

## Business service, business function and business process

**Question:** In the business layer, the concepts business service, business function and business process are positioned. The exact difference between these concepts is not clear in all cases, or to be more exact, in practice there sometimes exists confusion if something needs to be tagged as a business service, a business function or a business process. In the next section we give definitions and descriptions of these concepts.

**Solution:** A business service represents the added value that an organization delivers to its environment. One can make a distinction between internal and external services: Internal services represent the added value that is being delivered within the domain that the service belongs to. External services represent the added value that is being delivered to other domains or to the environment (for example customers).

A business function is an area that the organization wants to pay attention to ( e.g. by putting energy into, structurally committing resources to etc) in order to support its business goals. A business function can therefore be positioned as a grouping of internal behavior based on a certain criteria (for example location (same department), communication, required skills, shared resources and shared knowledge). A business function represents a part of the added value of an organization.

A business process is a unit of internal behavior or a collection of causal (sequence or dependency) related units of internal behavior, with the goal of producing a predefined collection of products and services. A business process can be constructed from sub processes or activities. A business process is triggered (started) by one or more business events or other business processes. Informally one could say that a business process consists of a number of activities or sub processes that are being executed in a certain sequence. Every activity is part of a business function. With other words, a process combines a chain of activities each of which are part of business functions, such as the figure below visualizes.

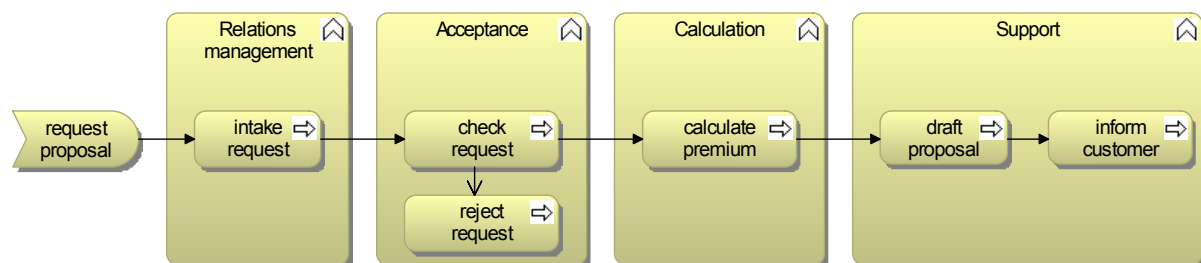


Figure : Example of business functions in relation to processes

A single process will not always belong to a single business function (as in this example): a business function will almost always consist of multiple activities and process steps and a process will often be realized by multiple business functions.

Business functions as well as business processes describe the inner way of working of an area or organization. A business service describes the parts of business processes and functions that are externally visible and usable. It describes the service that can be used, without making clear how that service is realized by means of processes or business functions.

In the figure below, the most important relationships between these concepts are visualized (being a part of the ArchiMate metamodel):

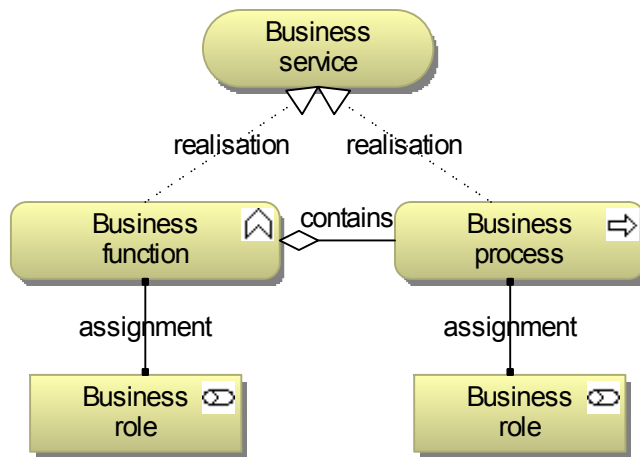


Figure: Most important relationships between concepts

**Consequences:** Not applicable.

**Alternatives:** Not applicable.

**Relationships with other good practices:** The distinction that exists between business service and business process / business function is also valid between application service and application function. Comparable criteria and heuristics can therefore also be used on the application layer.