Enterprise Architecture Function Primer for 2023

Published 12 September 2023 - ID G00782500 - 11 min read

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> Distributed, decentralized decision making is the new normal. In 2023, enterprise architecture leaders must reevaluate and redesign their function's value proposition, activities, management and staffing to enable growth and resilience in a project- and product-oriented digital enterprise.

Scope

This initiative covers how to start or renew the enterprise architecture (EA) function by crafting an EA value proposition, strategy and operating model that supports both growth and resilience.
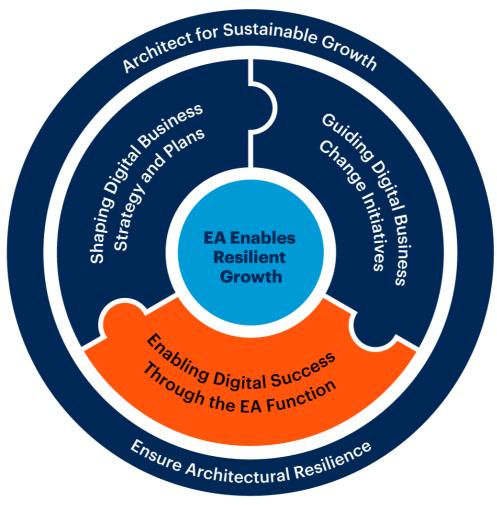
Topics in this initiative include:

- **Build or Reinvent the EA Function:** Define the vision, charter, operating model and staffing of the enterprise architecture function.

- **Attract, Hire and Retain EA Talent:** Build the EA talent management strategy needed to establish and maintain a highly skilled talent bench to realize business outcomes.

- **Improve and Modernize EA skills:** Continuously adapt the architecture skills and competency model to deliver business value.

- **Engage Business and IT Stakeholders:** Develop relationships and engagement models that enable stakeholders to make smart decisions.

- **Articulate the Value of the EA Function:** Measure, demonstrate and communicate the value proposition of EA to all types of stakeholders.

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Analysis

Figure 1: Enterprise Architecture Function Overview

Enterprise Architecture Function

Source: Gartner
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Numerous forces are impacting EA. Organizations continue to embrace more democratized and distributed digital decision making and product-oriented operating models: Forty percent of boards have moved more funds into business functions for digital investment. [1] While growth remains top of mind for the next two years, there is also evidence of disruptions, volatility and shortages impacting businesses. [2] Talent shortages are pervasive. Digital business ecosystems as well as environmental, social and governance (ESG) priorities are rising in importance and emphasis. Additionally, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as an urgent priority.

In 2023, organizations will be challenged to drive business growth while simultaneously ensuring operational resilience — or what we refer to as resilient growth — in the face of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) and evolving business conditions and priorities.

In response, EA leaders must revisit how EA can best enable business outcomes. Yet EA functions often have a subpar track record of reprioritizing in response to changing business conditions: 36% of EA/CTO functions reevaluate the business outcomes they must address on an ad hoc basis. [3] This is insufficient: EA functions must become more flexible and responsive.

To enable the increasingly distributed digital enterprise to achieve evolving priorities:

- **Reassess and revise the EA function's value proposition and charter.** In particular, EA must enable distributed product and fusion teams to efficiently make architecturally sound decisions. EA must also orchestrate shared resources to enable nimble and resilient business and technology change.

- **Recalibrate EA's stakeholder services, practices and operating model, revisit priority EA skills and competencies, and develop creative EA resource management strategies.** More flexible EA service and operating models are needed. This includes offering EA business services, using mechanisms like resource benches to fulfill demand, and developing better ways to leverage distributed architecture talent pools. EA leaders must also revisit priority architecture skills and competencies and establish ways to upskill and cross-skill their existing team as needed.

In 2023, our insights, tools and guidance will help you reset and mature your EA function's value proposition, activities, services, operating model and skill sets to better meet the needs of the increasingly distributed, product-oriented enterprise. In turn, the EA function will be better positioned to continuously shape digital business strategy and guide digital business change that enables growth and resilience.

Topics

Design the EA function to enable sustainable business growth while ensuring resilience in today's VUCA world. This requires repositioning the EA function's strategy, operating model, services, talent and stakeholder relationships to enable responsive digital business strategy that closes the strategy-to-execution gap across distributed stakeholders and fusion teams. It also requires delivering architectural guardrails to mitigate critical business and operational risks.

Our research in this area addresses the following topics:

Build or Reinvent the EA Function

Building a world-class EA function requires proactively readjusting EA's value proposition, charter and operating model to support current business priorities and enable distributed, product- and project-oriented digital business. Given increasing demand from distributed stakeholders, EA resource constraints and rapid adoption of emerging technologies such as AI, rigorously reprioritization and a flexible EA resourcing model are essential.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How should I define (or redefine) the value proposition and charter of the EA function to best enable distributed decision making?

- What EA organizational structures, ways of working, decision rights and financial models are best suited to enable distributed, product- and project-oriented digital business?

- Where are enterprise architects, business architects, product and solution architects and platform architects positioned within distributed, product- and project-oriented digital businesses?

- How can emerging technologies such as AI be used to augment EA activities?

Recommended Content

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- Presentation: The New EA Operating Model for Digital

- Enterprise Architecture Activity Guidebook

- 5 Steps to Professionalize the Delivery of Enterprise Architecture as an Internal Management Consultancy

- 5 Steps to Create a Flexible Team Structure That Enables Enterprise Architecture Value Delivery

- Quick Answer: How Can Organizations Succeed With Enterprise Architecture as a Service?

Planned Research

- Case studies on resetting EA's operating model to better enable distributed decision making

- Use case prism for AI-assisted EA activities

- Toolkit: how to build an EA charter that enables resilient growth

- Data view: opportunities and challenges of evolving enterprise architecture into internal management consulting

- Updates to the Enterprise Architecture Activity Guidebook

- Updates to 8 Steps to Start or Restart a High-Impact EA Practice

Attract, Hire and Retain EA Talent

Reevaluate the architecture roles needed to enable digital business. Business architects must shape and guide strategy and planning. Product and solutions architects must guide distributed teams. Platform architects must define digital foundations to better guide and orchestrate distributed solutions design for future, unknown business goals. Additionally, architecture practitioners without formal architecture titles — including developers and business technologists — must also increasingly be equipped to perform architectural work.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- What is the right number and mix of roles, responsibilities and career paths available for an effective enterprise architecture function, and how do they work together?

- How can we best attract, hire, develop and retain EA talent?

- How can we better leverage and enable architecture talent distributed across and beyond the enterprise?

- What are the typical roles, responsibilities and career paths of chief enterprise architects, enterprise architects, business architects, product and solution architects, and platform architects, and how are they evolving?

Recommended Content

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- Tool: Chief Enterprise Architect Job Description

- Tool: Enterprise Architect Job Description

- Tool: Product Architect Job Description

- Tool: Business Architect Job Description

- Tool: Technical Architect Job Description

Planned Research

- Enterprise architecture roles and organizational structure

- Quick Answer: what is the relationship between different architecture roles in an EA practice?

- Updates to architect job description tools

- Quick Answer: how do we build a minimum viable EA team internally?

Improve and Modernize EA skills

Architecture skills and competencies needed to deliver value are evolving. Modern EA functions must be equipped to enable architecturally sound and resilient strategy, planning and execution decisions by distributed teams. They also need skills to orchestrate and enable shared resources, such as shared applications, services and capabilities, to foster nimble and resilient change by distributed product and fusion teams.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- What is the right mix of skills, competencies and behaviors of an effective EA function?

- What are the typical skills, competencies and behaviors of chief enterprise architects, enterprise architects, business architects, product and solution architects, and platform architects, and how are they evolving?

- What are the skills implications of emerging technologies such as AI on architecture roles?

Recommended Content

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- ▪ [Tool: Competency Model for Enterprise Architecture Talent Management](#)

- ▪ [Tool: Architecture Team Talent Diagnostic](#)

- ▪ [Architecture Apprenticeship Program (Lilly)](#)

Planned Research

- ▪ Skills implications of AI on EA

- ▪ Key competencies of successful chief enterprise architects

- ▪ Case studies on emerging EA practices and capabilities and requisite skill sets

- ▪ Tool: individual architect talent diagnostic

Engage Business and IT Stakeholders

To enable business outcomes through distributed decision makers, EA must build relationships with and among key stakeholders — from business and IT leaders to distributed technologists and delivery partners. In short, EA must communicate with and persuade diverse audiences and enable effective architectural collaboration. Additionally, effective EA functions increasingly engage by offering business services to address varied and evolving stakeholder priorities and demand.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- ▪ What stakeholder relationships are needed for an effective enterprise architecture function?

- ▪ What engagement methods do effective enterprise architecture functions use to guide and enable distributed stakeholders?

- ▪ What stakeholder relationships and engagement methods do chief enterprise architects, enterprise architects, business architects, product and solution architects, and platform architects need to engage business and IT stakeholders?

Recommended Content

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- Quick Answer: How Do EA-Stakeholder Relationships Evolve as Maturity Increases?

- 3 Top Practices for Enterprise Architects to Engage Business Executives

- 3 Steps to Creating Enterprise Architecture Services

- Offering EA as a Service (Ernst & Young)

- Ignition Guide to Building Architecture Communities of Practice

Planned Research

- EA storyboard: 7 easy steps to gain stakeholder engagement

Articulate the Value of the EA Function

To articulate EA's value, begin with identifying EA's key internal stakeholder personas — effectively, EA's internal customers — and understanding the real-world business problems they are trying to solve and outcomes they seek. Build and market a set of EA services that helps stakeholders deliver against those outcomes. In turn, EA can develop outcome-oriented narratives, metrics and scorecards, with a focus on tailoring communications to the target audience's respective priorities.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How can I measure and articulate EA's business value proposition for my business and IT stakeholders?

- How can I develop EA's branding and positioning to best communicate EA's business value proposition?

- How can I tailor EA's communications and messaging around EA's value proposition for varied audiences?

Recommended Content

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- Toolkit: Measuring Stakeholders' Satisfaction With the EA Practice

- EA Value Stories: Articulating EA's Performance to Stakeholders

- How to Communicate EA's Value: Start With a Focus on the Value of 'Good Architecture'

- Ignition Guide to Creating a Marketing Plan for Enterprise Architecture

Planned Research

- Tool: construct a practice value proposition for the EA function

- Enterprise architecture metrics that matter

- Quick answer: how can enterprise architects solve the conundrum of EA value, frameworks, and the number of architects?

Suggested First Steps

- The Enterprise Architecture Leader's First 100 Days

- Toolkit: Enterprise Architecture in a Box 2.0

- IT Score for Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation

Essential Reading

- Leadership Vision for 2023: Enterprise Architecture

- Predicts 2023: Enterprise Architecture Charts New Path for Postdigital Era

- Digital Business Strategy and Plans Primer for 2023

- Digital Business Change Initiatives Primer for 2023

Evidence

[1] **2022 Gartner View From the Board of Directors Survey:** This survey was conducted to understand how boards of directors (BoDs) will address the risk from economic and political volatility and a multipolar world, and their intent to convert digital acceleration to digital momentum. The survey also helps understand the impact of the key societal issues that took center-stage during the COVID-19 pandemic on BoDs' strategy and investment approaches. The survey was conducted online from May through June 2021 among 273 respondents from the U.S., Europe and Asia/Pacific. Companies were screened to be midsize, large or global enterprises. Respondents were required to be a board director or a member of a corporate BoD. If respondents served on multiple boards, they answered for the largest company, defined by its annual revenue, for which they were a board member.

[2] **2022 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey:** This survey was conducted to examine CEO and senior business executive views on current business issues, as well as some areas of technology agenda impact. The survey was conducted from July 2021 through December 2021, with questions about the period from 2021 through 2023. One-quarter of the survey sample was collected in July and August 2021, and three-quarters was collected in October through December 2021. In total, 410 actively employed CEOs and other senior executive business leaders qualified and participated. The research was collected via 382 online surveys and 28 telephone interviews. The sample mix by role was CEOs (n = 253); CFOs (n = 88); COOs or other C-level executives (n = 19); and chairs, presidents or board directors (n = 50). The sample mix by location was North America (n = 176), Europe (n = 97), Asia/Pacific (n = 86), Latin America (n = 40), the Middle East (n = 4) and South Africa (n = 7). The sample mix by size was $50 million to less than $250 million (n = 58), $250 million to less than $1 billion (n = 81), $1 billion to less than $10 billion (n = 212) and $10 billion or more (n = 59).

[3] **2021 Gartner Clarifying Jobs to Be Done for EA&TI Leaders Survey:** This survey was conducted online from 22 September through 10 October 2021 to get clear insights into what jobs are to be done for the roles in EA and TI. In total, 60 leaders who were members of Gartner's Research Circle, a Gartner-managed panel, participated. Members from North America (n = 27), EMEA (n = 23), Asia/Pacific (n = 6) and Latin America (n = 4) responded to the survey.

Disclaimer: Results of these surveys do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

Related Priorities

Initiative Name	Description
Digital Business Change Initiatives	This initiative covers enterprise architecture (EA) practices and deliverables that guide the implementation of digital business change through digital platforms and foundations.
Digital Business Strategy and Plans	This initiative covers enterprise architecture (EA) practices that help organizations drive targeted business outcomes by shaping digital strategies that realize and optimize business capabilities.

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