

## Myth Busting: What Enterprise Architecture Is Not

Anne Lapkin, Betsy Burton

Enterprise architecture (EA) efforts are often perceived by those outside the practice area as vague, too broad and overlapping other functions. By clearly articulating the role of EA in relation to other disciplines and efforts, architects and EA teams can increase their impact and ability to engage IT and business people across the organization.

### Key Findings

- The EA team must leverage the strategic guidance from a business strategy and the specific tactical guidance from the business plan to guide their EA efforts overall.
- EA teams should serve as an advisor to the IT strategic planning effort, along with the CTO, senior IT staff, business leaders and users.
- EA teams must participate in performance management efforts relating to critical business processes.
- Enterprise architects do not dictate implementation details for the entire organization or for specific practice areas.
- In a well-architected enterprise, EA is the coordinating process that ensures that the other strategic and management processes of the enterprise are in sync with respect to the future state.

### Recommendations

- Be very clear about what EA is — and be equally clear about what it is not.
- Clearly document in the EA program charter how EA artifacts support other disciplines and how the work of the architecture team can be leveraged.
- Send enterprise architects to facilitation training to give them the tools they need to work with diverse groups of stakeholders to coordinate decision making.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Analysis .....	3
1.0 EA Is Not Business Strategy .....	3
2.0 EA Is Not IT Strategic Planning .....	4
3.0 EA Is Not IT Governance.....	4
4.0 EA Is Not Program Management .....	5
5.0 EA Is Not Portfolio Management .....	5
6.0 EA Is Not Process Management .....	5
7.0 EA Is Not Performance Management.....	5
8.0 EA Is Not Implementation.....	6
9.0 EA Is Not a Technology or Application Inventory .....	6
10.0 EA Is Not Change Management.....	6
11.0 EA Is Not a Standards-Setting Exercise.....	6
12.0 EA Is Not Enforcement .....	7

## ANALYSIS

---

Gartner's definition of EA (see "Gartner Defines the Term 'Enterprise Architecture'") reflects the goals and aspirations of most enterprise architects who are familiar with EA processes, methodologies and artifacts. It describes EA as an actionable and practical process and approach. EA is a collaborative process that facilitates discussion and resolution between diverse groups of stakeholders across the enterprise, with the objective of ensuring a consistent approach to the execution of the business strategy. However, in many organizations, EA initiatives are often perceived by those outside the practice area as vague, too broad and overlapping other functions. IT and business people will often express concern that EA is an effort by a group divorced from day-to-day realities to "control" what they do and "impede" their efforts. As a result, their interaction with enterprise architects is commonly clouded with suspicion, wariness and even disdain. How can enterprise architects create a culture of collaboration and support with other efforts? The key to increasing collaboration and support is for architects and architecture teams to communicate very clearly what EA is — and equally what EA is not. This provides other groups (see "Q&A on the Relationship Between Enterprise Architecture and Competency Centers") with an understanding of how they can work with architecture teams and leverage the work of EA. In addition, architects will gain a better understanding of what they should and should not be spending time on.

A well functioning EA program produces a number of artifacts that are used by other teams in the enterprise, including:

- A common vision of the requirements of the business strategy and the external trends affecting the enterprise. This provides the strategic imperatives for other initiatives such as business process management (BPM), business intelligence competency center (BICC), IT governance, enterprise information management (EIM) and program and portfolio management (PPM).
- A unified view of the future state that supports the strategy. This vision is shared across the entire enterprise and provides other initiatives with a common set of goals.
- An analysis of the gaps between the current and future states, as well as a road map for the evolution of the enterprise.
- The principles, standards and guidelines that support the realization of the future state as implementation decisions are made.

*Enterprise architects, who typically drive the EA program, are facilitators and do not have decision rights over all the critical issues of the enterprise. The participants in the EA process include the business, IT and operations, and representatives of the competency centers supporting specific disciplines such as business intelligence and the various management disciplines of the enterprise (like business strategy and portfolio management). These participants retain their decision rights, but in an architected enterprise, those decisions are made in collaboration with other enterprise stakeholders as part of the EA process, rather than being made in individual functional silos.*

In this research, we address the things that EA is not. However, EA does intersect with each of these areas. Accordingly, we also identify the intersection points.

### 1.0 EA Is Not Business Strategy

A business strategy is defined by business leaders and senior executives, and it articulates the business goals and directions of the organization overall, along with the strategic directions the

business will pursue. The business plan turns strategies into specific tactical plans designed to achieve the strategic goals. *The EA team must leverage the strategic guidance from the business strategy and specific tactical guidance from the business plans to guide their EA efforts overall. Gartner refers to this activity as "creating the business context for the architecture," and a critical deliverable of this effort is the common requirements vision (CRV — see "Advancing the Common Requirements Vision Deliverable"). This document can be leveraged by the business strategy and planning efforts, because it clearly identifies the changes required in the enterprise to support the strategy.* This information is invaluable when evaluating what business options are achievable and determining how to change/evolve the business.

The challenge is that many organizations struggle with defining a clear and focused business strategy (see "Findings: EA Should Be Driven by Business Objectives"). In such cases, the architecture team needs to work with business and senior executives to help them articulate the strategy in an actionable way. Business and senior executives should take the lead, but EA must support and help these efforts. The ultimate decision rights on the business strategy and business plans are with business leaders and senior executives, not the EA team.

## 2.0 EA Is Not IT Strategic Planning

EA and IT strategic planning are complementary efforts that must be coordinated and integrated, but they are not the same. IT strategic planning is the vehicle that sets long-term goals for the IT organization; it establishes the directions and constraints that will guide the tactical achievement of these goals, and it identifies the assets and capabilities that the IT organization has to acquire, and how, in order to execute the plan. IT strategic planning integrates the strategic intent of the business with the IT organization's delivery options, capabilities, priorities and commitments. An IT strategic plan commonly addresses:

- Sourcing options and strategies
- Service delivery plans and service-level agreements (SLAs)
- Vendor management plans
- IT organizational structure and governance
- IT training, recruiting and mentoring programs
- IT functional plans (integrating new technologies, data formats, service delivery models, acquisition cycles)

While IT strategic planning is most often led by a CIO, EA teams should serve as an advisor into IT strategic planning, along with the CTO, senior IT staff, and business leaders and users. *The IT strategic planning team leverages critical architecture artifacts, including the CRV (to provide overall strategic context for the IT strategy), the future-state view of the enterprise, and the gap analysis and road map that define the migration from the current state to the desired future state.*

## 3.0 EA Is Not IT Governance

Gartner defines "IT governance" (ITG) as "the processes that ensure the effective and efficient use of IT in enabling an organization to achieve its goals." ITG is composed of processes with the inputs, outputs, roles and responsibilities that are inherent in a process definition. One of the models we use to represent ITG is the Gartner IT Governance Demand/Supply Model (see "Defining IT Governance: The Gartner IT Governance Demand/Supply Model"), which illustrates the role of an IT governance strategy relative to demand governance (for example, what the IT organization should work on) and supply governance (for example, how the IT organization does

its work). *The IT governance strategy is developed from the articulation of the business strategy in the CRV, ensuring alignment with strategic goals. The road map and the principles, standards and guidelines provide the decision criteria that ITG uses to make investment decisions.*

## 4.0 EA Is Not Program Management

Gartner defines program management as the coordinated planning, management and execution of multiple related projects that are directed toward the same strategic, business or organizational objectives. EA is a planning discipline, while program management is a discipline of execution. EA is responsible for defining the future state of the enterprise, analyzing the gaps between the current state and the future state, and developing the standards and guidelines that support the realization of the future state. *Part of the discipline of program management is to make sure that the projects are executed in a way that adheres to the standards, guidelines and principles that are created as part of the EA effort.*

## 5.0 EA Is Not Portfolio Management

Portfolio management is the processes, governance and tools used to plan, create, assess, balance and communicate the execution of the IT portfolio. Portfolio management techniques can be applied to the application portfolio, the infrastructure portfolio, the project portfolio, the IT investment portfolio, or any of these in combination. Portfolio management is a strategic discipline that ensures a balanced approach (in terms of risk tolerance, strategic goals, resources and capabilities) to IT investment. *Portfolio management takes its strategic guidelines from the common vision of the business strategy articulated during the EA process, and it uses the road map, principles standards and guidelines as part of the criteria for portfolio decisions while balancing between strategic and tactical needs.*

## 6.0 EA Is Not Process Management

Business process management is a systematic approach to improving the way an enterprise does business by analyzing the strategic goals of the enterprise, then aligning the stakeholder interest with shared process performance objectives. *As part of the CRV process, EA provides the analysis of the strategy and identifies the most critical strategic imperatives. EA also provides the high-level process topology and the principles that guide the design and implementation of processes. Process improvement is an operational discipline that manages the design and implementation of new and improved processes in the enterprise.*

## 7.0 EA Is Not Performance Management

Performance management (see "Understand Performance Management to Better Manage Your Business") is the combination of management methodologies, metrics and IT (applications, tools and infrastructure) that enable users to define, monitor, and optimize results and outcomes to achieve personal or departmental objectives while enabling alignment with strategic objectives across multiple organizational levels (personal, process, group, departmental, corporate or business ecosystem).

*EA teams must participate in performance management efforts relating to critical business processes (see "Toolkit: Bank XYZ Conceptual Process Topology") and functions. This will allow them to track key business metrics that demonstrate the business value that EA is delivering. In addition, any efforts to define key performance management metrics should leverage the artifacts of EA — specifically, any change metrics (see "Toolkit: Bank XYZ Business Strategies to Initiatives and Change Requirements Matrix") or any direct metrics associated with EA principles (see "Toolkit: Bank XYZ Architecture Principles to Business Strategies Matrix"). Last, EA should*

*leverage the discipline of performance metrics to define metrics with respect to the business value and impact of EA efforts and investments.*

## **8.0 EA Is Not Implementation**

Enterprise architects do not dictate implementation details for the entire organization or for specific practice areas. *EA provides the foundational principles, guidelines, standards and constraints that enable implementation teams to make better decisions.*

Organizationwide departments, competency centers, project teams and steering groups have deeper knowledge of the specific requirements, processes, people and technology within a defined practice area. *The representations of the business, processes, information, people and technology that are created by the enterprise architecture effort should be used to guide and support the planning and implementation effort across the organization.* Architects should work closely and in collaboration with critical teams. Their joint efforts should be focused on leveraging artifacts to apply guidelines to a specific practice area and implementation, while enabling the implementation teams to lead with respect to their specific skills.

## **9.0 EA Is Not a Technology or Application Inventory**

Many organizations fall into a trap of believing that EA is a map of all their technologies and applications and/or that EA is solely about technology. In fact, we recently spoke with a midsize government organization that hired a consultant to "do" its enterprise architecture, and the output of this work was an 85-page inventory of technologies, applications and their connecting points. While a technology and application inventory may be helpful when defining a current state, this is not an enterprise architecture. EA is a much broader process that is directly reflecting the business vision and strategy, and it represents people, processes, organization, information and technology (including applications) that are critical to the business strategy. *EA provides actionable, prescriptive guidance for project-level decision making, consistent with executing a transition plan toward a described future-state architecture that aligns with the business strategy.*

## **10.0 EA Is Not Change Management**

Change management is a structured approach to change that encompasses individuals, teams and organizations, with the objective of facilitating the human side of change. In most enterprises undergoing significant change, the change manager is a senior business executive with responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the change, including technology, human factors, reorganization and process modifications. *EA provides the strategic context for the change through the common requirements vision or some similar vehicle, and it provides the view of the future state from a process, organization, information and technology perspective. This gives everyone a coherent view of the strategic drivers for the change, as well as a clear picture of the target state.*

## **11.0 EA Is Not a Standards-Setting Exercise**

Another common mistake by architecture teams, as well as a misunderstanding by IT and business users, is that EA is focused on "setting standards" (for example, technologies, applications, processes and usage). *When organizations define a future state, the need for standards in specific areas becomes clear at the conceptual (see "Toolkit: Bank XYZ Conceptual Application Architecture") and logical levels (see "Toolkit: Bank XYZ Logical Services Architecture"). Specification of standards becomes more critical at the implementation levels (see "Toolkit: Bank XYZ Implementation Technical Network Diagram"). However, these standards are the result of a complete business-driven EA effort, and they are guidelines for reaching the future state. Any defined standards should evolve with the business strategy and thus the enterprise*

*architecture. Organizations should incorporate the process of re-evaluating and updating standards into the EA process.*

## 12.0 EA Is Not Enforcement

Enterprise architects will not succeed if they are perceived to be solely enforcing rules and policies. They will also not succeed if they are viewed as controlling the use of technologies and processes. Furthermore, they will fail if they are viewed as impeding innovation and creativity. Business and IT users will ignore the efforts of EA and create their own solutions to meet their requirements (see "Recognize the New Stakeholder: The Individual"). EA and architects must be viewed as helping, supporting, advising and guiding the organization to achieve its business strategy through a future-state vision. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the enterprise architect to reach out and work across the organization to educate and encourage the use of the enterprise architecture (see "Q&A: Architects Must Advocate, Evangelize and Educate").

This research is part of a set of related research pieces. See "Organize Your Enterprise Architecture Effort: Planning for EA Success" for an overview.

## REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

---

### Corporate Headquarters

56 Top Gallant Road  
Stamford, CT 06902-7700  
U.S.A.  
+1 203 964 0096

### European Headquarters

Tamesis  
The Glanty  
Egham  
Surrey, TW20 9AW  
UNITED KINGDOM  
+44 1784 431611

### Asia/Pacific Headquarters

Gartner Australasia Pty. Ltd.  
Level 9, 141 Walker Street  
North Sydney  
New South Wales 2060  
AUSTRALIA  
+61 2 9459 4600

### Japan Headquarters

Gartner Japan Ltd.  
Aobadai Hills, 6F  
7-7, Aobadai, 4-chome  
Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0042  
JAPAN  
+81 3 3481 3670

### Latin America Headquarters

Gartner do Brazil  
Av. das Nações Unidas, 12551  
9º andar—World Trade Center  
04578-903—São Paulo SP  
BRAZIL  
+55 11 3443 1509