

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

Saul Brand, Senior Director Analyst
Marcus Blosch, VP Analyst

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

Published 23 September 2020 - ID G00733482 - 36 min read

By Analysts [Saul Brand](#), [Marcus Blosch](#)

Initiatives: [Enterprise Architecture](#)

Many enterprise architecture programs appear to follow “worst practices” rather than best practices. EA and technology innovation leaders must be vigilant and steer clear of practices that can make EA efforts fail. We identify 13 worst EA practices and explain how to avoid them.

Overview

Key Findings

- Without “linkage” to business strategy and targeted business outcomes, it’s impossible for enterprise architecture (EA) and technology innovation leaders to make recommendations that business and IT leaders can act on.
- Focusing on IT or technical-only architecture in isolation is not the same as EA. Such efforts fail to meet holistic digital business needs and deliver little business value.
- 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.
- Excessive EA governance and overbearing assurance create impediments and friction in the business-IT relationship. This hinders technology innovation, speed to value and time to market.

Recommendations

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

- Adopt a business-outcome-driven EA approach that is iterative, evolves with their digital business strategy and delivers measurable outcomes.
- Address business strategy and technology innovation and then address tactics by using business architecture to inform, guide, and drive information, solution, technical and security decisions.
- Define and document the future state first by developing a future-state business vision and context before creating a current-state technology and application inventory.

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

Analysis

In 10 years of helping organizations build world-class EA programs, we've observed many bad practices from EA leaders.

Business leaders are focused on meeting the challenges of uncertainty (for example, the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as ensuring growth and innovation. ¹ To succeed, they're concentrating on digital transformation and optimization. ² As a result, 76% of organizations are either starting, restarting or renewing their EA efforts. ³ This is not because there's something wrong with EA; rather, because "traditional" EA (see Note 1) has limited business value and doesn't meet the demands of digital transformation and optimization (see [The Future Direction and Evolution of Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture](#)).

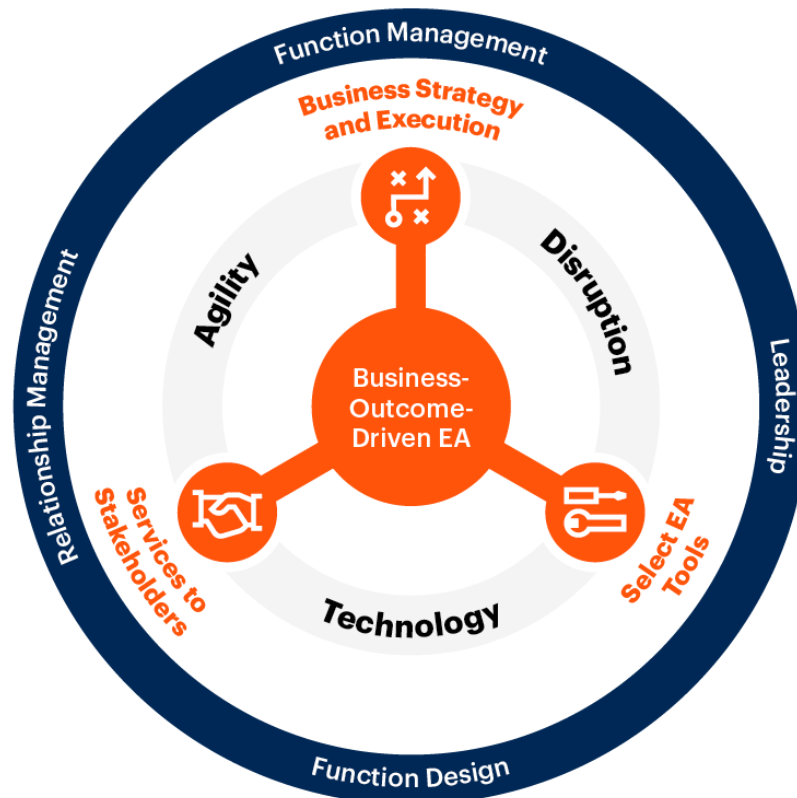
To overcome the limitations of traditional EA, leading EA practitioners start with a business-outcome-driven EA (BODEA) approach (see Note 2) that starts with business architecture (BA) to:

- Gain insight into business strategy and outcomes
- Provide support to business stakeholders
- Link IT efforts to business direction and strategy

Leading EA practitioners focus on the "why" and "what" before the "how" of "doing" EA. They avoid the pitfalls that make EA programs fail by adopting a BODEA approach. The BODEA approach is evolving EA into an internal management consultancy (see Note 3 and Figure 1).

Figure 1: BODEA Evolves Into Internal Management Consultancy

Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leaders



Source: Gartner
714307_C

This research describes the 13 worst EA practices we've identified over the past decade and explains how to avoid EA program failure. We provide tips to help you, as an EA leader, avoid the traps you may encounter, particularly if you're starting, restarting or renewing your organization's EA program (see [8 Steps to Start or Restart a High-Impact, Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program](#)). Follow the links provided to gain access to more detailed research, best practices and recommendations.

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's impossible for you to make recommendations that business and IT leaders can act on.

Explanation: EA programs that focus only on business or IT tactical requests instead of on the future business state as guided by strategy are bound to become stuck in a react mode. Many of these efforts don't focus on creating diagnostic, actionable and measurable deliverables that business leaders can use to understand opportunities or act on in support of the business's strategic direction. Consequently, many EA programs fail. If you focus mainly on the tactical questions that business and IT leaders are asking, you'll 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 BODEA approach. Start by doing BA, linking IT efforts to business direction and strategy. Construct an initial set of BA deliverables that are valuable and interesting to business leaders. Without BA, EA efforts are just “IT architecture” and will fail to demonstrate and deliver business value. Use your business strategy and direction to guide and inform responses to requests from business and IT leaders. Use this guidance as much to determine what to focus on, as to determine what not to focus on.

Actions:

- Adopt a BODEA approach that is iterative, evolves with your business strategy and delivers measurable outcomes.
- Position BA as a critical component of BODEA, helping to shape and define future-state business and operating models, identify opportunities and implications, and shape roadmaps and plans.
- 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.
- Create enabling, diagnostic and actionable BA deliverables focused on the target audience and its issues and opportunities. Look for opportunities to use high-level business and operating models (for example, business capability and value chain), combined with or relating to business, people, information, technology and solutions.
- 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 related research, see:

- [The Future Direction and Evolution of Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture](#)
- [Stage Planning a Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture](#)
- [Role of Business Architecture in Digital Business: Benchmark Data](#)
- [Deducing Business Strategy Is a Unique Opportunity for EA Practitioners to Both Drive Execution and Gain Credibility](#)
- [Toolkit: Business Outcome Statements Deliver Value to Your Business and Guidance for EA](#)
- [How Leading Organizations Create Innovative Business Models](#)
- [Better Digital Business by Design With the Business Architecture Landscape](#)
- [A Detailed Examination of the Elements of the Business Architecture Landscape](#)

- [Tell Your Business Model Story With Simple Building Blocks](#)
- [Follow 5 Steps to Architect Your Enterprise Operating Model](#)
- [Toolkit: Construct Business Architecture Deliverables That Deliver Value to Business Leaders](#)
- [Use Value Streams to Drive Customer Centricity, Design Services and Operating Models, and Technology Platforms](#)
- [The Enterprise Architecture Leader's First 100 Days](#)

No. 2 — Confusing Technical Architecture With Enterprise Architecture

Issue: Starting with, or focusing on, IT or technical-only architecture in isolation isn't the same as EA. Efforts that do this 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. They do this either as a "bottom-up" approach in the hope of developing the BA later, or they understand EA only in terms of technology. Technical architecture efforts are integral to the other main viewpoints of EA (the business, information and solution architectures). However, many organizations find it difficult to demonstrate business value and garner long-term business support without a clear line-of-sight link, including all four main viewpoints of EA, to targeted business outcomes.

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

Actions:

- Focus EA efforts on targeted business outcomes and on delivering real business value. Do so by concentrating all EA efforts in the context of business vision and strategy.
- Position all EA efforts within the scope of business outcomes to ensure that EA is business-focused, not just technology-focused.
- Start by refocusing EA efforts with a business outcome statement, regardless of the viewpoint of EA. Use the business outcome statement to inform, guide, and drive technology, information and solution decisions.
- Clarify boundaries between the different EA domains. Specify acceptable performance and task responsibilities, handoffs and collaboration between those domains.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Use Enterprise Architecture to Orchestrate the Delivery of Business Outcomes](#)
- [The Distinction Between Enterprise Architecture and Application Architecture Makes a Difference to Business Outcomes](#)

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. This can be time-consuming and costly. A current-state-first architecture provides little business value, motivates tactical fixes and produces more of the same.

Explanation: Starting with the current-state architecture risks wasting scarce resources (time, money and human capital) on investments that limit your organization's ability to envision or innovate on its future business models and supporting operations. It doesn't enable the future-state business capabilities that 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 to give your 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. Do so by using BA and a business outcome statement to guide what you consider in your current state. A clear understanding and articulation of the future state will determine which technologies, applications, solutions, processes and information you'll need to tend to first in your current state. Once you've defined the future state, look at the current state and use EA to work out how to close the gap and reach the future state. In other words, focus on the "why" and "what" before the "how" of "doing" EA.

Actions:

- Define and document the future state first. Develop a future-state business vision and context before creating a current-state technology and application inventory.
- Spend as little time as needed to document the current state. Spend most of your time and effort on creating diagnostic and actionable deliverables (for example, 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. Concentrate on the how of "doing EA" once you know what you are striving for.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [The Future Direction and Evolution of Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture](#)
- [Stage Planning a Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture](#)
- [Deducing Business Strategy Is a Unique Opportunity for EA Practitioners to Both Drive Execution and Gain Credibility](#)
- [Toolkit: Business Outcome Statements Deliver Value to Your Business and Guidance for EA](#)
- [Create Roadmaps That Support Decision Making and Communicate Strategy Effectively](#)
- [IT Roadmaps: A Reference Manual for Roadmap Visualization](#)
- [Toolkit: How to Develop a One-Page Business Strategy](#)

No. 4 — Excessive Governance and Overbearing Assurance

Issue: Excessive EA governance and overbearing assurance create roadblocks and friction in the business-EA relationship (see Note 4). This impedes technology innovation, speed to value and time to market.

Explanation: Traditional EA is about “command and control.” It acquired a reputation for being bureaucratic and removed from the practicalities of business. Today, it’s possible to architect for agility and adaptability by adopting a guardrails approach. This gives the organization, project and product teams much-needed flexibility. Many organizations are making changes to their IT operating model driven by the shift from project to product. Because of this shift, many organizations must rethink the role of EA in the changing IT operating model. More specifically, they must rethink the role of EA governance, assurance and review boards as they move deeper into digital business.

Solution: Effective EA governance and assurance help position the organization to deliver digital business outcomes. They do so by focusing on orderly and coherent strategy formulation and execution. Effective EA governance and assurance increase business value throughout the strategy formulation and execution process by:

- Providing the deliverables needed to support stakeholder investment decision making
- Orchestrating stakeholder involvement and interaction

They do so formally through the governance model and informally through the EA program’s daily work with project and product stakeholders. Successful EA governance is driven by collaboration, communication and facilitation. Effective EA assurance is the formal process of reviewing new and ongoing activities to ensure they comply with the defined guidance and policies, minimum viable architectures, reference models, and standards. It also approves or declines exceptions to these guidelines and policies.

Actions:

- Identify targeted business outcomes and ensure that EA governance is positioned to achieve those outcomes by doing more than just adding controls, assurance and governance.
- Develop and apply standards through the EA governance model, which is informed by the business strategy and corporate governance. Clarify accountability and provide the focal point for agile, effective and efficient decision making.
- Create a strategic review board (SRB) and an architecture review board (ARB). Ensure that these are resourced with the appropriate business and IT representatives. Focus the SRB on broad strategy and investment decisions, and focus the ARB on more detailed logical and implementation decisions.
- Shift from a primarily top-down and formal EA governance to a more collaborative, facilitated and informal EA governance with a guardrails approach.
- Help the organization find the right mix and balance between risk and agility.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2020](#)
- [Enterprise Architects Combine Design Thinking, Lean Startup and Agile to Drive Digital Innovation](#)
- [Rethink EA Governance, Assurance and Review Boards in the Digital Business Era](#)
- [From Project to Product Management: The Role of EA Governance and Assurance in Agile Development](#)
- [Product Management of EA Activities \(adidas\)](#)
- [Succeed With Digital Business Through Adaptive Governance](#)
- [Defining Principles to Guide Adaptive Governance Decisions](#)

No. 5 — Creating a Standard for Everything

Issue: When EA leaders become obsessed with “defining and documenting rigid standards,” it leads to command-and-control assurance and friction in the business-EA relationship.

Explanation: With the shift from projects to products, business leaders and product managers and owners are becoming more active and involved in selecting and buying new and emerging technology to build digital products and services. As a result, EA practitioners are losing immediate and direct control over technology procurement, vendor services, applications and the overall IT

estate. EA teams often respond to this loss of control by creating overbearing and rigid standards to try to influence or shape technology acquisition and implementation decisions. It's laudable to use standards to try to reduce the total cost of ownership, complexity, duplicity, technical debt, orphaned products and digital slums, and increase leverage and reuse. But many EA leaders experience a backlash against strict standards when they impede investment in and delivery of projects and products. If you impose too many standards or focus rigidly on standards:

- Users will — deliberately or inadvertently — circumvent or ignore those standards.
- Your team will gain a negative reputation for being the “standards police.”
- The business and product managers will view your team's efforts as nonstrategic and tactical, and as becoming too involved in the day-to-day operations of agile development.

Solution: Decide what specific set of standards and minimum viable architectures you need to support projects and agile products and services.

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.
- Define just enough standards to help guide the organization toward a business-outcome-driven future-state vision. Don't put the business and product managers at risk by overwhelming users with too many standards that they then ignore.
- Develop standards jointly with business leaders. Start by developing an IT or EA point of view (for example, a cloud-first strategy), and ask business leaders to provide input to achieve consensus. Do the same at the next level down with principles and, finally, follow with developing standards.
- Partner with agile teams by forming a community of practice (CoP). Task the CoP with establishing a baseline minimum viable architecture (MVA) that is scalable, conforms to enterprise standards, patterns and designs, and ensures the leverage and reuse of existing IT assets and resources.
- Avoid becoming involved in the day-to-day activities of agile development by giving “freedom and responsibility” to agile teams through the CoP. Give the CoP “voting rights” to enable it to develop an initial baseline MVA that continuously evolves. Collaboratively update the MVA on a predetermined basis (for example, quarterly or annually).

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2020](#)
- [Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends for 2020](#)
- [Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies, 2020](#)
- [Best Practices for Delivering Targeted and High-Impact Reference Architectures](#)

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

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

Explanation: If you become fixated with trying to champion, lead and create unnecessary EA deliverables (countless artifacts), you may forget the value proposition of EA. As a result, the business will undervalue and sidestep the EA program. To be valuable to the business, EA efforts must be pragmatic and repeatable (for example, iterative, defined, scoped, usable and available through a catalog of services). Their sole purpose must be to create enterprise value and deliver targeted business outcomes. The goal of BODEA is to focus on supporting and enabling business leaders to make strategic investment decisions in the IT estate. These decisions, in turn, enable future-state business capabilities that drive targeted outcomes.

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

Actions:

- Avoid fixating on EA terms for the sake of “practicing EA.” Stop gathering and creating endless invaluable artifacts that have no business value.
- Create “services” that help formulate or translate business strategy and execute EA. Focus on creating diagnostic deliverables (the “why” and “what” of EA), before creating, operating or enabling deliverables (the “how” of EA).
- Collaborate and communicate with business leaders and product managers using terms they understand and that are meaningful to them.
- Develop business knowledge and focus on speaking the language of business. Include in the EA communication plan presentations and collateral (such as business outcome statements and roadmaps) that continually reaffirm targeted business outcomes.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Positioning Enterprise Architecture for Success](#)
- [8 Steps to Start or Restart a High-Impact, Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program](#)
- [8 Steps to \(Re-\)Position EA to Enable Digital Transformation](#)
- [Enterprise Architecture Activity Guidebook](#)
- [Ignition Guide to Rebooting the Enterprise Architecture Practice](#)
- [The Enterprise Architecture Leader's First 100 Days](#)

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

Issue: An overly dogmatic adherence to any EA framework and industry reference model usually results in EA output documents that are of limited business value and lack competitive advantage.

Explanation: EA frameworks and industry reference models are generic guidance on the practices organizations might use to quickly and repetitively deliver EA. They aren't checklists of all the activities EA teams must do or lists of all the components necessary for BODEA. Use EA frameworks for inspiration, not aspiration. They are well-known — don't use them to create deliverables for their own sake.

It's 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. Every organization is unique, and you must start with BA to ask and answer the "what/why" of "doing EA," before creating a hybrid or customized EA framework to do "the how" of EA. Hybrid or customized EA frameworks support your organization's particular business needs by blending key elements of industry standard frameworks and reference models.

Solution: Start with BODEA — understanding business strategy and direction — before adopting EA frameworks, standards and industry reference models and customizing them to sustain competitive advantage. In other words, ensure the "why" and "what" (goals and targeted outcomes) of EA supersede the "how" (EA frameworks and industry reference models). Customize

and rightsize EA frameworks and industry reference models to suit your organization's needs and achieve speed to value.

Actions:

- Prioritize the most important business outcomes and customize the framework to match delivery (just enough and just in time) to business needs.
- Use EA frameworks and industry reference models to help guide organizational efforts. Don't use either to dictate or drive the entire EA process.
- Blend EA frameworks (creating a customized framework) by picking the processes, practices and models most relevant to 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. Use them to supplement and support your organization's business, people, culture, processes and technology needs.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2020](#)
- [Taming Your EA Framework With Business Outcomes](#)
- [Best Practices for Delivering Targeted and High-Impact Reference Architectures](#)
- [Reference Architecture Implementation Guide](#)
- [Building Reference Architectures](#)
- [Reference Architecture Management Framework](#)
- [Use of Reference Architectures in Core EA Activities](#)

No. 8 — Adopting an “Ivory Tower” Approach to EA

Issue: EA programs tend to fail if they operate in a vacuum and business leaders view them as bureaucratic, restrictive and slow.

Explanation: BODEA is a highly collaborative team effort involving individuals and different teams from across the organization consistently partnering to enable future-state business capabilities. These capabilities, in turn, drive targeted business outcomes. EA programs provide little or no business value if they:

- Operate in isolation, hiding behind governance, assurance and standards

- Focus on artifact gathering, rigidly adopting EA frameworks and industry reference models
- Spend too much time modeling and developing technical architecture

End users are likely to ignore and circumvent the EA effort if they view it as a roadblock and impediment, or if they view the EA team as a policing agency. This is especially true now, in the digital era, when business leaders want to engage EA leaders to help formulate and operationalize digital strategy. EA must be central to developing technology-enabled business strategy, embedding technology into products and services, achieving speed to value and time to market, and striving for digital survival and prosperity in times of uncertainty.

Solution: Advance EA efforts by adopting a pragmatic, business-outcome-driven approach. Streamline EA deliverables by directing them at business outcomes and stakeholder issues, opportunities, threats and risks.

Actions:

- Advance the EA program's capability and maturity by developing a relationship with business leaders and product managers based on a business- and IT-led, technology-enabled approach. Focus holistically. Start with the business and information architectures, followed by the solutions and technical architectures that follow across the organization.
- Map out the EA execution process — how the EA organization will move from strategy to goals, as well as the individual initiatives and projects that will define it. Determine what the steps will be along the way, who will be involved, what they will do and how EA will support them.
- Partner with business leaders to achieve consensus on making the right decisions on business technology investment. Keep finding new ways to work with business leaders.
- Acquire new soft skills for collaborative purposes. Use new approaches to value creation such as understanding the organization's BA landscape and constructing BA deliverables that are interesting and valuable to business leaders.
- Treat EA as an internal management consultancy to reframe the focus and value of your EA practice and program.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Leadership Vision for 2020: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader](#)
- [Enterprise Architects Combine Design Thinking, Lean Startup and Agile to Drive Digital Innovation](#)
- [Defining EA's Role in Customer Experience Improvements](#)

- [How Leading Organizations Create Innovative Business Models](#)
- [Better Digital Business by Design With the Business Architecture Landscape](#)
- [A Detailed Examination of the Elements of the Business Architecture Landscape](#)
- [Tell Your Business Model Story With Simple Building Blocks](#)
- [Follow 5 Steps to Architect Your Enterprise Operating Model](#)
- [Toolkit: Construct Business Architecture Deliverables That Deliver Value to Business Leaders](#)
- [Use Value Streams to Drive Customer Centricity, Design Services and Operating Models, and Technology Platforms](#)
- [5 Steps to Construct a Winning Value Proposition That Positions EA as an Internal Management Consultancy](#)
- [Enterprise Architecture Must Evolve Into an Internal Management Consultancy](#)
- [3 Steps to Creating Enterprise Architecture Services](#)
- [Toolkit: Enterprise Architecture Value and the I&T Operating Model Optimizing Patterns](#)

No. 9 — Lack of Continuous Communication and Feedback

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

Explanation: Business leaders view EA efforts that focus on technology-only decisions as relevant only to IT. The best way to improve relationships with business leaders is to keep producing deliverables they find valuable and interesting. Feedback mechanisms and channels include collaborative teams of business and IT people. The project management office, project and agile teams can't put EA into practice successfully if they don't know or understand what EA is asking them to do. If you fail to develop continuous communication and feedback, you run the risk of a backlash from users, especially agile teams. Users resent not having the opportunity to provide input and feedback to programs, projects, products and initiatives.

Solution: Ensure that the outputs of EA are always available to and usable by business leaders. Develop communication channels to encourage participation and feedback from these leaders.

Actions:

- Put effort into your communication. Use communication to describe the value of EA so that business and IT leaders and product managers will use EA to transform business toward the desired future state.

- Describe to business leaders how the EA program is helping the business achieve its future-state business capabilities that will then drive targeted business outcomes.
- Develop feedback communication channels such as a CoP, teams of business and IT people, collaborative tools, and corporate social networks.
- Ensure that stakeholders can easily understand and apply the EA information you make available to them and check that it meets their needs.
- Conduct business surveys so that EA team members can determine whether they're executing correctly. Use semistructured interviews with key stakeholders (asking what worked, what didn't work and what you can improve) and create scorecards.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Role of Business Architecture in Digital Business: Benchmark Data](#)
- [5 Steps to Construct a Winning Value Proposition That Positions EA as an Internal Management Consultancy](#)
- [7 Best Practices to Make Compelling EA Presentations to the Board of Directors and Senior Leaders](#)
- [Storytelling for Enterprise Architecture: How to Persuade Leaders of EA's Value in Decision Making](#)
- [Toolkit: Storytelling Digital Innovation Decision Making to Influence and Persuade Business and IT Leaders of EA Advisory Role](#)
- [3 Mistakes to Avoid in Your Partnerships With Business Stakeholders](#)
- [Gaining Support From EA's Critical Stakeholders \(Dayson\)](#)
- [Diagnosis of EA Stakeholder Perception Problems \(The Hartford\)](#)
- [Five Best Practices to Increase Stakeholder Engagement and Support in the Digital Era](#)
- [Toolkit: How to Create an EA Charter, and Why](#)
- [Enterprise Architecture \(Re\)Charter Template](#)
- [The Enterprise Architecture Leader's First 100 Days](#)

No. 10 — Restricting the EA Team to IT Resources

Issue: Successfully planning and executing a 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: Organizations and organizational design are rapidly shifting from focusing on projects to products. They are forming fusion or multidisciplinary teams to create technology-enabled and data-driven business models, integrating (rather than aligning) 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 engage business leaders to help formulate and operationalize digital strategy. The strategy these programs help formulate and execute often consists of new data-driven business models and analytics powered by, for example, 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 can't successfully operate or deliver business value in isolation. The complexity and scale of digital business demand that EA programs include a diverse, broad and deep pool of organizational expertise and a pool of talent from across the organization collaborating to achieve targeted business outcomes.

Solution: Build a robust EA team that consists of both core and virtual resources from across the organization and its supporting partners. This is vital to create a world-class EA program that focuses on planning and executing a digital business strategy.

Actions:

- Complement the technologists in your EA team with nontechnologists. Recognize that supporting EA is not just about IT — it's about enabling the business capabilities (people, businesses and things) that will transform the organization toward its desired future state.
- Create business and operating models with input from fusion/multidisciplinary teams of diverse stakeholders and resources from across the organization. Seek people with broad and deep business domain and technology innovation expertise, and versatilists with experience applying technology (existing, new and emerging).
- Extend EA capabilities and maturity with enterprise architects who think, behave and act in an innovative consulting manner to drive digital transformation.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Leadership Vision for 2020: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader](#)
- [Building a Business Outcome-Focused Architecture Team \(BMO\)](#)

- [Hiring Guide for Enterprise Architect](#)
- [Enterprise Architect Competency Profiles](#)
- [Maximize the EA Team's Effectiveness by Defining Team Roles](#)
- [Tool: Chief Enterprise Architect Job Description](#)
- [Tool: Business Architect Job Description](#)
- [Tool: Sample Job Description for the Role of Information Architect](#)
- [Tool: Solutions Architect Job Description](#)
- [Tool: Technical Architect Job Description](#)
- [Recruit the Best Enterprise Architects by Using a Methodical Selection Approach](#)
- [Hiring Enterprise Architects in a Tight Market](#)
- [Peer Connect Perspectives: Attributes to Look for When Recruiting a Chief Enterprise Architect](#)
- [Toolkit: Determining the Scope, Focus and Work Allocation Mix for Your EA Program](#)
- [5 Steps to Construct a Winning Value Proposition That Positions EA as an Internal Management Consultancy](#)
- [Enterprise Architecture Must Evolve Into an Internal Management Consultancy](#)
- [3 Steps to Creating Enterprise Architecture Services](#)
- [Toolkit: Enterprise Architecture Value and the I&T Operating Model Optimizing Patterns](#)

No. 11 — Lack of Key Performance Metrics

Issue: Many EA programs fail because business leaders don't recognize the business value of EA. Many EA programs exacerbate this because they lack a solid set of quantitative, qualitative, operational and business value metrics.

Explanation: Many EA leaders still focus on constructing "efficiency" metrics that measure the capacity and utilization of the EA program and its practices. But business executives want EA leaders to construct "effectiveness" metrics that measure how EA helps achieve targeted business outcomes. In other words, business executives want metrics that measure EA's impact on achieving the organization's strategic objectives and enabling its future-state capabilities. These drive its targeted business outcomes.

The impact of EA on business outcomes is indirect. As a discipline, EA contributes to organizational change, but the bulk of the change work effort is done through initiatives. As a

result, many organizations still don't understand the business value of EA efforts to their investments. This is why business executives sometimes view EA efforts as a "discretionary" discipline.

Solution: Construct an initial set of efficiency metrics and soon after construct a set of effectiveness metrics. Use EA efficiency metrics to review, adjust and refine EA program practices. Employ EA effectiveness metrics to measure the business value of EA. Map EA business value metrics to business performance 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 you receive.
- 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 the rest of the organization uses.
- 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 link EA efforts to targeted business outcomes.
- Work with business leaders and members of the strategy and finance teams to create, validate and approve key EA business value metrics.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [EA Business-Value Metrics You Must Have Today](#)
- [EA Value Stories: Articulating EA's Performance to Stakeholders](#)
- [Toolkit: Use a Customer Satisfaction Approach to Engage EA Partners](#)
- [3 Traits of Successful EA: Metrics, Skill Gaps, and Disbandments](#)
- [EA Scorecard Metrics](#)
- [Evolving EA Talent for Digital Transformation: Benchmark Data](#)

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

Issue: Some organizations acquire an EA tool when starting, restarting or renewing an EA program and its practices. But acquiring an EA tool before understanding the organization's business direction and strategy can do more harm than good. EA tools are merely a means to an end and don't 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. But "a fool with a tool is still a fool." EA tools themselves don't solve users' problems or 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 starting, restarting or renewing EA efforts. It takes them away from the important work they need to do:

- Building relationships across the business and IT
- Understanding their business and operating models, business goals, objectives and targeted business outcomes
- Determining the problem they're trying to solve
- Defining the appropriate governance and processes

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, not simply on the EA team's unique requirements.

Actions:

- Acquire an EA tool once you've started your BODEA program efforts, which include:
 - Adopting a business-outcome-driven approach
 - Constructing a value proposition
 - Starting with business architecture
 - Determining organizational design
 - Deciding on governance and assurance
 - Creating business value metrics
 - Constructing a charter
- Do the "what" and "why" of EA before the "how" of EA.

- Analyze and articulate the compelling business problems, opportunities and outcomes that an EA tool will help solve both now and in the future. Develop organizational use cases with consensus, ensuring that functional requirements and critical EA tool capabilities link to targeted business outcomes.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Architecture Tools](#)
- [Critical Capabilities for Enterprise Architecture Tools](#)
- [How to Develop a Winning Value Proposition for Buying Enterprise Architecture Tools](#)
- [Peer Connect Perspectives: Identify Use Cases for Selecting an Enterprise Architecture Tool](#)
- [Gartner Peer Insights 'Voice of the Customer': Enterprise Architecture Tools](#)

No. 13 — Viewing EA as a Finite Process — the “We’re Done” Mindset

Issue: Some EA leaders promote EA as a finite project with a start and end date, and some organizations view it in that way. Similarly, some organizations view EA as a “thing” — an “architecture” — to deliver and then forget. Both approaches are fatal for EA because EA must be a continuous and iterative process that helps formulate, translate and execute digital business strategy.

Explanation: An organization’s EA efforts are never “done” — they’re constantly evolving. EA is a discipline that holistically leads the organization’s responses to disruptive forces. It does so by identifying and analyzing the execution of change toward the desired business vision and targeted business outcomes. If EA leaders believe and advocate that EA is “done,” several challenges result:

- An “enterprise architecture” is created and then forgotten, quickly becoming obsolete.
- Resources are reallocated at a specific date, so EA efforts deliver limited impact and value.
- Management expectations are unrealistic, so EA efforts are disbanded.

EA’s value is in helping to ensure that the organization makes decisions on business and technology investments based on sound economic and financial principles. These decisions 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 as targeted business outcomes will change at an even faster pace when driven by uncertainty and technology innovation.

Actions:

- Create a value proposition for the EA program at the outset. Do so regardless of whether you're starting, restarting or renewing an EA program.
- Promote and maintain the value proposition across the organization. Work with business and IT leaders and product managers to help them understand that EA is an ongoing effort, just like strategic planning, budgeting, operations management, and program and portfolio management.
- Set clear expectations. Explain how the EA program adds value, what it will do and what it won't do. Describe how the EA program will work and how it'll be measured.

For more detailed related research, see:

- [Leadership Vision for 2020: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader](#)
- [Inventing the Future With Continuous Foresight](#)
- [Four Ways Enterprise Architects Can Help Chief Strategy Officers Conquer Digital Disruptions](#)
- [EA Advising on Business Strategy: Aspiration or Reality?](#)

Acronym Key and Glossary Terms

Term	Definition
Business Capability	A clearly identifiable and measurable value-adding set of activities that describes what the organization can do.
Business Model	A business model reflects what value the entity will create and deliver to customers or constituents. Business models are a blueprint an organization uses to create, deliver and capture value. Organizations use business model innovation to analyze current models, challenge them with disruptive “digital” options, and design, test and iterate different possibilities to provide new revenue- and value-producing opportunities.
Digital Business	A digital business is an organization or unit inside an enterprise with a product set and business model made possible only by the use of information and digital technology.
Enterprise Architecture	A discipline for holistically leading enterprise responses to disruptive forces by identifying and analyzing the execution of change toward the desired business vision and outcomes.

Information Architecture	The EA activities of creating and determining information that needs to be shared consistently across the organization and designing outcomes that strengthen the impact of sharing such information.
Operating Model	An operating model reflects how the entity creates and delivers the value reflected by the business model. Operating models are blueprints for how value will be created and delivered to target customers. An operating model executes the business model and brings it to life. An information and technology (I&T) operating model represents how an organization orchestrates its I&T capabilities to achieve its strategic objectives. An enterprise operating model describes how the enterprise configures its capabilities to execute its actions to deliver business outcomes as defined in the business model.
Project-Based Delivery	Work is executed as a series of planned activities to be delivered. These activities have a finite start, middle and end, and a fixed budget, scope and timeline, with people as multitasking shared resources.
Product-Based Delivery	Consistent agile teams create and maintain products throughout their life cycles, with a focus on value streams, time to market and continuous incremental delivery based on client and market feedback.
Solution Architecture	The activity of developing a direction for managing the portfolio of to-be solutions to match business outcome objectives more effectively. The to-be solutions include systems (applications, processes and information), shared infrastructure services, and shared application services and components.
Technical Architecture	The EA activities of developing target-state guidance (reusable standards, guidelines, individual parts and configurations) for evolving the technical infrastructure across the organization to enable business strategy and deliver business outcomes.

Evidence

¹ See [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resource Center](#)

² See [The 2019 CIO Agenda: Securing a New Foundation for Digital Business](#)

³ This is a finding of a preevent survey Gartner conducted in August 2019 of potential client and nonclient attendees from North America and Europe of Gartner's planned 2020 EA summits in Orlando, Florida and London. Gartner asked the question, "What stage is your organization's EA practice currently in?" Of the 486 respondents:

- 41% were taking their EA efforts to the next step or evolution
- 24% were continuing existing EA efforts
- 19% were implementing EA for the first time
- 16% were restarting or renewing EA efforts

Note 1: Traditional Enterprise Architecture

Traditional EA is a technology-centric approach to enterprise architecture. It focuses on defining the technologies, the principles, policies and standards that underpin them and the development of new “solutions.” Traditional EA focuses on renovating the core of the existing IT estate. It focuses on reducing the cost of IT and modernizing the existing IT estate by eliminating legacy and technical debt.

Note 2: Business-Outcome-Driven EA

Business-outcome-driven EA (BODEA) is a practical approach designed to deliver 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 guidance. This empowers chief enterprise architects to:

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

BODEA starts with the business, clarifying direction and strategy and the targeted outcomes the organization seeks to achieve.

- Works inwards from this starting point to business capabilities to the “operating model” (the people, process, IT and information).
- Links programs, projects and initiatives to future-state business capabilities and, in turn, to targeted business outcomes.
- Rightsizes IT efforts by first creating diagnostic, actionable and measurable deliverables, followed by operating and enabling deliverables.

Note 3: EA as Internal Management Consultancy

EA as an internal management consultancy (IMC) is an extension of business-outcome-driven EA (BODEA) that offers services to support business leaders in their efforts to shape and define business strategy, solve business problems and innovate. IMC offers critical services to business leaders such as:

- Design thinking
- Business modeling
- Ecosystem modeling
- Innovation management
- Investment analysis
- Operating model design

Note 4: Definition of EA Governance and Assurance

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. EA assurance (that is, compliance) efforts are focused on ensuring that the agreed viewpoints, principles and standards created during the architecture creation process are realistic, realized and adhered to.

Recommended by the Authors

[The Future Direction and Evolution of Business-Outcome-Driven Enterprise Architecture](#)

[A CIO's Guide to Strategy Development](#)

[Realign Enterprise Architecture Activities to Support Evolving Business Priorities Amid Disruption](#)

[Role of Business Architecture in Digital Business: Benchmark Data](#)

[Predicts 2020: Enterprise Architecture Enables the Intelligent Organization](#)

[Leadership Vision for 2020: Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leader](#)

[Enterprise Architecture Primer for 2020](#)

[Enterprise Architecture and Technology Innovation Leaders Primer for 2020](#)

[Technology Innovation Primer for 2020](#)

[Positioning Enterprise Architecture for Success](#)

[8 Steps to Start or Restart a High-Impact, Business-Outcome-Driven EA Program](#)

[The Enterprise Architecture Leader's First 100 Days](#)

Recommended For You

[Summary Translation: Building Organizational Resilience Is a Strategic Imperative](#)

[Summary Translation: 4 Essential Definitions to Create Effective Digital Business Strategies](#)

[ERP Primer for 2020](#)

[Compliance Reviews](#)

[Third-Party Supplier Risk Governance](#)

© 2020 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner is a registered trademark of Gartner, Inc. and its affiliates. This publication may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without Gartner's prior written permission. It consists of the opinions of Gartner's research organization, which should not be construed as statements of fact. While the information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Gartner disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. Although Gartner research may address legal and financial issues, Gartner does not provide legal or investment advice and its research should not be construed or used as such. Your access and use of this publication are governed by [Gartner's Usage Policy](#). Gartner prides itself on its reputation for independence and objectivity. Its research is produced independently by its research organization without input or influence from any third party. For further information, see "[Guiding Principles on Independence and Objectivity](#)."

Learn more. Dig deep. Stay ahead.

Get powerful business management insights to evolve your role and organization.

gartner.com/en/information-technology/role/enterprise-architecture-technology-leaders

Become a Client

Get access to this level of insight all year long — plus contextualized support for your strategic priorities — by becoming a client.

gartner.com/en/become-a-client

U.S.: 1 800 213 4848

International: +44 (0) 3331 306 809

About Gartner

Gartner is the world's leading research and advisory company and a member of the S&P 500. We equip business leaders with indispensable insights, advice and tools to achieve their mission-critical priorities today and build the successful organizations of tomorrow.

Our unmatched combination of expert-led, practitioner-sourced and data-driven research steers clients toward the right decisions on the issues that matter most. We are a trusted advisor and an objective resource for more than 14,000 enterprises in more than 100 countries — across all major functions, in every industry and enterprise size.

To learn more about how we help decision makers fuel the future of business, visit gartner.com.

SEE MORE REPORT HERE:



**TOP 100 DIGITAL BUSINESS
TRANSFORMATION AGENCY**

