

Enterprise Architecture: No Glamour, but Mission-Critical

Annemarie Earley

The development and application of sound enterprise architecture principles — although far from exciting — create an essential, working blueprint for financial services providers.

ANALYSIS

In their ongoing efforts to gain and retain market share, financial services providers (FSPs) have poured billions of dollars and billions of hours into high-profile IT projects. These "glamorous" initiatives have promised new channels, new customers and new revenue streams — and, all too often, they have failed to deliver the anticipated return on investment. The result is that many FSPs are now refocusing their attention, and their resources, on a decidedly *unglamorous* aspect of their operations: the development of sound enterprise architecture.

Enterprise architecture provides the strong foundation that FSPs need to efficiently address and support present and future business demands. The enterprisewide application of sound architectural principles ensures that an FSP can deliver the functionality its customers are demanding today, and still be prepared to simply and inexpensively deploy new products and services tomorrow.

The power of enterprise architecture lies in synergy: aligning business goals (established and anticipated) and IT needs and resources. The alignment of business and IT in an enterprisewide view of the organization provides a mission-critical, decision-making framework enabling IT and line-of-business managers to implement new solutions — including those high-profile projects — in ways that support enterprise strategies.

Effective enterprise architecture makes the deployment of new technologies and product offerings simpler, more efficient, more predictable and, perhaps most important of all, less risky. In a time of highly constrained IT budgets and personnel resources, enterprise architecture can be the key to continued profitability. FSPs simply cannot afford to ignore this unglamorous — but mission-critical — issue. That is why this edition of the Gartner Financial Services Spotlight focuses on enterprise architecture, beginning with "Enterprise Architecture: The Enabler of Success."

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Annemarie Earley

Editor in Chief

Financial Services

spotlight.feedback@gartner.com

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
Level 7, 40 Miller Street
North Sydney
New South Wales 2060
AUSTRALIA
+61 2 9459 4600

Latin America Headquarters
Av. das Nações Unidas 12.551
9 andar—WTC
04578-903 São Paulo SP
BRAZIL
+55 11 3443 1509