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# A Journey Through Enterprise Architecture (EA)

## Meeting the Business Challenge

In today's changing world every executive in an organization acknowledges that one of the key challenges facing the businesses today is the inability of their organization to transform faster than the innovations and disruptions in the marketplace. Thought leaders have always debated that organizations need to innovate to stay competitive. Though true, it appears there is more than meets the eye.

**Case in Point:** It is believed that Motorola sold 17,000 patents to Google for \$12.5 Billion. An Enterprise Architect's observation here would be:

1. What made Motorola unable to respond to Apple in the latter part of 2000 despite of having 17,000 patents?
2. How come Google is farming the same 17,000 patents and will be ever more profitable?

In a world where ideas and innovations can be purchased or even leased for a certain period of time, what seems more important is the ability of an organization to adapt to changing environments and respond to those changes with ruthless precision and speedy execution. EA teams in IT departments across organizations are seen as the only rescue that help businesses in aligning its goals and protecting its long-term interests by making it more flexible to expand or contract to various extrinsic disruptions and intrinsic evolutions.

Since the time of mainframes, client-server technologies and other complex evolutions of IT, not all companies have had a chance to take a step back and evaluate their holistic IT approach.

There are many available methodologies in the IT marketplace that provide guideline in implementing a central EA team.

Some of the industry leading methodologies are:

- Gartner Framework
- TOGAF

- FEA Methodology
- Zachman Framework

## Intrinsic Challenges for the EA Teams in Organizations

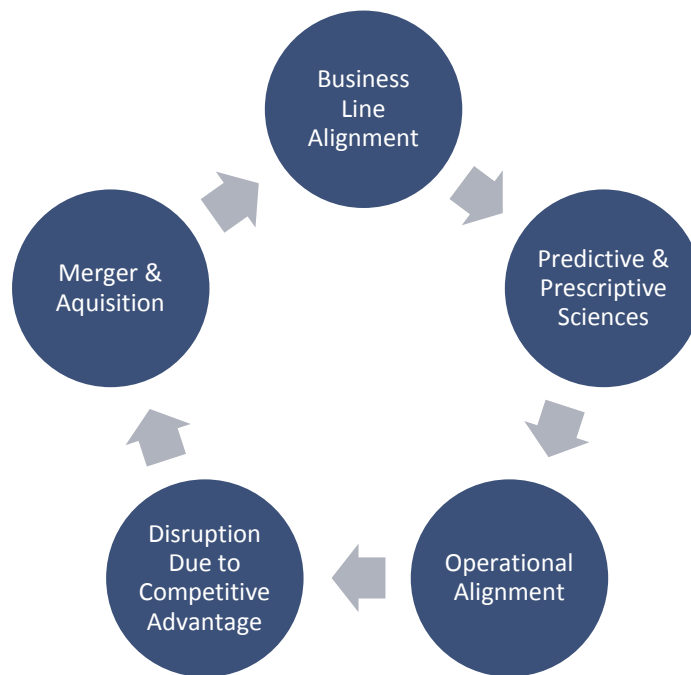
This is unlike the Project Management Practice which proposes to adapt a certain role for the PMO office in organizations which in turn manages and objectively defines the role of the Project Managers within portfolio and program initiatives. The central EA teams within large organizations struggle due to the top-down subjective nature of the field and because business units have embedded Data and Application Architects on their payroll in addition to the central EA teams. This sometimes led to ambiguity and undermine the objectives of the overall goal because Application and Data Architects who are embedded within the business units serve the interest of that business unit rather than the long-term vision of the organization. Another reason why this field took two decades to gain traction is because the middle management of IT considered this field theoretical. Here are few recommendations for the business and IT leaders in level playing the field:

1. **EA Team's Goal:** Business sponsors and IT leaders can explicitly specify the IT metrics to be achieved by EA teams in a certain period of time. A sample metric could be 50% of all operational applications used by the organization should be fully functional in a mobile device.
2. **Different Roles EA Can Play:** The organization has to bring about awareness in the IT middle management and articulate the specific role that EA teams play.
  - a. **Evangelist:** EA teams can assume the role of an “Evangelist” wherein they propagate the best methodological approach and awareness to the extended IT teams.
  - b. **Directive:** EA teams can be put in a more empowered environment where they get to manage and deliver the business vision and IT objective in parallel with the PMO office of an organization. Since EA teams by their very nature are the eyes and ears that can comprehend the current state of technical muscle power of an organization, this by far is the best approach because this gives the EA team a voice on the table when it matters and the business can leverage this setup to the best of its advantage by holding the EA and PMO teams accountable when they face disruptive risks.
  - c. **Participative:** A central EA team where all levels of expertise are employed and leased to application and business teams across the organization.

**Insights:** Over the years, EA as a field has matured to play a significant role in protecting and growing the interest of organizations. Businesses who realize its full potential harness this human capital in a very diverse and futuristic spectrum. Some of the key areas EA departments are now engaged in are:

1. Is the business ready to respond to a disruptive risk? If not, what are its options?
2. How can the business modernize and enhance its capabilities and maturity without extending its costs? What is the roadmap?
3. Can the Business evolve to be a game changer in its market space? If so, what is the action plan?

**Future of EA Field:** Below is an Industry Change Cycle that will shape the business world in the later part of this decade.



Due to the advent of advanced analytics, it has become even more urgent for business executives to engage their organization’s IT muscle more holistically. It is imminent that predictive analytics will give data driven business units more edge in the competitive space. This onslaught of data makes central EA department’s role more crucial and significant in navigating companies to a safe zone by managing each of the above phases of the industry cycle more seamlessly by bringing them all together.

There will come a time in the near future when Business Development Managers of data-driven companies will have the luxury to choose which competitor to engage and grow the capabilities of their company. It will be observed that every iteration of the above said cycle will move faster than its previous round. Hence, it is imperative that business and IT leaders plan to move from operation-centric paradigm to data-centric paradigm.

**Conclusion:** The CIO is the new COO

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This TIP was written by Ashwin Manepalli, who specializes in enterprise architecture, management and analytics. Ashwin welcomes comments and discussion on this topic and can be reached at [ashwin.manepalli@trexin.com](mailto:ashwin.manepalli@trexin.com)

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