Case Study

EA and SA

Learning Objective: EA and SA

To appreciate the boundaries that differentiates Enterprise Architects from Solution Architects

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# Introduction

The work of Enterprise Architects is often confused with that of Solution Architects and to a lesser extent other specialists.

The aim of this workshop is to help you as Enterprise Architects define the differences in focal point for yourself and others outside IT.

**Enterprise architects** develop a whole of organization view of that enterprise’s processes, information and information technology assets. They use this approach as a vehicle to attempt to align business and IT in a more structured, efficient, sustainable and adaptable manner.

The enterprise architect links the business mission, strategy, and processes of an organisation to its IT strategy, and documents this using architectural models that show how the current and future needs of an organisation will be met. Enterprise architects are like city planners, providing the roadmaps and regulations that a city uses to manage its growth and provide services to its citizens. In this analogy, it is possible to differentiate the role of the solutions architect who plans one or more buildings, network architects, who are responsible for wiring within the building, and other architects. The enterprise architect however, like a city planner, both frames the city-wide design, and choreographs other activities into the larger plan.

**Solutions Architects** – originally termed systems analysts - are responsible for designing computer information systems, modifying systems or expanding systems to serve new purposes. They must understand the capabilities of the firm's equipment and software, and may provide recommendations about selection of new equipment or software packages. They may be responsible for a firm's entire system or part of it. Solution Architects begin an assignment by talking with users to define the problem and to break it down into its component parts. After sufficient information has been collected, the analyst prepares charts and diagrams that constitute a representation of the new system in understandable terms. Analysts also prepare analyses which present cost versus benefit as a result of implementing the proposed new system. Once the system is accepted, Solution Architects prepare specifications for programmers to follow. The specifications include detailed descriptions of the records, files, and documents used in processing, and data flow charts describing the interrelationship of the data elements. The analysts also coordinate the development of tests to debug the system. They also may determine what computer hardware and software will be needed to set up the system.

# Workshop Task 1:

The business has unearthed an earlier proposal from a consultant on the issue of customer relationship management.

The consultant proposed 3 scenarios which are outlined below to provide a solution to the CRM problem.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | User Fit | Acquisition Cost | Ongoing Cost | Time to Implement | Age of solution | Platform | Preferred by |
| Package | 70% | $80.0k | 25% pa | 3 months | 7 years | Many | Users |
| Build | 100% | $130.0K | 40% pa | 9 months | New | Choice | IT |
| ASP | 50% | $1/Trans[[1]](#footnote-1) | N/A | 1 month | 2 years | Single | CFO |

Feedback from Solution Architect is as below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Functional Fit | Quality Code | Platform | Vendor |
| Package | Approximately 40 percent to new business processes | Poorly documented, many branches, poorly structured | Commercial platforms supported and can fit to our TA standards | Profitable, EBIT 17%. History of successful implementations |
| Build | Should be able to get 100% | Past experience suggests our AD team produces industrial strength code | Can be developed to suit our preferred architecture | Not applicable but evidence is our service management is poor. |
| ASP | Analysis reveals 80% fit to our *new* processes | ASP refused access to code. Inquiries to other users suggests an uptime rate of 98% | N/A. However need escrow copy for DRP/BCP risk management. Platform is UNIX and Sybase | Reputable public company. Profits exceed 15%. Reported to dislike enhancement requests |

Existing EA Principles (summarised)

• Re-use before buy before build.

• Applications are to be independent of technology

• Solutions must be scalable and modular

• Solutions must be easily integrated into the existing architectures.

* Solutions must consider whole of life costs (TCO) not just acquisition cost.

The CEO has come to you as the Chief Enterprise Architect and asked you to provide an evaluation of the proposal. Which solution will you recommend from an EA perspective?

# Workshop Task 2:

1. Use the chart provided to identify which role should be active in each domain (cell)
2. Identify the tasks that should be carried out by the EA and SA respectively.
3. Recommended next steps for
   1. Enterprise Architecture
   2. Solution Architect

1. The CFO has estimated that there are 100,000 transactions a year at $1/transaction [↑](#footnote-ref-1)