



Enterprise Architecture
Symposium Community

Trip Report

Enterprise Architecture Symposium Community

Members: 962

This year's Gartner Symposium/ITxpo — held from 12 through 16 October in Orlando, Florida — 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 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 the business strategies to integrating with the business and engaging IT and business leaders.
- Recognize that EA is much more than technology. EA must be approached as a holistic discipline that encompasses business architecture, solution architecture and information architecture.

Conference Highlights

Embracing Change in your Enterprise Architecture and Strategic Planning

The turbulence of the current economic environment makes it imperative for businesses to embrace change. Successful organizations use EA and strategic planning to navigate and embrace change. Their architectures are not completely top-down, bottom-up or middle-out, but a blend of these approaches. EA leaders can help incorporate enablers of change into processes, information structures, technical infrastructures and solution portfolios and can remove obstacles that inhibit change within their organizations. Moreover, they don't need to start from scratch. Reusing ideas and best practices from other organizations is an effective way to save time.

Recommendations:

- Meet with the EA team to consider the merit of applying a middle-out approach to EA for some parts of the enterprise.
- Identify and model stable and unstable parts of the enterprise. Select an unstable area, and design and implement an interface for it using clear identifiers, formats and protocols.
- Evaluate lessons learned from the first interface, and expand use of interfaces to more unstable areas.

Enterprise Architecture's Place in IT and the Business

How enterprises respond to change can determine their longevity. Effective EA practices build flexibility into businesses, allowing them to adapt more easily. As a result, EA must shift from strategic systems guidance for running the business on a day-to-day basis to a discipline that supports the business strategy.

Recommendations:

- Reach out to the head of strategy and discuss scenarios, their likelihood and how EA can support them.
- Make EA guidance defensible by giving it business context.

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 heard that an immediate way to save costs is to identify high-cost projects that can be halted or delayed.

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.

Achieving EA Excellence: The Present and Future of EA

EA is much more than technical architectures and is focused on 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 what you mean by 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 and how these aspects must change or evolve to reach the overall EA future state. EBA processes empower the business and IT people with a toolkit and information to evolve their business in the context of interrelationships 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 created by the EBA and your EA effort. Also, 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, information and solution architecture. This can result in highly ineffective investment in business change and transformation, fragmented and disconnected information, wasted investments in technology and solutions without a clear business driver or focus.

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.

Using the Business Context to Inform Your Strategic Initiatives

Businesses find it is easy to start new strategic initiatives, but much more difficult to rationalize ones they already have and align them to a common set of strategic goals. The business context is a critical component of this alignment, providing all the strategic initiatives of the enterprise with a shared set of objectives and future state vision. By creating a shared view of the strategy that all initiatives share, as well as a common set of constraints, progress toward strategic goals will be more orderly and effective. A well-defined business context not only provides the foundation for the enterprise architecture, but also provides invaluable guidance to strategic initiatives such as business process management, business intelligence and CRM.

Recommendations:

- Assess the clarity of your business context — make immediate plans for remediation if necessary and assess the drivers of your strategic initiatives and governance programs for coherence.
- Define how enterprise programs should use the business context.
- Assess program performance against your strategic objectives.

Keynotes

Welcome Address and Analyst Keynote

Most IT budgets will take a hit from global economic problems, but the situation is not as dire as IT leaders who lived through the dot-com bust might expect. Gartner's recent surveys of CIOs show that at worst, IT spending worldwide likely will increase 2.3% in 2009, down from Gartner's earlier projection of a 5.8% increase. IT spending at worst will be flat in the U.S. and down in Europe.

IT budgets will be largely spared because IT runs almost all aspects of business, and IT is increasingly viewed as the means to improve and transform the business, but IT leaders still have to deliver. Economic downturns tend to amplify disruptive technologies, so IT leaders should research virtualization and modernization opportunities. IT leaders also should take stock of the whole IT portfolio to see what the business can run for less or live without. For every application and system, ask:

- Why is this needed?
- What does it cost?
- How can it be implemented with fewer resources?

Mastermind Keynotes Show Other Organizations' Strategies

Gartner analysts interviewed three IT leaders to gain insights about their strategies and outlook for 2009:

- John Chambers, CEO of Cisco Systems, said Cisco plans to work on dozens of projects in 2009 that aim to expand the company's scope past just networking into network-enabled processes to improve productivity. Cisco will use partnerships to help customers boost scale and speed. Cisco has a unique opportunity in the economic downturn to help its clients enable transformative business strategies, Mr. Chambers said.
- Joseph Eng, Executive Vice President, Systems and Technology at JetBlue Airways, urged IT leaders to show how IT can help

transform and differentiate the business, as his group has done to make JetBlue a customer-centric airline. Mr. Eng described how JetBlue customers are empowered to make their own decisions and are provided with perks to make the trip better. This strategy has greatly helped JetBlue grow and has provided more opportunities for revenue.

- Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, insisted that what has been an apparently slow uptake of the Vista operating system among enterprises doesn't indicate a problem with Vista. In fact, he said, Vista's uptake is roughly comparable to the uptake of Windows XP at a similar stage. Ballmer also said Windows 7, Vista's follow-up, will be a true release, not a mere update. He acknowledged competition from Google, but was critical of Google Apps, saying that it is "just not good enough today" for enterprise-level adoption. Cloud computing will also be a challenge for Microsoft, he said, since it involves a paradigm shift, but he predicted the company will adapt. Cloud computing will be delivered "piece by piece by piece," he said. "This is a technology that Microsoft is embracing, but it won't be ready the day after tomorrow."

What People Asked About

My organization's business strategy has changed, but it has not been defined yet. How can I integrate my EA strategy to the business strategy?

The best thing to do in this situation is have a go at defining the business strategy. This may sound radical, but it can work. Communicate with people on the business side and find out what they think the strategy is. Get an idea of what they focus on and what they need. Then, use the information to create a slide with no more than four bullet points, offering a summary of what you think the business strategy is. You can take this to the business, very humbly, and ask them if it is close to the business strategy and, if not, where it needs modifying.

My budget has been reduced. What cost-cutting strategies should I look at?

Consider several established cost-cutting practices, such as identifying:

- Areas where automation can reduce overall costs.
- Suboptimal business processes. Productivity and quality suffer when suboptimal business processes remain automated. Look for opportunities to optimize these processes.
- Underutilized assets. For example, servers often operate at only 20% of their capacity and many organizations have unused software licenses as well.
- Projects that can be eliminated. Focus on finding projects that are redundant or superfluous.

In addition, Gartner has a broad array of cost-cutting and cost optimization documents available to clients. Visit www.gartner.com/it/themes/economy/economy_100.jsp to find actionable advice on identifying and implementing cost-saving initiatives.

I'm new to EA. How do I get started?

Define meaningful objectives and an achievable scope for your EA program. The primary goal for the first iteration of the EA program is to get people comfortable with the process and to deliver early value. Time boxing the first iteration to deliver in less than three months is a useful technique to limit effort and, therefore, limit scope to the most important areas. It also instills a sense of urgency in the program. In practical cases, organizations will focus on a small subset to get started — perhaps only technology standards or applying EA analysis approaches to a single project. Once the EA program's value has been demonstrated and experience has been gained, the scope can be expanded.

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 do this in a way that demonstrates the value of EA. They can do this directly through case studies, but also by:

- Articulating EA to the business
- Establishing practical deliverables
- Defining business-focused metrics
- Integrating with the business

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