

## Enterprise Architecture— Moving to Structure that Delivers

Let us be clear about this, information technology (IT) is the assembly line for knowledge workers. Cars and aeroplanes are made using assembly lines. Recipes are followed and standard tools are used for fast food and cleaning. Whether it is foreign exchange trades, selling real estate or managing life insurance policies, knowledge workers need standard parts and recipes to achieve. What is often missing is a properly designed and functional assembly line to guarantee service delivery.

In telecommunications, banking and finance or transport and logistics, many knowledge worker operations are characterised by an unknown quantity of workers delivering a product of uncertainty quality to variable cost in a flexible timeframe.

Knowledge workers need to be an expert on where information is stored, in what format, how to get it and how to use it. If this was not enough of a challenge, knowledge workers often create multiple instances of a part (information) when they are not required and instead of having the parts come to them, knowledge workers often go collect them one at a time.

I doubt if Henry Ford would let the current assembly line for knowledge workers continue.

As ever, the solution is simple and staring us in the face, we just need to apply the principles to enterprise architecture.

**Technology is a utility that business must have but technology is seldom designed and implemented as a utility.** Humankind has over 200 years of experience in designing utilities. Such infrastructure is characterised by inbuilt redundancy, failover, load bearing capacity, using proven technology and it is kept simple and standardised. Utility infrastructure accommodates change and assumes failure will occur. It brings together the best of breed and many small, standardised components work together

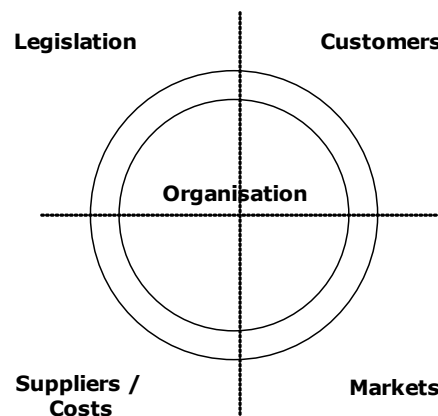
"I doubt if Henry Ford would let the current assembly line for knowledge workers continue for long."

to form an emergent behaviour that delivers an industrial strength utility solution.

By designing IT solutions as a utility, many of the issues around the failings in current enterprise architecture are resolved.

**Like a building, incumbent IT solutions exist for years** and yet the rigorous design and engineering process required for a building is seldom used in enterprise architecture.

Practical experience shows that once implemented, systems such as SAP are seldom discarded, i.e. enterprise architecture is designing a 10 year plus solution. A property is designed in response to four key factors: government legislation, cost, market trends and customer demand. Shouldn't enterprise architecture be driven by these factors and a solution designed accordingly?



Like the design of a building, enterprise architecture should be driven by and meet the needs of competing forces.

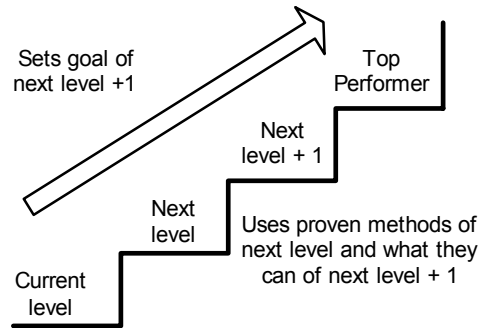
**One size does NOT fit all.** In large enterprises with a diverse range of operations and offerings, each area of business is not only different but is also at different levels of operational performance and positions in the market place.

Enterprise architecture needs to move passed designing for the lowest common denominator and alienating higher performance. It needs to forget about the cutting edge for a small minority and the resulting frustration with the slower adopters. Enterprise architecture needs to leverage this business diversity.

The goal is to make the entire enterprise the top performer. The challenge is the cultural

"maturity of the product and the marketplace is a key driver of enterprise architecture"

change required to achieve it. Let an area of business use the proven methods and expertise of that from the next level of competency and what they can from the one above that. In that way, realistic outcomes are achieved in an optimised way. This approach meets the needs of the business both now and the longer term, as well as providing clear development path and performance criteria for the application and integration of technology.



Those at the higher levels of performance know what is needed from both a business and technology perspective to perform in that market. Use this expertise to drive an optimised enterprise architecture that can be adopted by the business.

Those at the higher levels of technology and performance strive to match those above them. Those at the highest level of sophistication are the ones inventing new systems and new technologies.

By definition, this model for enterprise architecture evolution is also a model for business growth and business performance.

**Market maturity drives enterprise architecture.** The obviousness of this statement is all but absent in current enterprise architecture approaches. Make no mistake; it is market forces and market maturity that determines the required level of technology.

In banking, the bank teller is being replaced by the ATM - a highly standardised operation with proven technology that is ideal for outsourcing, i.e. a mature market offering. Conversely, the initiation of securitised lending for mortgages (notes) required the development of new processes and systems. It was only as the market and the product offering matured, did the required IT solution mature and securitised lending became a standardised industry. Your local deli does not need the same solution as a multi-national like Cisco.

**In our next article** (Enterprise Architecture – Designing the Assembly Line), we will review the critical element of *designing the assembly line for knowledge workers*. In manufacturing we design a product and then implement an assembly line to deliver that product – why should it not be the same for knowledge workers?

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