

The 5 EA Advantages That You Should Embrace

Introduction

Enterprise Architecture (EA) is a discipline that can have a wide range of applications. The same architects can spend one project working on modeling business capabilities, before moving to implementing GDPR compliance across the organization.

However, both of these are well known functions of EA.

A firm that does the same activities as every other organization will probably not have any competitive advantages; one of the safest sources of competitive advantage is to find activities which others are not doing or are even aware of. EA is a young discipline with a lot of unexplored uses, and so is ripe for exploitation. This paper will introduce 5 potential functions that many companies do not think of, or are unaware of, illustrating how they can bring new opportunities to your firm.

Customer Journey Mapping



Innovation Management



Project Portfolio Management



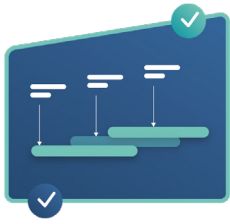
Technology Portfolio Standards Management



IT-Business Management (IT4IT)



Customer Journey Mapping

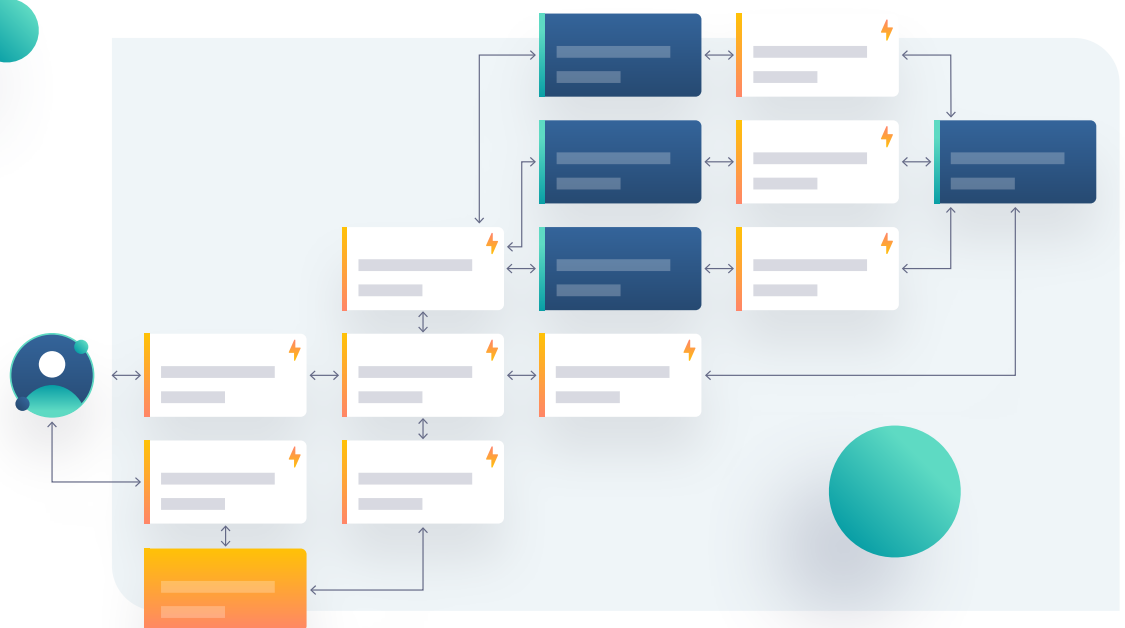


A customer journey map visually represents the experience a customer has with your organization from start to finish. Customer journeys are a very important part of most marketing functions, so it's unsurprising that the more IT focused enterprise architecture does not make wide use of the idea.

However, there is ample room for enterprise architecture tools to greatly improve the process of journey mapping and solve several persistent issues.

If you're unaware of customer journey maps, the benefits are fairly simple to understand. Customer journey maps help in understanding, communicating, and improving the customer experience. They can deliver:

- Better customer satisfaction and retention;
- Improved resource allocation in handling customer requests and queries;
- Product innovation, resulting from the identification of new opportunities from analysis of customer personas and brand interaction;
- Improved profits and growth as a result of better and more efficient client interactions



The principle way that EA tools can help deliver customer journey mapping is through the central repository. A central repository can store and manage all data and artifacts relevant to Customer Journey Mapping initiatives - including touchpoints, Customer Personas and Journey Map diagrams.

Visualization is easy thanks to data structures and dashboards in Power BI, while integration with collaboration tools such as Teams and SharePoint enable Customer Journey insights to be shared across the business.

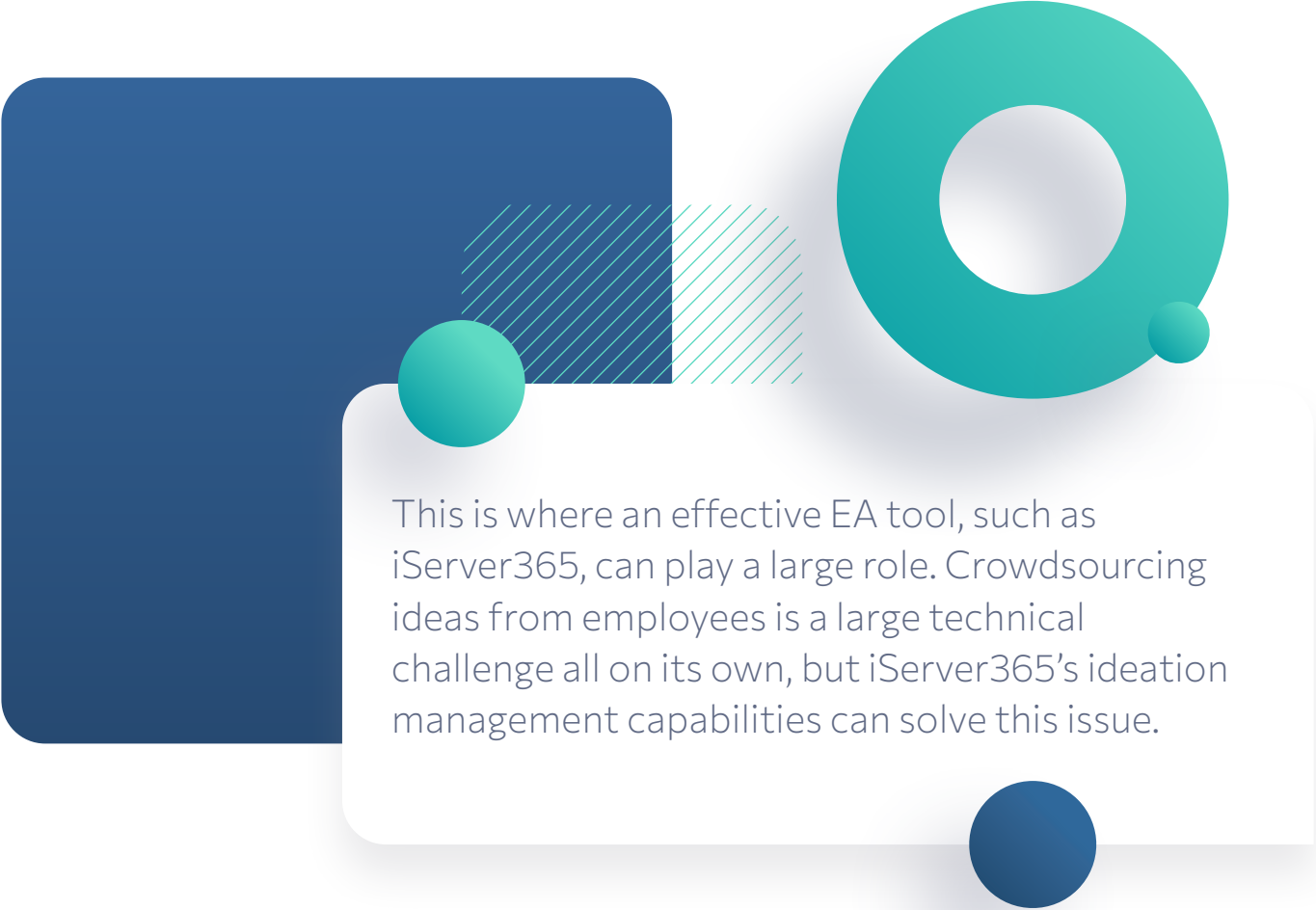
Innovation Management



One of the most widely known lessons of the “Japanization” craze of the 80s and 90s was ‘Kaizen’, the idea of continuous improvement. While western firms used suggestion boxes largely as alternate trash cans, the likes of Toyota or Mitsubishi surged forward driven by actively listening to employee suggestions.

However, as production lines have dwindled and firms have spread across the globe, old ways of collecting employee ideas no longer work so well.

Modern enterprises need a way to collect employee feedback not just on their own specialty but a wide range of business activities, seeking fresh ideas from whatever source they can find.



This is where an effective EA tool, such as iServer365, can play a large role. Crowdsourcing ideas from employees is a large technical challenge all on its own, but iServer365’s ideation management capabilities can solve this issue.

Thanks to its SharePoint collaborative solution, communicating and collating a vast number of employee responses and ideas become simple. A fully integrated centralized repository provides a way to comprehensively link and manage the evolution of ideas into requirements or projects, and to trace execution impacts across the enterprise.

Project Portfolio Management



Strategic Portfolio Management as an aspect of EA is fairly well known, but there are depths to the concept that are still unexplored.

One of these is the management of the project portfolio, which in other words is the proactive prioritization of projects, their benefits and alignment to business strategy. Project Portfolio Management (PPM) provides clear benefits to the organization, by:

- Better customer satisfaction and retention;
- Improved resource allocation in handling customer requests and queries;
- Product innovation, resulting from the identification of new opportunities from analysis of customer personas and brand interaction;
- Improved profits and growth as a result of better and more efficient client interactions

However, PPM often struggles due to several common issues. First, data is often stored across multiple disparate systems. Even when data can be obtained, it often relies on artifacts in PowerPoint and other non-data driven formats. Finally, practitioners often lack the tools with which to effectively communicate to stakeholders and drive decision making.

This is where EA comes in. iServer365 enables the capture of all business transformation data in a common language. Data structures and dashboards in Power BI enable firms to visualize their project portfolios easily. And leading collaboration and communication tools enable the socialization of PPM insights to stakeholders across the business.

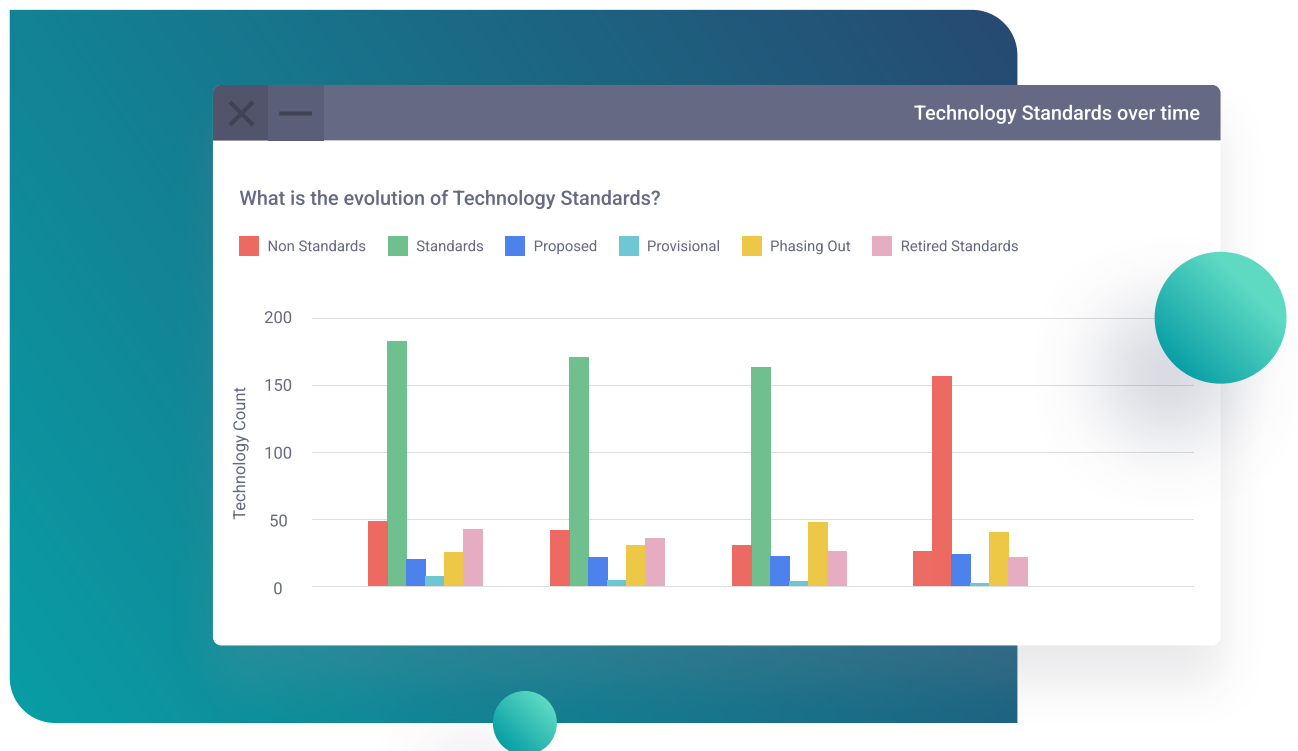




Technology Portfolio Standards Management

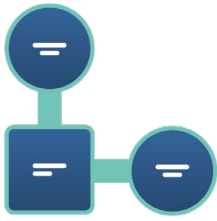
An even more niche aspect of portfolio management is Technology Portfolio Standards Management. This refers to the designation and strategic management of technology products (hardware or software) as enterprise standards; an ongoing process that is often core to the mission of enterprise architects.

Standardization of enterprise IT can bring many benefits to the organization. Lower overall technology spend - through simplification of support processes and training, and improved bargaining power - is a major one. In addition, greater assurance that applications and technologies are fit for purpose helps to prevent future issues.



EA can bring about Technology Portfolio Standards Management in several ways. First, a central repository for storing and managing technology information and product information set up the foundation. Native integrations with other relevant systems – such as ServiceNow – further improve the sourcing of technology data. Tools to enable effective collaboration and governance within the Microsoft365 ecosystem like notification of End of Lifecycle in Microsoft Teams, Standards Review Workflows, Surveys for Standards. That's not to mention the general technology portfolio management advantages, such as dashboards for visualization and analysis, as well as links to the rest of the architecture and impacts that technologies can have.

IT-Business Management (IT4IT)



IT4IT launched with much fanfare from the Open Group, so most architects have probably heard of it already. Nonetheless, the standard has been somewhat neglected by organizations and there is certainly room for a fast mover to take advantage of this.

The standard is focused on the definition, consumption and management of IT services by looking holistically across the entire IT value chain. It takes a value chain approach to provide a model of the functions that IT performs to deliver greater business competitiveness.



Given the relative youth of enterprise architecture as a concept, as well as the size of most enterprises that utilize EA, it is perhaps unsurprising that EA is still a cautious, careful initiative. Rushing into new standards and frameworks will undoubtedly not be the norm, but that does not mean that the likes of IT4IT fail to provide large advantages. Adoption of the IT4IT standard benefits business through:

- Provides a vendor/technology/industry agnostic reference architecture for the IT valuechain.
- It is the only IT standard to take a value chain approach and so can drive continuous improvement across IT services.
- Provides the capability to manage IT as a business across the IT value chain to support IT execution in a more cost effective and agile manner.
- It specifies services and interactions including an information model to support decision making.

iServer365 provides comprehensive support for the IT4IT standard, including reference Architectures, service definitions, interactions and the information model. Support for complementary standards further improves the accessibility of IT4IT. Meanwhile, a full set of decision viewpoints and dashboards address strategic and operational questions for stakeholders, helping to drive reductions in costs while maximizing business value.

In the end this is just a small fraction of the possible use cases for enterprise architecture, and not everyone is going to be useful for every firm. Arguably, the greatest competitive advantages will come from uses that no one has identified yet and are not being done by anyone else. Nevertheless, this guide will hopefully inspire readers to branch out further with their EA initiatives. Orbus' report packs cover over 100 common business use cases, and bespoke dashboards can be created for hundreds more.



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