ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE

At this 01.24.23 Roundtable 55, *NOREX Select Members from Fortune / Forbes 1000 organizations discussed top priorities for your Enterprise Architecture team in 2023; recommendations on maturing a "new" EA team; EA team as centralized, decentralized or a hybrid of both; EA groups providing value to Agile development groups; effective training methods for a new EA team; techniques to assess cybersecurity for an architecture; evolution of Zero Trust concepts and data governance; and value from an investment in an EA tool.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Discussing recommendations on maturing a "new" Enterprise Architecture team and integrating that function into other more mature service delivery and project development processes, a Chief Technology Officer is partnering up with experts in the Microsoft Azure space. They are helping his organization to set up the reference architecture and pipelines to get things stood up and to coach their team. As they go through this process and utilize Microsoft developers, they are adding to their team with the eventual goal of becoming independent from this assistance. They are leveraging experts that have cut their teeth on projects like this and learned the hard way, so they do not have to. An Enterprise Architect has had his team in place for 4 ½ years and has seen major growth in the last 12-18 months around demand for services related to road mapping and strategy. They looked at business capabilities and business functions, modeled the existing application landscape around those, applied the projects that might be in flight, and then potential projects to those models to map out a current state and a future state architecture for the groups to help them set a scope. One organization has seen their EA journey evolve over the past 10 years. When they started up, they had well-respected and deep subject matter experts in the company leading the charge. During the first 5-6 years, it was very operationally focused. There was a good deal of firefighting, but building that credibility has led to morphing to a more strategic focus.

On the topic of Enterprise Architecture groups providing value to Agile development groups and at what levels and points of interaction, an Enterprise Director / Integrations and Application stated EA is a place for your design patterns. It is a place for shrinking the onboarding gap for new efforts from weeks to days or hours. The shortest path to that "minimum viable product" is EA can help decrease the starting point time. One organization is giving direction through strategies and roadmaps but cannot be involved in every decision. They have a set of principles that they expect people to follow but realized that they needed to establish decision rights when it comes to those significant decisions the Agile teams are making. They have a formal decision request where EA is involved for those large-scale decisions with long-term impacts. This is how they try to stay involved and establish correct points of interaction. A Team Lead, Cloud Center for Excellence stated they have a general Agile model in place where they have a go-to-market team, platform infrastructure team, and different groups that work in Agile teams. They are nimbler than a SAFe environment but have lost the strategic opportunities that a structured SAFe provides. If you just move everybody to individual Agile teams, architecture and the bigger vision is left to management. It then becomes an organizational problem as opposed to a technical architectural issue at the strategy level.

Additional headline topics:

- **Current Enterprise Architecture** projects and priorities in 2023.
- **Effective training methods** for starting a new EA team.
- **EA tools**.

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Topic: 2023 EA projects

Moderator: Our first topic involves your current EA projects and priorities. Please respond to the poll asking about your EA maturity level while we start the discussion.

Poll: How do you rank the maturity level of your EA practice?

Very mature	(0/24) 0%
Somewhat mature	(9/24) 38%
Somewhat immature	(9/24) 38%
Very immature	(2/24) 8%
Not formally implemented	(4/24) 17%
Unknown	(0/24) 0%
N/A	(0/24) 0%
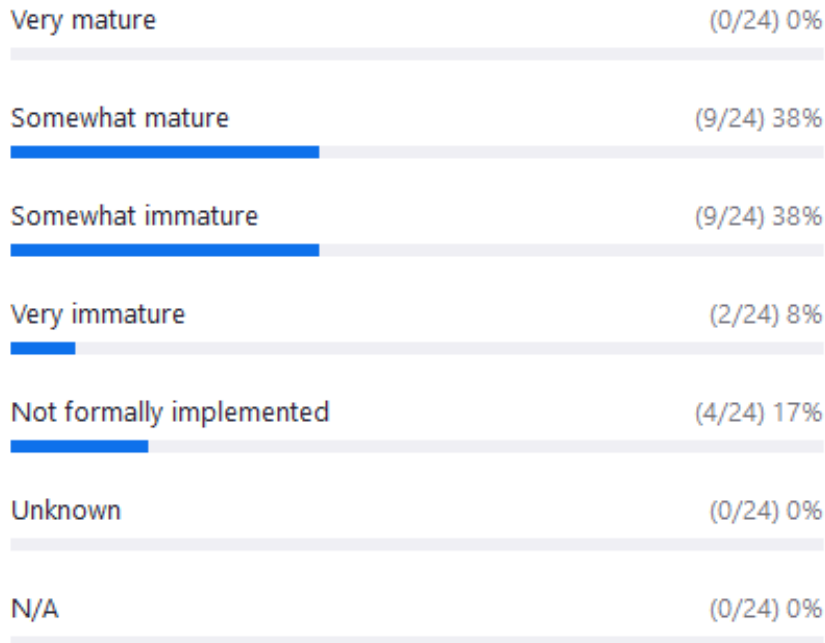
Moderator: Most are either somewhat immature or somewhat mature. Is it possible to become very mature in this space?

David M.: I'll just jump in and say I'm actually the one that picked very immature, even though I'm probably a little harsh on us. We're probably more in the somewhat immature space. But I'm not very happy with how far we've come. I'm responsible for enterprise architecture here, and our formal program is really just maybe two years old. I would hope we would be further along than we are two years in.

One of the complicating factors was at the time we introduced enterprise architecture that was part of a much larger IT transformation and business transformation were going through. There's a whole lot of activity going on besides EA and we're trying to respond to that. That's held us back from focusing on EA, trying to support everything else going on at the same time. It's a bit chaotic. That's why we're not as far along, I think, as I'd like us to be.

Dave T.: A top priority for us this year is improving technology governance. And it comes as no surprise to anybody here that the lens we're looking at that through this year is really cost containment. I wouldn't say we're quite there to cost cutting. It depends how long this goes. That

could be the next step. That's probably your number one priority. Battling that, though, and maybe this something that all the other EAs have the same problem as us.

We are often viewed as the firefighters in the organization, so that right now is taking up 90% of our time. That is our number one priority, putting out fires. But from a planning perspective, what we planned on doing is that technology governance improvement, and through that financial lens.

Marc K.: We are turning the corner in a major technology transformation at our organization. In the next few months we're going to be building out an all new API ecosystem and an all new portal ecosystem. That's we can more easily do business with our customers and our carriers.

Mike R.: Our major focus right now is building out a business capabilities and functions model globally, Then mapping our current enterprise and a future state set of enterprise applications across the globe.

Mark N.: Our EA practice I'd say is fairly mature. Some of the priorities that we have for 2023 we mentioned architecture governance, that's another one. We started putting some processes in place. We've always had them, but we formalized them a couple of years ago. We've been starting to make the transition to Agile. We have to start reevaluating our governance process and practices. I'd say that's one piece.

Another piece is around how do we increase our velocity in delivery? There's a variety of things that go into that process. We call it flow. How do we increase the flow through our development processes? I'd say those two things. We just recently kicked off an effort to start looking at our application portfolio. We went through a merger, so now we're looking through our application portfolio and see if there's opportunities there to rationalize. I would say those three things.

David M.: I didn't mention our priorities, but we are largely firefighting too. As I mentioned we're on an IT Transformation / Modernization journey that includes a Cloud migration and a mainframe migration. My goal is reduce our tactical firefighting this year, shore up our ARB process, increase operationalization of Agile + DevOps, and pursue an AI/ML strategy.

Anton C.: What does AI/ML strategy include?

David M.: Basically, how we can leverage AI/ML to further predictive and descriptive analytics but also in places like GitHub Copilot for code generation.

Steven S.: Mapping business cases to capabilities & maturity levels.

Moderator: Does anybody else want to jump in on your top priorities current projects? Jason?

Jason K.: First off, thanks for the warm welcome, everyone. This my first time attending. I was one of the few who entered not formally launched or chartered. I'm new to the role. Our enterprise and application architecture team had been to a degree without a director here for probably 6-8 months, and I've been tasked with reimagining it and standing it back up.

Top priority in calendar 2023 is doing just that, reimagining the role. We're starting a major transformation in terms of our ERP that's going to take a long time. I think as with everyone here, APIs and more customer-centric technologies are bubbling up and we have a lot of robust but legacy tech. We need a refresh of our tech strategy, and really how we are going to manage the lifecycle of our technology. All of those things are circling around as I'm thinking about what enterprise architecture looks like and kicking that off in 2023.

Topic: AI/ML maturity

Moderator: We had a follow-up question in the chat asking Dave about the strategy for including AI and machine learning in the EA strategy. Is that stuff mature enough these days to really become so significant and meaningful? Or is it still a buzz phrase?

David M.: I think from our position there's enough work that's been done to give us a toe hold, a starting point that we can work from. The advances in OpenAI and ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot are very intriguing and we think can bring some value. We've had some internal data science projects around AI / ML going on for a couple of years and have actually gotten some useful value out of that in terms of prediction engines and that kind of thing around our product space.

I think there's enough meat there on the bone now to get started. I guess we've been dabbling in it for 2-3 years now. But we're looking to really focus a larger initiative on that this year. EA has been charged with, if not getting us to a strategy we can execute on this year at least defining that strategy for next year.

Anton C.: Thoughts on the AI/ML space: I've been working with the data science group for a number of years and lead our Platform Architecture team. What I have discovered is that our data governance and data quality needs significant work before we can be in a place to realize a return on enterprise tools that promise ML based anomaly detection and the ontology framework needed to use ChatOps effectively.

David M.: Replying to "Thoughts on the AI/M..." Anton, I agree completely, and that's been the reason we've not pushed harder before now. We have a very active Data Governance program in place now (started when EA was started) that is getting us to the point we can start taking it more seriously now.

Anton C.: Replying to "Thoughts on the AI/M..." Have you looked into Data Mesh Architecture?

David M.: Replying to "Thoughts on the AI/M..." Our Data Science group has. EA has not had the opportunity yet. We're leveraging expertise and resources in other areas to help us move those things forward. Our EA team is currently understaffed and overtaxed to take ownership of everything, so we're taking more of a sponsorship approach to some of these things. We also are adopting Azure Data Lake with what we're calling an enterprise data fabric that abstracts and virtualizes access to enterprise data assets.

Anton C.: Replying to "Thoughts on the AI/M..." Azure has a very good footing in the AI space. I helped build a very mature DevOps platform, and as I started to moving to the next gen of automation and SRE / AIOps, I started working with Turbonomic (owned by IBM) and saw that they were charging a very high price for something that wouldn't totally work for us until we got our own data quality and capability domain organization under control.

Topic: Integrating a new EA team into existing processes

Moderator: Okay, thank you for clarifying that. Let's move on. Can others share suggestions or recommendations on maturing a new EA team and integrating that function into other more mature service delivery and project development processes? Steve, would you like to elaborate?

Steve S.: Hi, everyone. Thanks for hosting. We've gone down the road of EA in the past and had an enterprise architecture team that really was one of those Ivory Tower type of teams that did not really integrate well with the development community, or actually with the project community.
We've gone in a different direction and reimagined that enterprise architecture team as a distributed team with architects that sit within our development teams. As we restart that we have a very mature project process. Just looking to see how we plug enterprise architecture into that function. We've made some really good gains so far in terms of standardization of integrations.

For instance, as we put out RFPs to vendors, we have a very clear, and EA helps contribute to that very clear integration standards depending on what domain of technology they're coming in on. I'm looking for thoughts on how we mature it.

I would add that our EA team is responsible for other things. Among that is custom development, so they do get pulled in a lot of firefighting directions. I think that comment was made earlier. They get pulled in a lot. Hey, we need this done quickly, or this is on fire. Can you guys come and help with that? Just looking for suggestions on how we plug in a new team into a real mature process.

Janet K.: Shared training. Even if it's a familiar topic, getting everyone using the same language and having a shared experience can help mature a team.

Marc K.: The model that we're following is we are partnering up with experts in the Microsoft Azure space. Again, multiple years of gold partnership with Microsoft. We're essentially helping them, or if they're helping us to come in and set up the reference architecture, all the pipelines, all the plumbing if you will, to get things stood up and to help coach our team with that.

As we go through that process and we use their developers, we will be adding on to our team with the eventual goal of becoming independent from that contractor. That's the model that we use. We're really leveraging experts out there that have cut their teeth on projects like this and learned the hard way we don't want to reinvent the wheel. Others of have done similar things and that's the model that we're following.

Moderator: That's a real partnership that you've struck with Microsoft. How is it going?

Marc K.: It's a gold partner with Microsoft. It's not Microsoft themselves, but really what these firms bring is a deep bench. If we need somebody that can help us with networking, if we need someone that can help us with AI machine learning, they can just tap those individuals on their bench to help us out, to get us up to speed. Once we've sort of stabilized, then we can eventually wean off and become independent with them.

Moderator: Sounds like a good way to go, if you can afford it, right? Thank you for that Marc.

Dave T.: We've been at this for three years in our EA roadmap. We noticed that we we there's two different struggles. We have an internal one within our IS department and an external one getting a established outside of IS. Internally, there's the stick, governance. But what's been more successful for us is actually sharing architectural responsibilities within IS and monitoring and maintaining reporting on the quality of those architectural artifacts that we are sharing that responsibility for people to produce.

That's really managed to get us some toe holds with those development teams and have meaningful discussions about when decisions are being made, and looking at a bit more of a longer timeline than a developer thinks about.

Then from an external perspective, we really struggled getting EA considered in planning and what have you. Find your allies would be my advice. For us, it was within a business unit, but also across our enterprise and into different companies.

I recently found an ally in our life company that we're working on, and what's worked with those allies is developing a shared artifact. For us that was a business capability model and developing a view of that business capability health that's specific to that business unit or that organization. That's really worked for us.

Mike R.: Our architecture team has been in place for about 4 ½ years, and we've seen major growth in the last 12-18 months around demand for services related to road-mapping and strategy. It's similar to what Dave mentioned, where we looked at business capabilities and business functions, modeled the existing application landscape around those, applied the projects that might be in flight, then potential projects to those models to map out a current state and a future state architecture for the groups to help them set a scope.

Then make sure they understood what the breadth of the solution delivery they were talking about really was, and how the executives articulate the changes that were going to be coming into the business based on the applications that they were moving around. It's been very application-based language. But our business speaks that language.

I'd say along with that, one of our successes has been understanding our current state and having that view of it's in the environment where it is, how the data moves in and out of that system. Nobody else has that. That's put a lot of demand on our team to help articulate the future of how this going to work when SAP comes in or the HR system gets moved out and the new HR system comes in.

Those have been pretty successful for us, and we're getting more demand around that kind of product delivery. We don't focus on governance, and we let the Solution Architects in our IT teams do a lot of the solutioning. We've tried to stay out of that space so as not to conflict with the IT teams as much.

Elisa C.: I would say for us, we've been on our EA journey for probably 10+ years now and it's evolved over time. I'm happy to report we never had Ivory Tower EA, but basically how it started up was we had people very well-respected in our company leading the charge. These were deep subject matter experts, incredibly intelligent people. It was people who were in a position of power to some degree, and they stayed in touch with the organization.

I would say the first 5-6 years it was very operationally-focused. It was a lot of firefighting, a lot of getting involved in really heavy initiatives. I would say by building that credibility that has led us to over time morphing to more strategic focus. Not to say we still don't have firefighting. But I would say our percentages have flipped.

We decentralized architecture. Similar to what the last person just said, we let the Solution Architects in - we call them verticals / horizontals, just different departments in IT, and they're responsible for it. We're responsible for the standards. The overall practice, the frameworks. We loosely use TOGAF. We have our architecture center of excellence.

Our group leads that in our Architecture Review Board, and we do roadmaps in more of forward-looking technology. But the day-to-day is very decentralized, and we're used as like a lifeline. We try to keep that pushed out, if that makes sense.

Moderator: So where does EA reside in the organization?

Elisa C.: We're in IT, and we actually report up through the PMO. We've migrated over the years. At one point we were in governance. It just kind of depends, really. Someone talked about internal focus versus external. We have found there is no appetite for external to it focus for us. We just focus on the value internal to IT.

That's not to say we don't have some conversations, but I would say from an overall corporate strategy, IT is just not viewed as a strategic business partner in that regard. We don't try to push for that. We would rather be invited to the table than try to fight for a seat at that table.

Mark N.: Elisa, I'd be very interested in your structure / approach. We currently centralized EA and SA with a federated vision. At the same time, we are driving modernization of our ecosystem so that is an expectation of architecture being "the tip of the spear".

Dave T.: We're along side the PMO with both reporting up to the same VP within IS.

Topic: Data mesh architecture

Moderator: There was a sidebar conversation going on about data mesh architecture. I had not heard that phrase before. Can someone talk more about that?

Anton C.: I can speak to it. Data mesh is a new architecture that talks about looking at data and your data endpoints from like an API layer for all of your domains, a typical capability domain. So you define out your capability domains in the way that EA thinks about them.

Then you have data contracts between each of those domains. They typically take the form of APIs. It helps the idea of analytical data streaming in and out of your app areas and not just your data warehouse. It's kind of a federation of analytical data. We still have a bit of this problem.

In our data science group we have all of the data engineers who are managing all of our pipelines for ML and the data science groups and all of our analytical stuff coming through. It's a bottleneck, a single bottleneck, and it's hard to keep people in that space with specific tool sets.

The idea is, if we can make generalist developers have easier access to the technologies, which would be Python, REST APIs, and such, make that closer to their areas and the domains as opposed to centrally managing it locally in a data engineering group, we could actually realize better quality and better streaming across the organization as opposed to having it all in a single place.

Moderator: Thank you, Anton. Appreciate it. Well, Steve, you've got some good info. Any follow-up before we move on?

Steve S.: I appreciate it, and it's validating to hear. We're doing some of those things. Some of the shared successes in picking out partners and moving that forward. I do appreciate the feedback, and it's good to hear that we're all vaguely on that same track.

Topic: Centralized vs. Decentralized EA

Moderator: Okay, let's move on. Does your EA team operate as a centralized team, a decentralized team, or a hybrid of both? What factors led you to that approach? I did a poll on this asking how your EA team operates. Once we get a majority of you responding I'll show the results.

Poll: How does your EA team operate?

Option	Result	Percent
Centralized	(12/22)	55%
Decentralized	(2/22)	9%
Hybrid	(8/22)	36%
Unknown	(0/22)	0%
N/A	(0/22)	0%
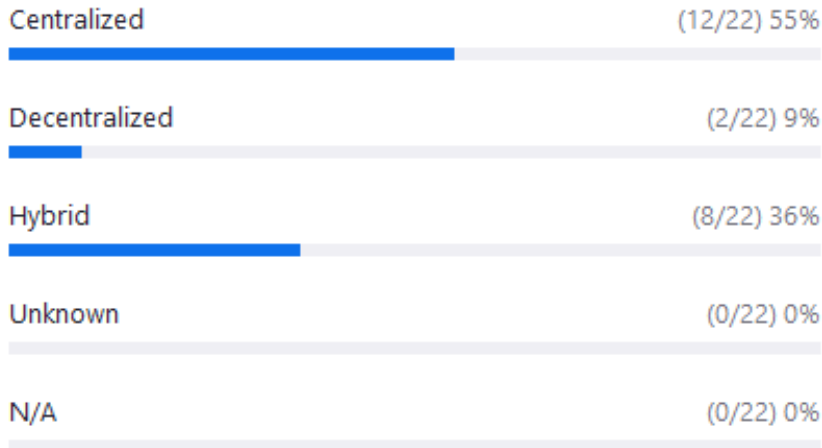
Moderator: Dave, do you want to explain the question?

David M.: Sure, I'll try to keep it short. I know we only have 55 minutes and I could talk about this stuff for hours. As we started out our EA program, I'm doing some research. By the way, our prior architecture team was an applications architecture team, mainly applications and integration architecture. And I led that team.

I graduated into this EA role, and we talked about how were going to staff it. Some of the conversations so far touched on centralized versus decentralized and Ivory Tower and that sort of thing. We're very conscious of those concepts. What we had learned through my research is that when you're starting out you're very immature. It's best to be centralized. As you gain maturity, you decentralize, and become hybrid.

When you get to a point of maturity where you can just have a core like a chief architect, maybe a couple of supporting staff, then the rest of it's decentralized. I was just curious what the rest of your journeys have been. And when you do have those dispersed architects, is there any sort of accountability to EA? Is there a dotted line reporting structure? How do you make sure that your solutions, architects, your hands-on architects, and the other teams are remaining aligned with that core EA team and vision?

Moderator: How did you respond to the poll, Dave?

David M.: I responded centralized because we're still centralized, but we just opened some positions to staff Solutions Architects in other areas. That's not to say we don't already have some other engineers that are practicing solution architecture, but formally we're centralized today.

Moderator: A little over half of the respondents are centralized. There's a quite a few that are hybrid, though.

David M.: That's what we're trying to get to, right? On the reporting structure, I'm curious to hear how some of the others that have been decentralizing or doing the accountability part of that.

Dave T.: I answered decentralized, but could have answered hybrid. The SAs are decentralized. EA is centralized.

Elisa C.: I can jump in. We don't have any, I would say, dotted lines. It's just sort of accepted in our organization that EA has overall responsibility for making sure we have software rationalization, any major technology decisions or investments that we're really kind of that end group. But we try to push out a lot of the decision-making.

We have architects embedded specifically, because we say look, you're closest to the business. You understand the day-to-day. EA can't be the know-all. I'm trying to think, there's a team of four of us. There's three of us and then a Director. We're a very, very small team. We just don't have capacity to get plugged into everything.

We try to position it as we get involved in the biggest or the most complicated things and we try to let the day-to-day things just be handled through the group and drive accountability through those groups versus trying to centralize too much of that.

Moderator: There's been a request from Mark to get with you offline to talk a little bit more about your structure. Would that be okay if we arrange that?

Elisa C.: Yeah. We have found too, just in one-off conversations, whether at NOREX events, it very much is dependent on your company, your IT Department, and I would say general sentiment, which I know stinks as an answer. But I think it really does just depend.

Moderator: We're going to want to get you at that Chicago session to do a short presentation this. We'll be following up with you. I think you'd be excellent, especially with the maturity level you folks have.

Elisa C.: It's been a long time. It's been an evolution.

Arturo S.: Has anyone experienced EA reorganization as a result of implementing SAFe?

Topic: SAFe usage

Moderator: Look forward to that call. Here's a question from Arturo. Has anyone experienced EA reorganization as a result of implementing SAFe? Tell me again what SAFe is an acronym.

Arturo S.: It's just a different way of doing things of operating on an Agile framework where instead of projects, we have products. It does change the role of architecture. We are in the process of going into that direction, and I like to know if anybody has already going through that kind of exercise. And what was the impact on the EA?

Anton C.: Yes, scaled Agile framework. I was at a health plan several years ago, and we implemented SAFe. We saw amazing improvements to our IT work output to the business initially, but it tapered off over time. My takeaway from that is that the process of SAFe can take you a long way, but technical excellence is what gets you to the next level after an initial move to domain products.

Topic: Managing EA in an innovative, rapid adoption environment

Moderator: I'm actually going to jump ahead to this topic which I think fits here. How are you managing standards, guidelines, and patterns against the new normal for innovation, agility, and rapid adoption of emerging technology? I think that ties into this.

Arturo S.: It does, thank you.

David M.: I would just offer that our EA team is charged with rolling out and proposing a more formalized, consistent approach to Agile as well as DevOps. We are cherry-picking some concepts from SAFe that we think add value, including the product versus project approach. But we're not formally adopting SAFe. And to this point we've not had it impact our organization. EA is just kind of driving it right now.

Janet K.: The value prop should remain the same regardless of the delivery methodology, building and maintaining an architecture repository, setting standards, and helping to framework in terms of strategic priorities

Topic: Agile considerations

Moderator: Any other thoughts on the SAFe approach? How about Agile in general? How are others providing value to Agile development groups? What are the levels and points of interaction? I'm certain, given the fact that this our Select group, there's a lot of Agile going on. Probably a lot of DevOps going on too. Any thoughts on how EA can support those efforts and integrate those efforts?

Jason K.: As I'm standing up the team, I've been pulled into a lot of act as architect discussions inside for projects and efforts. Something that I think we're going to lean into quite heavily is EA is a place for your design patterns. EA is a place for shrinking the onboarding gap for new efforts from weeks to days or hours.

I think in an Agile world where it's 2-3 weeks to complete a deliverable, the shortest path to that "minimum viable product" is EA can help decrease the starting point time. How long does it take to start working on value-add activities? I know there's a strong desire organizationally for that. I've been doing that as kind of the current solo practitioner in the team.

Dave T.: A couple of things. One is we're sort of giving direction through strategies and roadmaps about where we see things going, but we can't be involved in every decision. Somebody else made that point. What we have is a set of principles that we expect people to follow.

What immediately followed after that was a realization that we need to establish decision rights when it comes to those significant decisions those Agile teams are making. A formal decision request where EA is involved for those large-scale decisions with long-term impacts. Those are the ways that we're trying to stay involved, and getting those correct points of interaction. It's not perfect.

Quite often a decision will come to us with two weeks notice before they go live, and the decision was essentially made. Now they're just trying to document things. That's where we're at right now. I'd love to hear if there's any other advice on how to improve that.

Anton C.: One of the nice things about SAFe is it gives you those 10-week program increments. Currently we don't use a SAFe model. It's just a general Agile model, where we have a go-to-market team and platform infrastructure team, and we have different groups that work in Agile teams. In a way, we're more nimble than a SAFe environment. It's less structured. There's more innovation that happens.

However, Agile tends to focus on those two weeks or four weeks or whatever. You lose the strategic opportunities that something like a structured SAFe will give you, or a place for EA. SAFe gives you a place for architects and ease to work. If you don't have that, and you just move everybody to individual Agile teams. Architecture and larger vision is left to management, and it becomes an organizational problem as opposed to a technical architectural issue at the strategy level.

Dave K.: Thanks for the input, Anton.

Topic: Training recommendations

Moderator: I've backed up to a topic regarding staffing, training, etc. Dave is asking what training methods were most effective in starting a new EA team staffed by former domain architects or engineers within the company. Did you let them find their way over time, force them to learn, or certify on a framework, etc.? Jump in, Dave.

David M.: We've been on this journey for about two years. One of the things we've struggled with, I have four architects on my staff that are trying to balance the firefighting with the strategic forward looking. We have one guy on the team who has former EA experience, and he was certified on TOGAF.

He's really been trying to push the rest of the team to get certified on TOGAF. But it's a big lift for them given their bandwidth. I'm just curious how your EA team matured with the training and the information around the EA. What's the best way to approach that?

Janet K.: Our team faced that a few years ago. We had a group of mostly technical folks, people who had domain expertise. The way we wound up helping everybody was doing group training focused on business architecture, so that helped bring the conversation up to get people out of their own silos in terms of technology and thinking about broad ways to bring value to the organization from a business point of view.

There was a course through, EA Learning, I think it was. I can get the instructor's name. I think it was called the Applied Business Architecture course. Highly valuable, incredibly valuable. I think it gave enough structure and experience to everybody who had more of a technical focus to give them a common language for business architecture that it was really helpful for our organization.

Elisa C.: We're pretty lucky in that the person who started our EA practice had actually started an EA practice at much larger company. I would say we had very sharp technical people. I would say we found our way to some degree over time, although this person who started our practice had been loosely based in TOGAF.

We've always taken that approach where we say look, TOGAF can be a very big, bulky, comprehensive framework. We like to use it as a guideline, but not try to take it as a Bible. That being said, after a couple of years we got a group together and we did go through the formal TOGAF certification process for that group. Actually, we just finished round two for another group a couple of months ago.

Generally speaking, I think people like it. However, if you don't have people in the group with context to basically say, how would you pare this down? What pieces or parts are we really going to use? Is this more of an academic exercise versus an applied? That's where it can get really confusing. I feel like that's just where sometimes straight training doesn't really help, because you need to adapt it for your company and for your organization.

Mike R.: I would agree with a lot of what Janet and Elisa said. We focused on business modeling as our starting point for the Enterprise Architecture team. I came from a previous organization that use ArchiMate language as our modeling language, which is loosely based on TOGAF. We've had really good success with it from a business and application modeling perspective. It gives us the view, I'll

say 10,000 feet and higher, that our leadership and executives can comprehend, and it doesn't get us into the weeds.

The challenge with the modeling language is finding that right depth or height of detail to fly at when you're describing a business capability and business function so that it's not super granular that you have the Nth level of detail. It's also not so broad that it could mean multiple things. There's been a lot of debate around that. But that's where we started with ArchiMate and the framework around that. Then we've put a modeling tool around that which is really helped us as well.

Moderator: Thanks for that. Any follow-up, Dave?

David M.: All good information. Thank you.

Topic: Incorporating security into EA

Moderator: Alright, let's jump to a couple of security topics. Arturo is asking what techniques are recommended to assess cybersecurity for an architecture? Then Steve asks has Zero Trust concepts continued to evolve as your organization and are you taking any action in this space? If so, what have you done? And how has data governance played a part involving security?

Anybody have advice for Arturo? I imagine security has got to be cooked into just about everything. Elisa?

Elisa C.: Can he expand just a little bit? I know how to answer for our company. I just don't know if it's going to be the right context.

Arturo S.: We typically work with cybersecurity from the very early stages when we start to find and make an initial assessment of the solution in general. Then when we start working on the architecture we get input on potential risks and renewal is the solution may offer. The idea is that they help us guidelines for the designers to address those as well.

Within the design itself, cybersecurity is again supporting the design and making sure that it works nicely at that point they do come some more detailed analysis sometimes through threat modeling. It works okay. We have some problems with the subjectivity in some of these assessments both from the architecture and the design perspective. I wanted to see if anybody has some ideas to eliminate that subjectivity. Really, that's the bottom line.

Elisa C.: I feel like we do something similar where we assess architecture. We cover all of our bases, like are we securing data at rest, in motion data classification? Do you have multiple layers of security there? Networking - is it more of the Zero Trust network? Is it wide open? The devices and all that? I would say we do pretty well up front, but we don't do a lot of external exposure type things.

We're very internally focused. I would say generally speaking, as part of a project we do some sort of pen testing where they come in and try to find threats then say, okay, in order for you to go ahead you need to remediate this. I would say you probably don't have as much of the subjectivity embedded in our processes. Sorry, not sure if that helped.

Arturo S.: Yeah, it does. It does. Thank you.

Steven S.: One of the things we found valuable on our side is the security architecture team that actually lives in the cybersecurity space has a set of architects that goes through a permitting process

where a lot of the stuff that was just mentioned, data at rest, encryption, Zero Trust, they have an opportunity to weigh in before anything's built. Then again before anything goes live. So it is a way for not the enterprise level necessarily to have input but the targeted security architects themselves.

Dave T.: Elise, agreed. Regarding TOGAF, we've all taken the training. It's very heavy though and we've whittled it down to what's meaningful to us. However, we do feel challenged by Agile and are looking to streamline further.

Elisa C.: I will say we haven't figured out Agile. Our company is still primarily Waterfall based or some combo of Waterfall with some Agile sprinkled in.

Mark N.: Mike, we are on the verge of implementing an EA tool with ArchiMate. Would love to follow up on that.

Jason S.: One of the bigger challenges for those attempting Agile is that they often add sprints and call it Agile. That's just faster Waterfalls, or ripples.

Mike R.: Mark, happy to connect on a broader conversation on the tool topic.

Mark N.: 👍

Topic: Zero-trust

Moderator: The other security topic involved zero-trust. What's your definition of that?

Steven S.: Yeah. Thank you, this is my first time here, and this a very great experience. But what we're finding is having an organization to find Zero Trust for their organization has been critical, especially as the industry vendors in particular are really good at using that buzzword to sell products or services.

We are entering into what I would maybe call like a Zero Trust journey in a way to get leadership understanding the concepts and how they might impact down into the different strategies going forward. The question is meant to be a little bit vague in the sense of what others are doing in this space.

I put a little bit of a teaser out there, because we're finding that in order to have the conversations or organically talking a lot about data governance and data stewards so that we're focused on the most valuable assets at the company and not trying to do Zero Trust concepts for every piece of data across the entire organization.

Moderator: Priorities. Anybody else down the road a ways on Zero Trust and how it fits into your EA practice?

Arturo S.: Yeah, we do have Zero Trust, as Steve was saying. It's more of a principal or goal that we aim for but we might never reach. That's the culture that we want to offer to our solutions.

Elisa C.: This is something we've been interested in. I would say it's evolving. Initially when we started this, the focus was very much on-premise. We still had a very large on-premise data center footprint, and so it was all about principle of least privilege. Like instead of having a wide open network, only the things that need to talk to the other things should really be there.

As we've gone Cloud, that conversation has changed. We're still working through, because we're very much hybrid at this point, but it's still more of that principle of least privilege, which is like only the things that should really be talking to each other should have access.

Arturo S.: There are some concepts within Zero Trust, like a just-in-time authorization and just-in-time authentication and authorizations. Those are very difficult to really implement in the real world. But again, that's some objective to have controls that are close to that. That's probably what works.

David M.: This is how we started in Agile many years ago. We added 30-45 day sprints and claimed to be doing Scrum. Then each team still were able to choose to go that way or not. Some remained entirely Waterfall. Our EA team is now tasked with shoring that up and focusing more on the business involvement, MVPs, shorter sprints, product vs project, etc. and making it consistent across teams.

Buzz W.: It is a continual journey. I liked what Elisa said. We started off here on-prem. Then we started off in Cloud. As things continue to evolve I think that that's going to be the piece that continues, why I say it's a continual journey. We here have started Windows Hello, so now we don't require. Everybody's got multi-factor authentication and all that. At least I hope so.

Everybody's using single sign-on. So then what? Well, now I don't want you to have to type, I want you to be able to use this type of authentication and authorization methods to make sure you are who you are. Well, something else is going to come out and then you're going to move into that. I think it's just a continuous evolution of least privilege. I think that's the key to it.

There are as many definitions out there for Zero Trust as there are corporations. Everybody has their own little twist, their own little understanding of what it means to them. At the end of the day it's all about how do you make sure the person that's trying to get to this data is the person, and they only have access to that specific data or the data they need.

It's a combination of all those things to try and help you become more secure and more difficult for people to pretend they are you. That's where the journey starts. What do you do? Do you start with a PIN? Do you start with a longer password? All those things have evolved. And so now for us, we're Windows Hello, which is working very well for us, and we'll continue the journey, and we'll continue to evolve.

Moderator: We need to do a session on Windows Hello. I think there's a lot of interest in that among the membership. We'll see if we can get that on the calendar. Thank you. Let's start wrapping up here.

Topic: EA tools

Moderator: Final topic involves EA tools. What tools would you recommend? What tools are out there specifically to work with the enterprise architecture?

Dave T.: Highly recommend LeanIX, and it's just enough architecture approach.

Janet K.: For those using ServiceNow, the ins-pi tools have been great!

Elisa C.: We use LeanIX.

Mike R.: We use Bizzdesign.

Sid O.: Yeah, we're using ABACUS at the moment from Avolution. But we're canvassing the alternatives and looking around. We have ServiceNow as well. We're looking at tools that are embedded with ServiceNow, as well as ServiceNow Module and UMT360 and LeanIX and trying to figure out where we're going to go.

The issue that we're struggling with is recording seems to be better in other places than in our current tool. We're trying to figure out what the right method is to actually leverage the information that we've been accumulating over time.

Jason S.: We looked at ins-pi for ServiceNow, but we couldn't diagram what we really needed. Not friendly for creating your own models.

Jason S.: We're rolling out Sparx EA right now.

Elisa C.: LeanIX is lightweight, easy to use / have others use, and reporting capabilities are solid.

David M.: We're a ServiceNow shop but haven't been impressed with the modules we have. Looked at LeanIX and others but haven't invested yet.

Janet K.: The diagram tool on ins-pi leaves things to be desired, but the data model has been incredibly helpful.

Jason S.: LeanIX was one of our finalists but it couldn't integrate properly with ServiceNow.

Mike R.: Archi is a free tool that leverages the ArchiMate language if you want to try the modeling language out before investing.

Dave T.: LeanIX seems to be maturing rapidly. Where they were two years ago and where they are now is impressive.

Jason S.: Importing ServiceNow as XLSX isn't an integration.

Moderator: I'm sure these tools will be a big topic at our EA Workshop coming up in April please make sure your organization is represented. Thanks for all the input, folks, good chat messages. You guys have a great day. Thank you.

End of discussion

Products/Vendors/Technologies shared in this Roundtable 55:

ABACUS
Agile
AI
API
ARB
ArchiMate
Architect
Artifact
Avalution
Azure
Bizzdesign
ChatGPT
Data mesh
Domain
EA
ERP
GitHub
Governance
LeanIX
ML
OpenAI
PMO
SAFe
ServiceNow
Sparx EA
TOGAF
Waterfall
Zero Trust

Appendix: All Poll Results

How do you rank the maturity level of your EA practice:

Very mature	(0/24) 0%
Somewhat mature	(9/24) 38%
Somewhat immature	(9/24) 38%
Very immature	(2/24) 8%
Not formally implemented	(4/24) 17%
Unknown	(0/24) 0%
N/A	(0/24) 0%

How does your EA team operate:

Centralized	(12/22) 55%
Decentralized	(2/22) 9%
Hybrid	(8/22) 36%
Unknown	(0/22) 0%
N/A	(0/22) 0%