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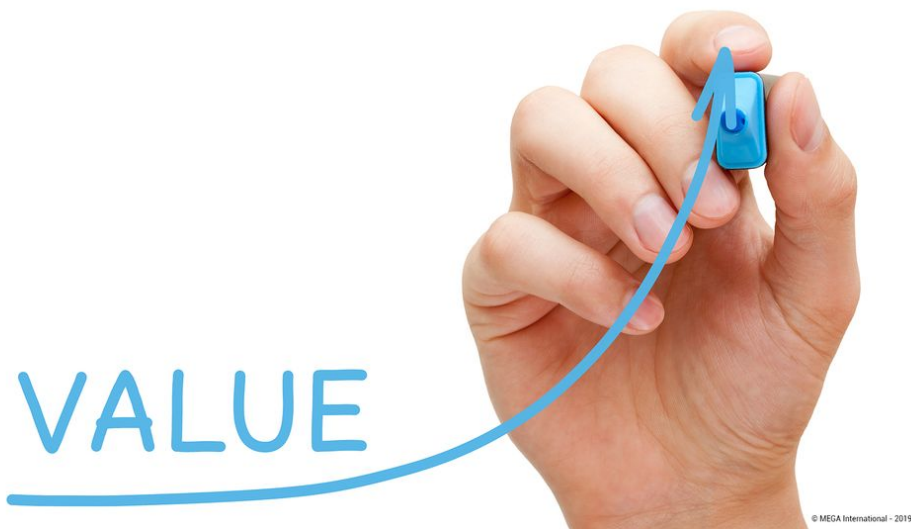
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# The value of Enterprise Architecture in today's age of digital disruption



**Laurie Kelly** ◯
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> What is the state of enterprise architecture today? How has enterprise architecture evolved and what is the perceived value of the practice?

MEGA brought together thought leaders to discuss the evolving role of enterprise architecture in a webinar entitled, "Modernizing

the Role of Enterprise Architecture in the Digital Age." President of JV Strategic Solutions **John Varricchio**, KPMG Enterprise Architecture Leader **Roland Woldt**, and MEGA's own Chief Strategy Officer **Dan Hebda**, discussed several topics. Below is brief recap of the discussion around the state of enterprise architecture today and its perceived value.

## How does the company perceive the value of enterprise architecture?

In our webinar poll, 88% of respondents said they think the business views their enterprise architecture efforts as noisy (low perceived value) or useful (valued, but for too few stakeho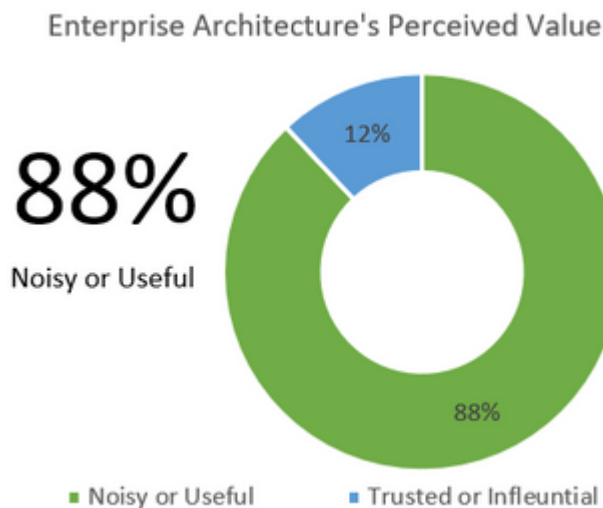lders). Only 12% said trusted (reputation for delivering value) and 0% said influential (business asks enterprise architecture before doing). Given these



results, it appears enterprise architecture practices need help in providing greater value to their organization to **become more influential** in the organization.

## What is the state of enterprise architecture today?

Roland likens the history of enterprise architecture to the history of Business, where businesses are not just in the business of creating/building/selling widgets, they are now part of an integrated value chain and each organization in the company plays a role. "**A company needs to be able to draw alignment from its strategy through the business and then deeper through application, data, technology, people, and so forth. If you can't draw the right conclusions through these layers, how can a company make decisions?**"

Dan agrees that there is an aspect of enterprise architecture that's rising up. It's moving business, it's moving strategy and not all organizations are there yet. Enterprise architecture has had a history of being known as the group that says "no," rather it needs to become the group that is in the "know." Many enterprise architecture practices still of course are heavily involved in IT and will likely continue to do so, but they need to incorporate business architecture strategy.   **The dialogue with the business needs to be one that says, "Here's how you'll achieve the outcome that you're looking for," instead of, "No, you can't,"** because of a certain standard or a certain perspective.  These are some of the key areas where value is derived. It should be that the enterprise architecture practice provides services to the business that are recognized as valuable by the business and that's a key aspect that is often forgotten.

John adds, the enterprise architecture group is in a unique position to add value to the organization. **"I think it really begins at getting a seat at the table and in some cases, driving strategic planning process at their organizations."**  He adds, "We had one client I worked with where we did an EA-led IT strategy and we got the Business and IT folks to agree on common language around business capabilities, identifying what business capability you want to prioritize, which ones do you want to ignore for now, and which ones you'll say, 'Okay, let's get to those later,' and that provided a foundation to enable and accelerate overall business and **IT strategic planning** processes in just about three weeks, which I think breaks the land speed record for creating strategy, and it was all based on business capability, is architecture-led, and I think it's a good example of how organizations can think about architecture in adding value to their organizations."

## How can enterprise architecture add value to their companies around digital disruption?

There are two things, says Roland around how enterprise architecture can help.  "First, everything is faster.  The expectations in delivery are higher on the timeframe, and it's more iterative. So that's the reason people move away from a waterfall approach with the big design upfront, to a more Agile approach without

maybe not knowing exactly what that actually means. Second, from a technology perspective, everything is getting smaller. When you think about 15 years ago, 20 years ago, you had those huge ERP implementations where everybody wanted to standardize all the processes because it had to fit into the SAPs and Oracles of the world. So, companies moved away from the best-of-breed to the more standardized approach. I see the trend going to smaller pockets. You have the single application. You have things like containerization. You go up to a point where you have Content-as-a-Service that's hosted by a cloud provider. Which then on the other side adds obviously a lot of complexity with tons of little things that you have to manage like release management, and then and those things that come together. **So on the one hand, you ask to be faster and deliver in a more Agile and iterative way - while on the other side, the complexity grows because you have millions of little things to manage and that's definitely a shift from the traditional architect to deliver in a modern fashion nowadays."**

"With digital disruption, business architecture (which is part of enterprise architecture) can play a pivotal role in helping the organization to speak along the lines of capabilities," adds Dan. "I think having a common vocabulary between the business, IT, and management helps to make sure everybody's on board and understands what the effect of digital disruption would be, and to assess the current state of capabilities and prioritize where enhancements need to be. When you've got all these little different pieces and all these different aspects, companies can start organizing and better managing them under a business architecture umbrella."

In addition, Dan says he sees a trend where enterprise architecture teams are starting to be asked to pay more attention to the emerging tech, to really look ahead and see what's coming up. **"There are opportunities and risks to this emerging tech. An enterprise architect can assess the impact of what it would take to deploy, how much more would it cost or save, determine whether there are any preconditions, and to what capabilities will this affect.** A company can do a lot when they have business architecture; as it's able to add/connect tracking and managing emerging technology. Then for me, you're assisting with a strategic vision, which has been mentioned a few times and I

strongly agree. I think enterprise architecture aspires to be there and that's where you get towards influential," adds Dan.

John adds, **"Historically the job of enterprise architecture has been 'how do I make the job of IT easier?' Now it's, 'How do I create a digitally enabled business strategy, an operating model to take advantage of all the new and innovative technologies that our organizations can leverage?'** The role of architecture becomes elevated because just to throw out a stat, if you think about it, more than half of the capital spending that's occurring across the economy is in technology the companies are spending. That becomes the largest line out of our own CapEx and so architecture has to play a critical role in how we're managing that innovation budget and innovative technology to get into new and different things."

Roland adds, "I think it's helpful if a company uses a common repository.  I think you can do enterprise architecture with a piece of paper and a pencil, but I think there are more efficient ways of doing it.   There are tools that help you to have that shared repository where the business, technology teams and risk groups can see how their contribution goes in and see how it all connects and contextualizes information."

For additional insights, please view our short videos on **how to increase the perceived value of your enterprise architecture efforts from noisy to influential**.

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