Architecture Challenge Statement Development

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Overview

Before we start on any architecture work we need to know what business problem aim to solve

At the end of this workshop, we should have

- Identified the problem
- Gained an understanding what successful resolution looks like
- Identified the key stakeholders who must commit to delivering success
- Determined if there is potential enterprise architecture to do

For enterprise architects (EAs) to add value the problem should be a mess or wicked or both

- Messy – has high process, data or technology complexity
    - problem space is reasonably stable or changes in a predictable way
    - target state can be defined with a reasonable level of confidence
    - Enterprise Architects can
        * make sense of the complexity
        * help define a target state
        * help define a roadmap to deliver the target
        * help define an incremental approach to benefits delivery
    - EA engagement is likely to be front loaded focused on defining current state, target state and the roadmap followed by a supporting role to help maintain the overall integrity of the approach as the delivery progresses
- Wicked – poorly understood
    - constantly changing problem with complex interdependencies
    - often has social / people complexity
    - significant parts of the target state cannot be defined with confidence
    - Enterprise Architects can
        * make sense of the complexity
        * identify areas of uncertainty
        * help define incremental and experimental target states

          ∗ help define an incremental approach to learning and benefits delivery
- EA engagement is likely to be continual during the programme

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Workshop Agenda

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2. Problem identification
3. Break
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5. Break
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7. Break
8. Key stakeholders
9. Decisions

Total duration - 4 to 6 hours

Precondition

A concern of potentially enterprise wide significance has been identified by an EA

e.g.

- A senior stakeholder says "take a look at this. . . "
- An EA gets an idea at a conference
- An EA hears a worrying statement in a meeting about. . .
  - Project
  - Technical debt
  - Lack of collaboration
  - Siloes
- An experienced EA just gets a sense that something is wrong!

Attendees

There are three formats for this - - Informal with EAs only - More formal with key stakeholders and EAs - Multiple stakeholder meetings followed by a joint playback

You can combine formats if it helps - You want a rehearsal with EAs only - You want to make sense of what the stakeholders said (e.g. create the stakeholder playback)

5 to 8 people is an ideal size for the meeting

Give attendees plenty of notice of the meeting

Meetings can be fully remote

The Invitation

Hi AP

As I am sure you are aware we have major challenges with providing insights to leaders within the business.

We are running a workshop to develop a strong problem statement and work out how to kick off an initiative to improve the situation. You will see an invitation to a video call in your inbox soon.

I am looking forward to your valuable contribution.

Best wishes

JJ - Head of Enterprise Architecture

Roles

The workshop will require these roles to be successful -

- Facilitator - takes the attendees through the workshop structure, adapting it as necessary, owns the schedule
- Challenge owner - presents the challenge, makes decisions when asked to do so by the Facilitator, maybe a proxy for a key stakeholder
- Scribe - makes notes when asked to do so by the facilitator
- Timekeeper - keeps time when asked to do so by the facilitator

Ground rules

1. The Facilitator is in charge

2. Challenge owner makes decisions

3. No distractions from phones or emails or chat

   - switch off notifications
   - we will have breaks

4. Don't worry about children, pets, partners, deliveries, builders, etc

   - they will interrupt and distract, it is OK!
   - this is normal!
   - sometimes they help with the creativity. . .

The Workshop

Introduction

Purpose - explain the purpose of the workshop

Duration - 15 minutes

1. Introduction

   We are here to discuss [the challenge]

   The purpose of this workshop is to

   - Clearly define the problem
   - Understand what successful resolution looks like
   - Identify the key stakeholders who must commit to delivering success
   - Determine the of enterprise architecture

2. Quick personal introductions if everyone does not know each other

   - name
   - 2 words describing what you do

4. The challenge

   [challenge owner] will now set the scene for the workshop by briefly describing the challenge

   The challenge that we see is [challenge description]

We don't have strong evidence but the impact that we see anecdotally is [examples]

Problem

Purpose - create a description of the business problem

Duration - 1 hour

1. Ask the participants to write down 2-3 bullet points that describe their perspective on the challenge

   - Write the notes individually without discussion and without showing them
   - What is the root cause?
   - Why is it important to address the challenge?
   - Do not think about solutions

2. All participants show their notes at the same time

3. The facilitator talks through each note in turn

4. The facilitator creates a summary note that captures the agreement and divergence of the team's contributions

5. The facilitator asks for any further thoughts from the team and adds to the summary if necessary

6. The facilitator then leads an analysis of the summary to firm up the problem description and resolve any disagreements. The following questions can be used as a start point -

   - How does this damage the business?
   - Will key business stakeholders recognise the problem?
   - What makes it **significant** to the business stakeholders?
   - What makes it important to do something now?
   - What value will enterprise architects bring to the challenge?

7. The facilitator summarises the discussion under the following headings -

   - Problem statement highlighting the negative impact on the business
   - Who is impacted negatively by the problem?
   - Who benefits from the problem?
   - Why is is important now?
   - What important things don't we know?
   - How can enterprise architects help?

Now it's time to take a short break!

Success

Purpose - create an ambitious description of what it will like when we have solved the problem

Duration - 45 minutes

1. Ask the participants to write down 2-3 bullet points that describe what is will be like when the problem has been **fully** solved

   - Write the notes individually without discussion and without showing them
   - This should be idealistic, not realistic or pragmatic (we will add that later)
   - Do not think about solutions

2. All participants show their notes at the same time

3. The facilitator talks through each note in turn

4. The facilitator creates a summary note that captures the agreement and divergence of the team's contributions

5. The facilitator asks for any further thoughts from the team and adds to the summary if necessary

6. The facilitator then leads an analysis of the summary to firm up what an **ambitious** view of success looks like and resolve any disagreements.

7. The next step is to make sure that we know when we have achieved success, is it **measureable**? The following questions can be used as a start point -

   - What objective measures can we use to confirm that we have achieved success?
   - What measures can we use to help us understand that we are on track to deliver success
   - How does this change our definition of success?
   - Is it still **significant** and **ambitious**?

8. We now have a view of success, a target state that is

   Significant **M**easureable **A**mbitious

Now it's time to take another short break!

Route to Value

Purpose - we will establish a realistic way forward

Duration - 45 minutes

1. Ask the participants to write down about 10 bullet points that describe how success can be delivered

   - Write the notes individually without discussion and without showing them
   - If you have any solution options, list them now, we are capturing them to sho wthat there are possible ways forward (we will not discuss them in detail in this workshop)
   - This should be idealistic, not realistic or pragmatic (we will add that later)

2. All participants show their notes at the same time

3. The facilitator talks through each note in turn

4. The facilitator creates a summary note that captures the agreement and divergence of the team's contributions

5. The facilitator asks for any further thoughts from the team and adds to the summary if necessary

6. The facilitator then leads an analysis of the summary to firm up the route to value and resolve any disagreements.

7. The next step is to adjust our route to make sure that we being **realistic**. The following questions can be used as a start point

   - What is the maximum that should be paid to solve this problem?
   - What are the major steps required to deliver the ideal?
   - Can these be delivered?
   - Can the ideal be delivered in phases?
   - Is there a point before we get to the ideal that is "good enough"?
   - What are the big risks, issues, blockers, concerns, constraints that may stop us achieving the ideal?
   - Are any critical details that could derail us?
   - How does this change our definition of success?
   - Is it still **significant**, **measureable** and **ambitious**?

8. We now have a view of success, a target state that is

   Significant **M**easureable **A**mbitious **R**ealistic **T**imebound

Now we should have another short break!

Stakeholders

Purpose -

Duration - 45 minutes

who pays who cares who can cause problems who needs to support who do we need to persuade to back us

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Decisions

Purpose -

Duration - 10 minutes

go / no go - should we look for solutions? who will plan next steps and when is there a role for enterprise architects

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Architecture Challenge Canvas

Example