



Who is Responsible for the Enterprise Architecture?

by Roger Evernden

I was put on the spot recently. I was working with a client; they've had an enterprise architecture team for nearly five years. We were going from one meeting room to another, and we were taking the lift to the 10th floor. A very senior exec joined us in the lift – I was introduced – and he asked: *“who owns the enterprise architecture?”*. This was the classic ‘elevator pitch’ situation, and I probably had ten or fifteen seconds at most to answer!

Here, more or less, was my response:

The enterprise architecture exists independently of any ‘ownership’. Even enterprise must have its own unique enterprise architecture, and a key question is therefore: what is the best way to effectively manage architecture? Because the enterprise architecture affects everyone in the organization, the most effective way to govern it is to have a clear definition of the full set of responsibilities – for funding, making decisions, developing and implementing, and moving on for making the best use of it.

The two key points were:

- That the enterprise architecture is not optional; we only have choices about whether we manage it proactively, or whether we manage it.
- That ‘ownership’ is not the best approach EA; it is much better to think about a range of responsibilities and accountabilities.

Although I was caught on the hop, I’ve answered similar calls before, so fortunately I wasn’t totally unprepared. And responsibilities is one of several (eight, according to my research) fundamental factors that are vital for all EA programs. The EA team got a call from the senior exec the following

day, with an invitation to explain how EA could be more effective with a better awareness of all responsibilities.

When we think about responsibilities we get a richer response than merely considering ownership. TOGAF has some useful suggestions. Chapter 47, which describes the Architecture Board, has a whole section (47.2) about Responsibilities. It’s useful to take each of these responsibilities and think about who has each responsibility in your enterprise. For example, TOGAF says that the Architecture Board is responsible for: *“Providing the basis for all decision-making with regard to the architectures”, “Ensuring that the discipline of architecture-based development is adopted”, and “Resolving ambiguities, issues or conflicts that have been escalated”*. If you ask who exactly is involved in each of these tasks, you will get a more complete picture of the various roles that need to collaborate together in order to succeed. Decision-making is rarely the responsibility of the EA team, but presenting alternatives and options to decision-maker, along with the decision-making criteria, is

one of the key responsibilities of architects. Decision-making requires architects to explain the various ways in which these problems might be addressed, and help the actual decision-maker reach a conclusion. But it is no use presenting alternatives and options unless there are others to help with funding, resourcing and realizing them.

TOGAF also has a Principle: *“Principle 3: Information Management is Everybody’s Business”* (which can be found in Section 23.6, Example Set of Architecture Principles). Well this can, and in my opinion should, be extended to cover EA in general. The Enterprise Architecture is

Register today for a free Good e-Learning account to view this resource



Everybody's Business'. If a principle like this is adopted, then it makes it very clear that everyone in the enterprise has their part to play. Obviously some roles are more important than others, but in the final crunch everyone works within the context, constraints and enablements of the current enterprise architecture!

The EA team need to cooperate with a range of other functions and roles across the enterprise. Typically it will be CxO and board level stakeholders who are responsible for strategies and goals; business units or managers who are responsible for day-to-day operations including processes, products and business information; the CIO and IT specialists who are responsible for developing and implementing technologies; and change and project management specialists who are responsible for evolution and transformation. There are many roles and responsibilities, and it is a big mistake to reduce these to 'ownership', which can easily result in a nominal duty or task, without specifying clear and useful governance processes, responsibilities or accountabilities.

A useful technique for defining roles and responsibilities is the Responsibility Assignment Matrix or RACI matrix. RACI stands for:

- **Responsible** – Those who are responsible for achieving a task, there is a clear line of responsibility. Who is responsible for each task? Who is doing this task? Who is participating in this task? Who is doing this task or will be doing this task? Who is working on this task?
- **Accountable** – Those who are responsible for the completion of a deliverable. Who is accountable for each task or deliverable? Who is accountable? Who's head will roll if anything goes wrong? Who is authorized to make decisions?
- **Consulted** – Those who are not directly involved, but who provide inputs and whose opinions are sought. Who are the subject matter experts? Who can explain or describe a situation in detail?

• **Informed** – Those who are affected by outputs or outcomes. People who are kept up-to-date on progress, often on completion of a task or deliverable. Whose work depends on the enterprise architecture? Who are the people who need to be updated of the progress?

This matrix is sometimes extended to become the RASCI matrix. The additional 'S' is for Support. This covers those providing additional resources or those who assist in completing a task; people who help those responsible for a task.

So what is the answer to the question we started out with: Who is responsible for the Enterprise Architecture? It can be summarized in the principle I mentioned earlier: 'The Enterprise Architecture is Everybody's Business'!

Register today for a free Good e-Learning account to view this resource



 **Good e-Learning**

Learn TOGAF with Good e-Learning
www.godelearning.com

