

## Suggested Practices for Highly Effective EA Team



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1) **Asynchronous Communication:** Your team adopts and uses a web-based team collaboration/communication/chat tool. If your team is relying on email for your primary means of communication - if you are passing documents back and forth via email - *you are the canonical example for why I wrote this list*. Hint: You should be posting links to your repository-based artifacts.

2) **Simplified Asynchronous Collaboration:** You use git as your primary collaboration repository / publishing mechanism for EA artifacts - with a web UI (e.g. private Github, Bitbucket, etc.). A wiki is an excellent choice as a complement for some categories of content (e.g. published for consumption outside of the EA team)

3) **Simplified Processes for Asynchronous Authoring/Publishing:** You use markdown, stored in the git repositories, to write the majority of your EA documents. Also see #2 above, re: Wiki.

4) **Asynchronous Governance Processes:** Your governance tooling and processes are based on the premise of a geographically distributed team - that operates in an asynchronous manner (i.e. artifacts are published for review, comments are collected, and voting is conducted - completely asynchronously). If the basis of your governance process is that you must interrupt team members ability to stay focused on high value tasks - by insisting on scheduling recurring mandatory governance meetings - on a very frequent basis - *you are doing it wrong*.

5) **Automated Reminders:** Your governance tooling and processes are designed to send out timely reminders for assigned tasks to be completed.

6) **Automated Search:** You leverage powerful automated search tools (e.g. Apache Solr, Elastic Search, etc.) to make finding artifacts easy and painless.

7) **Automated Annotation:** You have processes that automate the majority of the effort to annotate, tag, and index the entire corpus of all the artifacts in your EA artifact repository.

8) **Diagramming (Elements - Root Definition/Reuse) :** Whatever EA diagramming solution you adopt - supports a core capability of managing a master reference inventory of element definitions; reusing those definitions in different diagrams; easily visualizing the AS-IS/transition/TO-BE views. (**hint:** As a baseline example for this type of capability, look at the [Diagram Filter](#) capability of Sparx Enterprise Architect. YouTube [demonstration video](#))

9) **Diagramming (Element Relationships/Connectivity):** Creating relationships between elements; and being able to quickly and easily explore, discover, query, reuse, and report the elements in the master inventory - across different diagrams. (**hint:** LucidChart and Visio are not such solutions). Automated Dependency Impact Analysis is thus possible.

10) **Asynchronous (Diagram) Repository Collaboration:** EA team members are able to collaboratively work together, asynchronously, in the same repository - while crafting diagrams, components, etc.

11) **A Culture of Cultivating EA Artifact Reuse:** There is a process defined, resources are staffed (rotated assignment among EA team members is suggested) and effort is allocated - to continually support the creation, harvesting, management, and refresh of reusable artifacts, exemplars, patterns, templates, white papers, technology position papers, etc. - to help accelerate/optimize the efforts of the team.

12) **EA Kaizen:** You conduct frequent retrospectives to review WHAT you do, HOW you do it - and analyze your own EA processes for improvement. Minimally, this should be done at least quarterly. This means EA should have a BACKLOG of improvements to manage.

13) **Ruthless Efficiency:** The relative cost vs. value of governance processes are rigorously challenged - before adoption, and are reviewed periodically for adjustment - or elimination.

14) **Secure Asynchronous External Collaboration:** You leverage cloud-based, encrypted-at-rest, file storage mechanisms for collaboration with external partners (e.g. Box, DropBox, Google Drive, even private Github repositories, etc. - GPG encrypted files, if/when needed/warranted)

15) **Automated Generation/Update of an EA Dashboard:** You need to tell a story to your peers and stakeholders. A dashboard is a good starting point. But, you cannot really afford the luxury to assign vital resources to manually assemble/update such a dashboard. So, yours **must** be automated. Some ideas for possible metrics to collect (automatically), for a selected look-back period (e.g. Last Week, Last Month, Last Quarter, Last Year, vs. ~Current Period): Number of Artifacts Created, Modified; Number of Governance Reviews Scheduled, Completed; Governance Review Outcomes, by Status w/Counts; Diagrams Created, Modified; Diagram Repository Elements/Components Created, Modified; etc.

16) **Internal URL Shortener:** You use an internal, enterprise-wide URL shortner. This allows you to manage updates/corrections to the final target - without having to edit/update documents everywhere. Bonus Points: A separate batch refresh process to associate a computed hash of the files that URLs that point to - so that you can identify and rationalize/consolidate references to duplicate instances of documents.

17) **Daily Journals:** Each EA team member publishes a Daily Journal - that is visible to the team. Wiki or git Markdown files suggested. This does four things for team members:

- 1) Asynchronously catch-up on status updates - without interrupting conversations, and avoid the  $\frac{n(n-1)}{2}$  communication channel problem;
- 2) Tribal knowledge is captured;
- 3) Reduces the need for team meetings - members can just quickly read/scan each of the members' most recent daily journals for an update.;
- 4) Supports Business Continuity - in the event someone leaves the team unexpectedly/suddenly.

18) **Continuous Knife Sharpening:** On a rotating, periodic basis - each EA team member is tasked with researching, organizing, and giving a one-hour demonstration / technical talk on some new/interesting area of technology, methodology, strategy, practice, etc. Suggested minimal frequency: Monthly. Invited speakers from other internal groups (or vendors, or other companies are also good variations to consider).

19) **Awesome Lists:** There should be an "Awesome List" git repository - in which team members can record interesting, useful new ideas, resources, articles, open source (or vendor) solutions. This creates a valuable, persistent knowledge repository for the team - that grows over time. **Hint:** If you are primarily using emails (or tools like Slack) to communicate such information to the team - *you are doing it wrong*. The added benefit of this approach is that new team members have immediate access to the historical record of the team's growing body of knowledge (which they won't have - if you continue to just send emails to each other - and Slack sucks for scrolling back in time).

20) **Tips Repository:** Rationale: See "Awesome List" #19 above. Within this repository are separate Markdown files, with the following suggested naming convention: Tips.{subject area}.md ([examples](#))