

Goals: Doing the Right Things Right

*Before the flight it's opinion,
after the flight it's fact!*

While few of my readers will be content with this familiar quotation from the aviation industry as a response to the issue of the costs and benefits of enterprise architecture (EA), it nonetheless offers us a kernel of truth: only the real flight, i.e. the real establishment of EA, will provide us with the facts we need to evaluate the costs and benefits associated with a particular case.

For this reason I would like to begin my discussion with an examination of the potential benefits or goals pursued by EA management. What can we reasonably expect? What will we need to concentrate on? What are the various fields of action?

**EA creates
transparency.**

When we consider EA from the viewpoint of IT governance, we are primarily concerned with transparency: information as a basis for decision making and control. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, it is more than just a matter of a static construct that is referred to using the term EA. Indeed, it is also a matter of architecture management, organization and continuous processes. It is a matter of the sustained and continuous provision of the kind of information that enables governance. And it is a matter of acting within the context of IT management to bridge the gap between strategic planning and operational implementation.

This is why our sightseeing flight is not only connected to the goal of establishing an overview and transparency. We also want to do very concrete things: optimize our applications environment and infrastructure landscape, align our IT to our business goals, make our risks manageable, etc. This is the subject of the present chapter.

Later, in Chapter 7, I will offer an assessment based on various real flights, including an analysis of the costs of establishing EA, an appraisal of its benefits, and a discussion of what one learns by experience.

3.1

The Potential Benefits of Enterprise Architecture

In what areas are the benefits of EA most evident? The answer to this question can be derived directly from the material that we analyzed in the previous chapter, i.e. the anatomy of an EA, its structure, its components and models. Let's have a look back at the essential features and ask ourselves what benefits we are likely to be able to draw from these.

Target group benefits

EA refers to a collection of plans that represent various aspects (data, functions, networks, etc.) at various levels of detail (planners, agents, designers, etc.) in past, present and future scenarios. When we apply this definition to our example of city and house planning, we see that the above-mentioned plans help the various target groups in different ways:

- The planner recognizes, for instance, building gaps, missing utility installations, overly dense development and inadequate structures. The planner can use this as a basis for developing plans and supervising their implementation.
- The agent recognizes missing infrastructure, insufficient capacity utilization, and disadvantageous cost-benefit ratios.
- The designer is able to draw upon experience with earlier plans, identify potential junctions for utility installations, and create uniform facades.
- The builder recognizes the location of utility installations, has access to baseline dimensions and material lists, and knows the location of load-bearing walls.
- The supplier knows the exact dimensions and the expected functionality of the parts that are to be supplied.

Implementing the right measures . . .

EA therefore helps the planner to identify the right application and infrastructure components, to optimally support the fulfillment of the requirements submitted by the business side and to simultaneously guarantee a smooth functioning IT. This requires balancing new projects aimed at fulfilling technical requirements with needs relating to restructuring and optimization. The EA also helps the agent to optimally plan IT investments, i.e. to identify the fields of action with the best cost-benefit ratios. In short, EA helps one to identify the **right** measures.

. . . at a mini- mal risk . . .

The benefits of EA for the builder arise from the creation of transparency with respect to interfaces and relevant dependen-