

Connected Systems Consulting Ltd

BizTalk Maturity Assessment

Case Study 2

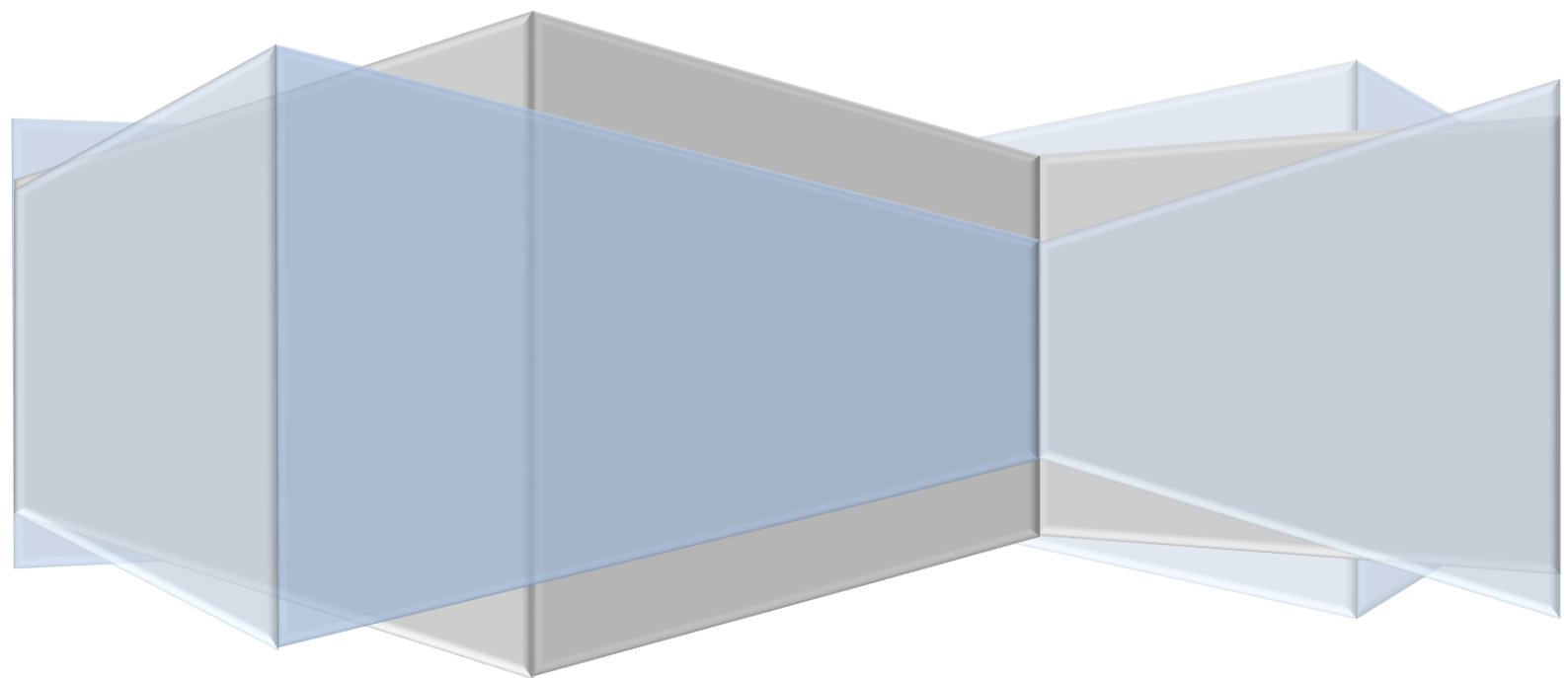


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INTRODUCTION

Case study 2 is about a company I once worked with where we had initially delivered a very successful project and then when it went live and service transition was complete, the customer then went into maintenance mode with their BizTalk capability until a future point when they would do more BizTalk projects but that would be some time in the future.

I have seen this a number of times in the past where a company has a high performing team which delivers well and then a period of inactivity and a new team starts a 2nd wave of BizTalk work but has problems which were not encountered by the first team.

These situations can be interesting from an observational perspective because it can lead to some interesting reasons or excuses why the two teams are believed to be having different levels of success. In this particular case I got to return to that customer to help them through some of the challenges they had at the time and I wanted to use the Maturity Assessment to compare where the customer was at the end of the first project and where they were when I went back to help to see what kind of conclusions it draws compared to the observations I could make at the time.

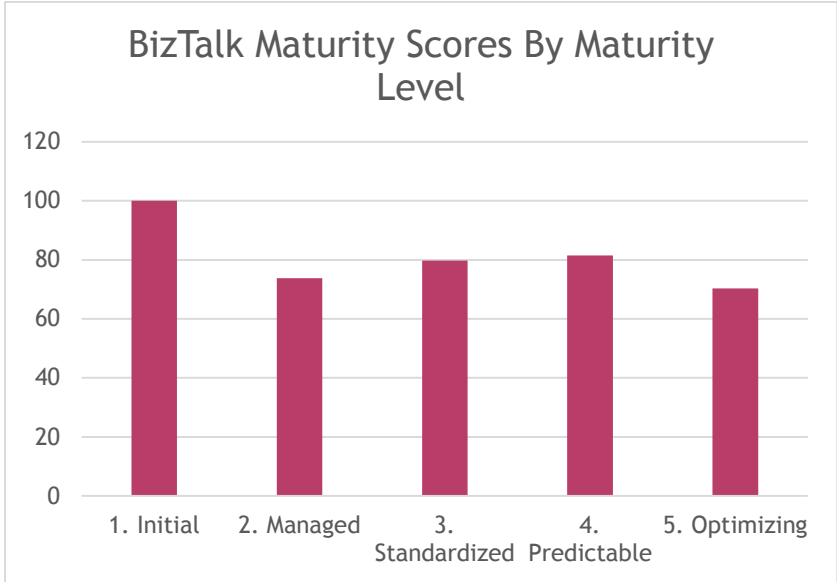
To compare these two positions I have completed the Maturity Assessment for each of these times and have outlined the results in the rest of this document.

When I went back to help this customer they were actually in the development and testing phases of the project and were having problems successfully delivering working software that met the requirements on a consistent basis. The customers management team had identified that the new project team were struggling with some areas which they knew from previous experience with the original project team were areas which used to work very well.

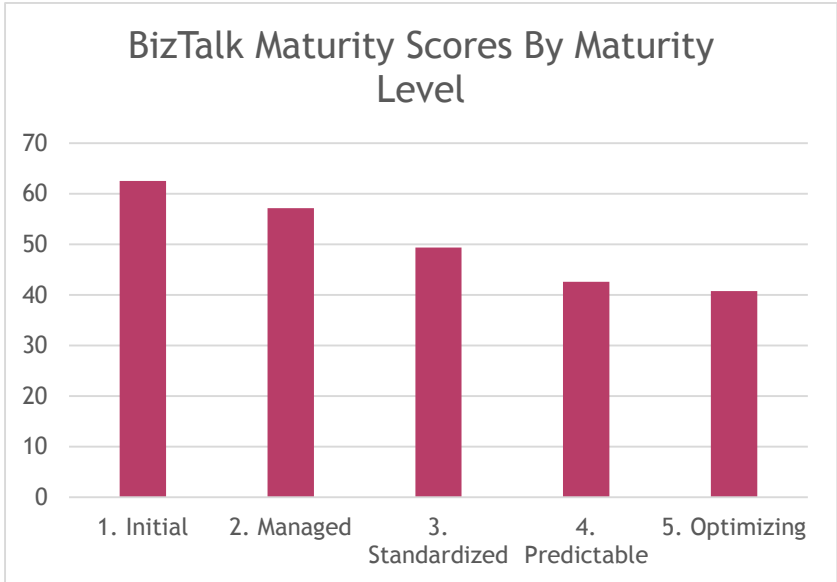
MATURITY OVERVIEW

This section will outline the results at the highest view of maturity.

BEFORE



AFTER



SUMMARY

The below table summarizes the change in the two tables identified above.

Area	Change
Initial	100% → 62.5%
Managed	74% → 57%
Standardized	79% → 49%
Predictable	81% → 42%
Optimizing	70% → 40%

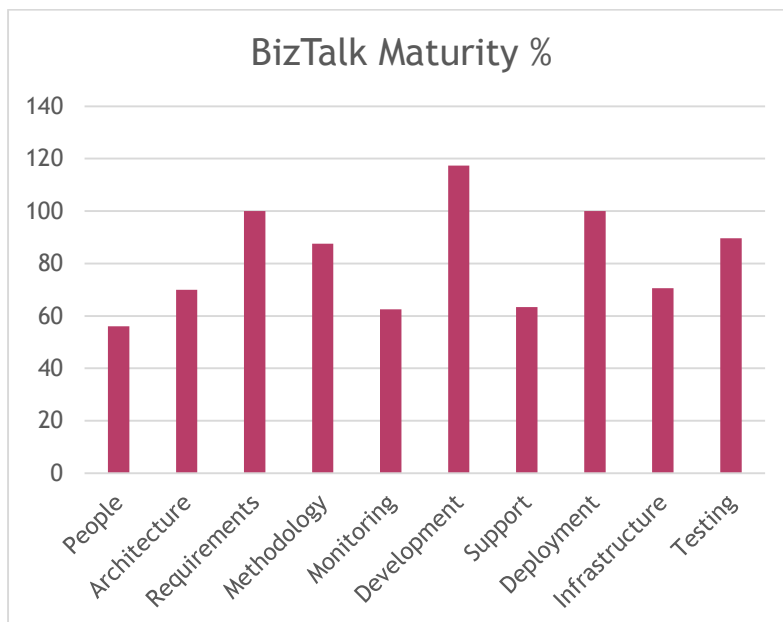
OBSERVATIONS

You can see that there has been a significant drop in maturity across all areas. Straight away this would suggest that the 2nd project team aren't following the same ways of working that the original project team had introduced. On the positive side however the fact that there has been some significant drops across the board suggests that there will be a number of things we could change which should have a significant effect.

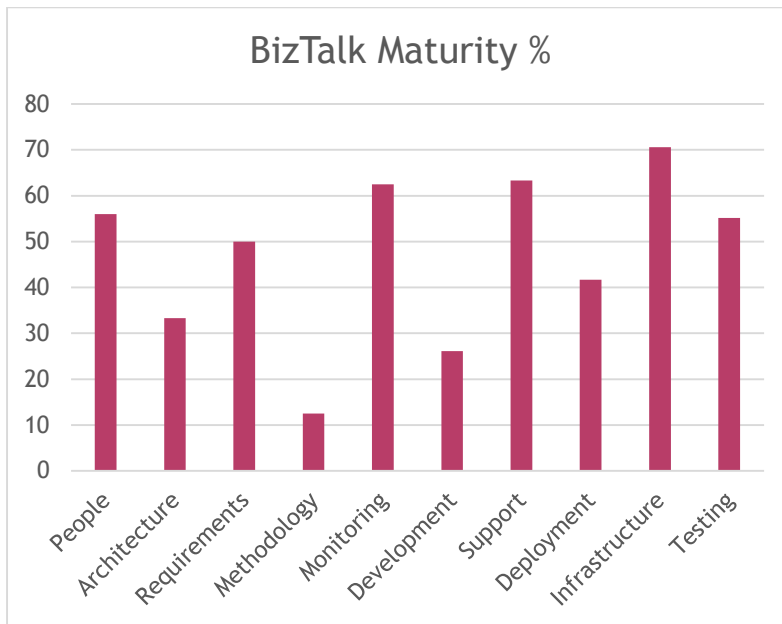
MATURITY BY CATEGORY

In this section we will look at the change in maturity % for each category. This should help us to identify any obvious areas which may have been affected by changes in the way of working.

BEFORE



AFTER



SUMMARY

Area	Change
People	56% → 56%
Architecture	70% → 33%
Requirements	100% → 50%
Methodology	87% → 12%
Monitoring	62% → 62%
Development	117% → 26%
Support	63% → 63%
Deployment	100% → 41%
Infrastructure	70% → 70%
Testing	89% → 55%

OBSERVATIONS

The first interesting observation in this area is there are a number of areas which have not changed, or have changed very little. These are:

- Monitoring

- Support
- Infrastructure

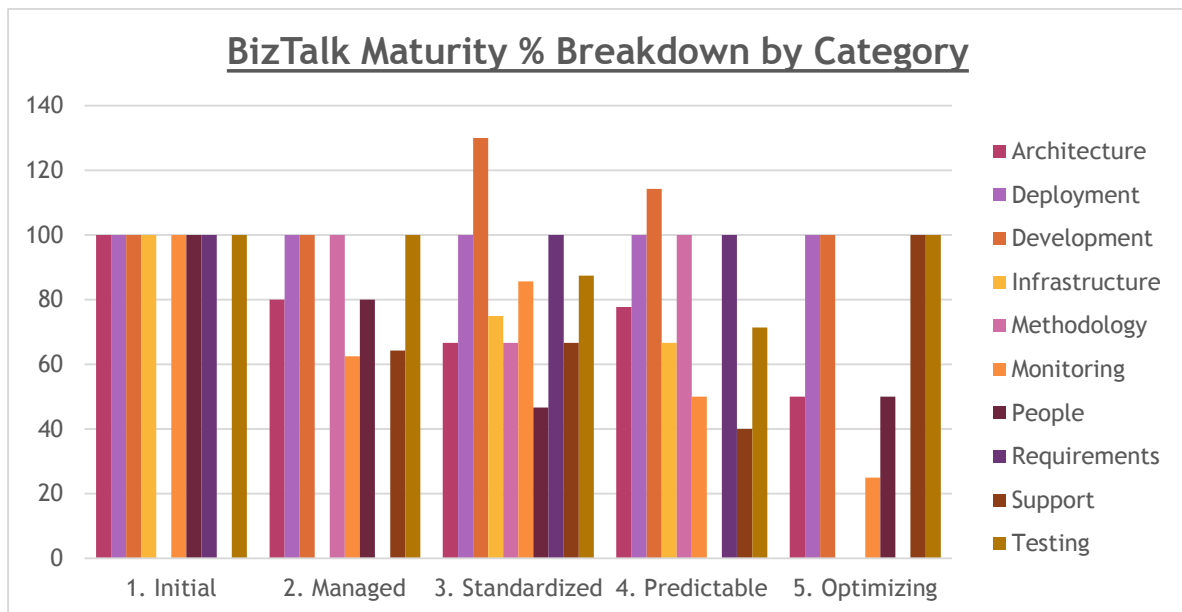
My assumption here is that when the original project closed the customer would have people who would still be actively working with BizTalk on a regular basis in these areas and it is likely that most customers would maintain their standards in areas like these or perhaps improve them.

The other areas are things that would tend to only be used when active development of new projects are happening. My guess is that when service transition was completed the customer didn't really use any of the BizTalk things they had in place and over time no one really owned or maintained these things. When the new project team came in they either did not know about some of the things which were already in place or did not understand them clearly so treat the customer like a green-field project and started putting together new application life cycle processes in place with the 2nd project wave. These new processes weren't maturing quickly enough and the project was suffering as result.

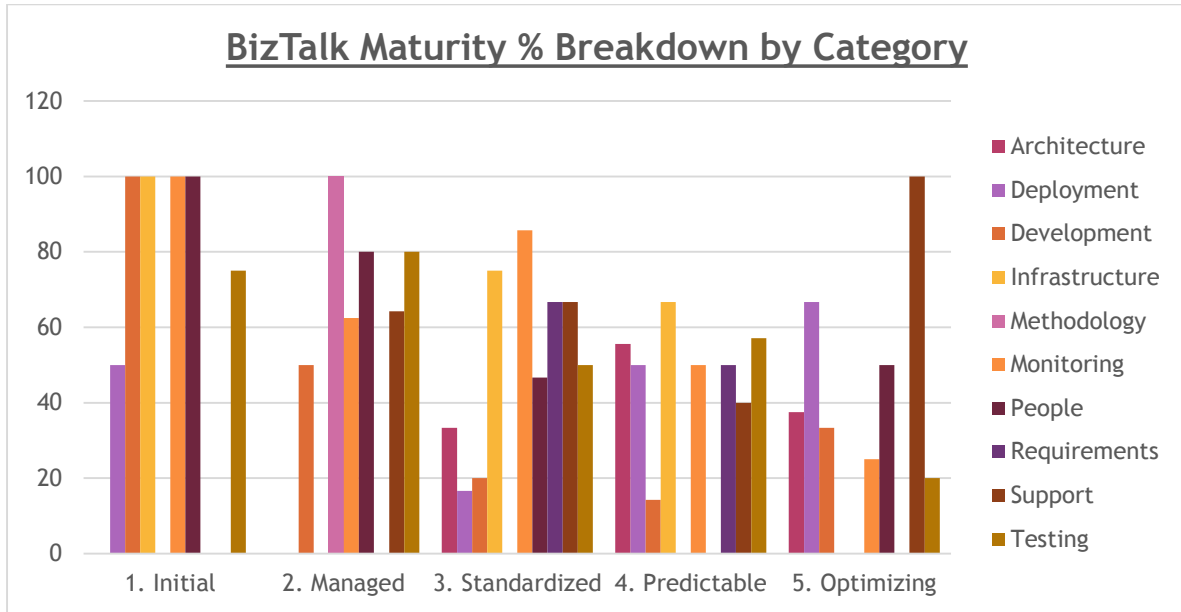
MATURITY BY CATEGORY AND LEVEL

In this section we will look at the details of the maturity scores for each category within each maturity level.

BEFORE



AFTER



OBSERVATIONS

In this section you can see that while the customer had a very solid capability in most areas, the 2nd project wave was working with a much lower maturity level in some of the key areas such as development, requirements and deployment. If these things have a low maturity level in any of the Initial, Managed or Standardized areas then it is common that the day to day working of the development team and their ability to make changes and get working integration processes into the test environments would be poor. These are the key initial areas that the customer needs to improve in to start getting their project back on track.

Once they have done this they can look at some of the longer term things which will ensure that the projects will deliver successfully into production and then service transition again.

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

In this case study it was interesting to look at the maturity assessment and to see that it highlights the same areas that an experienced consultant would identify as being the cause of the immediate problems being faced by the customer.

What is also an interesting area is how in the initial assessment the customer scored really well in most areas, however one of their weak areas was "People". The customer's original project team had put in place a lot of good practices which all projects should follow however the customer hadn't really invested in their internal people. When the project team all left at the end of the project the customer's internal team had been trained to a degree but the organisation wasn't really setup correctly to maintain BizTalk themselves and when they brought in a new team to ramp up for some new work the few people who had been using BizTalk weren't a core part of the original project team so a lot of the ways of working, standards and processes had been forgotten. This put the customer back into the position of an organisation doing their first BizTalk implementation.

Unfortunately this Service Transition and Integration Ownership within an organisation is a really common problem and I'm sure a lot of readers will have seen this scenario too.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Stephenson is a UK based integration specialist who has worked with many consultancies and customers delivering integration solutions based on Microsoft technologies such as BizTalk and Windows Azure.

Michael is heavily involved in community activities such as the UK Connected Systems User Group and speaking at events across Europe. Michael has also been a Microsoft Integration MVP for the past 5 years.

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