
Preface

Without doubt, enterprise architecture (EA) management has evolved to become an important discipline in practice throughout the past years. In essence, it advocates being intentional about the architecture of the enterprise and managing its constituents as a coherent whole rather than as isolated parts—in line with what one of the authors in this book calls “things work better when they work together, on purpose.” From a conceptual point of view, one aspect area to be managed as such is the business architecture. But are we not often told that EA management at its core is in fact about the information technology (IT)? Obviously, this tends to be propagated or at least practiced as such by some professionals in the field, showing only moderate awareness for the business architecture and associated management practices. However, one may also consider it an unforced restriction of the overall scope in EA management that prevents essentials of the business from being addressed in a way as holistic and systematic as this is usually the case with IT landscapes today.

Reviewing the literature, it becomes apparent that there are only few books on EA management that deal with the business architecture in a comprehensive way and focus on how to use it in practice. In addition, those works that do cover it to some extent usually take up an IT-oriented perspective on that part of the enterprise architecture as well. As indicated, a reason for this might be the fact that “enterprise architecture management” is often equated with “enterprise IT architecture management.”

This is also evident in our own work as practitioners in the field. Quite frequently, we hear statements questioning the role of architecture in the business and suggesting the IT to be the “center of the universe” in EA management:

- “Enterprise architecture? That’s about the application systems, data, and technologies used to support the business—it gives us a structured description of our IT landscape.”
- “Business architecture? You mean the processes? Yes, this is where you should map your application systems to.”

- “Strategy and business model? That’s none of our business. Of course, it’s relevant, but that’s not architecture, right?”
- “Well, but how does this affect the IT? Why should we look into this if it does not have any implications on the IT?”
- “Business folks are not interested in architecture. Architectural approaches do not really help there; they only work in the IT.”

To experienced architects in the field, this may sound familiar. For us, such claims to some extent set the motivational foundation for this book. Enterprises consist of much more than information technology; considering only this part or viewing the enterprise architecture only from that single perspective will thus not provide a holistic understanding of the enterprise and allow it to be managed in such a way. Furthermore, the enterprise—as some purposive, bold endeavor or undertaking—is by definition a motivational entity with a clear purpose; architecting efforts going beyond the IT will thus have to include this part as well.

The intention of this book therefore is to provide a “breath of fresh air” in this respect. While some might argue that architecting the business does not happen in practice, this book demonstrates the opposite: it provides various examples of real-life business architecture management. This is also supported by experiences from our own practice: throughout different engagements, business architecture has proven to be a crucial instrument not only to facilitate the dialog with the business (from an IT point of view) but also to support strategy making and translation into proper execution.

Even in a lack of such practical insights and success stories, there would still be the question of alternatives to help coherently manage the increasing complexity and dynamics in today’s enterprises. From our experience, this question usually remains unanswered. This book, in contrast, provides answers: it details the concept of business architecture, illustrates approaches of how to bring it to reasonable use, and explains the role it may thus play to master the aforementioned challenges. To achieve this, we strived to integrate both experiences from practice and the latest research. Armed with this diverse input, the book is supposed to represent a progressive piece of work in terms of the business aspects of EA management, addressed in a way that is meaningful for non-IT professionals as well.

This book would not have become a reality without the support of some people in our professional environment. First of all, we would like to thank the individual authors who made the effort to write a chapter and shared their personal experiences and/or valuable insights about business architecture management. Second, we would like to thank all colleagues in the architecture management field with whom we have worked on business architecture themes and had fruitful discussions in the past years. These discussions have been a major inspiration for us to edit this book. In addition, we acknowledge the support of James Lapalme, who was willing to contribute a foreword to this book, to review and comment on some of the manuscripts, and to give advice in the final steps of this book’s production. Finally, we are grateful to all who remain passionate about bringing architectural thinking

into the business and keep pointing out that enterprise architecture management is about more than just “structure and vision” for the IT landscape.

We trust that you will enjoy this book and will find it inspiring. Feel free to contact us with questions and comments concerning contents of this book or architecture management matters in general.

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