






The Skills in Demand for Enterprise Architects

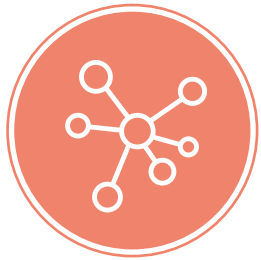




Gartner report on defined architect roles and the possibility of improving effectiveness of EA through careful distribution of different architects. While this is doubtless an interesting topic for architecture departments, this paper will focus on a simpler issue: what are the most demanded skills for architects? What skills can we expect to see become more relevant in the future and what will perhaps fade away?



Technical Skills



Enterprise Architecture

No surprises with the first, enterprise architects are of course expected to have knowledge of enterprise architecture. However, it does not appear that any specific frameworks are in demand, suggesting that enterprises are happy to train architects in their framework of choice, despite the seeming dominance of TOGAF



Integration

Building integration architecture and integrating disparate applications is likely to be just as relevant as enterprise architecture, so again this is not a surprising inclusion.



Roadmaps

An indication of the importance of this particular use case, being able to create roadmaps is by far the most in demand, specific ability for architects to possess. Business Roadmaps can cover a range of topics, but this is most likely focused on technology roadmaps.



Java

The most in-demand of the programming languages, even more than generic “programming” ability. While Java is an extremely widely used language, this may still come as a surprise to some given the lack of emphasis on programming for architects and its specific popularity.



Research

Somewhat more generic, research can of course encompass a huge range of different activities. There is even an argument as to whether this is really a technical skill and not a soft skill, as secondary research is as much about knowing what to look for as it is anything else.



Analytics

As with research, analytics can cover a lot of different applications and is another that is arguably as much a soft skill as a hard skill. The average architect is not going to be performing factor analysis or regressions, after all, but will instead need to pick out patterns and key points from large amounts of data.



Project Management

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Ones to Watch

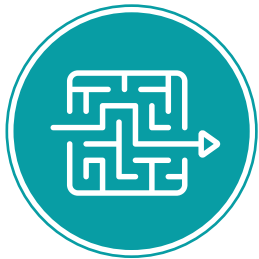


Cloud Skills

Though still relatively niche, having the technical ability to manage cloud platforms and transitions is undoubtedly becoming a more important ability. This is true whether for specific platform experience, such as Oracle Cloud or AWS; knowledge of areas such as platform-as-a-service; or simply experience with cloud architecture.



Soft Skills



Problem Solving,
Communication,
Collaboration,
Leadership

Yes, these are 4 skills and not one, but there seems little point to list these one by one. After all, these 4 skills are highly in demand for every single position, not just architecture positions. Every employer wants good team members that can solve problems, that are dedicated, that can plan well, and so forth.



Creativity

A soft skill that is not so relevant to every position, or an obvious choice for architects, is creativity. A large part of this will link back to problem solving, since coming up with creative solutions will often produce better results than mundane solutions.



Innovation

Like creativity, innovation is not quite so relevant in most positions, but it can be a huge contributor to better problem solving. In addition, the constant change experienced by people dealing with technology almost demands an innovative mindset that quickly adapts to new developments.



Strategy

Typically a key skill for senior management yet not often useful for positions with less responsibility. Enterprise Architecture is the one area that really does need strategic thinking, whether for strategy modeling, transformation initiatives or roadmapping.



Facilitation

Making things easier for people; given that enterprise architecture often acts an enabler for other parts of the organization – IT in particular - it's easy to see how this could be important.



Ones to Watch



Presentation

Straddling the line between soft and hard skills, being able to present well is not often associated with the IT department, but as the need to bring in stakeholders increases, so does the requirement for better presentation skills.



Networking

Often seen as a benefit for the individual more than the firm, but it definitely has its uses to the employer. After all, finding an employee with the range of skills listed above is a lot easier if an architect can just recruit through their network. And staying on top of developments in technology, in frameworks, and even the best EA tools can bring a lot of benefits.



Summary

How should readers use this information? For architects the answer is fairly obvious, work on developing these skills. For enterprises? Partly this can function as a guide as to the kind of enterprise architect that you may be looking for. However, perhaps the best use of this information is to determine the training needed to produce high quality architects from within. After all, these are all highly demanded skills. Anyone that possesses these will have a host of offers to consider and recruiting such an employee will not be easy. If a company can produce their own employees with these skills, that could be a huge competitive advantage.



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