OrbusSoftware

6 Key Mistakes to Avoid When Creating a **Technology Roadmap**

Introduction

Business Roadmaps, unlike their cartographic counterpart, are always going to be inherently uncertain. Since any prediction of the future is subject to unforeseen events, it's easy to be blindsided when trying to forecast.

This is even worse in technology, where the pace of change means that even a short-term forecast can end up missing major developments. Even if it's not quite on the scale of IBM predicting a "world market for maybe five computers", no business wants to waste the time and effort they've put in to creating a technology roadmap.

With that in mind, it's important that Enterprise Architects can get every other aspect of their roadmaps correct. In this piece, we'll be looking at the most common mistakes that can affect roadmaps, and how to avoid them.

The Most Common Mistakes

01 Poor Quality Data

02 Target Issues

03 Existing Infrastructure Problems

04 Siloed Development

05 Failing to Consider Strategic Alignment

06 Stakeholder Engagement Issues

01

Poor Quality Data

Almost every modern business decision is now driven by data. Roadmaps are no different. Aside from the obvious benefits of improving predictions, technology roadmaps in particular need to know what the current state of the firm is to be able to draw up a starting point. For technologies and applications in particular, architects need to know the lifecycle dates, in order to be able to accurately predict when changes will need to be made.

This is an issue that needs to be solved well in advance of the creation of any roadmap. The easiest way to do this is to maintain good data practices for your application and technology portfolios, with clear ideas of lifecycle dates. Orbus Software's iServer platform solves this through its central repository model that ensures a single source of truth throughout the organization, though even with the right enterprise architecture application there still needs to be the effort to collate and govern data collection.

02

Target Issues

A map's usefulness depends on two elements: knowing where you are, and knowing where you want to be.

It's not different for a technology roadmap – you have to have a target state in mind that your roadmap will lead to. However, many organizations will start the process of a roadmap without being clear on what their target state is. Just establishing the target state can be a large investment of resources and this is only exacerbated if the target is ignored until the roadmap is already underway.

Partly this is an issue that will be solved by proper planning and preparation, but it's also an issue that goes hand in hand with having quality data to work with. If you know in advance which applications or technologies are reaching the end of their lifecycle dates, then establishing which new technologies are required becomes much easier for the organization.

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03

Existing Infrastructure Problems

Technologies and applications don't exist in a vacuum; they depend on having the right infrastructure available, whether simply having enough processing power to run an application, to a network that can handle mass production of thousands of units.

However, organizations won't necessarily have carefully managed their infrastructure over the years, which can make it difficult to get a clear picture of what is possible for a roadmap, as well as determining an accurate starting point.

This is another area where efficient architecture and portfolio management can make a big difference. While enterprise architects might receive the most notice for impactful roadmaps, rationalization initiatives or impact analysis, none of these would be possible without handling the basics.

04

Siloed Development

The technology and applications that an organization uses can have drastic impacts across the business, but there is a risk that roadmaps fail to take a wide range of views and opinions into account. Enterprise Architects and IT departments can easily end up siloed, focusing on their own analysis and ideas and thus fail to represent what the entire business needs.

This can be particularly risky for application roadmaps, where the end users are not kept informed and end up with applications that are ill-suited to their environments.

Avoiding this mistake is fortunately simple. The team involved in the creation of the roadmap has to make sure to gather input and participation from different stakeholders, such as Asset Managers, Technology & Infrastructure Architects, and Strategic Business Units. In doing so, roadmaps will be based on a wide range of views.

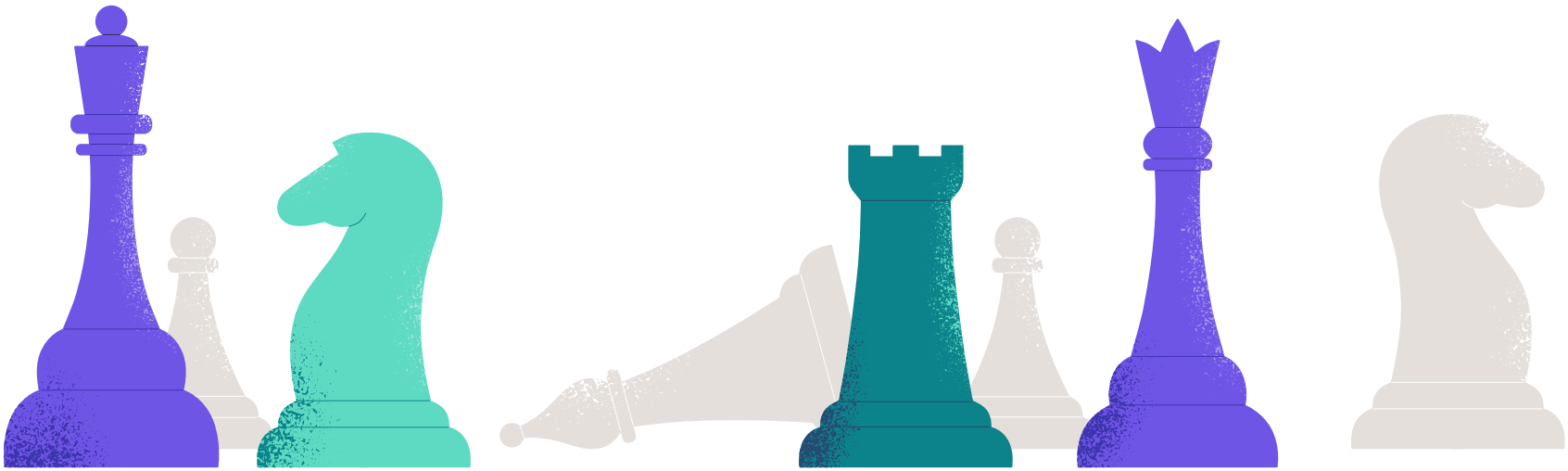
05

Failing to Consider Strategic Alignment

Aside from failing to consider a range of viewpoints, an even greater risk is not considering the business's strategy when creating a roadmap. Roadmaps should have corporate strategies at their foundation which are not IT specific, or risk irrelevance.

This can arise from a similar area as siloed development, with architecture or IT teams being isolated or inward looking. Ultimately roadmaps that don't align with the strategic vision of the firm are worse than nothing – the resources that go in the creation of the roadmap can't be brought back.

Getting this right is more of a challenge than avoiding siloes, however. You can't simply collect a range of stakeholder views and expect to have a good grasp of overarching strategy. This is an area where the experience of the architecture team will matter. Teams that are involved in initiatives such as business strategy modeling will be in a much better state to understand how other parts of the enterprise architecture can fit, whilst those with a narrower selection of tasks will struggle.



06

Stakeholder Engagement Issues

You've gone through this guide and avoided all the major issues with putting together an effective technology roadmap, so there shouldn't be any more problems, right? Unfortunately, even the best roadmap in the world can still be derailed by poor presentation.

Roadmaps, particularly for applications and technologies, can be complicated, confusing documents. The best technology roadmap ever made would be for naught if key, decision-making stakeholders cannot understand it and don't make any changes based on it.

A good roadmap will engage with stakeholders and earn buy-in, which requires attractive, clear presentations. A major advantage of iServer is that it has strong integration with Visio and PowerBI, allowing roadmaps and roadmap data to be created in familiar environments that stakeholders can understand.

What is the failure rate of digital transformation projects?

According to McKinsey's report, **70% of digital transformations are unsuccessful**, primarily because of resistance from teams. 45% of leaders think that their company does not have the right technology for digital transformation adoption, as recorded by PWC (a partner of Orbus Software).

Orbus Partner: pwc

Summary

Roadmaps communicate and influence change, earning buy-in from key stakeholders and providing a plan of action to achieve particular goals, such as the implementation of new applications and technology solutions.

A good roadmap can achieve outsized benefits for an organization, but it's easy to fail to deliver if you don't plan properly. In fact, many of these mistakes emphasize the need for continual, effective enterprise architecture, and not one off or quick fixes.

The OrbusInfinity® Difference:
The Next Generation SaaS Platform for Architecting Your Digital Future

Meeting the requirements of effective technology roadmaps means you'll need the right tool. OrbusInfinity is a market leading SaaS platform for enterprise architecture that is ideally placed to deliver outstanding roadmaps.

Dealing with Data Quality

The central repository of OrbusInfinity provides a single source of truth for managing enterprise content, ensuring accurate, high quality application or technology data.

Determining Current and Target States

Thanks to the central repository, it will always be easy to determine the current state of a portfolio. Target states are also simplified, with OrbusInfinity illustrating relationships to show which technologies will be replaced and showing a view of all the associated physical and logical components.

Handling Infrastructure

OrbusInfinity cannot guarantee strong infrastructure, but it does make maintenance and modernization of infrastructure much simpler. Cloud migration is made less risky, while the ease of application rationalization prevents technical debt from accruing.

The iServer Suite has won Gartner's Peer Insights Customers' Choice for EA Tools for 5 years running, and was named a Leader in the EA Tool space by Forrester. It's the ideal tool for designing and disseminating effective, clear roadmaps that communicate change and provide a plan of action for the future.

Preventing Silos

Stopping data or organization silos requires a clear view of the enterprise and strong collaboration tools, both of which are provided through iServer's portfolio management functions and the integrations with Microsoft Teams and SharePoint.

Strategic Alignment

Ensuring that roadmaps are aligned with business strategy will partly depend on senior stakeholders placing trust in architecture teams, but OrbusInfinity can make this easier. When stakeholders are more engaged and have greater access to EA, it is more likely that EA teams will become more involved with business strategy.

Engaging Stakeholders

Roadmaps created in OrbusInfinity can be quickly and easily delivered to relevant stakeholders. PowerBI reports and Visio templates can illustrate the roadmaps themselves, which are then disseminated through Microsoft Teams and SharePoint, all of which are seamlessly integrated.

Deliver Technology Roadmaps in Your Organization

Book a tailored demo today to find out how OrbusInfinity can empower architects to create roadmaps that inform and guide decision-making within the organization.

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About Orbus Software

Orbus Software is a leading provider of cloud solutions for enterprise transformation, with regional offices in Australia, Poland, the US, and the UK. Its enterprise platforms provide a comprehensive view of applications, systems, and data, allowing leaders to optimize cost, minimize risks, and maintain operational resilience in the face of constant disruption, while supporting them to make more informed and responsible business decisions that consider cost, impact, strategy, and sustainability. Customers are predominantly global blue-chip enterprises and government organizations, including AstraZeneca, CIMB Bank, Investec, Three, and Saab. To learn more, follow Orbus Software on LinkedIn and Twitter.

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