

# Top Priorities for IT: Leadership Vision for 2021

Enterprise Architecture Leaders

## Introduction

2020 has been a year full of terms like “unprecedented” and “unanticipated.” Every industry has been affected in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic fallout and social unrest around the globe. Strategic and business model change has translated, and continues to translate, into new challenges and priorities for function leaders. For the CIO and the whole IT organization, 2021 brings with it the imperative to generate more business value using innovative technologies and approaches to information.

Each IT role faces specific challenges — from planning and supporting digital acceleration to integrating more strategically with the rest of the business. As business partners grow more comfortable with identifying and using technologies, IT leaders will need to become more sophisticated in their partnership and collaboration.

And, despite the challenges, a significant great opportunity exists to transform business operations and models from the ground up, enabling the organization to respond to future disruption quickly and strategically.

This e-book highlights the trends and challenges enterprise architecture (EA) leaders will have to reconcile in the coming year and provides specific actions that they can take in response — and to better align their piece of the organization with the business.

IT leaders have learned many valuable lessons in the past year, from how to quickly move entire organizations to remote workforces, how to create a secure work environment and how to prioritize digital initiatives like never before.

But there is more work to be done.

Leading in 2021 will look different from leadership in 2020, but understanding and planning for unknowns and continued disruption across the IT organization is critical to moving forward.



**Chris Howard**  
Chief of Research, Gartner

EA leaders are key enablers for digital business — accountable for helping the enterprise balance risks and benefits.

In a rapidly changing business environment, enterprise architecture leaders must develop a three-year plan to deliver high-impact business-outcome-driven advice.

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**By 2023, 60% of organizations will depend on EA's role to lead the business approach to digital innovation.**

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Source: Gartner





# 3 trends that will impact enterprise architecture leaders in 2021

## **EA leaders play key role through the recovery**

As organizations go through the three phases of COVID-19 (Respond, Recover, Renew), EA leaders will play a vital role. In the Respond phase, EA leaders identify essential parts of the core of the business. In the Recover phase, they find innovative ways to reduce cost, increase productivity and drive better performance. Finally, in the Renew stage, EA leaders work with business and IT executives to identify opportunities to create new business models, services and experiences.

## **EA shifts toward internal management consultancy**

Over the past five years, there has been a shift toward business-outcome-driven EA, which has extended the reach of the EA practice into the strategy end of the cycle — identifying business outcomes, supporting business capabilities, and changing requirements and roadmaps. This activity provides real value and helps organizations execute their strategies.

## **Information becomes the fuel for business innovation**

EA leaders should look for opportunities for their teams to help business executives identify where in the business and operating models artificial intelligence could be used. They can then assess the scale of the benefits and help create implementation roadmaps for those initiatives selected.

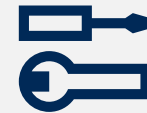
## 2 challenges facing EA leaders in 2021

Although EA leaders will face many challenges in 2021, here are two to begin strategizing for:



### Reposition the EA practice, its outcomes and value-add

EA leaders must create a clear message on what EA is, and how it adds value to the organization. They will then have to sell this vision and value to their key stakeholders and help educate them on the full scope of EA. They will also need to reframe EA and the services it provides — crafting services that add value to both sets of stakeholders.



### New ways of working and new deliverables

As the focus of the EA practice shifts from the IT organization to the business, the types of deliverables will need to change. The EA team will now require models and analyses, practices and competencies that can support business stakeholders. They will need to develop a definition of their strategy and the desired business outcomes. EA leaders must acquire an understanding of their business stakeholders and develop models that add value for them.

## 2 actions for EA leaders to take in 2021

Given the challenges that EA leaders will encounter, consider these two actions to help move the organization in the right direction:



### Shift your leadership style to coaching and mentoring

Your leadership style can be adjusted to fit the situation and context. The leader that can nurture a high-performing team will need to take advantage of each of these styles given the appropriate situation.



### Build a flexible adaptive EA team

Cultivate an organizational network and reach out to individuals and teams from key areas (for example, business analysts, business strategists, business relationship managers and the project management office). The EA team can use more “adaptive governance” approaches, such as a “center of excellence,” which brings people together. Ideally, this network is driven by the senior executive team that is leading the transformation.

# Shift your leadership style to coaching and mentoring

## Continuum of leadership styles



### Commanding

“Do what I tell you.”



### Pace setting

“Do as I do now.”



### Visionary

“Come with me.”



### Affiliative

“People come first.”



### Coaching

“Try this.”



### Democratic

“What do you think?”

Low

Degree of involvement of team members

High

Be comfortable with this style of leadership.

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