

Introduction: When Things Just Work

A well-known commercial from the automobile industry uses the slogan: *Isn't it nice, when things just work?* Doesn't this slogan also apply to the IT support of your business processes, the alignment of your IT infrastructure and applications development to the strategies and goals of your enterprise? Isn't it nice, when IT does exactly what it is supposed to do – and that cost-effectively, smoothly, and elegantly? My proposition is that this is exactly what the mysterious creatures known as IT architects are there to accomplish with their enterprise architecture (EA), i.e. to simply make sure that things work the way they are supposed to, the way the clients, system operators, and users like. I suppose this might elicit some protest on the part of IT professionals. After all, the clients, system operators, customers, and users do not always succeed in making their wishes clear.

Well, this is precisely why the job isn't trivial, for we are successful precisely when we get things to work, for the benefit of the whole, despite a lack of precision in the instructions and despite moving targets! And yet, the meaning of success is determined by the client, not the architect. "Success is defined by the beholder, not the architect!" (MRE2002) I would like to see this statement together with the above slogan from the automobile industry written in big letters in every IT architect's office. The IT architect is a mediator between the client's wish and the technically and economically feasible! This is precisely the nexus at which the IT architect is called upon to support the project manager – by striking up a balance between client wishes, the complexity of the technical implementation and the associated costs for development and operation.

This book is addressed to IT decision makers (CIOs) who face the task of securing and exploiting the overall potential presented by their information systems despite budget constraints. The book focuses on a consideration of the task of establishing governance processes that ensure comprehensive control as one moves from strategic plans to their operational implementation. The book aims to provide a basis for orientation and decision making, to be a management manual for the establishment of an EA process and an architecture management. It aims to outline

how IT governance processes are supported by EA processes that create transparency for decision making and orientation for management tasks.

I wish to disclaim any scientific ambitions or the intention of writing a methodological handbook. Readers who are interested in a more detailed account of the operational implementation of EA may wish to refer to the website for this book, which includes information about an architecture management framework.³ My aim was to write an accessible book on the subject of EA that is fortified with quotes, accounts of real-world experiences, best practices for developing an EA process and general outlines of how to proceed. It is my view that EA and an accompanying architecture management offer great potential that is too often left unexploited.

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Overview: The Essence in a Nutshell

In the course of writing this book, I was often reminded of a quip that appears in a letter from Charlotte von Stein to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: “Dear Friend, please forgive me for this long letter, for I did not have the time to write a short one.” Again and again, I was caught between the temptation to go into the details, to address the inner workings of architecture management, and the need to concentrate on the essentials and uphold my commitment to accessibility.

And now my present concern is to compress the whole thing once again into a summary for impatient readers. This abridged version and the subsequent notes on the contents of the individual chapters are also meant to facilitate the use of the book as a guide by offering quick *topic orientation* and references to the chapters in which the topics are handled in detail.

The central theme and the core statement in a nutshell:

³ www.unternehmensarchitektur.de