

# INSIGHT

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## BUSINESS ROLES

A MORE STRATEGIC AND BUSINESS ORIENTED  
APPROACH TO MANAGE ACCESSES



## Introduction

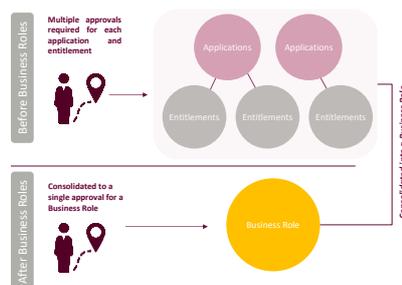
Imagine the following scenarios:

- You as a line manager or department head are constantly being asked to approve access requests for team members and are not sure what the requests are for?
- Different team members have different accesses to systems resulting in a team member not being able to check specific reports.
- Every year as part of recertification exercise you need to review access to dozens of applications for your team of 4 people and a mistake can lead to potential data breach?

Sounds familiar? As organizations and businesses are evolving at an unprecedented pace, so are the systems, processes and people that make up the operating model. Most notably in the financial services sector, companies have access to sensitive client information, which require careful planning of system access rights across the organizational structure from C-level executive down to the operational users. This is where business roles can help transition from an IT defined model to a more strategic model in which the process of managing permissions is owned by business. The introduction of Business Roles has provided organizations with a solution for their Identity & Access Management issues in this rapidly evolving and competitive environment.

## What is a Business Role?

A Business Role is a mapping of a company's resources (e.g. applications, entitlements, access rights, etc.) with similar functionality that exist in addition to departments, cost centers and / or locations. In other words, a Business Role is a package of access rights which regroups the necessary resources and permissions that allow the users assigned to this role to perform their standard work. A Business Role can be designed for a project team for example or it can be tailored for functions and specifically for



the departments/teams within that function (e.g. the recruiting team of the HR function).

The increasing adoption of Business Roles has allowed organizations to strengthen their access and data security, risk management and business productivity across all functions and sectors.

Business roles are an important pillar of Identity and Access Management (IAM). IAM is the discipline in enterprise IT that defines and manages the roles and access privileges of individual users and circumstances in which users are granted (or denied those privileges).

The objective of IAM is to enable the organization to manage the confidentiality, availability and integrity of the organization's data and intellectual property. For these reasons, IAM is becoming a trending topic for banks and financial institutions given their access to information from a retail (consumer banking) and market making (capital & global markets) perspectives. In short, IAM is seeking to enable the right individuals to have the right accesses at the right time and for the right reasons to promote data security and identity thefts.

## Benefits of Business Roles

With a robust Business Roles framework in place, four (4) major benefits impacting your organization have been identified:

**New joiner on-boarding:** By having Business Roles



in place, a new joiner can raise one (1) request for a Business Role, which should theoretically have all the standardized accesses required for him / her to perform their job.

This will minimize the confusion new joiners / line managers often experience when onboarding and determining which applications and accesses are required to perform the daily work. The overall onboarding journey will be smoother, which is shown to increase employee morale and retention rate.

**Decrease workload / increase productivity:**



Traditional IAM models require line managers and application owners to approve individual requests for resources when permission is sought after. By having Business Roles in place, individual requests will be consolidated into a single request as intended by

the Business Role created. This drastically saves time spent for line managers and application owners when it comes to approving access requests.

**Improved audit trails and recertification process:**



Yearly recertification and audits are conducted to make sure existing employees have the correct accesses and employees who have transferred departments

have accurately reflected their accesses and permissions. Business Roles streamlines the recertification process by allowing line managers to recertify the Business Role (assuming it is up to date). However, user access recertification is still required for individuals for applications beyond the scope of the Business Roles.

**Improve access control security:** Since a Business



Role is a package of applications and access rights, this consolidated view allows line managers to easily determine the level of access restriction and control security for

any given user, project, department or function. By having a clear view of all users' accesses, line managers can effectively monitor and control sensitive application and those privy to confidential client information. Additionally, the approval process of a Business Role creates a multiple line of defense for access requests; oftentimes an organization would have in place a process requiring the line manager's and department head's approval before a Business Role can be fully utilized.

In order to achieve the desired outcome and realize the potential benefits of Business Roles, the strategy and roadmap definition, operating model design / implementation and subsequent change management plan are critical. Sia Partners has extensive experience in the design and implementation of Business Roles for IAM teams, with a robust methodology to deliver value to our clients.

## Approach

Like any other critical initiative impacting the entire enterprise, it is very important for IAM management to define in the goals and roadmap of the program in alignment with the global IAM / Cybersecurity roadmap.

**Sanity Check tool:** After the roadmap is agreed, IAM team should work on creation of Sanity check tool.

This can be a simple excel macro based tool which based on the team / country defines which applications / entitlements can be included in the particular business role taking into account the different regulatory, confidentiality and other controls. For example, someone based in Singapore cannot access data from China shared drive due to China's data privacy laws and the sanity check will remove the Chinese shared drive from the SG business role design.

**Workshop with Management:** Based on the departments identified in the roadmap, IAM team can launch workshops with the department management to define the business role strategy based on factors like organizational structure, business criticality, etc. For example, APAC Wealth Management team could define a regional role which would be assigned to all employees within a function and then another role to be designed at the

### Sia Partners Approach

• **Business Roles review/creation**



• **Collaboration between Data Analytics and Business Roles**



country level. Resulting someone in Taiwan WM team, would be assigned 2 roles, a regional role and a Taiwan specific country role.

**Business Roles pilot program:** Run a pilot with a small team in every department. This helps achieve a quick win and showcase the benefits of business roles to the managers and users. In addition the pilot ensures the SPOC (Single Point of Contact) gets comfortable with the tools and process of business role deployment before tackling bigger teams.

## Challenges

Two (2) key challenges have been identified as the major impediments that must be overcome to successfully have the Business Roles framework and process in place.

**Getting the buy-in from business:** Business roles involve a fundamental shift in how permissions are managed. Since the changed workflow involves business owners defining the business roles and validating the user requests, shifting the responsibility and accountability from IT to business. This increased workload and responsibility

can seem like an impediment to certain business units, that's why it is important to define and emphasize on the both the qualitative and quantitative benefits from the start of the program.

**Quality of business roles:** It is easy to design business roles with few simple permissions which can help reach the KPI's in terms of number of roles created and users assigned. The litmus test for a well-defined business role is if the role can enable users to carry out most of their everyday tasks with permissions contained in the business role. This can be challenging because often application owners are reluctant to include their permissions in business roles due to various reasons. Thus it's imperative to understand and allay the concerns of the application owners and facilitate business roles covering a high percentage of permissions.

## Key Success Factors

The following factors are essential to ensure that the Business Roles program successfully meet its objectives, especially for large institutions which have departments spread across cities/countries, and it is only feasible to have the Business Roles project team in a few locations.

**Buy in from Senior Management:** Getting the buy-in from Senior Management/COO can set the program can be key in implementing the business roles program. It is thus key to highlight at the beginning of the project the key benefits of the project especially the man hours saved and the business accountability through the deployment of the program.

**Involvement of SPOC's:** Depending on the IAM roadmap and budget, it is likely that the Business Roles project team will have to compete for resources with other IAM initiatives resulting in limited bandwidth. In addition the team members have limited understanding of how each department works and which are the key applications/entitlements for carrying our everyday activities. This is where the SPOC's, who are on the ground, have in depth knowledge of the departments, and have relationships with all the major stakeholders can increase the likelihood of successful deployment, usage and maintenance of business roles.

**Change Management:** Effective and well-designed change management is key to the success of the program as it is easier to enlist support for the program and work with the SPOC's for the design of

the business roles. A good change management toolkit with simple communication and easy to understand communication is key to sustaining the program over a longer period and ensuring periodic maintenance and usage of these roles in Business as Usual (BAU) phase.

## The Future

To increase the adoption of Business Roles and justify the extra effort required by business teams for maintenance of business roles, IAM teams needs to prioritize few improvement areas which will focus on improving the quality of business roles and integrating business roles as a key pillar of employee onboarding.

**Integrating business roles in the HR onboarding process:**

- This will simplify and streamline the onboarding experience for a new employee and reduce the workload for the respective manager/admin.

**IAM Roadmap:**

- In the fast evolving IAM ecosystem, it is important to understand the strategic status that role management occupies. Are business roles a tactical or one off step only or it is a key step in the overall strategy in how IAM facilitates the overall business?

**Improvement of data quality and standardization of data formats:**

- Improvement of data quality and standardization of data formats across the vast myriad of interconnected systems used by large organizations is a key requirement for designing high quality business roles.

**Auto provisioning:**

- Move to auto provisioning from manual provisioning (especially for less critical and simpler applications) will not only enable faster provisioning of accesses but also free up substantial resources to focus on more valuable and complex tasks

With increasing regulatory requirements, access to growing customer data and focus on compliance, financial institutions are increasingly transitioning from a tactical IT defined model to a more strategic model in which the process of managing permissions is owned by business. A lot of work needs to be done to make this transition in which Sia Partners can play an integral role in defining a roadmap for your organization's IAM journey and tailor the approach to your needs.

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## YOUR CONTACTS

### VINCENT KASBI

Head of Asia  
+852 6800 5988  
vincent.kasbi@sia-partners.com

### STEFANO FOIS

Manager, CIO Advisory  
+852 9723 3483  
stefano.fois@sia-partners.com

### Adel Akloul

Manager, CIO Advisory  
+852 5664 1052  
adel.akloul@sia-partners.com

## ABOUT SIA PARTNERS

Sia Partners is a next generation consulting firm focused on delivering superior value and tangible results to its clients as they navigate the digital revolution. With over 1,200 consultants in 15 countries, we will generate an annual turnover of USD 230 million for the current fiscal year. Our global footprint and our expertise in more than 30 sectors and services allow us to accompany our clients worldwide. We guide their projects and initiatives in strategy, business transformation, IT & digital strategy, and Data Science. As the pioneer of Consulting 4.0, we develop consulting bots and we integrate the disruption of AI in our solutions.



### Abu Dhabi

PO Box 54605  
Al Gaith Tower #857  
Abu Dhabi – UAE

### Amsterdam

Barbara Strozilaan 101  
1083 HN Amsterdam -  
Netherlands

### Brussels

Av Henri Jasparlaan, 128  
1060 Brussels - Belgium

### Casablanca

46, Boulevard Adbellatif  
Ben Kaddour, Racine –  
Casablanca 20000 -  
Morocco

### Charlotte

101 S. Tryon Street, 27th  
Floor, Charlotte, NC 28280,  
USA

### Doha

Al Fardan Office Tower #825  
PO Box 31316  
West Bay Doha - Qatar

### Dubai

Shatha Tower office #2115  
PO Box 502665  
Dubai Media City  
Dubai - UAE

### Hong Kong

23/F, The Southland  
Building, 48 Connaught  
Road Central  
Central - Hong Kong

### Houston

800 Town and Country  
Boulevard, Suite 300  
77024 Houston, TX

### London

36-38 Hatton Garden  
EC1N 8EB London - United  
Kingdom

### Luxembourg

7 rue Robert Stumper  
L-2557 Luxembourg

### Lyon

3 rue du Président Carnot  
69002 Lyon - France

### Milan

Via Vincenzo Gioberti 8  
20123 Milano - Italy

### Montreal

304 - 19 Rue le Royer Ouest  
Montreal, Quebec,  
Canada, H2Y 1W4

### New York

40 Rector Street, Suite 1111  
New York, NY 10006 – USA

### Paris

12 rue Magellan  
75008 Paris - France

### Riyadh

PO Box 91229  
Office 8200 - 12, Izdihar city  
Riyadh 11633 - KSA

### Rome

Via Quattro Fontane 116  
00184 Roma - Italy

### Singapore

137 Street Market, 10-02  
Grace Global Raffles  
048943 Singapore

### Tokyo

Level 20 Marunouchi  
Trust Tower-Main  
1-8-3 Marunouchi,  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 100-0005 Japan



For more information, visit: [www.sia-partners.com](http://www.sia-partners.com)

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