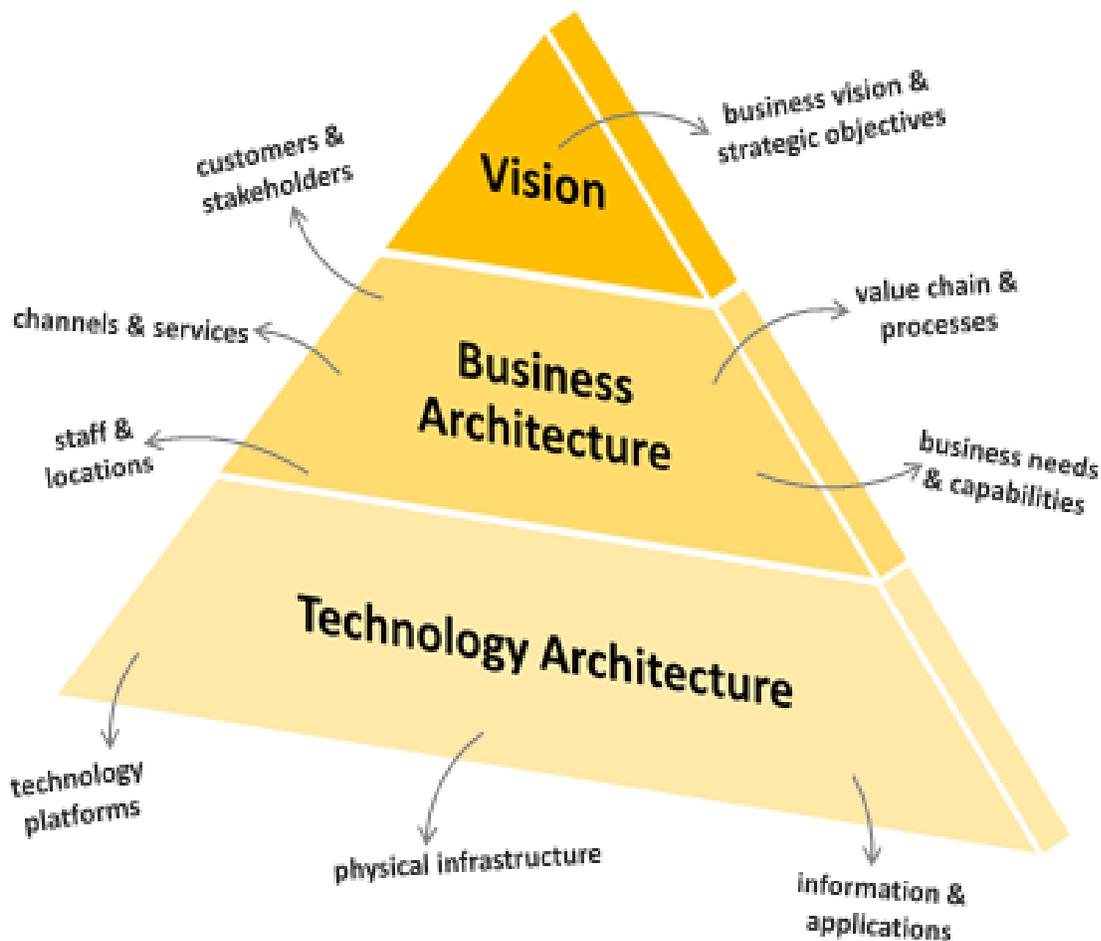


Enterprise Architecture – the answer to your business problems

Enterprise architecture is the answer to addressing growing complexities in business. Business processes have become complicated with intertwining processes, information, software and compliance to regulations. Enterprise architecture is the solution you need to run your business efficiently and be adept to face competition.

Enterprise architecture has been here for decades, but in the last few years, it has gained momentum due to its initiative that is driven by CxOs. Today the applications of this architecture are becoming the necessities in our lives thus it becomes harder to ignore them. Enterprise architecture makes good use of Fours Cs that are connections, collaboration, communication, and customers. By bringing together the four Cs, enterprise architecture, creates unity.



What is Enterprise Architecture?

In simple words, enterprise architecture is defined as the procedures followed to align a business strategy and vision with information technology to obtain desired results. Different business units are brought together for easy synergistic collaboration and communication thus enhancing customer experience. ([Hoffer 136](#)).

Why is Enterprise Architecture required?

The next question that comes to anyone's mind is why is enterprise architecture required. Enterprise architecture is required because it does the following things to the business:

- Identify short term and long term business goals of the organization
- Find out where the organization stands today in terms of IT
- Curve out a roadmap of how IT needs to be modified to achieve those business goals
- The IT assets that are available in the organization today
- The IT assets that the organization needs to achieve those goals
- Prepare a framework for IT and systems of the organization
- Take the business strategy and translate into effective change in the organization
- Setup a plan for implementation of the roadmap
- Manage the IT roadmap
- Include standard definition and strategies for services

Benefits of enterprise architecture

Enterprise architecture has multiple benefits for corporations. Let us look at how they benefit a user:

- **Holistic approach**
An enterprise is a collection of individual divisions all of which work relentlessly towards a common goal. For the success of a business, it is important that all these divisions collaborate by sharing resources and knowledge. Enterprise architecture provides this holistic approach to bring a sense of togetherness among the various divisions.
- **Consistency in delivering solutions to business problems**
Enterprise architecture can deliver business solutions in more structured and consistent way. The basis of enterprise architecture is to find out the gaps or problems in the existing practices and then develop solutions to bring about the whole story. Delivering suitable solutions is one of the key benefits of enterprise architecture.
- **Creating enterprise -wide repository**
Enterprise architecture creates an enterprise-wide repository which helps in the enterprise conducting operations in an organized way. The repository ensures that information is available all the time, at any place. This in turn saves cost and time.
- **IT governance**

EA enables an organization in creating and developing management in the enterprise. This translates into effective IT governance. This governance plays a huge part in the success of an organization and acts as a framework for organizational structure, leadership and business processes, practices and standards among others.

- **Defining information system architecture**

Enterprise architecture helps in defining the information system, business, and technical architecture in an organization by helping in understanding the business better. In this process, the business structure is also developed.

Case Study I – IT Transformation at PHH Corporation

Background: PHH Corporation, was founded in 1946. It helps clients through outsourcing solutions. The company has two subsidiary companies – PHH Mortgage and PHH Arval.

PHH Corporation is also a leading mortgage outsourcing and vehicle fleet management service provider.

Requirement for an IT Transformation: PHH Corporation had a light on model for technology management, which involved a lot of risk for the business, including unreliable old systems, higher maintenance costs, more outages due to decreased systems and failure to adopt new technologies.

The company has two business units – PHH Arval and PHH Mortgage. They used two different technologies which faced the following problems:

- Difficulty in technology implementations
- Siloed technology roadmaps
- Two separate processes, delivering two different things to the business
- Difficulty in sharing resources between the two and lack of expertise between business units

The process of transformation: For implementation of the processes, the current state of technology was first identified. Then all the processes were merged into one PHH process which could service fleet, mortgage and corporate technologies. This new process involved the most advanced web, mobile, security, data and communication services with a keen eye on cost optimization. In this process, the best players of the industry were included like Oracle, EMC, Microsoft, Apple and IBM.

An EA center of excellence was created with the following deliverables:

- Assessment of EA practice
- Enterprise architect charter
- Role definition
- Engagement model
- Architecture principles
- Future state architecture
- Technology roadmap
- Enterprise architecture maturity roadmap

Against each deliverable, the current situation with respect to products and processes were assessed. Thereafter, changes required were identified for implementation. The solutions identified were then implemented for bringing about the IT transformation.

Best Practices: Finally, the best practices were identified for implementation which included:

- Requirement of support across the hierarchy of the organization
- Improved communication between different stakeholders
- Management plan involving quick implementation of plans
- Showing progress
- Strong business backing for IT support
- Intense training of employees
- Implementation of Oracle Enterprise Architecture

The result of the technological process change was a better equipped IT process which was adept to handling business complexities better.

Case Study II – Financial Transformation at Hartford Financial Group

Background: Hartford Financial services Group Inc, a leading insurance and wealth management service provider worldwide is a well-known brand. It is a well-known brand which has earned itself a name for itself. More details about the company is available at www.thehartford.com.

The company has products in Insurance, Investment, Business Coverage and Employee Coverage. The company also undertakes philanthropy initiatives like direct giving, volunteerism and education programs to contribute to the society.

The company has been operating for 200 years and has made a name for itself. The company has also received innumerable recognitions like World’s Most Ethical Companies 2011 by Ethisphere, Top Military Friendly Employer of 2010, The Spirit of Juneteenth Award by The Amistad Center etc.

The requirement for Financial Transformation: The financial transformation was required to meet Hartford’s objective to grow forward. The goal was to have more efficient transaction processing and reporting by implementing a centralized shared service model. The intention was to invest in value-added capabilities that can drive business growth. Through the financial transformation, the company wanted to make the finance division stronger. This way, the finance division could give analytical support to business partners to create more opportunities for development.

Strategies for implementation: Implementation was done through the following actions:

- Invest in technology infrastructure and tools
- Improvement in processes and procedures
- Active involvement of leaders and employees throughout the process
- Modifying existing business processes to adapt to the transformed processes

- Concentrating on cost reduction and promoting efficient operational procedures
- Manage change efficiently for minimal friction to change

Process of implementation: The first step to implementation was to create multiple work streams to implement the changes in each stream. The existing practices in each process were identified to identify the changes required.

The multiple streams were bound together to create a coherent structure so that the entire transformation process could be aligned. Various technologies and tools were used in this process. Oracle Enterprise provided guidance and the tools and technologies for the enterprise architecture.

The architectural vision was divided into three separate processes with clear deliverables in the three. These three processes were Data Management Process, Technology Applications and Data Architecture Design.

The current state of each of the above processes was identified and then the future roadmap was identified. The future roadmap identified included creation of a centralized finance data management module which included the following:

- A finance data model to be used enterprise wide
- Interdependency of market risk reporting
- Implementation of consolidated financial warehouse
- Re-implementation of Peoplesoft Suite
- Assessing the capabilities of source systems and improve them
- Implementing a master data management strategy and operational data store
- Implementing an executive dashboard
- Process of capital planning
- Technological improvements in expense and allocation

Best Practices: Finally, the best practices were identified and laid down for implementation. These included:

- Ensuring executive buy-in for support of cohesive architecture vision
- Realigning all stakeholders to accept the change
- Looking at the business processes through a holistic approach to solve business challenges
- Remove gaps and duplicate efforts by managing inter-dependencies
- Reassess and realign the program management approach
- Manage data flow throughout the process

Hence, in this case, EA has helped transform operations by leveraging information strategically. It has also helped in building the core IT strength which has helped the business focus correctly.

Conclusion

You can give your business a competitive edge using enterprise architecture too. A stronger IT is the backbone of a successful business. If you need help regarding your business, the Apex Informatics team can help you with it. We can provide innovative information technology

consulting and staffing solution to help you achieve your business objective. Contact us and give your business the smart edge.

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