Misperceptions regarding the role of EA abound in most organizations, resulting in conflicts, as well as resentment between the EA team and other groups. These issues are fueled by several EA myths that have propagated and continue to be professed as truths by many pundits and practitioners. It is important to increase the collaboration between business, IT and architects by clearly communicating what EA is — and equally, what EA is not — and to debunk the common EA urban legends.

To be effective, EA teams must:

- Leverage the strategic guidance from a business strategy, and the specific tactical guidance from the business plan, to guide EA efforts overall.
- Serve as advisors to the IT strategic planning effort, along with the CTO, senior IT staff, business leaders and users.
- Participate in performance management efforts relating to critical business processes.
- Not dictate implementation details for the entire organization, or for specific practice areas.

In a well-architected enterprise, EA is the coordinating process that ensures that the other strategic and management processes of the enterprise are in sync with the future state.
Enterprise Architecture: Best and Worst Practices

Those who have cracked the code on enterprise architecture today have programs that are performing well and delivering recognized value to the business. Others are recovering from costly mistakes. This presentation describes best practices of the high-performing teams and lessons learned by others.

• How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?
• How can you effectively communicate the value of EA?
• How can organizations leverage the EA best practices and avoid the EA worst practices?
Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

Gartner defines EA as "the process of translating business vision and strategy into effective enterprise change by creating, communicating and improving the key requirements, principles and models that describe the enterprise's future state and enable its evolution." Nowhere in this definition does Gartner define EA as a process that is only relevant to the IT organization, nor does it define EA as a technology discipline. In fact, the words "information" and "technology" are noticeable by their absence.

A review of our client calls during the past year reveals a marked difference in discussions with clients launching new or renewed EA programs. Three years ago, most of these calls were concerned with the initial deliverables or artifacts created by the EA program. Today, our discussions reveal a clear focus on business value first and the associated processes and deliverables supporting this work second. This change will not come easy to practitioners of a more traditionally minded EA approach, which focuses on the IT organization first and the business second. Gartner believes these trends reflect a new reality for EA.
Key Issue: What does it really mean to do EA?

Gartner's Formal Definition of Enterprise Architecture

- Enterprise architecture is…
  - ... the process (it's a process and a thing)
  - ... of translating business vision and strategy
  - ... into effective enterprise change (if no change is needed, no architecture is needed)
  - ... by creating, communicating and improving the key requirements, principles and models that describe the enterprise's future state and enable its evolution
    (architecture produces the creative constraints that bind implementation decisions)

- The scope of the enterprise architecture includes…
  - ... the people, processes, information and technology of the enterprise.
    (architecture is not just about technology)
  - ... and their relationships to one another and to the external environment.

- Enterprise architects compose…
  - ... holistic solutions
  - ... that address the business challenges of the enterprise
  - ... and support the governance needed to implement them

Enterprise architecture means architecting the enterprise for change.

Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

In May 2006, Gartner ratified a revised standard definition of EA. This definition represents the consensus opinion of the entire Gartner enterprise architecture research community on the scope and purpose of EA. EA has always been focused on enhancing enterprise agility.

We have long stated that EA must facilitate change. The key is to create, not the perfect or elegant architecture for the moment, but the most adaptable architecture for the future. It is useful to consider this definition in the context of the best practices for enterprise architecture. EA is a challenging discipline, made more so by its potential scope and reach. Careful attention to the basics can mean the difference between success and failure.
Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

On completion of the "Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2010," we reflected on the story it was telling us about the state of enterprise architecture (EA) and its future.

· Early-generation EA, which is on the right side of the Hype Cycle, is marked by mature IT-oriented practices.
· Today's EA — the latest generation of EA that is emerging today reveals a new set of practices, techniques and viewpoints that clients are employing to try to integrate and engage with the business as a partner.

This year, the two generations continue to exist. However, we find that the aspirations (and thus the hype) in EA are high, as several of the entries, including EA overall, begin to shift toward the Plateau of Productivity. Our surveys also reflect this aspiration: In December 2010, 87% of organizations surveyed in EMEA and 66% in North America said that their primary focus for EA during 2011 and 2012 will be on aligning with business and IT vision and strategy, delivering strategic business value and enabling major business transformation.
Enterprise Architecture: Best and Worst Practices

Tactical Guideline: Many organizations believe that they are doing something called "enterprise architecture" but may have mistakenly restricted their view of how it may be applied in different parts of the organization. Recognize which archetypes can, and should, be applied to which areas of your own organization to aid in defining what EA really means to you and your organization today.

Understand EA Archetypes

Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

Enterprises that have matured their architecture efforts and are performing in the upper-right quadrant of mature enterprise architecture are ideally placed to define their EA governance on both sides of the demand and supply issue. This EA team is an integral part of the strategic planning activities of the enterprise. The portfolios of technology assets, infrastructure services and initiatives are balanced based on the future-state vision and principles defined in the EA process. Investments are aligned with the business strategy, synergies are exploited where appropriate, and there is a recognition of the differences in needs and business models across different parts of the enterprise. Furthermore, the archetype employed will have an impact on the type of governance style required:

- Tactical Architecture — Centralized decision making with local control.
- Enterprise Tactical Architecture — Decentralized decision making because of enterprise scope.
- Strategic Architecture — Centralized decision making with local control, but more complex due to strategic nature of decisions.
- Mature Enterprise Architecture — Decentralized collaborative decision making and implementation with business.
Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

Gartner's Maturity Assessment for Application Organizations allows organizations and their leaders and managers to evaluate application management processes in a holistic fashion and to identify actions for advancement. Between 2007 and 2010, over 495 Gartner clients took Gartner's EA maturity assessment. We represent the results of these assessments. This is a self-selecting group of Gartner clients who have elected to take our maturity assessment to understand their own maturity; thus, many of them may already be questioning their current EA execution. In blind maturity assessments (that are not self-selecting), the results are a bit closer to a classic bell curve.

This is interesting data for organizations seeking to understand their maturity relative to their peers. Even more interesting, clients need to understand the details as to why organizations struggle.
Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

This chart shows the details of the previously discussed EA maturity assessment taken by 495 Gartner clients. Two of the critical aspects to consider are the challenges that clients face defining their enterprise context and future state. In this assessment, the clear majority of clients faced challenges in these two areas, which is likely to have a profound impact on clients' overall ability to impact the business with EA.
Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

EA is an iterative process that produces four major deliverables: a future-state architecture, which supports the requirements of the business strategy and external environmental factors; documentation of the current-state architecture (to the minimal level of detail required); a gap analysis that identifies the shortfalls of the current state in terms of its ability to support the strategies of the enterprise; and a road map defining the steps that should be taken to evolve the current state into the future state. Control of the execution of the road map — decisions with respect to the allocation of funds and resources — are not made within the architecture itself, but are the function of other management disciplines that are related to, but not part of, the architecture.

A future-state architectural vision is developed through a process of defining requirements, developing principles and building models at various levels of abstraction. This is followed by documentation of the current state (to the minimum level of detail required). Finally, a road map is developed, which defines how the enterprise will evolve from the current-state to the future-state architecture, and the evolution is achieved through a governance process and structure, which ensure that the decisions of the EA are acted on as new capabilities are built and new investments are made in technology.
Enterprise Architecture: Best and Worst Practices

Tactical Planning Guide: Organizations must define their enterprise context, because the enterprise context is the critical foundation for integrating and aligning EA efforts with business strategy.

Key Issue: How is the discipline of EA evolving with new business and IT requirements?

Developing and supporting the enterprise context are required parts of supporting EA. Organizations that do not define the enterprise context will be greatly hindered in their ability to deliver or recognize real business value. It is the enterprise context that provides the highest level guidance on how to translate business strategy into effective change. It is nearly impossible to link EA to positive business value outcomes if EA guidance is not within the context of the business direction, strategy and future vision. The enterprise context overlays and informs all the EA work and viewpoints — that is, ETA, enterprise information architecture (EIA), enterprise solution architecture (ESA) and EBA — to ensure an effective strategic alignment with the business and a focused direction of effort. To support this effort, EA teams should collaborate with diverse business leaders, IT, subject matter experts and end users. Often, enterprise architects take on the role of facilitators and leaders to guide this collaboration, rather than the role of defining and directing.

Organizations that do not define the enterprise context before deploying any EA or viewpoint-specific work will be greatly hindered in their ability to deliver or recognize real business value. This is because EA guidance is not within the context of the business direction, strategy and future vision. As a result, it is nearly impossible to link EA to positive business value outcomes.
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Key Issue: How can you effectively communicate the value of EA?

The value of anything can be examined in two dimensions: financial efficiency and business effectiveness. Ideally, we want to "sail northeast" and drive toward the upper right corner of this model by maximizing both dimensions. It follows then that it is fair and appropriate to consider and explain to key stakeholders the value of EA in both dimensions.
Key Issue: How can you effectively communicate the value of EA?

Looking at these two dimensions of value from an EA perspective, we can see on this slide that there are several contributions that an EA program can typically make in each value category. We have seen clients justify their entire EA program entirely on the basis of any single one of these items, while the benefits of all of them are still present. Some of these value areas will surely resonate much more strongly with some stakeholders than others. Therefore, emphasize the one or two that serve the stakeholder best.
Key Issue: How can you effectively communicate the value of EA?

Enterprise architecture is uniquely positioned to address these concerns. Gartner defines enterprise architecture as "the process of translating business vision and strategy into effective enterprise change by creating, communicating and improving the key requirements, principles and models that describe the enterprise's future state and enable its evolution." The scope includes the people, processes, information and technology of the enterprise, and their relationships to one another and the external environment. In terms of understanding critical processes and information, being able to understand the relationships between the different components, and spotting opportunities to optimize in nondifferentiating areas, no one has a better view of the landscape than a well-developed enterprise architecture program. In addition, when EA is focused on the same things the business is focused on, it is uniquely positioned to bring innovative new technologies and methods of doing business and delivering value to customers.
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Key Issue: How can organizations leverage the EA best practices and avoid the EA worst practices

The best practices of high-performing EA programs are not rocket science. They don't require extensive training or specialized skills (beyond those required for EA). They are easy to put in place and not complicated to maintain. They are simply a set of behaviors that will help transform a less effective EA program into a more effective one.

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The 10 Best Practices of Successful EA Programs

2. Develop (and Execute) a Communications Plan
3. Be Pragmatic (scope and iterate your efforts)
4. Treat Each Iteration Like a Project
5. Start With the Business Strategy and Obtain Business Sponsorship
6. Do the Future State Before the Current State
7. Don't Forget Governance
8. Set Up a Measurement Program (link to overall performance management)
9. Track EA Program Maturity and Perceptions
10. Pay as Much Attention to Peoples Competencies as to Skills
Key issue: How can organizations leverage the EA best practices and avoid the EA worst practices

We often find organizations supporting EA struggling to define their initial approach, understand what activities to do, garner support for EA, and focus on the right scope and breadth for their efforts. Understanding the best practices that are leveraged by peers that are making progress and seeing value from their EA investments can be one way to help chart clients on the right path. Even when trying to follow industry best practices, some may unwittingly fall into worst practices. Many organizations' best efforts are derailed. To keep EA efforts on the path toward success, EA teams should continually seek to understand the worst practices, as well as the best practices, that their peers have leveraged as they work to support EA.
Recommendations

Monday Morning
- Assess key EA stakeholder perceptions about the business value of EA.
- Start to socialize the best and worst EA practices within your core and extended team.

Next 90 Days
- Focus everything you do based on business value and outcomes.
- Select key business measures to use for determining EA value.

Next 12 Months
- Analyze and report on accomplishments in improving the selected business measures as a result of EA efforts.
- Look for new business opportunity areas for EA value contribution.
## Related Gartner Research

- **Thirteen Worst EA Practices**  
  Betsy Burton (G00214881)

- **Hype Cycle for Enterprise Architecture, 2011**  
  Betsy Burton, Philip Allega (G00214756)

- **EA Must Include Defining Your Enterprise Context**  
  Betsy Burton, Philip Allega (G00209976)

- **Link EA to Business Outcomes to Demonstrate Value**  
  Betsy Burton (G00167681)

- **Five Ways CIOs Can Use Enterprise Architecture to Increase the Business Relevance of IT**  
  Scott Bittler (G00167455)

For more information, visit the Gartner Solution Central or email us at solutioncentral@gartner.com.