

Project Scope

Dependencies upon various elements (internal to project and external)

Release plan and priorities for functional components

Poor Communication Between

Project team and project sponsor

Requirements Specifier and Designers

Project and EA

Project and other concerned groups and projects

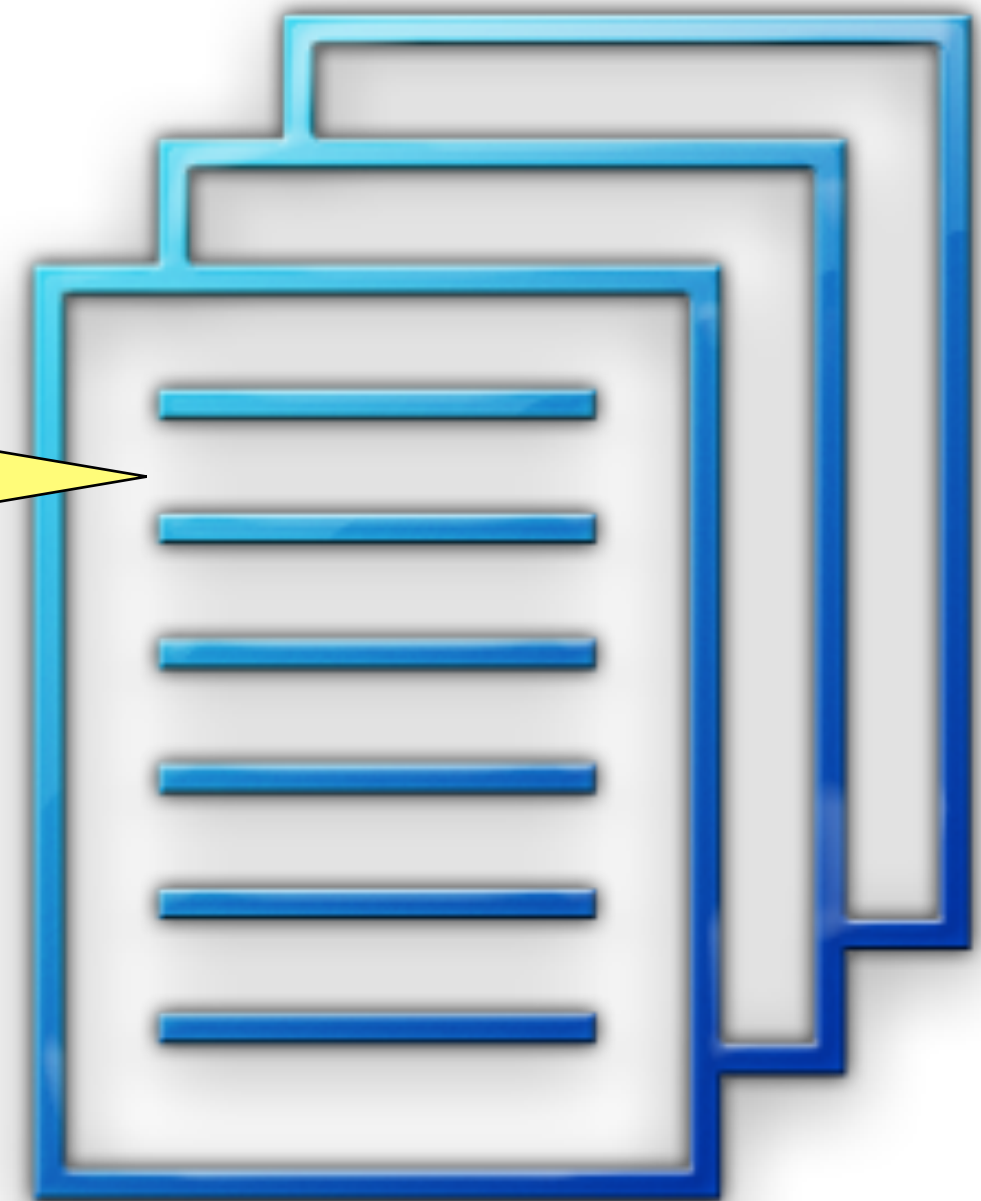
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Gaps

Business Requirements Specification

- Very Large Scope
- Effectively an End State with many Business Participant wishes
- Not Prioritised or Broken into Delivery Packages
- Partial Suggested Solution Design, but not fully thought through

- Fine Grained
- Not Visible to User and Sponsor Community
- Confusion between Versions and Releases



Agile Method Issue Lists

- Scope Differences
- Solution

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Building Blocks

TOGAF has a somewhat schizophrenic definition of building blocks: on one hand defining them thus:

“**Architecture Building Blocks (ABBs)** typically describe required capability and shape the specification of Solution Building Blocks (SBBs). For example, a customer services capability may be required within an enterprise, supported by many SBBs, such as processes, data, and application software.

Solution Building Blocks (SBBs) represent components that will be used to implement the required capability. For example, a network is a building block that can be described through complementary artifacts and then put to use to realize solutions for the enterprise. “

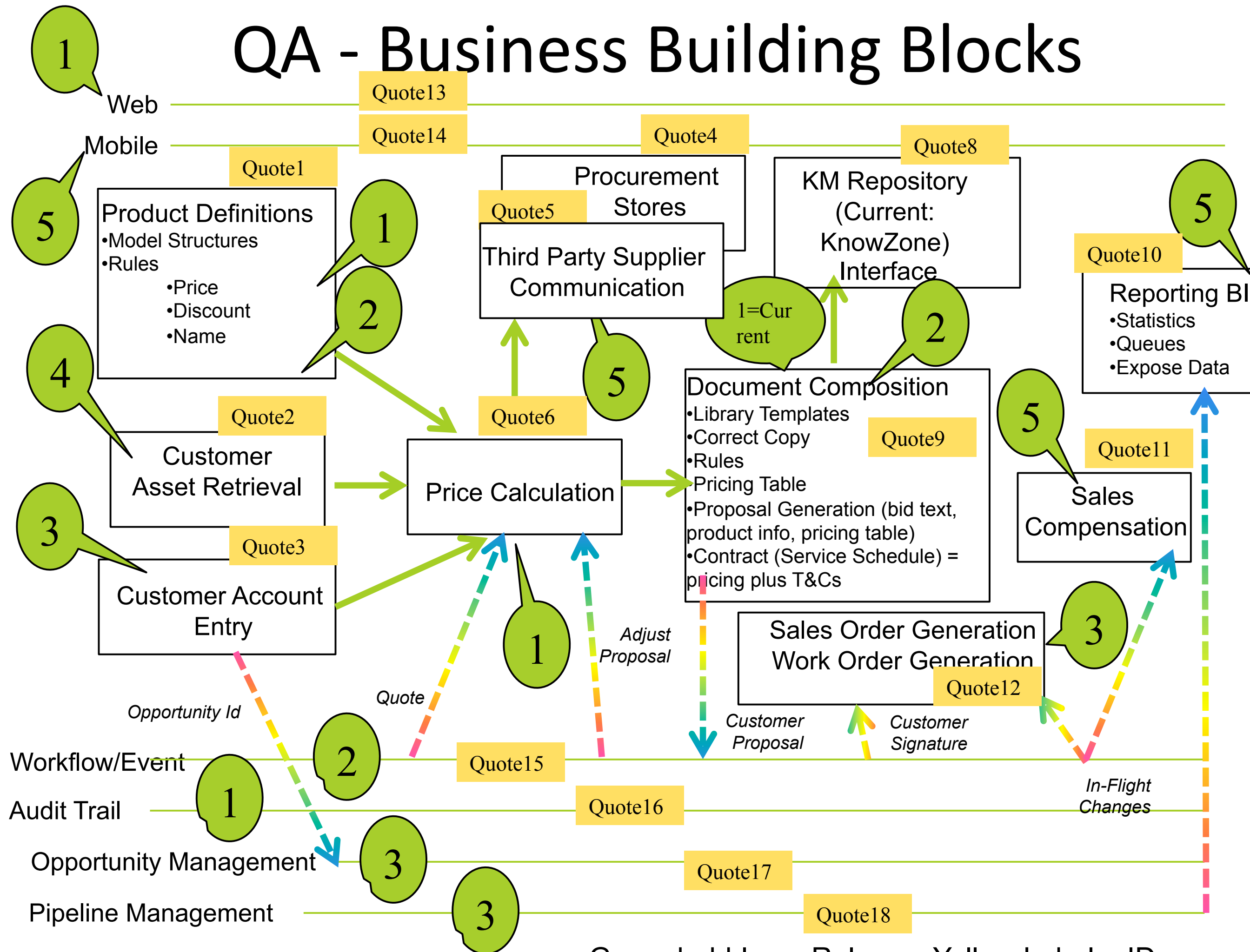
but also at another point [section 33.2] defining them as the elements in the content or meta model:

“The content metamodel provides a definition of all the types of building blocks that may exist within an architecture, showing how these building blocks can be described and related to one another. For example, when creating an architecture, an architect will identify applications, “data entities” held within applications, and technologies that implement those applications. These applications will in turn support particular groups of business user or actor, and will be used to fulfill “business services”.”

We use a capability based approach where a Business Building Block is a capability required in the business defined independently of technology and implementation choices. They can include elements of service, process and function. They may also imply location and capacity to deal with volume or performance needs.

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QA - Business Building Blocks



Green bubbles = Release; Yellow Label = ID

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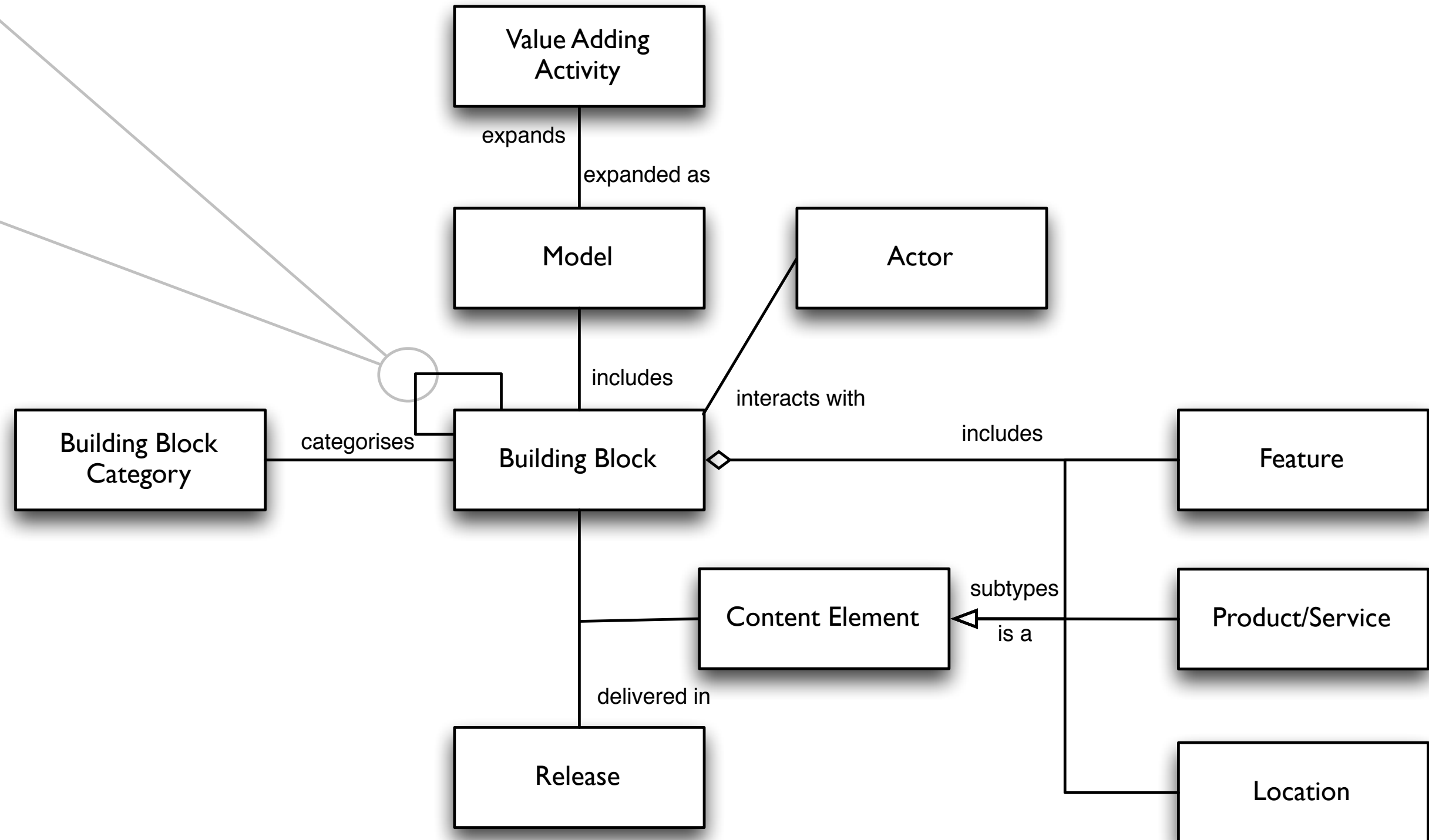
Release Planning

Target Date =>		April 2013	June 2013			
Target Capability V	Systems Interdependencies	Release 1	Release 2	Release 3	Release 4	Release 5
Product Definitions	Tribold	EIA	EIA			
Price Calculation	Tribold	EIA				
Audit Trail		EIA				
Proposal Document Creation	Qvidian		EIA			
Workflow			EIA			
Customer Account Create/Read	Siebel			EIA		
Sales Order/Work Order Creation	Siebel			EIA		
Installs Project Management	Siebel			EIA		
Customer Asset Read	Siebel				EIA	
Opportunity Management	Siebel					
Pipeline Management	Siebel					
Sales Compensation Calculations	Oracle Incentive Compensation					
Web/Mobile Access						
Reporting & BI	Microstrategy,					
3rd Party Communication						
Procurement/Stores						
Knowzone Sales Document Creation	Knowzone					
Authority Matrix						

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Meta Model

- Multiple:
- depends upon
 - includes
 - realised by
 - triggers
 - messages



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Tooling

EVA Netmodeler is used by client

A repository and web based multi-user EA and modeling tool

Allows quick and easy extension of meta model and visual model notations

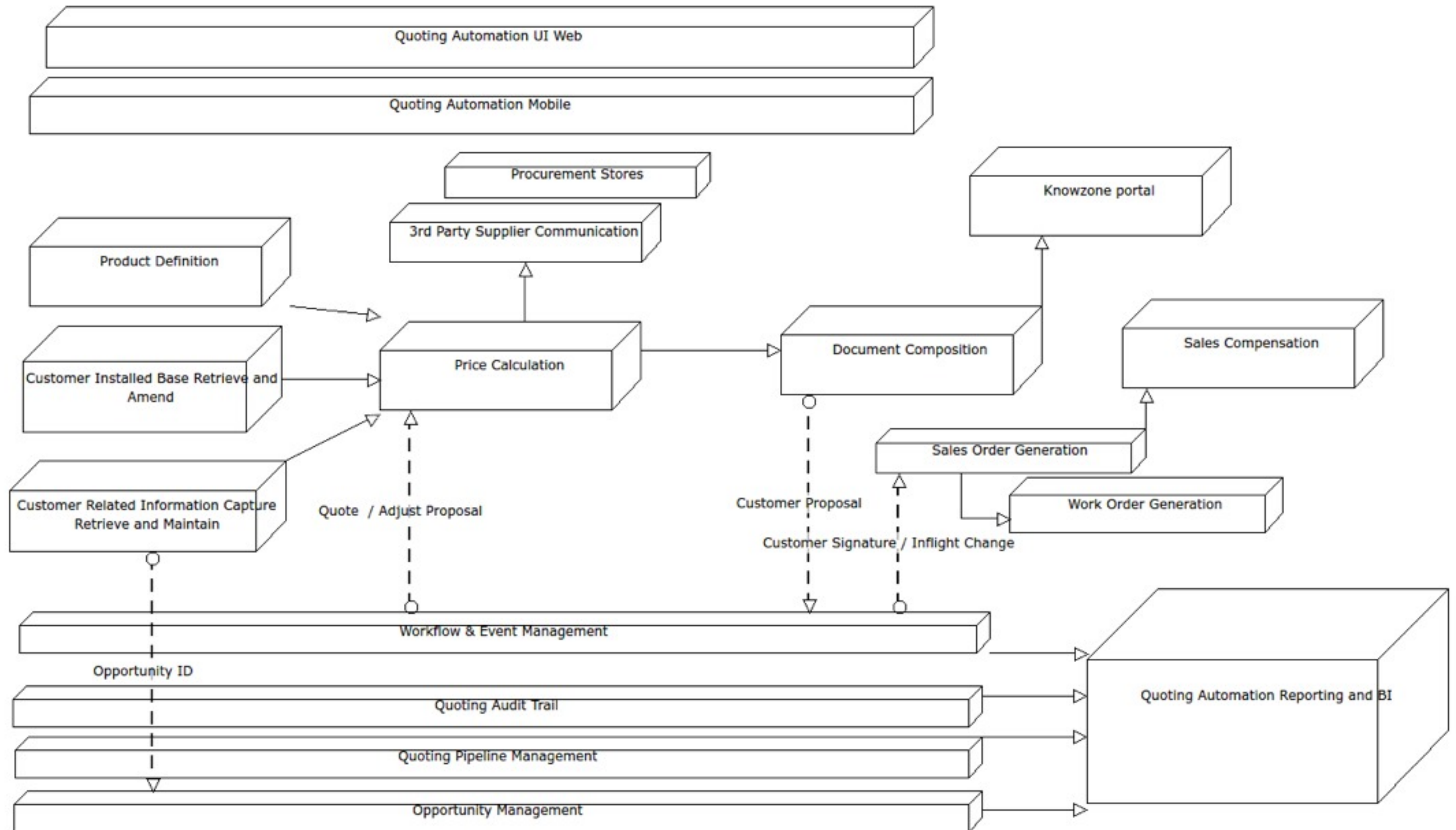
We created a suitable meta model fragment (for both business and solution levels)

Implemented this in the tool and defined a visual modeling notation (2 days)

Applied this to make whiteboard model more rigorous and allow linkage to other repository information

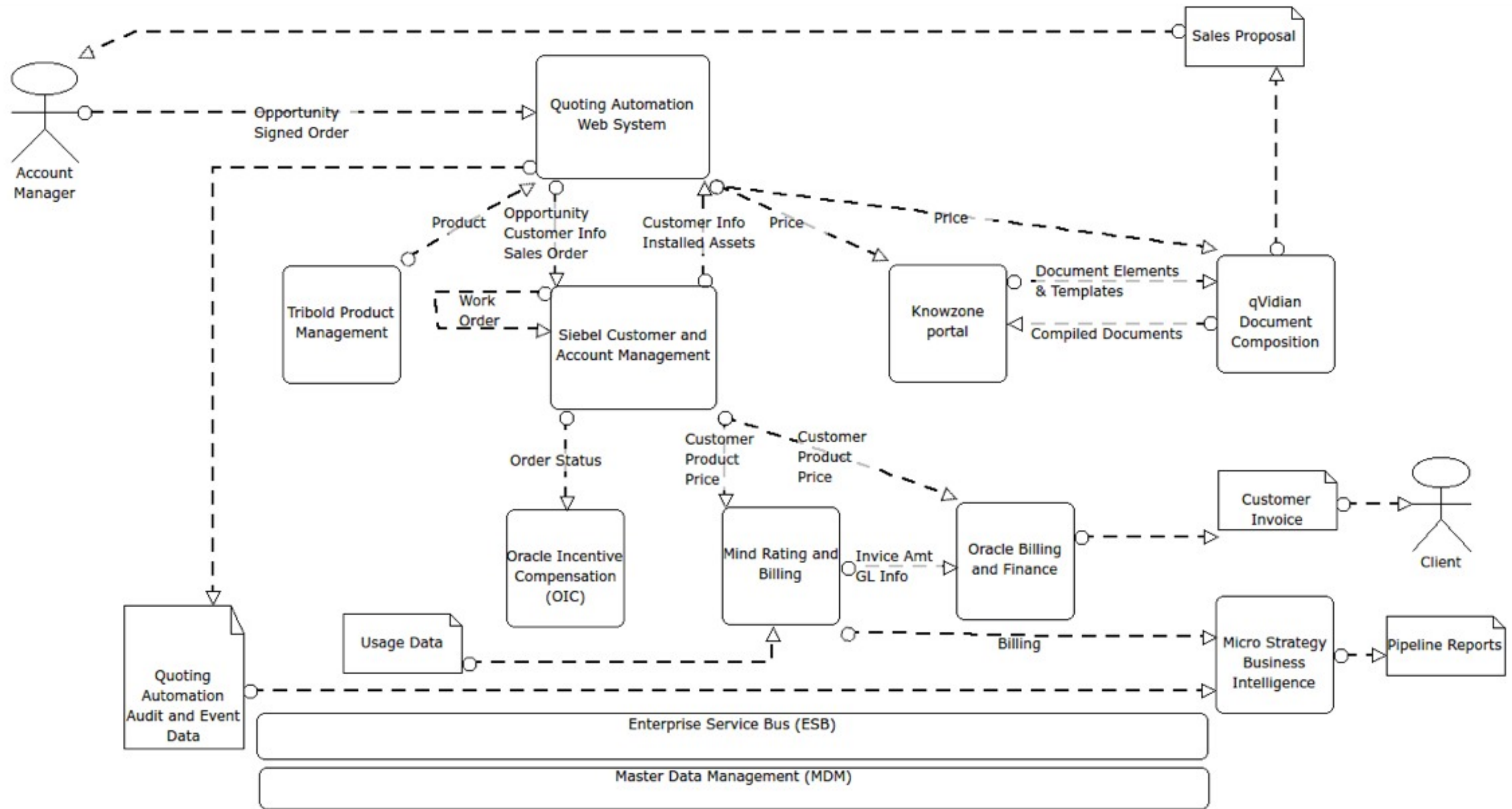
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Business Building Blocks



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Solution Building Blocks



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Results

Differences in perceptions between stakeholders and participants became obvious

Differences in scope as defined by different parties were highlighted

Common requirements across projects were identified

It became possible to inform someone about a given project within minutes rather than confusing the with multiple documents totalling > 100 pages

Dependencies between elements and the implications for release planning were obvious

Limitation: Only applied in one organization so far..

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Traceability thru' Development

Recommended

Updating of BRS to align with building block models

Unique numbering of Requirements in BRS

Numbers to be used in defining issues in Agile Issue management system

So that

Requirements are not lost during translation

Reporting can be against agreed requirements

Any out of scope issues will be quickly highlighted

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Conclusions

Sponsor was delighted with results

Project more accurately scoped

Dependencies clear

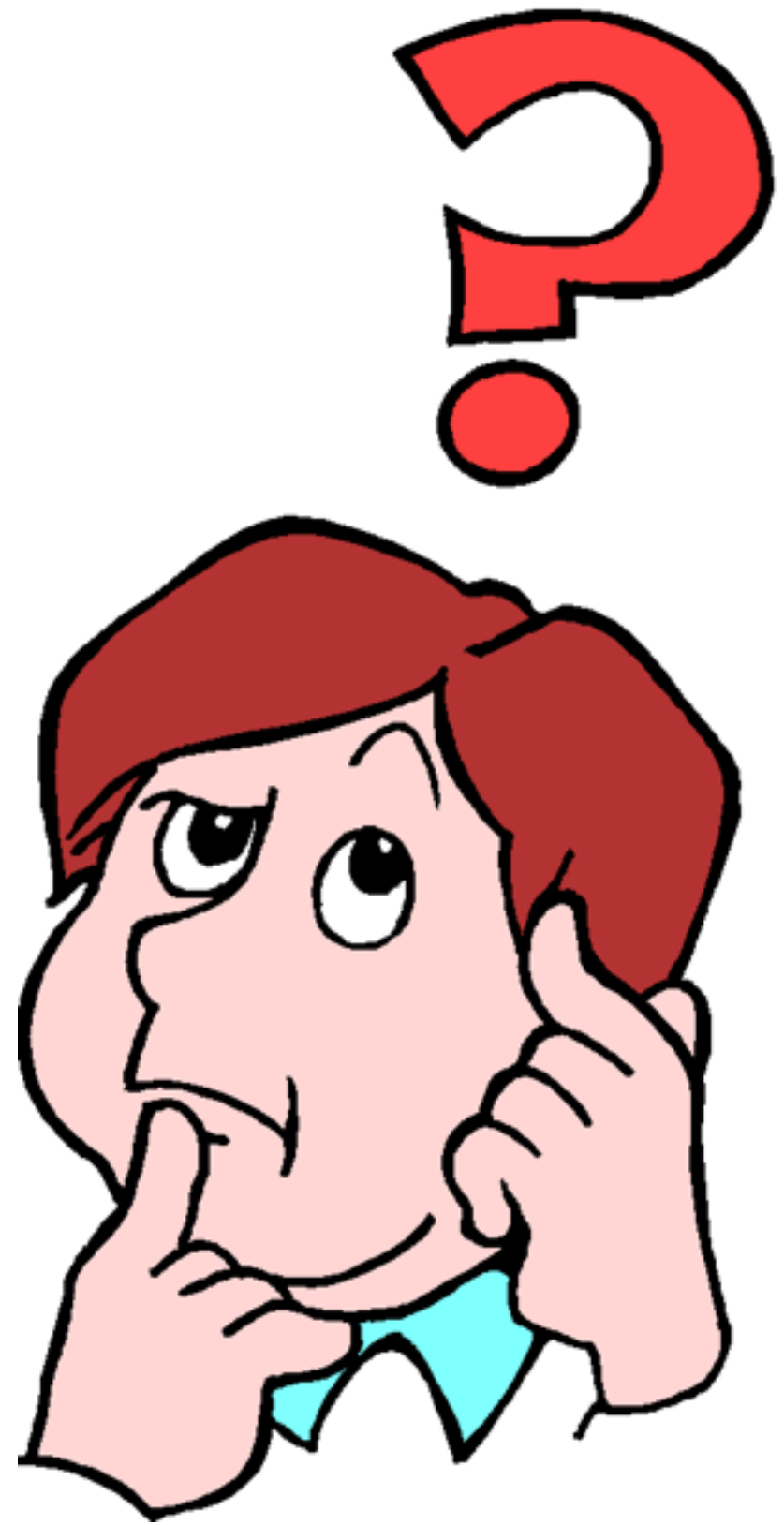
Release components and capability clear

Better communication between strategy, sponsor, programme management, business analyst and system development

Clear linkages between business and solution view

Technique is easy to teach and quick to use

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Graham McLeod

- ✉ graham@inspired.org
- 🕸 www.inspired.org
- 🕸 📅 <http://grahammcleod.typepad.com/>

(blog)



■ LinkedIn: Graham McLeod

“The world is moving so fast nowadays that the man who says it can’t be done is generally interrupted by someone doing it!” - *Elbert Hubbard*

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