Deliver value

Analysts at the Gartner Enterprise Architecture Summit 2012 reiterated the need for Enterprise Architecture to become business outcome-driven. Mayank Singh reports from London

A disconnect remains between the way many organisations pursue Enterprise Architecture (EA) and the impact of EA on the business, which prevents EA from delivering business value, according to Gartner, Inc. EA practitioners need to re-examine old practices and shift their focus to deliverables that direct change and empower business and IT leaders to make better decisions. This was one of the big themes discussed at the Gartner Enterprise Architecture Summit 2012 (EAS) held in London, recently.

The summit presented a unique confluence of disruptive trends from the nexus of cloud, social, big data and how mobile technologies are providing an unprecedented opportunity for EA practitioners to deliver business value from EA better than ever before. The summit not only helped organisations to navigate the nexus of change to deliver business value, growth and transformation, but also gave them a roadmap to master their core EA competencies that are essential for EA success.

"Focusing on a standard EA framework doesn't work," said Brian Burke, research vice president at Gartner. "In the past EA practitioners focused on deliverables that were useful to enterprise architects but not valuable to senior management and/or did not respond to a specific business or IT need."

"We've witnessed a change in mindset, execution and delivery of EA. The value of EA is not in simply 'doing EA', but rather in how it can help evolve the business and enable senior executives to respond to business threats and opportunities," said Burke. "EA leaders must shift their focus to create actionable and measurable deliverables that address specific business outcomes and work with other business and IT disciplines such as business process management (BPM), programme and portfolio management (PPM), business information (BI), finance and human resources to leverage their efforts and move to value-driven EA."

Gartner has categorised five types of deliverables that will help EA practitioners deliver business value from EA efforts. "EA practitioners need to find the right balance of resource investment (time, energy and money) between all of these deliverables, while understanding that stakeholders only value actionable and measurable deliverables," said Burke.

Measurable Deliverables

Measurable deliverables specifically measure the direct impact of EA on the business. Currently, less than 44 per cent of EA organisations worldwide have defined metrics and even fewer are focusing metrics on business outcomes. It's often the case that many of these organisations measure what an EA team is doing, for example how many deliverables created rather than gauging the impact of EA on the business.

Actionable Deliverables

Actionable deliverables drive change and must have a direct relationship to business outcomes and stakeholder requirements. Actionable deliverables present senior IT or business executives with a decision to be made or a specific action to be taken that moves the business toward a future state. Because actionable deliverables must invoke some change, they are easily measured - did the recommended change occur or not?

Diagnostic Deliverables

Diagnostic deliverables include models, requirements and analysis tools that are designed to enable IT and business leaders to understand the impact of different decisions made in response to business disruption

or business opportunity. Diagnostic deliverables combine different views of a problem or opportunity to address a specific need. For example, for a durable goods manufacturing organisation that is trying to make a business and IT investment decisions on a new market/product opportunity, diagnostic deliverables might include an illustration of the critical affected business capabilities using a business capability model.

Enabling Deliverables

Enabling deliverables are composed of information that is collected; they provide input to diagnostic deliverables that represent the business, people, processes, information and technology. For years, these have been considered the primary deliverables of EA. Enabling deliverables are collected from existing information sources, such as performance metrics, reports from PPM, or a business process diagram from BPM.

Operational Deliverables

Operational deliverables are the artefacts that EA practitioners use to help them define, communicate and run their EA programme. These deliverables are largely focused on defining what EA practitioners "do," and on positioning EA goals and governance structures. Examples of these operational deliverables are in the EA team charter, the EA steering committee and architectural review board charter.

The other big theme of the summit was how EA practitioners can play a major role in ensuring their organisations maximise the business opportunities posed by big data. Big data makes organisations smarter and more productive by enabling people to harness diverse data types previously unavailable, and to find previously unseen opportunities. However, Gartner analysts said big data poses big challenges as well – and that's where enterprise architects can help. As navigators of strategic change, the task for EA practitioners is to chart the right course for big data across the most critical dimensions of the

organisation: business, culture, talent and technology.

"Traditional approaches to EA are significantly impacted by big data," said David Newman, research vice president at Gartner. "For the EA practitioner, the balance shifts from a focus on optimisation and standardisation within the organisation, to lightweight approaches that focus on harmonisation and externalisation across the broader enterprise ecosystem. Big data disrupts traditional information architectures – from a focus on data warehousing (data storage and compression) toward data pooling (flows, links, and information shareability). In the age of big data, the task for the EA practitioner is clear: Design business outcomes that exploit big data opportunities inside and outside the organisation.

Big data enables decision makers to spot patterns quickly across different data types, but requires a data-savvy business strategy to achieve competitive advantage. Enterprise architects should educate leaders about potential big data opportunities now readily available through start-small, cost-effective analytics and pattern recognition tools and techniques, but also explain the risk factors (such as data privacy, regulatory and legal challenges). Practitioners should also explore the increasing number of public datasets now available through open APIs, and use these for sentiment analysis (e.g., mining social media feeds), location-based services (using publicly available telemetry data) or to design context-aware applications.

> Big data enables decision makers to spot patterns quickly across different data types, but requires a data-savvy business strategy to achieve competitive advantage

Atoll Technologies and Gartner

Atoll Technologies, a focused EA vendor, was a silver sponsor at the event. Atoll Technologies has been active in delivering practical EA solutions, including both software and consultancy, to companies in a number of sectors such as finance, telecommunications, government, energy and more. Atoll Technologies has been working in the field of enterprise architecture management since 2002. It is an IT solution provider for large organisations and has extensive experience in helping these organisations to oversee and manage their architecture. Atoll is a European company that is focusing on doing business in the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe.

The company was awarded the first Omani project in December 2010 by Omantel and has been supporting the telecom major successfully since then. In 2011 it was awarded another project to provide the architecture repository solution for the Information Technology Authority(ITA), Oman. The company's SAMU tool provides all functionalities and decision supporting reports defined by the Oman eGovernment Architecture Framework. Gartner included Atoll Technologies and its product SAMU in the Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Architecture Tools in 2010. Atoll has been receiving great recognition for the quality of work it performs and the solution it delivers.

Gartner, Inc. is the world's leading information technology research and advisory company. Gartner delivers the technology-related insight necessary for its clients to make the right decisions, every day. From CIOs and senior IT leaders in corporations and government agencies, to business leaders in high-tech and telecom enterprises and professional services firms, to technology investors, Gartner is a valuable partner to 60,000 clients in 11,500 distinct organisations. Founded in 1979, Gartner is headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut, USA, and has 4,500 associates, including 1,250 research analysts and consultants, and clients in 85 countries. OER