Enterprise Architecture – Finding Meaning amid chaos.

# Version Information

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Alpha, read 1. (I expect a couple of more releases)

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# Goal: Extract Meaning out of Work

An EA (Enterprise Architect) is called upon to analyze, assess, help, and lead new initiatives in a large IT organization. For example, how do you decide and execute a strategy for digital transformation of a large IT company?

Why? What tools? Where is the market? What are different teams in the organization thinking about the right set of approaches and tools?

At some point this becomes a “mundane” exercise of presenting options, not unlike passing bills in the United States Congress, a lengthy lawyerly exercise devoid of any incentive on the visionary “you”.

***There is a way to convert this “tedious work” exercise into a meaningful “personal growth” where your contribution helps others and is long-lasting.***

As “humans” we do things “we like”! And when we do those things we like, it is not “work” but “meaning”, and things we like sustain us.

# Work: How does Enterprise Architecture work become “work”?

Enterprise Architecture work revolves around

1. Decisions, Strategy
2. Tool selection and recommendations
3. Negotiate with teams through internal and integration architectures for
   1. Execution efficiency
   2. Time to Market
4. How to win at a lower cost
5. Present to business a compelling technology canvas for their creative growth

## Why does this feel like work?

An EA might formulate the central idea in a relatively short amount of time. This is the fun part.

However, it may take over a year to take that idea and get it approved and have multiple teams get on board with that idea or very likely a very compromised idea in the end.

At the end of that process, after 1000 meetings, something is proposed and eventually gets executed and when you look back after a few years, there is no artifact that is reusable and long lasting “like an idea”, or “like a paper” that can summarize that subject, that can outlast the chaos and implementation.

# Derive Meaning: Generalize, Publish, and Frequently!

Let’s see now what is a “meaningful” asset that can be extracted from such a tedious work!

Something you would do even if no one is paying you for it.

What you want to do is derive the ‘***general’*** from the “specific”. Extract the “horizontal” from the “verticals”?

## The How

What does that look like?

1. Take the large initiative and look at it from top down.
2. Look at it just from your perspective.
3. If you were King for a day, how would you go about proposing it, explaining it, and profiting from it in your own words.
4. Create a white paper generalizing the problem independent of the organization.
5. Get the draft out as soon as possible.
6. If this takes more than a day, then you are overthinking.
7. Publish in a draft form to your colleagues, or in broader context to your peers on LinkedIn or similar media.
8. Continue to refine it over the rest of the year as you learn more and discover more.

## Why does this make you smarter?

When you turn “specific” to a “general”, you become a researcher? You become curious. You ask questions. You just get better.

## A Personalized Asset

Finally, this becomes “YOUR WORK!!”. Your contribution to others. Your fellow beings.

# What not to do?

One thought is to wait for all the work to be completed and then allocate time to do this writing exercise.

Don’t do that!

Very likely it won’t get done.

Make this effort early and continuous. This is something you do very quickly. Day or two at best for the initial draft. May be revisit and refine as you go.

Know! - this is a continuous practice!