

## Key Issues for Enterprise Architecture, 2009

Anne Lapkin

Key Issues are the cornerstone of our agenda. This note defines the critical themes that our clients should focus on and lays out Gartner's EA research for the coming year.

## ANALYSIS

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In the current climate of business turmoil, the need for enterprise architecture (EA) is even greater than it is during times of economic growth. Yet, we find that many of our clients continue to struggle — the value of EA is not well-understood across the business and IT — and EA teams are still not doing a very good job of demonstrating or articulating that value. In addition, the increased importance of cost optimization efforts means that EA teams often must recast their initiatives in light of changing enterprise priorities. All in all, EA teams are under increased pressure to deliver value from EA initiatives (see "Predicts 2009: Enterprise Architecture Programs in Crisis"). The objective of our research agenda is to help enterprise architects ensure that their EA initiatives deliver maximum value and impact to the business. Here, we lay out the critical themes that we believe our clients need to address. These themes will drive our research agenda in the coming year. EA teams should use this research to evaluate the performance of their EA programs and remediate the shortcomings. Those that fail to do so may not survive.

In 2008, we wrote about a broad range of issues (see "Key Issues for Enterprise Architecture, 2008-2009") based on what our clients were asking and what we thought they should be asking. While we believe that those questions continue to be valid, we also believe that today's atmosphere of economic and business uncertainty requires us, and our clients, to focus. Therefore, we will be looking this year at the most critical questions that EA teams must address to deliver business value to the enterprise. These questions reflect the research themes that will be our focus this year:

- Aligning and integrating EA with other strategic and operational disciplines — What are the best practices for EA teams to collaborate with and support other disciplines and practices?
- Support for new business and IT models — How can enterprise architects keep up with the pace of change?
- Starting up (or turning around) an EA program — How can enterprise architects' efforts effectively evolve beyond their current scope to increase value to the enterprise?
- Business benefits and value of EA — How can enterprise architects deliver demonstrable value with EA?
- EA and IT modernization — How can architecture efforts rapidly realize a desired future state?

### **What Are the Best Practices for EA Teams to Collaborate With and Support Other Disciplines and Practices?**

We have had many conversations with our enterprise architect clients about the difficulty they have in working with other disciplines in the enterprise and when trying to engage with the business. EA teams continue to be challenged by the need to integrate and align the enterprise architecture initiative with the people, strategy and planning aspects of the enterprise. We have had an equal number of conversations with program and portfolio managers, information managers, application development leads, CIOs, business process managers and others — and those conversations focus on the difficulty of working with EA. In this turbulent economic climate, which demands an ability to make wise investment decisions that deploy an organization's resources in the way that best supports its strategy, the last thing that anyone needs is internal conflict and turf battles. This requires a level of collaboration and communication that many organizations have not yet achieved — and an unprecedented level of facilitative and consultative

skills within the EA team. EA has always been a facilitative discipline (see "Gartner Clarifies the Definition of the Term 'Enterprise Architecture'"). It is remarkable that EA teams are still struggling with fundamental questions of stakeholder management, and it is clear to us that more attention must be given to this very important discipline. Therefore, we will focus this year on how EA can effectively work and maintain relationships with its stakeholders:

- Business strategy and operations
- Cost optimization "SWAT teams"
- IT strategy
- Program and portfolio management
- Enterprise information management
- Business process management
- SOA initiatives
- The various competency centers

## **How Can Enterprise Architects Keep Up With the Pace of Change?**

Enterprise architecture is all about enabling and supporting business change. As business models continue to evolve, people behaviors change (see "Economic Downturn Will Test Leadership Skills: Focus on People") and new technologies continue to emerge, the way that EA supports the enterprise will continue to change and evolve. We define enterprise architecture as "the process of translating business vision and strategy into effective enterprise change by creating, communicating and improving the key requirements, principles and models that describe the enterprise's future state and enable its evolution." EA teams need to cope with all kinds of change, including:

- Changes in business vision and strategy (that is, what are we going to do differently to be more successful?)
- Changes in market and regulatory environments
- Changes in technology (for example, advances in mobile communications or the availability of low-cost services in the cloud)
- Changes in the EA process and scope as the strategic maturity of the enterprise naturally evolves

With the rapid pace of business change, enterprise architecture efforts that take too long, specify too much detail and are perceived as inhibiting, rather than enabling, the growth of the enterprise are doomed to failure. To help our clients focus on and manage all this change, we will be writing more this year about how approaches to EA are evolving and how architects should evolve the EA process to support changing enterprise priorities and growing strategic maturity. This research will include continued development of the concepts of federated EA, "lightweight" EA and managed diversity. This is complemented by Gartner's deep coverage of trends such as software as a service (SaaS), cloud computing and context-aware computing, as well as our coverage of the evolution of application development, infrastructure management and other topics that are pertinent to the decisions that enterprise architects must make within their own enterprises every day.

## How Can Enterprise Architects' Efforts Effectively Evolve Beyond Their Current Scope to Increase Value to the Enterprise?

In many cases, it has been the technical success of individuals that has caused the organization to turn to them as enterprise architects. However, the characteristics that made them successful in the past are not those that will make them successful in the future. In the turbulent economic climate, EA teams can no longer focus on defining technology standards, managing exceptions and directing technology usage (see "Thirteen Worst Enterprise Architecture Practices"). Instead, EA must help answer questions like "How can we cut costs without impacting customer service and quality?" or "How do we allocate our spending for maximum business leverage?" The enterprise is becoming increasingly hostile to technology standards that appear to impede business progress. Increased business concern with agility and flexibility requires that the business be able to modify processes, exploit new technologies, and use information in new and unpredictable ways. This means that enterprise architects must understand the strategic imperatives of the business to identify architectural priorities and to persuade the enterprise to adhere to architectural guidance. Today's EA teams are valuable to the business when they expand their horizons with an eye toward facilitating the rapid redesign and extension of the business as it responds to new economic and competitive challenges.

If your organization has faced challenges demonstrating the value of EA, this is not the time to give up. The current business environment presents a unique opportunity to turn around struggling EA efforts so that they have a real and profound impact on business optimization, growth and transformation.

This increased focus on business and information aspects will require enterprise architects to "move outside of their comfort zones." Not only will they be required to have a more complete understanding of the business environment, drivers and strategies, but they will need to facilitate decisions across areas over which they have far less control. They will be valued more for their abilities to engage with business users on the strategic issues facing the business, as well as to facilitate consensus across diverse groups of stakeholders in the enterprise than for their technical knowledge. This year, we will focus on the skills and knowledge that architects must acquire and the actions that they must take as they evolve their initiatives to provide more value to the enterprise.

## How Can Enterprise Architects Deliver Demonstrable Value With EA?

One of the most common questions that Gartner is asked by clients centers on how to convince the business that enterprise architecture is worth doing. Inevitably, these clients are looking for a generic list of quantified business results, such as ROI, reduced IT cost or reduced time to market. Our answer is always the same. To create a compelling case for *your* business, the value of enterprise architecture must be defined individually for every enterprise in the context of *your* strategic imperatives, *your* culture and *your* level of strategic maturity (see "Toolkit Case Study: Safeco Recharter EA to Focus on Value Delivery"). Explicit definition of enterprise architecture value, implementation of EA performance management programs that measure that value, and communication of that value are best practices to which every enterprise architecture initiative should subscribe. In 2009, we will focus on helping our clients to create meaningful value propositions that are easily understood by stakeholders and that drive directly to desired business results. We will provide frameworks for creating meaningful metrics to manage EA performance and for translating those metrics into value statements. We will also discuss techniques for communicating business value to the enterprise. EA is an activity that plans for the evolution of

the enterprise — and there has long been an implicit assumption that architects plan for growth. However, with cost optimization so high on the agenda of many enterprises (a recent Gartner survey indicates that cutting operating costs is a top priority for 68% of companies), many architecture teams will need to reposition their efforts to align with the new reality. Therefore, we will devote research to the specific questions of how EA can lead and support cost optimization efforts with an eye toward business optimization and future growth.

## **How Can Architecture Efforts Rapidly Realize a Desired Future State?**

As many enterprises grapple with the challenges of the current economic environment, they are also grappling with aging infrastructure and applications that are nearing obsolescence. To many organizations, this means that limited budgets must be used wisely to remediate the existing portfolio of IT assets and applications while enabling business improvements and optimization. IT modernization represents Gartner's theme for closing the gap between yesterday's IT implementations and tomorrow's IT demands (see "IT Modernization: The Changing of the Guard") and understanding the ripple effect of these changes on business, people, processes and technologies. This kind of intelligent investment requires that EA provide a clearly articulated future state and a well-understood road map for getting to where the business wants to go from where it is. It also requires effective governance to ensure that EA guidance is adhered to as new capabilities are delivered to the business and existing capabilities are improved. To help our clients support IT modernization efforts, we will provide tools and techniques for ensuring that EA guidance is easy to comprehend and actionable. We will discuss different approaches to governance and share case studies that illustrate effective techniques employed by enterprise architecture teams in a variety of industries and geographies. Finally, we will discuss what types of information EA teams should use when assessing the viability of existing infrastructure and applications to ensure that investment decisions are made for optimal support of the business strategy.

### **Bottom Line**

The current environment is more challenging for enterprise architects than ever before — but the opportunity to deliver real value to the enterprise is also greater than ever (see "Findings From Client Inquiries: Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste"). To support business survival and the ability to grow as the economy begins to recover, EA efforts (business, solution, technology and information) must focus on these critical issues and themes.

*Betsy Burton, Brian Burke and Julie Short contributed to this research.*

## REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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### **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