

Enterprise Architecture: Process, Structure and Organization

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1 Abstract

In this research paper, I discuss about the process of Enterprise Architecture and how the Architecture is organized. I start by discussing the problem with the organization, how the strategy does not meet the implementation. Next, I try to find a solution to fill in the gap between strategy and implementation by exploring three major sections of Enterprise Architecture Management. Finally I look at the outcomes of this process and the important takeaways.

2 Introduction

In any organization, the executive structure holds key importance in the strategies and implementation of the strategies [3]. But only having enough funds does not mean success. Having a cohesive, streamlined enterprise architecture means having a blend of corporate operations with employee loyalty and culture. To be successful, processes and operational models must be aligned [2]. The architecture should align Information Technology to Business. It should be based on a navigation from Information artifacts to Business Artifacts [1]. The entire process of Enterprise Architecture management should be optimized and controlled on a continuous basis.

The three parts that are to be bound are, structure, process and organization. The key to successful Enterprise Architecture management is to give all the 3 equal attention in the entire process. According to a survey [4], most projects tend to give majority of the focus to the structure, thereby ignoring the process and organization.

In coming up with a viable project, enterprise architects sometimes run into problems like inefficient business processes, ineffective measurement objectives, and misaligned organizational responsibilities. It is the architect's most important duty to come up with ideas to uncover and resolve these problems. These problems cause misalignment and disruption in the management plan and can throw the project off its tracks [2]. Another problem for the architecture could be the dissimilarity between the IT position and its role in the organization. This leads to expectations that are not fully met. Enhancement is achieved by two major factors: Iterations and Feedbacks. The iterations are to manage risks and the feedbacks generate reusable assets and best practices.

3 Structure

Enterprise Architecture management structure consists of an application landscape which applies goals and strategies, processes, components and data to the business architecture. This business architecture is implemented using the software architecture. The software architecture has interfaces and layers to implement the architecture. The business architecture also has to take care of the requirement specifications. The requirement specifications are of two types: functional and non-functional. Finally all this is applied with the system architecture to form the structure of the Enterprise Architecture Management structure. The system architecture comprises of different environments like development environment, test environment, integration environment, production environment and hot fix environment. These environments together complete the structure of the Enterprise Architecture Management [1].

4 Process

Once the structure is in place, we look at the Architecture Management process. This is the part where enterprise architects integrate and consolidate the enterprise architecture. The process includes analyzing the plan and conducting market research. The architects analyze the quality, cost, the risks and the functionality of the plan. It is important to evaluate the risks to make the entire process fail-proof. Or rather eliminate errors that could be easily avoided. Risk management is an important step in any organizational project. When we talk about the market research, it includes steps like evaluating the IT technology, verifying the available options, considering alternatives and a lot of decision making. Research is not just limited to IT technology, but the planners also evaluate alternate methods of approach as well standards present in the market [1].

The Enterprise Architecture Management process involves steps to design a number of entities. These include the business architecture, the application landscape, the software architecture, and the system architecture as a whole. Designing the system architecture is a part of developing, optimizing and procuring technology projects. The system architecture design also includes creating the technology model and supplying it for enterprise wide use [1].

5 Organization

The enterprise architecture management organization includes Enterprise Architecture roles and committees. While the roles vary in terms of the part everyone plays in the management of the project, the committee includes different boards to take care of various different subprojects. The rest of the organization section includes organizational principles and patterns, marketing patterns, critical success factors and best practices. These patterns and principles provide valuable accountability, credibility, motivation and decentralization of the architecture development. The best practices may also include consulting a mentor to guide the project, someone who has prior experience in a similar field [1].

6 Benefits and Conclusions

Enterprise Architecture projects are different in a way that they require inputs and support from more than one source. This support can be political as well financial. The Enterprise Architect's role is to help guide, identify, and correct misaligned investments. And for that, it is fully essential that they understand the organizational structure and operational models [2]. To conclude, the success of any Enterprise project heavily depends on the balancing the business and technological approaches. The outcome of any management plan majorly depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of the project. In Enterprise Architecture Management, the effectiveness of the technology and its efficiency define success of the management plan [1].

7 Acknowledgements and Reference

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