

Challenges of Enterprise Architecture:

A Focus on the Transformation!



Barriers for Enterprise Architecture

When working with adaption of concepts and technology then the enterprises will face issues with to identify the proper solutions in the proper pace and adapt the solutions to the context that the enterprise is within. Likewise will the enterprise face the challenge of adoption. The adoption of the concept or technology.

The first outwards part (identification of potential technology or concepts) has to be diffused by networks that the enterprise linked to. This can be either through so called social networks or through meta-organizations that acts on behalf of many different organizations and sent out information to the different actors within their network. In many cases is the technology or for that matter the concept in some form generic, and the enterprise needs to alter it to make it work in their context. The adoption process (Rogers 2005) as it is called will have to impact various activities, processes and structures within the enterprise, and that will take time.

Usually semi-mature enterprises will be working with an assumption that they will have to make use of project and program management to implement the new concepts or technology. However it is quite clear that the transformation itself will not happen as a result of project management, but only as a result of organizational transformation. It is rather common that the various lines of businesses don't adapt and incorporate the various projects right away which leads to the realization of the investments isn't crystallized right away.

It can be concluded that it is the adaption process that fails when enterprises aren't able to incorporate the projects into their activities.

The question then becomes if the concept of project or for that matter program management will be a particular good way of adapting the enterprise to change when the real focus should be on how to adapt to the organizational transformation, and thereby working with change management instead of project management.

Change management is usually a rather difficult discipline to work with, and many enterprises underestimate the resources needed to implement the resources. When working with adaption of concepts and technology, then the enterprises will face issues with identifying the proper solutions in the proper pace and adapt the solutions to the context that the enterprise is within. Likewise will the enterprise face the challenge of adoption the concept or technology.

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Win Over The Opposition

In most literature that has been written about how change management works with the assumption that an enterprise can be unfreezed, moved and refrozen. The initial idea was proposed shortly after the second world war by Kurt Lewin. The assumption was based on that the organization was a tightly coupled social system where the actors thought and acted alike. However this might not be the case for most enterprises if they are slightly more complex than the average entrepreneurial organization. For this Karl Weick introduced the loosely coupled social system. In the paper Weick wrote together with Orton in 1990¹ they state that there are eight forms of loosely coupling among the various components of the enterprise:

- 1) Individuals.
- 2) Subunits.
- 3) Organizations.
- 4) Hierarchies.
- 5) Organizations and Environments.
- 6) Activities.
- 7) Ideas.
- 8) Intentions.

This means that it isn't as easy as Kurt Lewin proposed it was to change enterprises. It is a rather complex processes where the influences of the various connections and couplings with the components of the enterprise. It is very likely that the various components will be influenced by their contexts and thereby by their domains.

It is notable that in every organization there will be different forms of coupling among the various components and some will be more tightly integrated than other. Therefore should the eight forms of coupling be understood as a stereotyped view that needs to be customized. In his book "managing the unexpected" that burning platforms aren't the way forward if the enterprise has to transform for the better, since it is already too late when the burning platform is present.

The Burning Platform?

Therefore should the burning platform be a last solution. The concept of the burning platform was originally published in the Kotter's (1995) article dealing with managing change. The first part of working this particular change approach is creating the burning platform and for that the executives needs to create a crisis so it is apparent that the enterprise needs to change or extinct.

When the burning platform has been established then Kotter works with a framework that contains eight steps that needs to be followed to implement change. All of the steps are useful but the primary problem is that the approach to change is based on Lewin's eight steps for change.

¹ Loosely Coupled Systems: A Reconceptulation.

It might make the framework for change useless but the rest of eight steps might be useful if it is combined with social networks theory and defining how to approach the loosely coupled systems. Likewise does the enterprise need to institutionalize a culture that accepts when the managers and employees makes mistakes and support them when they report when the mistakes happen so the damage of the mistakes are coped with.

In conclusion it is a necessity to handle the change approach by blending it with the views of Rogers, the views of Weick and the view of Kotter. As it is with all generic frameworks it has to be adapted to the individual enterprise otherwise will the benefits not be realized by the enterprise.

Enterprise Architecture and Organizational Transformation

It is needless to say when implementing an Enterprise Architecture program then it will lead to a need for change in the organization and it handles a lot of its activities for working with documentation, communicating and not to forget how to prioritize projects and organize them into programs. The changes in tasks will impact the organization structure, the people who have been employed, and the technology that has been implemented.

If the enterprise already has implemented a functional Enterprise Architecture program then it is likely that the enterprise will have to identify that the various problems that the Enterprise Architecture program has identified and the transformation phase of the critical business processes. The Enterprise Architecture program will lead to further change through iterations and eventually the program will have matured the Enterprise Architecture. When the Enterprise Architecture has matured then a lot of other elements of the enterprise will be influenced by the concept of Enterprise Architecture program.

Projects Don't Transform the Enterprise

Projects alone aren't contributing to change within the enterprise. Usually projects are groups that are established with members from the Line of Business or the Lines of Businesses and when the project has been delivered the project team is usually dissolved and the project is handled over to the line of business. It is in the line of business that the change needs to occur if the business processes have to be changed. Therefore it is the Lines of Business and their ability to adopt the project deliveries that is the key to a more agile enterprise.

Sources

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