Practical Steps in the Early Stages of Enterprise Architecture

In Collaboration with

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTS

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Introduction

The early days of implementing Enterprise Architecture can be very confusing. Architects can find it overwhelming trying to understand where to start and how to build any momentum. TOGAF®[1] is the accepted industry standard but it is large and many people struggle with knowing where to start and how to integrate it into their organization.

In this white paper, we identify a few key steps that we recommend to smooth your path to TOGAF® adoption. This won't turn you into a fully-fledged Enterprise Architecture practice but will move you in the right direction and give you time to make your own choices. Targeted communication, gaining agreement of the Enterprise Architecture goals and carefully focusing your work is critical in the early stages.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Attempting to run an Enterprise Architecture effort without planned and well executed communication will give you many headaches. People will have differing expectations and understanding of Enterprise Architecture and of your chances of success. Many senior managers may have been bitten by failure. You need strong sponsorship and enterprise-wide support. Clarity of communication is the way to achieve this. Successful Enterprise Architecture demands skilled stakeholder management.

In fact, the Preliminary and Vision phases of the TOGAF® Architecture Development Method outline a process that can be used to help your communication. TOGAF® provides steps to align views and viewpoints to address the concerns of stakeholders. You can achieve even better results by taking this further and creating a customized communication plan for your entire Enterprise Architecture effort. The key is targeting the correct message to the correct people in order to achieve a desired outcome.

Stakeholder	Contact	Stake in the EA	Power/ Influence	Understanding and Agreement	Level of Impact	Involvement	Expectations	Concerns
			H / M / L	H / M / L	H / M / L	R/A/C/I		
CEO	Alex James	Customer	H	L	H	A	Much Pain, wants practical results	Very busy on transformation, wary of EA from previous failures
CIO	Damien Rice	Sponsor	H	H	H	R	Pragmaric steps towards better IT planning	Does not want EA costs to get out of hand
Head of Programmes	Toby Jones	Downstream impact	M	M	H	C	Wants projects better planned in the early stages with better financial estimates	Worried early stages of projets will take too long

Figure 1 – Stakeholder Map

The first step is to identify the people that architecture interacts with and those that have power over it. Take time to map out every role and team in the enterprise that might be impacted by

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[1] TOGAF® is a registered trademark of The Open Group in the United States and other countries.

Enterprise Architecture. Try to think beyond the usual suspects. Your list should include, but not be limited to:

- IT Leadership
- Business Leadership
- Portfolio Management
- Project Management
- Service Management
- Delivery Managers and Teams
- Development Teams
- Infrastructure Teams
- Suppliers and Partners
- Business Change Planning
- Information Security

Note that external vendors, service providers, suppliers, and partner organizations are often key stakeholders. Don't leave them out!

Once you have identified the people connected to architecture you need to understand how these people see their relationship with you and what they expect from architecture. In particular, what are their current pain points or concerns? Try creating a Stakeholder map (figure 1), adding as much information as you can. Use the "Stakeholder Map Matrix" template defined in TOGAF®, but feel free to extend it to meet your needs.

The Stakeholder Map is the heart of your Enterprise Architecture strategy. The concerns and expectations of stakeholders are the key drivers you need to keep in mind.

Communication Plan

The next stage is to create a communication plan that presents your Enterprise Architecture messages in the best light for each stakeholder group. Approach your Enterprise Architecture effort as you would a business change programme. The communication plan that you create needs to be regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date.

When you plan your message beware that TOGAF® is a tool that Enterprise Architects use and not very interesting to non-architecture stakeholders. Do not spend time selling TOGAF® to other communities. You may confuse them, or worse, put them off completely! When project managers are recruited or a programme management office is setup, they do not spend weeks telling the senior management why they need to use PRINCE2. They just use it. PRINCE2 is their standard method and TOGAF® is ours. Don't waste valuable listening time; though, if you are asked, then you can state that you are using an industry standard, robust framework. Instead, try concentrating on a message that matters to the stakeholders and use their language.

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Promote Your Charter

If you were setting up a long–term business change programme then you would carefully lay out the scope, objectives, and success criteria for that programme. You would then seek agreement from the senior management before moving too far in any direction. Enterprise Architecture is a long-term business change programme and requires the same level of discipline and approach.
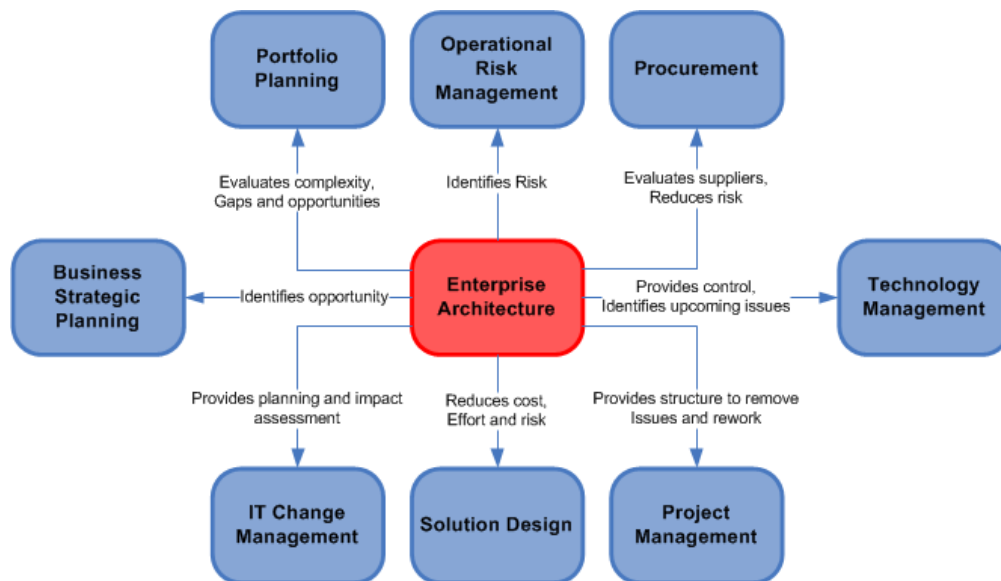

Figure 2 - Interaction with other processes

Create a Charter that defines Enterprise Architecture within your organization. A Charter focusses the Enterprise Architecture effort and seeks agreement on that focus. A good Charter answers the following:

- What is Enterprise Architecture within this company?
- What is the scope of the Enterprise Architecture effort?
- How does Enterprise Architecture link with other organization processes (figure 2)?
- How will Enterprise Architecture performance be measured?
- What are the Enterprise Architecture roles and responsibilities?
- What are the Enterprise Architecture deliverables?
- What are the Enterprise Architecture drivers, goals and objectives?

The purpose of the Charter is to give Enterprise Architecture a clear and supported remit with your organization. It needs to be approved at the highest level you can achieve. Once you have an approved Charter you will have a clear remit for Enterprise Architecture, helping you achieve practical goals.

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Have a Reason for Everything

Many Enterprise Architecture teams create fantastic landscapes, service models, or other artefacts that don't change anything or have any impact. Why? Usually because the artefact was created without a clear purpose in the first place; and as a result, the dangerous ivory tower label can develop. Every piece of work that you do must be targeted towards achieving a specified goal or addressing a particular concern.

It is not enough to say that we created this service model so that we had a good picture of the services that the organization uses. A focussed Enterprise Architecture team must go further and understand why they are modeling the services in the first place. Who is the model for? How will you communicate it with them? Is the service model going to help people? What is the message you want to share with them? What is the outcome you are hoping for?
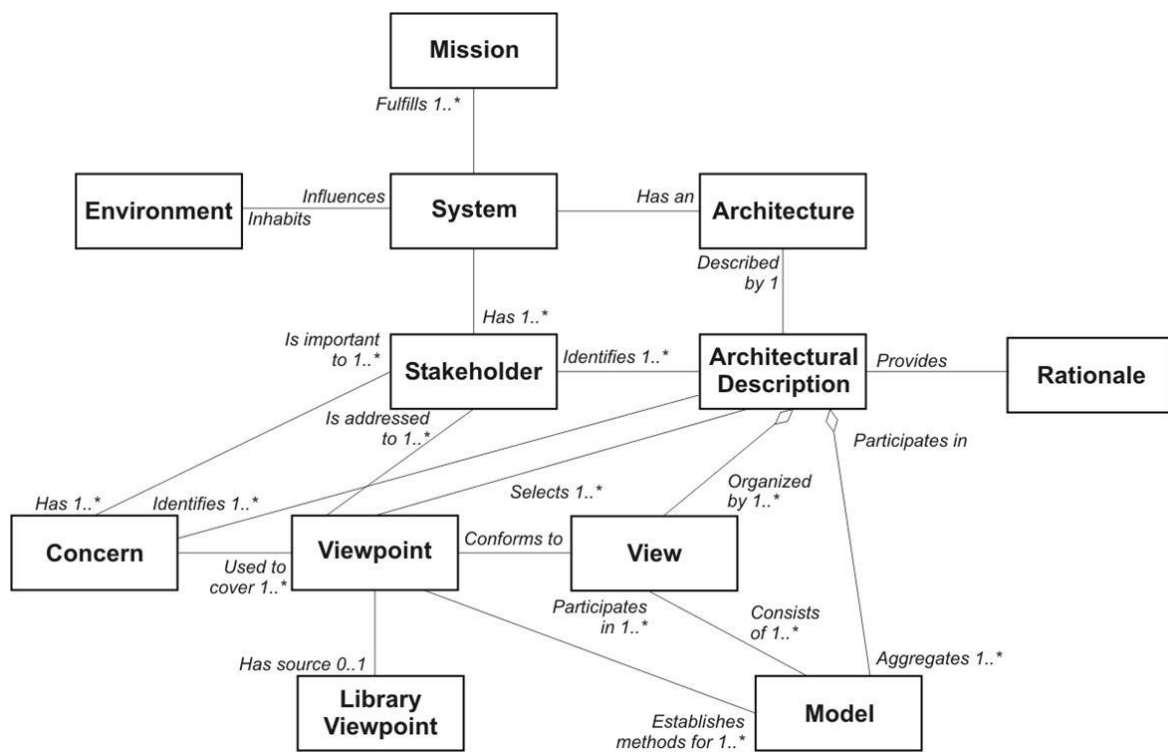

Figure 3 - TOGAF® Views and Viewpoints

If you can answer these questions for every artefact that you create then you will avoid the ivory tower status and make a real difference to the operation of the business. TOGAF® uses the concept of architecture views and viewpoints to capture and address the concerns of stakeholders. Figure 3 shows how architecture views are linked to goals and drivers. If you have defined your Enterprise Architecture Charter then you already have a clear set of drivers for Enterprise Architecture. Every artefact and deliverable that you create must be targeted at these agreed objectives.

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Just Don't...

TOGAF is excellent and it works. However, if your Enterprise Architecture practice is new or immature then you may well be more successful in the short term without spending time adopting a big framework.

Adopting a framework can take time, add process complexity and actually make things less efficient in the short-term. Making TOGAF® work well requires a good level of maturity of process and thought. During the early stages of an Enterprise Architecture effort, your time can be better spent gaining credibility by focussing on more visible and direct tasks such as supporting the solution architects and project managers or gathering data and contributing to major programmes. As your practice grows you will find that managing Enterprise Architecture becomes complex. At that point a framework will help bring structure and organise your efforts.

As you proceed, keep your eye on TOGAF® and use your experience to make sure that you are staying on the correct track in order to flick the switch when you need to.

Conclusion

It is easy in the early days of Enterprise Architecture to begin creating attractive artefacts and setting up boards. Time spent on establishing your Charter and communicating well will add value for the long term. In the meantime, if you do have artefacts to create, make sure they are well targeted.

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