

This year's Gartner Fall Symposium/ITxpo – held from 3rd through 7th November in Cannes, France – was organized around the theme of IT and the economy. This report offers an overview of what was on attendees' minds and what they learned from Gartner analysts and each other.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In sessions throughout Fall Symposium, enterprise architecture (EA) leaders gained insight on how to enable change in their organizations. EA leaders were shown how EA is a critical tool to help businesses adapt, particularly in times of financial uncertainty. Over the course of the week, Gartner analysts reinforced that architects must:

- Think beyond just aligning with business strategies to integrating with business and engaging IT and business leaders.
- Recognize that EA is much more than technology architecture. EA must be approached as a holistic discipline that must also encompass business architecture, solution architecture and information architecture.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Workshop: Top 10 Ways Enterprise Architecture Will Lower Your Costs

EA leaders converged in a workshop to discuss cost optimization strategies. Gartner's Common Requirements Vision approach was used to help EA leaders identify where they could achieve cost savings. Attendees developed a range of different starting points and heard about the most impactful ways to consolidate existing IT assets (hardware/software).

The session also underlined the importance for EA leaders of claiming credit for cost-cutting strategies that succeed. EA leaders in the session discussed various EA strategies that had achieved cost savings and created case studies to demonstrate the value of their initiatives.

Recommendations:

- Re-evaluate the project portfolio to ensure all projects make sense in the current conditions
- Review the existing IT asset portfolios to identify opportunities for consolidation.
- Evaluate alternative service delivery models such as BPO or SaaS



Achieving EA Excellence: The Present and Future of EA

Mature EA programs are focused on optimizing at the enterprise level rather than the business unit or project level and this requires coordinating business strategy across business functions. EA leaders need to understand the maturity of their programs to identify their next steps and architectures that will support businesses. Best-practice EA teams treat their programs as processes that must continually improve. This means evaluating their maturity on a regular basis, setting realistic goals for evaluation cycles and analyzing critical constraints that prevent programs from being as effective as they should be. EA leaders use this information to develop concrete action plans to address those constraints.

Recommendations:

- Revisit and redefine the scope, objectives and deliverables of EA.
- Begin to expand EA across all viewpoints and architect links across boundaries within the organization.
- Continue to evolve the maturity of related processes.

Enabling Real Business Change With Enterprise Architecture

Enterprise business architecture (EBA) describes the aspects of the business ("how") and how these aspects must change or evolve to reach the overall EA future state. EBA empowers the business and IT people with a toolkit and information to ensure the structured evolution of the business toward a future state. The business value and impact of supporting EBA is to ensure that changes and enhancements to business process and organization are optimized with the information and technology direction to support the business strategy.

When advancing the business architecture, the EA team must articulate the value proposition in business terms aligned with the strategic direction. Evolving EBA requires developing the value proposition, as well as building demonstrable proof that value is being delivered. EBA must be an integral part of EA – otherwise, organizations risk investing in automation, augmentation, enhancement and innovation without a link to and from technology to business change..

Recommendations:

- Define the role of EBA in the scope of overall EA efforts.
- Identify the future-state vision, and define the requirements, principles and models that can enable your business to move toward this future state.
- Evaluate the current-state models and relationships of EBA dimensions (current and planned) against future-state models to determine overlaps and gaps.
- Revisit and revise principles, requirements and models regularly, based on the current-state and future-state visions.

KEYNOTES

Welcome Address and Analyst Keynote

There are no easy or safe decisions in the next year – get over it. Be smarter, conquer your fear and make the hard choices. We are in a new age in which IT is still essential... But so is change. Gartner recommends you take action now; examine your inventory, rank it to find your priorities, question everything you have, protect your key people who can deliver your priorities, reconsider each budget line, plan for multiple futures and then choose where to cut AND where to spend.

IT is very good at acquiring systems but it's time to learn how to "manage what you have." Use this opportunity to move from the accidental legacy architecture you have inherited toward a 21st Century sustainable architecture. Use the downturn to modernise and prepare for the return to growth; remember this is your chance to get executive support for the change process so you can do what's necessary.

It's also time to innovate. It's time to "learn to let go" instead of always seeking to control and stamp out user driven innovation and technology choices. Find the opportunities for reinvention. By cultivating innovation and recalibrating your awareness of where differences can be made you will be able to drive down costs and harness new ideas. You need to upgrade or you risk lower speed, lower power and performance than more agile competitors. Do rationalise your portfolio but be careful! Exploit commoditisation, use the cloud, and leverage partners where appropriate. Take stock and decide what you need... And what you can change. We live in interesting times; it's time to focus, it's time for courage, it's time to get started.

Mastermind Interview: Ian Livingston, CEO, BT

For the next year, things are going to be tough across the business world. The key message from Ian Livingston, CEO of BT, is you should plan for it – being prepared won't harm you. No one is recession proof. No one is going to escape the present climate unscathed. Companies should be looking at both the top and bottom line simultaneously, to cost cutting as well as continuing to seek opportunities for revenue growth.

Remember that in this difficult time the need for green IT is not going to go away. And with innovations like telepresence and virtualization, it isn't a case of paying for green IT at the expense of the business. Green IT can and does save you money if approached sensibly, and is something customers want to be a part of.

Reducing headcount is definitely going to be one of the core approaches CEOs adopt; it's inevitable. When talking to its customers, BT is finding that they are examining costs and looking to refocus on higher growth regions of the world. The opportunity for IT is to streamline the bureaucracy and to move to a position where the CIO and the key IT management are change leaders and change enablers contributing to overall business efficiency and effectiveness.

Radical moves in the name of cost cutting are not the right approach. Use technology and process to reduce failure, work on increasing agility and ensure customer experience is at the forefront of each decision. This has to be the answer; making the organization more able to realize opportunity and deliver to customers more effectively. Don't force people to use new technologies; think about where social networking technologies, cloud computing, Software as a Service (SaaS) and remote working can make life better for the business and for employees and use the technology to serve those ends – make people want to use the new approaches.



THINGS TO WATCH FOR

During the event, Gartner analysts fielded many questions that revealed enterprises weren't focusing on EA as a holistic discipline. Some attendees were working on technology architectures, information architectures or just solution architectures. Sessions throughout the week showed that this often leads to problems. Organizations that focus too much on one particular area, rather than on EA as a whole, often encounter problems linking that area to the rest of the architecture. For example, enterprises may have to redo their technology architecture if they don't focus on their information and solution architectures simultaneously.

EA leaders need to respond to the economic situation, but were urged not to panic and adopt overzealous cutting. They need to focus on their businesses and cut, augment or evolve their organizations so that they're still moving toward a future state.

It is paramount for EA leaders to be indispensable in these difficult times. EA leaders must continually demonstrate the value of EA. They can do this directly by:

- Articulating EA to the business
- Establishing practical deliverables
- Defining business-focused metrics
- Being an essential part of the solution to the business problem