Avoid the 13 Worst EA Practices and Ensure Your Success in the Digital Business Era

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Despite best efforts, many EA programs fall from "best practices" to "worst practices." Enterprise architecture and technology innovation leaders must be vigilant and navigate away from practices that sink EA efforts. Here, we identify 13 worst EA practices and offer guidance on how to avoid them.

Key Findings

- Without "linkage" to business strategy and to targeted business outcomes, it is impossible for EA leaders to make business and IT recommendations they can act on and deliver on.
- Focusing on IT or technical-only architecture in isolation is not the same as EA. This effort fails to meet holistic digital business needs and delivers little business value.
- Excessive EA governance and overbearing assurance create roadblocks and friction in the business-EA relationship. This impedes technology innovation, speed to value and time to market.
- A current-state first architecture focuses attention on today's pain points and problems. It leads to a never-ending spiral of documenting the "as-is," and provides little business value.

Recommendations

Enterprise architecture and technology innovation leaders seeking to build a world-class EA capability and program:

- Read this research to learn the worst practices that cause EA programs to fail and the best practices and solutions to circumvent these worst practices and ensure success.
- Embrace a business-outcome-driven EA approach that is iterative, evolves with your digital business strategy and delivers measurable outcomes.
- Define and document the future-state first. Develop a future-state business vison and context before creating a current-state technology and application inventory.

- Structure EA governance to mirror overall enterprise governance so that EA efforts unite decision making across all EA viewpoints and help achieve targeted business outcomes.

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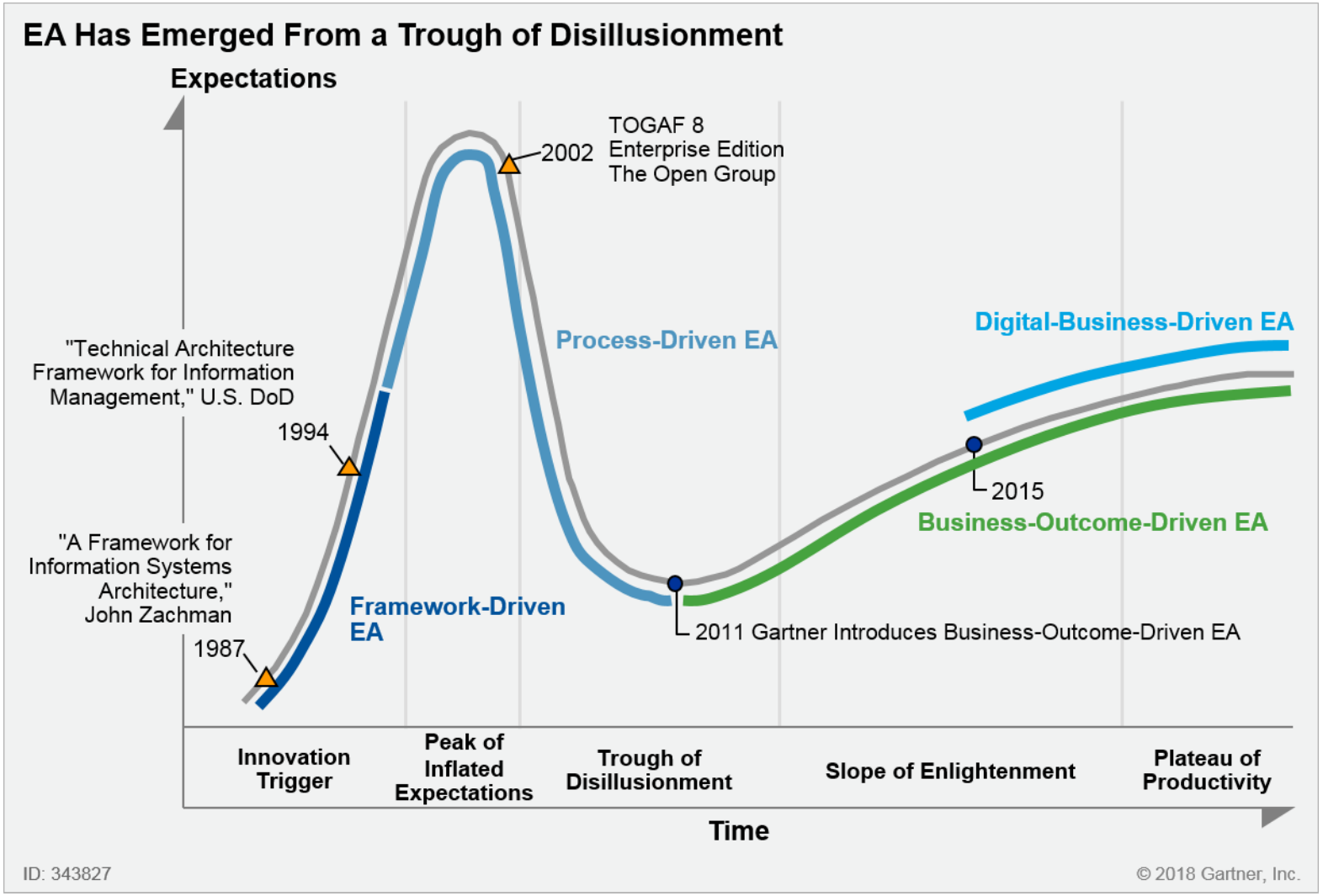
Analysis

Over the last seven years of helping organizations build world-class enterprise architecture (EA) programs, we've observed 13 most common "worst practices" of EA leaders. Any one of these worst practices can diminish the value proposition of an organization's EA programs and sink its EA efforts. The 13 worst EA practices emerged as a result of EA's evolution from a framework-centric discipline to a process-centric discipline (see Figure 1).

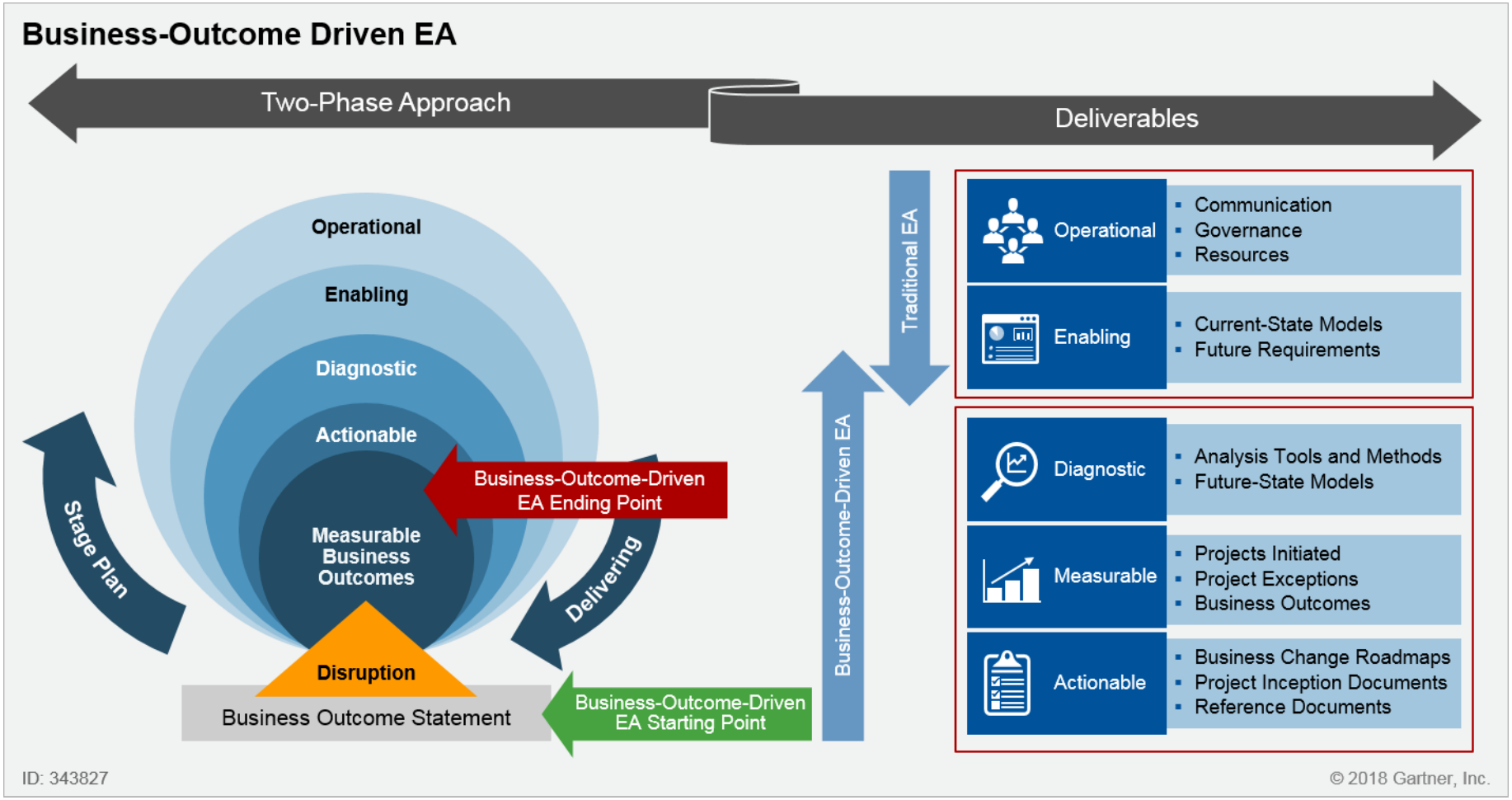
Figure 1. The 13 Worst EA Practices Emerged in the EA Hype Cycle Between 1987 and 2010



Source: Gartner (January 2018)

Today, 72% of organizations are either starting, restarting or renewing their EA efforts.[1] This is not because there is something wrong with EA; rather, it's because traditional EA is seen as not having business value. Successful EA leaders focus first and foremost on business value and business outcomes — the "why" and "what" — before the "how" of "doing" EA. They avoid the pitfalls of a failed EA program by ensuring that EA efforts deliver targeted business outcomes and a continuous value proposition. This is especially important with evolving digital business, which is being fueled by technology innovation (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Business-Outcome-Driven EA

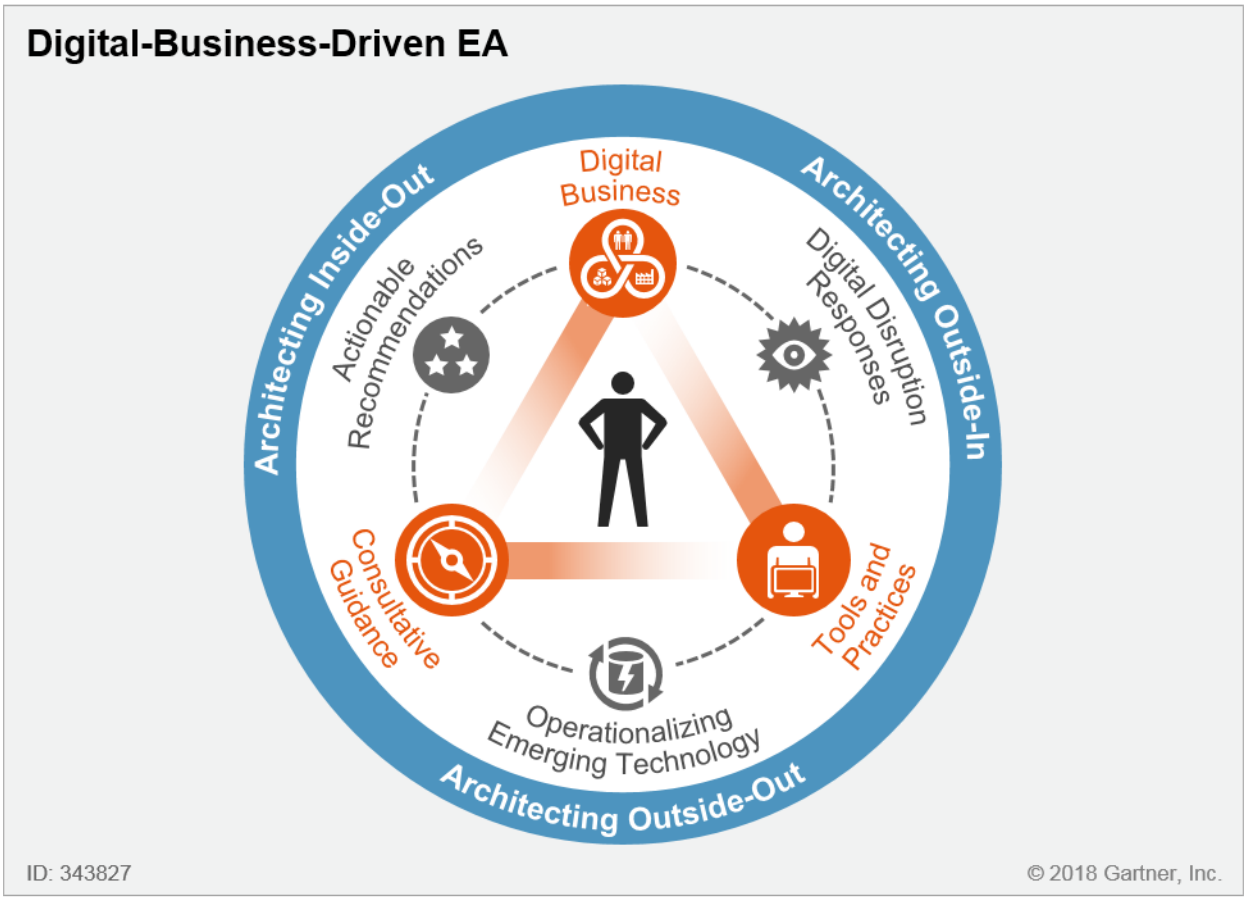


Source: Gartner (January 2018)

With digital business comes a fundamental change and a stark contrast in the way the business-IT (and EA leader-business leader) relationship operates (see Note 1). Before the digital era, the business-IT relationship was predicated on a "business-led, IT-enabled" approach. In the digital era, the business-IT relationship is predicated on a "business- and IT-led, technology-enabled" approach. It's no longer about aligning business and IT in the digital era; it's about surviving extreme competition and prospering by integrating business and IT into a single, all-encompassing digital business strategy that addresses business and IT strategy as one.

Modern EA programs are bimodal in nature, simultaneously focusing on foundational and vanguard EA efforts. They proactively engage business leaders to help formulate and operationalize digital strategy. These EA programs help formulate and then execute strategies that often consist of new data-driven business models and analytics powered by things like digital platforms. Digital platforms are an integrated mix of existing, new and emerging technologies that enable interactions between people, business and things across digital ecosystems (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Digital-Business-Driven EA



Source: Gartner (January 2018)

To help EA leaders navigate safely around the 13 worst EA practices, this research describes each worst practice and provides guidance on how to eliminate EA program failure. We provide tips for traps particularly important to EA leaders who are starting, restarting or refocusing their organization's EA program. Clients facing issues and challenges supporting their EA efforts should follow the links provided to gain access to more detailed research, best practices and recommendations. This list of worst practices is by no means exhaustive.

No. 1. No Link to Business Strategy and Targeted Business Outcomes

Issue: Without "linkage" to business strategy and to targeted business outcomes — which inform EA efforts and provide guidance — it is impossible for EA leaders to make business and IT recommendations they can act on and deliver on.

Explanation: EA programs that focus on either business or IT tactical requests only rather than focusing first on the future business state as guided by strategy are bound to become stuck in a react mode. Many of these efforts do not focus on creating diagnostic, actionable and measurable deliverables that business leaders can use to understand opportunities or take action in support of the business's strategic direction; thus, they result in EA program failure. EA leaders who focus primarily on the tactical questions their business and IT leaders are asking will find it impossible to demonstrate and deliver business value in the digital era, or garner long-term stakeholder engagement and support.

Solution: Start, restart or renew your EA program by adopting a business-outcome-driven EA approach. Use your business strategy and direction to guide and inform responses to requests coming from business and IT leaders. Use this guidance as much to determine what to focus on, as to determine what not to focus on (see Note 2 and Figure 2).

Actions:

- Embrace a business-outcome-driven EA approach that is iterative, evolves with your business strategy and delivers measurable outcomes.
- Ensure that you create a direct link between targeted business outcomes, the future-state business capabilities required to achieve them, and the organizational programs, projects and initiatives that will deliver them.
- Engage key business stakeholders to show how business architecture can add value to both strategy and innovation planning.
- Proactively work with business and IT leaders in an innovative, collaborative, supportive and consultative manner to drive the organization's digital business strategies and to ensure a balance between innovation and running and growing the business.
- Streamline EA deliverables by ensuring they are directed at either the business outcomes or stakeholder issues.
- Look for quick wins to position you or your team to deliver at least one actionable recommendation that addresses a high-priority business outcome within the first 100 days.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Must Read Research Notes to Start, Restart or Renew Your EA Program"
- "Stage Planning a Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture"
- "Toolkit: Business Outcome Statements Deliver Value to Your Business and Guidance for EA"
- "Use Enterprise Architecture to Orchestrate the Delivery of Business Outcomes"
- "Business Architecture Is Not Optional for Business-Outcome-Driven EA"
- "Toolkit: Determine Your Business Scope and Focus for EA"
- "Deducing Business Strategy Is a Unique Opportunity for EA Practitioners to Both Drive Execution and Gain Credibility"
- "Define a Value Proposition for a Winning Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program"
- "Five Best Practices to Increase Stakeholder Engagement and Support in the Digital Era"
- "EA Business Value Metrics You Must Have Today"
- "Toolkit: Use a Customer Satisfaction Approach to Engage EA Partners"
- "The Enterprise Architect's First 100 Days"
- "Toolkit: How to Create an EA Charter, and Why"

No. 2. Confusing Technical Architecture With Enterprise Architecture

Issue: Starting with, or focusing on, IT or technical-only architecture in isolation is not the same as EA. These efforts fail to meet holistic digital business needs and deliver little business value.

Explanation: Most organizations begin their EA efforts by focusing on the technical architecture. Either they do this as a "bottom-up" approach in the hope of developing the business architecture later, or they understand EA only in terms of technology. Focusing on IT or on technical-only architecture is not the same as EA (see Note 3). Technical architecture efforts are integral to the other main viewpoints of EA (the business, information and solutions architectures). However, many organizations find it difficult to demonstrate business value and garner long-term business support without a clear line-of-sight linkage, including all four main viewpoints of EA, to targeted business outcomes.

Solution: Adopt a business-outcome-driven EA approach. First, address business strategy (business architecture) and technology innovation (information architecture: data-driven business models) — the "why" and "what" of EA. Second, address tactics (solutions and technical architectures) — the "how" of executing and operationalizing EA (see Figure 2).

Actions:

- Ensure that EA efforts are focused on targeted business outcomes and on delivering real business value by focusing all EA efforts within the context of business vision and strategy.

- Position all EA efforts within the scope of business outcomes to ensure that the EA is business-focused, not just technology-focused.
- Start by refocusing EA efforts with a business outcome statement — regardless of the viewpoint of EA — and use the business outcome statement to inform, guide and drive technology, information and/or solution decisions.
- Clarify boundaries between the different EA domains (business, information, solutions and technical) and specify acceptable performance and task responsibilities, handoffs, and collaboration between them.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "The Distinction Between Enterprise Architecture and Application Architecture Makes a Difference to Business Outcomes"
- "Focus Enterprise Architecture and Application Architecture on Distinct, but Complementary Business Outcomes"
- "Vanguard and Foundational Enterprise Architects Must Collaborate on a Bimodal Technology Architecture"

No. 3. Focusing on the Current-State Architecture First

Issue: A current-state first architecture focuses attention on today's pain points and problems, leading to a never-ending spiral of documenting the current state. A current-state first architecture provides little business value, motivates tactical fixes, and produces more of the same.

Explanation: Starting with current-state first architecture risks wasting scarce resources (time, money and human capital) on investments that limit the organization's ability to envision or innovate on their future business models and supporting operations. It does not enable future-state business capabilities, which, in turn, drive targeted business outcomes. Establishing a link to future-state business capabilities and targeted business outcomes — the two things business leaders really want to talk about — is critical. Without it, creating and trying to continuously maintain an inventory of the IT estate (including applications, technologies, APIs, services, processes and data elements) to give the organization an understanding of what it has is costly and time-consuming, and provides little business value.

Solution: Start with the future state, focusing on the strategy of the organization, the trends and disruptions facing it, and the capabilities needed to support it. Understand the future state first, by leveraging business architecture and a business outcome statement, to guide what you consider in your current state. The clear understanding and articulation of the future state will determine and drive which technologies, applications, solutions, processes and information you will need to tend to first in your current state. Once the future state is defined, look at the current state and use EA to figure out how to get to the future state by closing the gap.

Actions:

- Define and document the future state first, not the other way around. Develop a future-state business vison and context before creating a current-state technology and application inventory.
- Spend as little time as needed to document the current state. Focus the majority of your time and effort on creating diagnostic and actionable deliverables (e.g., roadmaps, guiding principles and journey maps) on how to evolve toward a future-state business vision.
- Focus on doing "just enough," "just in time" and "as is" for the current-state architecture.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "The Enterprise Architect's First 100 Days"
- "Market Guide for Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture Consulting"
- "How to Use Consultancies in Enterprise Architecture Efforts"
- "Four Scenarios for How CIOs Can Clarify or Deduce Their Business Strategies"

No. 4. Excessive Governance and Overbearing Assurance

Issue: Excessive EA governance and overbearing assurance create roadblocks and friction in the business-EA relationship. This impedes technology innovation, speed to value and time to market.

Explanation: EA governance and assurance is important because it helps position the organization to deliver business outcomes by focusing on orderly and coherent strategy formulation and execution (see Note 4). Modern EA program governance is much more than simply EA assurance or setting up charters and architectural review boards. Today, many EA programs struggle to establish an effective EA governance structure for their organization's digital business initiatives. This is complicated by the fact that many EA programs try to govern everything without considering economic, competitive and other critical risk factors. When EA governance becomes excessive, bureaucratic and time-consuming, it impedes business value. It's not surprising that business and IT teams do their best to avoid or ignore the EA program. The lack of appropriate EA governance hinders the ability of business leaders to deploy new value creation mechanisms (such as data-driven business models) empowered by digital platforms, which are necessary to prosper in the digital era.

Solution: Shift from a command-and-control approach with prescriptive guidelines to guardrails that communicate boundaries to spur innovation. Shift EA governance and assurance emphasis from top-down governance to an EA center of excellence. Move to being a center of "know" from being a center of "no."

Actions:

- Move from formal to informal governance by adopting a flexible approach to governance and assurance that focuses more on coaching and guiding than on policing and enforcing.

- Ensure that EA efforts have defined the target business outcomes the organization seeks to achieve based on business direction and strategy.
- Structure EA governance decisions to mirror overall enterprise governance so that EA efforts unite decision making across all EA viewpoints. EA governance must be positioned to help foster, facilitate and achieve those targeted business outcomes.
- Enact and reinforce business leaders' decision-making rights over strategy direction, IT investment and risk priorities.
- Match EA governance decision making and assurance to the organization's culture, maturity and approach to doing EA.
- Coach and mentor, be inclusive and collaborative, and become a center of "know," not a center of "no." Include participation and involvement by centralized as well as decentralized/local EA teams.
- Integrate EA governance with other processes such as project portfolio management, application portfolio management, budgeting and, most importantly, investment decision making.
- Define explicit delegation of authority for decisions within the scope of EA.
- Provide the deliverables needed to support stakeholder decision making by orchestrating stakeholder involvement and interaction. This is done formally through the governance model and informally through EA's daily work with stakeholders.
- Facilitate a collaborative relationship with the business, which is important for realizing the future-state architecture.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Gartner Defines 'Governance'"
- "Define EA Governance to Deliver Targeted Business Outcomes"
- "Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2017"
- "ITScore Overview for Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation"
- "Manage Architectural Debt to Enable Continuous Innovation and Delivery"
- "Governance and Culture Are the Fabric of Your I&T Operating Model"
- "Gartner ITScore Transformation Roadmap: Achieving Enterprise IT Maturity Level 3"

No. 5. Creating a Standard for Everything

I**ssue:** An obsession with EA leaders focusing on "defining and documenting standards" leads to bureaucratic governance and an excessive focus on assurance.

Explanation: Business leaders are becoming increasingly active and directly involved in selecting and purchasing IT to drive digital business outcomes. Traditional technology procurement and purchasing practices are shifting from IT purchasing on behalf of the business to the business purchasing IT directly (and in many instances without IT involvement). With the shift from "inside-out" and "outside-in" to "outside-out" architecture, EA practitioners are losing immediate and direct control over technology procurement, vendor services, applications and the overall IT estate. Most often, EA teams respond to this loss of control by creating standards in an attempt to influence or shape technology decisions. While reducing total cost of ownership, IT management costs and time through standardization is a laudable goal, without line-of-sight linkage to business strategy, many EA leaders experience a backlash against standards. As a result of too many standards or a rigid focus on standards:

- Users will — on purpose or inadvertently — circumvent or ignore the defined standards.
- The EA team gets saddled with a negative "standards police" reputation.
- EA efforts become increasingly viewed as nonstrategic and tactical in nature.

Solution: Step back and determine what exact and specific set of standards is really needed to support business in the digital era, where the focus is shifting from "inside-out" and "outside-in" to "outside-out" architecture.

Actions:

- Develop and apply standards through the EA governance model, which is a subset of IT governance. Clarify accountability and provide the focal point for agile, effective and efficient decision making.
- Identify clearly defined business outcomes. Ensure that EA assurance standards are positioned to achieve those outcomes and are not simply adding more controls, assurance and governance.
- Focus on defining just enough standards to help guide the organization toward a business-outcome-driven future-state vision, rather than putting the business at risk by overfocusing and overwhelming its users with too many standards that get ignored.
- Develop standards jointly with business leaders. Start by developing an IT or EA point of view (e.g., cloud-first strategy), and get business leaders to provide input to achieve consensus. Do the same at the next level down with principles and, finally, follow with standards.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2017"
- "Predicts 2018: Scaling to Deliver Digital Business Strategy and Technology Innovation"
- "Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies, 2017"
- "Predicts 2018: Emerging Technologies Pave the Way for Business Reinvention"

- "Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends for 2018"

No. 6. Engrossed in the Art and Language of EA Rather Than Business Outcomes

Issue: Becoming overly engrossed with practicing the "art and/or academic theories of EA," especially when starting, restarting or renewing an EA program detracts from immediately demonstrating the value proposition and business value of EA.

Explanation: When EA leaders become fixated with trying to lead, educate, facilitate and create unnecessary EA deliverables (countless artifacts), they most often forget the value proposition of EA. As a result, the business undervalues and sidesteps the EA program. To be valuable to the business, EA efforts must be pragmatic (for example, iterative, defined, scoped, usable and available) and continually integrated with business outcomes, with the sole purpose of creating enterprise value and delivering targeted business outcomes. The goal of business-outcome-driven EA is to focus on supporting and enabling business leaders to make strategic investment decisions in the IT estate, which, in turn, enable future-state business capabilities that drive targeted outcomes.

Solution: Demonstrate the business value of EA to business leaders by "rightsizing" and targeting EA efforts to deliver "just enough" and "just in time." Create the right number of high-value EA deliverables that are meaningful and valuable to business leaders, especially as they seek to use technology innovation (existing, new and emerging technologies) to create new business and operating models.

Actions:

- Avoid fixating on EA terms for the sake of "practicing EA." Stop gathering and creating endless amounts invaluable artifacts that have no business value.
- Help formulate and/or translate business strategy, followed by executing EA processes and practices. Focus on creating diagnostic and signature-ready deliverables — the "why" and "what" of EA — before creating operating or enabling deliverables — the "how" of EA.
- Collaborate and communicate with business leaders using terms (nomenclature) that are understood and meaningful to them.
- Develop business knowledge and focus on speaking the language of business. Ensure that the EA communication plan includes presentations and collateral (such as business outcome statements and roadmaps) that continually reaffirm targeted business-outcomes.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Define a Value Proposition for a Winning Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program"
- "Five Best Practices to Increase Stakeholder Engagement and Support in the Digital Era"
- "Toolkit: Use a Customer Satisfaction Approach to Engage EA Partners"

- "Must-Read Research Notes to Start, Restart or Renew Your EA Program"
- "Stage Planning a Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture"
- "Toolkit: Business Outcome Statements Deliver Value to Your Business and Guidance for EA"
- "Toolkit: Determine Your Business Scope and Focus for EA"
- "Use Enterprise Architecture to Orchestrate the Delivery of Business Outcomes"
- "Deducing Business Strategy Is a Unique Opportunity for EA Practitioners to Both Drive Execution and Gain Credibility"
- "Create Roadmaps That Support Decision Making and Communicate Strategy Effectively"
- "Toolkit: How to Develop a One-Page Business Strategy"

No. 7. Strict Adherence to EA Frameworks and Industry Reference Models

Issue: An overly dogmatic adherence to any EA framework and industry reference model generally results in the production of EA output documents that are of limited business value.

Explanation: EA frameworks and industry reference models are generic guidance for the practices organizations might leverage to deliver EA.

EA frameworks are merely guides — not a checklist of all the activities EA teams must do, or lists of all the components necessary to do business-outcome-driven EA. It is a waste of time and resources for EA programs to blindly create EA artifacts prescribed by generic EA frameworks (such as The Open Group Architecture Framework, the Department of Defense Architecture Framework and the Zachman Framework). The same applies to blindly adopting generic industry reference models (such as the Banking Industry Architecture Network [BIAN], Association for Cooperative Operations Research and Development [ACORD] and American Productivity and Quality Center [APQC]). These reference models are often incomplete. For example, ACORD doesn't cover actuarial, enterprise risk management and legal "functions," which are the lifeblood of the insurance industry. Industry reference models are only as good as how well they support an organization's business and competitive advantage needs. They are a starting point rather than an end in themselves. Every organization is unique, and the EA leaders must create a hybrid, or customized, EA framework to suit its particular business needs by blending key elements of industry standard frameworks and reference models.

It is Gartner's position that it is best to focus on the starting point of business-outcome-driven EA — understanding business strategy and direction — before adopting EA frameworks, standards and industry reference models, and customizing them to sustain competitive advantage. In other words, the "why" and "what" (goals and targeted outcomes) of EA must supersede the "how" (EA frameworks and industry reference models).

Solution: Customize and "rightsize" EA frameworks and industry reference models to suit the organization's needs and achieve speed to value.

Actions:

- Determine what is needed by business leaders, what drives their EA efforts, and how an EA process should develop, given the organization's culture.
- Prioritize the most important business outcomes, and customize the framework to match delivery ("just enough" and "just in time") against business needs.
- Use EA frameworks and industry reference models to help guide organizational efforts. Neither should be used to dictate or drive the entire EA process.
- Blend EA frameworks (creating a customized framework) by picking the processes, practices and models most relevant for your organization's business needs. Augment EA frameworks with organizational ideas and industry best practices. Customize industry reference models to ensure competitive business advantage.
- Use EA frameworks and reference models as guides. They should augment and support your organization's business, people, culture, processes and technology needs.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Best Practices for Delivering Targeted and High-Impact Reference Architectures"
- "Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2017"
- "Stage Planning a Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture"
- "Taming Your EA Framework With Business Outcomes"

No. 8. Adopting an "Ivory Tower" Approach to EA

Issue: EA programs that operate in a vacuum and are perceived by business leaders to be bureaucratic, restrictive and slow, tend to fail. CIOs cite this as the No. 1 reason for either eliminating, starting, restarting or renewing EA efforts.

Explanation: Business-outcome-driven EA is a highly collaborative team sport involving individuals and different teams from across the organization consistently partnering to enable future-state business capabilities, which, in turn, drive targeted business outcomes. EA programs that operate in isolation, hiding behind governance, assurance and standards; focus on artifact gathering, rigidly adopting EA frameworks and industry reference models; and spend too much time modeling and developing technical architecture provide little to no business value. If the EA effort is seen as a roadblock and impediment, or as the policing agency, then it is likely to be ignored and circumvented by end users. This is especially the case in the digital era where business leaders are looking to proactively engage EA leaders to help formulate and operationalize digital strategy. EA needs to be front and center to embedding technology into products and services, achieving speed to value and time to market, and playing a critical role in digital survival and prosperity.

Solution: Advance EA efforts by adopting a pragmatic business-outcome-driven approach. Streamline EA deliverables by ensuring they are directed at business outcomes or stakeholder issues.

Actions:

- Advance the EA program's capability and maturity by developing a business-EA leader relationship predicated on a "business- and IT-led, technology-enabled" approach. Focus holistically on the business, information, solutions and technical architectures across the enterprise.
- Map out the EA execution process — how the EA organization moves from strategy to goals, as well as the individual initiatives and projects that define it. Determine what the steps are along the way, who is involved, what they are doing, and how can EA support them.
- Collaborate with business leaders to achieve consensus on making the right business technology investment decisions. Continuously find new ways to work with business leaders.
- Acquire new soft skills for collaborative purposes, leveraging new approaches to value creation such as "economic architecture" (see Note 5) and focusing on and employing new modeling techniques such as "ecosystem modeling."
- Treat EA as an internal management consultancy to reframe the focus and value of your EA practice and program.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Leadership Vision for 2018: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader"
- "How Vanguard Enterprise Architects Lead Technology Innovation"
- "Four Ways Enterprise Architects Can Help Chief Strategy Officers Conquer Digital Disruptions"
- "Exploiting Economic Architecture to Drive Digital Business"
- "Rethink EA as an Internal Management Consultancy to Rapidly Deliver Business Outcomes"
- "Using EA to Support a Palette of Business Strategy Approaches"
- "Developing a High-Performing EA Team"

No. 9. Lack of Continuous Communication and Feedback

Issue: EA leaders who fail to create a proactive communications plan and a continuous feedback loop with business leaders put the EA program and their jobs at risk.

Explanation: EA efforts that focus on technology-only decisions are perceived by business leaders to be relevant to IT only. The only way to build bridges to business leaders is to keep reaching out with deliverables they find interesting and valuable. Feedback mechanisms and channels include collaborative teams of business and IT people. If the project management office and project teams

cannot find or understand what EA is asking them to do, then they cannot successfully put EA into practice. EA leaders who fail to develop continuous communication and feedback run the risk of a backlash from users who resent not having the opportunity to provide input and feedback to programs, projects and initiatives.

Solution: Continuously ensure that the outputs of EA are available to and usable by business leaders, and proactively develop communication channels to encourage their participation and feedback.

Actions:

- Do not leave communication as an afterthought. The value of EA is in how it is used proactively by business and IT to transform business toward a desired future state.
- Ensure business leadership understands how the EA program is helping facilitate the business in achieving its future-state business capabilities which, in turn, drive targeted business outcomes.
- Develop feedback communication channels such as teams of business and IT people, collaborative tools and corporate social networks.
- Take the simple step of checking to ensure that the EA information made available can be easily understood and applied, and that it meets stakeholder needs.
- Conduct business surveys so that EA team members can determine whether they are executing correctly. Use semistructured interviews with key stakeholders (asking what worked, what didn't work and what improvements can be made) and create scorecards.
- Model continuous improvement. Each year, review the EA practice, and tailor, adjust and refine it. Don't expect the EA program to remain static; it must change as the organization evolves.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Five Best Practices to Increase Stakeholder Engagement and Support in the Digital Era"
- "Toolkit: Use a Customer Satisfaction Approach to Engage EA Partners"
- "Define a Value Proposition for a Winning Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program"
- "Effective Communications: How to Develop a Communications Plan"
- "Effective Communications: Lead Through Storytelling"
- "Storytelling for Enterprise Architecture: How to Influence and Persuade Leaders of EA Value in Decision Making"
- "Toolkit: Storytelling Digital Innovation Decision-Making to Influence and Persuade Business and IT Leaders of EA Advisory Role"
- "ITScore Overview for Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation"

No. 10. Restricting the EA Team to IT Resources Only

Issue: Successfully planning and executing digital business strategy, which includes technology innovation, requires developing a diverse set of deep organizational competencies. Restricting the EA program to IT resources isolates them and prevents the formulation, translation and execution of digital business strategy.

Explanation: Today, organizations are working to integrate (rather than align) their business planning and technology planning. The goal of this integration is to define an enterprise digital business strategy and transformation plan that puts technology at the center of new value creation and revenue growth, cost optimization, and risk mitigation efforts. Modern EA programs are bimodal by nature, simultaneously focusing on foundational and vanguard EA efforts. They proactively engage business leaders to help formulate and operationalize digital strategy. The strategy these programs help formulate and then execute often consists of new data-driven business models and analytics powered by things like digital platforms (integrated mixes of existing, new and emerging technologies). These platforms enable interactions between people, businesses and things across digital ecosystems. The modern EA program cannot successfully operate or deliver business value in isolation. The sheer complexity and scale of digital business demands that EA programs include a diverse, broad and deep pool of organizational expertise and players collaborating from across the organization to achieve targeted business outcomes.

Solution: To build a world-class EA program that focuses on the planning and execution of digital business strategy, build a robust EA team that consists of both core and virtual resources from across the organization and its supporting partners.

Actions:

- Avoid staffing the EA team solely with technologists. Supporting EA is not just about IT; it is about enabling the business capabilities (people, businesses and things) that will transform the organization toward its desired future state.
- Search and leverage skills from diverse business and IT functions and stakeholders, as either a virtual or a core EA team.
- Seek input from diverse stakeholders and resources from across the organization — people with broad and deep business domain and technology innovation expertise, and versatilists with experience applying technology (existing, new and emerging) — to create new business and operating models.
- Look to extend existing EA capabilities with vanguard enterprise architects who think, behave and act in an innovative consulting manner to drive their organization's digital transformation.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Leadership Vision for 2018: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader"
- "How Vanguard Enterprise Architects Lead Technology Innovation"
- "Rethink EA as an Internal Management Consultancy to Rapidly Deliver Business Outcomes"

- "Toolkit: Chief Enterprise Architect Job Description," "Toolkit: Business Architect Job Description," "Toolkit: Sample Job Description for the Role of Information Architect," "Toolkit: Solutions Architect Job Description," "Toolkit: Technical Architect Job Description," "Toolkit: Enterprise Security Architect Job Description"
- "How to Recruit and Retain Enterprise Architects"
- "Toolkit: Define Enterprise Architect Skills and Competencies"
- "Maximize the EA Team's Effectiveness by Defining Team Roles"
- "Use Competency-Based Behavioral Event Interview Questions to Hire Enterprise Architects"
- "Interview Questions for Enterprise Architect Candidates"
- "Market Guide for Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture Consulting"

No. 11. Lack of Key Performance Metrics

Issue: Many EA programs fail because business leaders cannot see or recognize the business value of EA. The problem is exacerbated because many EA programs lack a solid set of quantitative, qualitative, operational and business value metrics.

Explanation: Many EA leaders still focus on and propagate operational- and transactional-level metrics about the EA program, with their primary focus on measuring the activities of EA. In contrast, business executives want to measure EA's impact on achieving the enterprise's strategic objectives and enabling the organization's future-state capabilities, which, in turn, drive its targeted business outcomes. The impact of EA on business outcomes is indirect. As a discipline, EA is a contributor to organizational change, but the bulk of the change work effort is done through projects. As a result, many organizations still do not understand the business value of EA efforts to their investments, and this is why business executives sometimes come to view EA efforts as a "discretionary" discipline.

Solution: Construct a set of EA business value metrics and operational- and transactional-level metrics. Link EA performance metrics to business value metrics.

Actions:

- Define what the EA program will offer by asking business leaders key questions about their digital business strategy. Scope, size and define the EA approach and determine the performance metrics based on the answers received.
- Communicate and articulate EA in terms that business executives understand and appreciate — performance metrics for business outcomes. Make an explicit link between EA performance measurement and the performance measurement programs used in the rest of the organization.
- Determine how the EA program will impact the organization's top and bottom lines.

- Focus business value metrics on measuring EA's short-term impact on the ability to run the business and EA's long-term effect on the ability to grow and transform the business.
- Develop metrics that reflect business strategy and direction, resonate with executive management, and show a clear line of sight between the efforts of EA and targeted business outcomes (metrics).
- Work with business leaders, strategy and finance to derive, validate and approve key EA business value metrics.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "EA Business Value Metrics You Must Have Today"
- "Define a Value Proposition for a Winning Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program"
- "Five Best Practices to Increase Stakeholder Engagement and Support in the Digital Era"
- "Toolkit: Use a Customer Satisfaction Approach to Engage EA Partners"
- "Exploiting Economic Architecture to Drive Digital Business"
- "Toolkit: Examples of Digital Business Optimization"
- "ITScore Overview for Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation"

No. 12. Purchasing an EA Tool Before Understanding the Use Cases and Critical Capabilities Required

Issue: In an effort to rapidly stand up or jump-start an EA program, it's detrimental to acquire an EA tool right at the outset, before understanding the organization's business direction and strategy. EA tools are merely a means to end and do not deliver business outcomes.

Explanation: EA tools can provide tremendous business value by enabling decision support and analysis for organizational stakeholders who want to make business and IT investment decisions. However, EA tools are merely a means to an end. Remember, "a fool with a tool is still a fool." EA tools themselves do not solve users' needs, nor do they deliver business outcomes. Like any other tool, an EA tool must have a value proposition. Focusing on implementing an EA tool can be a huge distraction for EA leaders just starting out. It takes them away from the important work they need to do:

- Understanding their business strategy, business models and goals
- Determining what problem they are trying to solve
- Defining the appropriate processes and governance
- Building relationships across the business and IT

Solution: Wait to develop an organizational value proposition for an EA tool. Ensure that it goes beyond the reactionary needs of the foundational IT-focused program. Base the EA tool's value proposition on use cases and not simply on requirements.

Actions:

- Acquire an EA tool once you've got your business-outcome-driven EA program efforts started (including diagnostic and signature-ready deliverables, charter and scope, organization, basic governance, and metrics). Do the "what" and "why" of EA, before the "how" of EA.
- Understand and articulate the compelling business problems, opportunities and outcomes that an EA tool will help solve both today and tomorrow. Make sure you develop organizational use cases with consensus, ensuring that functional requirements and critical EA tool capabilities link to targeted business outcomes.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "How to Develop a Winning Value Proposition for Buying Enterprise Architecture Tools"
- "Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Architecture Tools"
- "Critical Capabilities for Enterprise Architecture Tools"
- "Understand the Eight Core Capabilities of an Enterprise Architecture Tool"
- "Understand the Critical Capabilities of a Modern Enterprise Architecture Tool in Order to Make Smarter Choices"
- "Selecting EA Tools: Use Cases Are Not Optional"

No. 13. Viewing EA as a Finite Process — the "We're Done" Mindset

Issue: Some EA leaders propagate (and organizations view) EA as a project with a finite "start" and "end" date. Similarly, some organizations view EA as a "thing" — an "architecture" — one delivers and then is done with. Both approaches are fatal for EA because EA needs to be a continuous process that helps formulate, translate and execute digital business strategy on an ongoing basis.

Explanation: An enterprise's EA efforts are never done; they are constantly evolving. EA is a discipline that proactively and holistically leads the enterprise's responses to disruptive forces. It does this by identifying and analyzing the execution of change toward the desired business vision and outcomes. If EA leaders believe and advocate that EA is "done," this mindset results in several challenges:

- An "enterprise architecture" is created and then put on a shelf, quickly becoming obsolete.
- Resources are reallocated at a specific date, so EA efforts deliver limited impact and value.
- Management expectations are out of sync, so EA efforts are disbanded.

The value of EA is in helping to ensure business and technology investment decisions are made based on sound economic and financial principles that generate monetized business value as ultimately measured by the organization's performance in its financial statements.

Solution: Treat EA as an ongoing, continuous and iterative effort, especially since targeted business outcomes will change at an even faster pace when driven by technology innovation.

Actions:

- Create a value proposition for the EA program from the outset — regardless of whether you are starting, restarting or renewing an EA program (capabilities and maturity).
- Perpetually propagate and maintain the value proposition across the organization. Work with business and IT leaders and users to help them understand that EA is an ongoing effort just like strategic planning, budgeting, operations management, and program and portfolio management (PPM).
- Ensure that expectations are clearly set (what the EA program will do and what the EA will not do, as well as what it will be measured against). Define EA teams and correctly allocate resources to short- and long-term EA efforts.

For more detailed and related research, see:

- "Define a Value Proposition for a Winning Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program"
- "Leadership Vision for 2018: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader"
- "Five Best Practices to Increase Stakeholder Engagement and Support in the Digital Era"
- "EA Business Value Metrics You Must Have Today"
- "Toolkit: Use a Customer Satisfaction Approach to Engage EA Partners"
- "How Vanguard Enterprise Architects Lead Technology Innovation"
- "Build the Design Capability of Your EA Practice to Drive Digital Innovation"
- "Rethink EA as an Internal Management Consultancy to Rapidly Deliver Business Outcomes"
- "Four Ways Enterprise Architects Can Help Chief Strategy Officers Conquer Digital Disruptions"
- "Exploiting Economic Architecture to Drive Digital Business"
- "How Enterprise Architecture Can Use Lean Practices"
- "Toolkit: How to Create an EA Charter, and Why"
- "ITScore Overview for Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation"

Acronym Key and Glossary Terms

Application Architecture	Application architecture is a subset of solutions architecture. It's the discipline that guides application design and defines application architecture paradigms such as service-oriented architecture (SOA), principles that influence design decisions, and patterns that provide proven design solutions.
"Architecting Inside-out"	Taking a traditional internal perspective (inside-out) that is focused on guiding how people, processes, information and technology interact relative to delivering operational value indirectly to the business.
"Architecting Outside-in"	Taking an outside-in perspective starts with focusing on the business outcomes needed to deliver business value to customers, constituencies, partners and stakeholders, and then involves working inward to determine and guide changes to people, processes, information and technology to drive these outcomes.
"Architecting Outside-out"	Taking an outside-out perspective starts with an even broader focus beyond the enterprise and its known customers, partners and competitors into the world of possible (unknown) customers, constituencies, partners and stakeholders. The focus is on disruptions well beyond the immediate scope of the organization (new technologies or competitors, for example) that could drive change and innovation.
Bimodal IT	Bimodal IT refers to having two modes of IT, each designed to develop and deliver information-intensive and technology-intensive services in its own way. **Mode 1** is traditional, emphasizing safety and accuracy. **Mode 2** is **n**onsequential, emphasizing agility and speed. Each mode has all the people, resources, partners, structure, culture, methodologies, governance, metrics and attitudes toward value and risk that its operation requires. New investments are deployed through one of the two modes depending on the balance of needs. When the balance changes, existing investments and operations move between the two modes. The most mature version of Mode 2 — enterprise bimodal — is not just about the IT organization. Rather, it encompasses a fast, agile mode of doing business.
Foundational Enterprise Architecture	Foundational EA (Mode 1): Tactical — maintain and evolve future-state business capabilities with a focus on efficiency and predictability of the existing IT estate.
Information Architecture	Is the EA activities of creating and determining information that needs to be shared consistently across the enterprise, and designing outcomes that strengthen the impact of sharing such information.
Security Architecture	Is the activities and deliverables that enable enterprise architecture practitioners to team with those in the security architecture role, with the goal of helping their organizations manage risk. Security and risk disruptions may occur via physical or electronic exchange of information between people, systems and things inside or outside the enterprise. External interactions may include partnerships, customer interactions, supplier relationships or broader ecosystems.

Solutions Architecture	Is the activity of developing a direction for managing the portfolio of to-be solutions — including systems (meaning not just applications, but also processes and information), shared infrastructure services, and shared application services and components — in order to better match business outcome objectives.
Technical Architecture	Is the EA activities of developing target-state guidance (reusable standards, guidelines, individual parts and configurations) for evolving the technical infrastructure across the enterprise in order to enable business strategy and deliver business outcomes.
Vanguard Enterprise Architecture	Vanguard EA (Mode 2): Strategic — design and enable future-state business capabilities with a focus on technology disruption, speed, agility and flexibility that enables and drives new business models and designs, while meeting today's business needs with an optimized Mode 1 strategy.

Gartner Recommended Reading

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

"Build a World-Class EA Capability Primer for 2018"

"Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2017"

"Predicts 2018: Scaling to Deliver Digital Business Strategy and Technology Innovation"

"Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends for 2018"

"Capitalizing on Your Business Ecosystems Economy: A Gartner Trend Insight Report"

Evidence

[1] Gartner conducted a pre-event survey in November 2017 of potential client and nonclient attendees from North America and Europe ahead of Gartner's 2018 EA summits in National Harbor, Maryland and London, United Kingdom. The total number of respondents was 1,087. We asked this question: "What stage is your organization's EA program currently in? (1) Implementing EA for the first time, (2) Continuing existing EA efforts, (3) Taking our EA efforts to the next step or evolution and (4) Restarting or renewing our EA efforts (i.e., past efforts have failed or are stagnant).

Note 1 Digital Business

Digital business is focused on how organizations create new business models and designs by blurring the physical and digital worlds through the unprecedented convergence of people, businesses and things. To survive and prosper in the digital era, organizations must adopt new ways of working and new competencies to capitalize quickly on opportunities as they arise.

Note 2 Definition of "Business-Outcome-Driven EA"

Business-outcome-driven EA is a practical approach designed to deliver signature-ready and actionable recommendations to business and IT leaders. These recommendations enable business and IT leaders to adjust policies and projects to achieve target business outcomes based on the business direction and relevant business disruptions (see "Stage Planning a Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture").

This approach puts business direction (strategy and operations), disruptions (opportunities and risks) and outcomes first in developing signature-ready guidance, empowering chief enterprise architects to:

- Drive enterprise change
- Deliver high-impact value
- Lead the business forward in a competitive environment

Note 3 Definition of "Enterprise Architecture"

EA is a discipline that proactively and holistically leads enterprise responses to disruptive forces. It does this by identifying and analyzing the execution of change toward the desired business vision and outcomes. Mainstream viewpoints of EA include:

- Business architecture, which guides people, processes and organizational change
- Information architecture, which focuses on the consistent sharing of information across the enterprise
- Solutions architecture, which develops a direction for managing the portfolio of to-be solutions
- Technical architecture, which focuses on evolving the technical infrastructure

Note 4 Definition of "Enterprise Architecture (EA) Governance" and Assurance

Enterprise architecture (EA) governance refers to the EA activities of defining guidance of decision rights and the required processes, policies and procedures for the successful execution of investment decisions in support of the business strategy and direction. Assurance efforts are focused on ensuring that the agreed-on viewpoints, principles and standards created during the architecture-creation process are realistic, realized and adhered to.

Note 5 Definition of "Economic Architecture"

Economic architecture is a discipline for driving an enterprise's business model through financial metrics and key performance indicators. It is a critical tool to plan, track and manage future-state value creation mechanisms.

For more detailed related research, see:

- "Exploiting Economic Architecture to Drive Digital Business"
- "How to Evaluate Multisided Platform Investments"
- "Leading Indicators Are a Critical Tool for Digital Business"
- "Examples of Leading Indicators for the Digital Business Era"
- "Steps to Build a Value Model of Leading Indicators for the Digital Era"

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