

No way around Enterprise Architecture

You might not be aware but your enterprise has an Enterprise Architecture, so you better start cashing in on its benefits. It would be a big waste not to because every day time and effort is spent on your Enterprise Architecture. And there is no way to stop this, EA is not an option, it is a necessity.

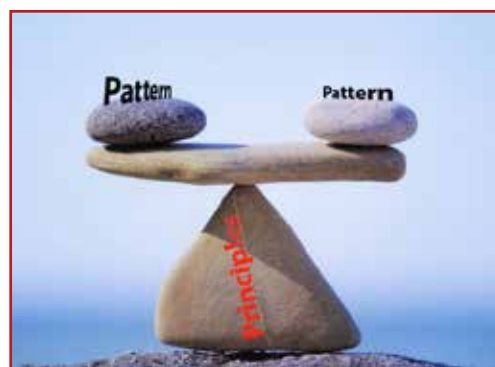


When I look at the things I do, like doing small jobs in my garage or preparing a meal, I follow a certain pattern. Somehow I transformed random activities into fixed patterns. Not because I had to, not because I needed to cooperate with others but just because it is part of my human nature. So, what will happen if you look at multiple people working? Will they all develop their own patterns? Yes, I think they do. Each individual will develop his or her own patterns, patterns which will lead to the expected result. A pattern which will fit personal preferences and which will create a pleasant environment. If a result depends on others, one will automatically adjust their personal pattern to match the pattern of others. Not only because you will experience better results but again because it will create a pleasant environment. So it is in your personal best interest to adjust your pattern a little to match others.

Principles

People need rules and principles because they are what behavioral patterns are

based on. It is in our nature to define principles and follow up on them. Not all of these principles are defined in documents or rule books, most of them are implicit. For example the principle to be eco friendly, not to eat meat, to drive an organization to make profit, to recycle all of your waste etc.. People show the ability to apply these principles to their patterns in a way that fits the context. If a group of people, that has developed patterns based on common principles expands, new members need to adopt these



principles in their own patterns if they want to fit in. In time a pattern might change; principles on the other hand are pretty stable.

Looking at enterprises

When you start your own business you might argue you don't need Enterprise Architecture. Sure, if you want to be able to communicate with your environment (your clients), you need to follow the principles your environment enforces. So you develop patterns which fit the principles of your environment and serve the purpose of your business.



But this is not Enterprise Architecture is it? In time you may need to select partners which can execute supporting tasks. In cooperating with these partners you need to develop new patterns. These patterns have to be patterns both parties agree on and are based on common principles. If your business is growing and more and more people join your enterprise, principles and patterns will be developed without your involvement. When you delegate responsibilities it also means you are delegating the freedom of developing a way to fulfil these responsibilities. In order to accomplish this principles and patterns are developed you will not be concerned about, as long as the delegated tasks are executed and the results are satisfying. Patterns are freely developed and applied between stakeholders involved in transactions to complete your company's tasks. The principles people apply need to follow your existing (enterprise) principles or require approval from you when existing principles are modified.

It continues

What will happen if you don't define your enterprise principles and patterns and make sure people in your enterprise follow them? What if you let your enterprise grow organically? Will your enterprise principles and patterns evolve in a way you can approve of and control? How long would it take before you lost control? Could you stop the development of principles

and patterns you're not happy about? Initially, each interaction between people (or automated interaction for that matter) will develop its own pattern, following circumstantial principles. These create an archipelago of departments within your enterprise, functioning perfectly. The limited size of a department enables generic agreed on principles and the patterns individuals use are compatible in most cases. Even interaction between different departments will develop specific principles and patterns over time. It requires more time to develop interdepartmental patterns because often patterns and principles of one or more departments need to be adjusted to enable interdepartmental communication. And if you're lucky, this all happens in great harmony. Are you lucky?

Translation

Principles and patterns are generic phrases for a variety of elements building an enterprise. Your principles determine why you do things the way you do them. They define your business strategy, the implementation of your business process, the usage of IT systems, the products and services you offer your customers and so on. You will find them everywhere in your organization, documented and non documented principles to guide decision making at all levels. Patterns can be regarded as the best practices you apply. Any enterprise has its standard way of doing things, standard products they use, generic templates, procedures for a customer request, manuals, workflow management, specific materials to apply, a specific way of calculating retail prices, etc.

If you acknowledge principles and patterns do exist in your enterprise you have to ask yourself if you're in control of them? Have you defined a structure of principles which guide your organization by performing their tasks and making business decisions? Have you engineered the patterns so you know

why they're there and what their purpose is? Imagine your market is changing, your customers demand other services. Do you know which patterns and principles to change? More specifically, which strategies, processes, responsibilities, artefacts, applications, timelines or locations are involved? Unfortunately, I've seen to many enterprises that are not in control. If this article made you aware, why don't you initiate a way to get in control of your enterprises principles and patterns? Become an enterprise with a smooth operation after any change in markets or customer demands. Stay a highly effective and efficient business where all activities connect.



Don't hesitate any more, adopt a proven methodology called Applied Enterprise Architecture (AEA). It is all about your Enterprise. You will need a defined enterprise structure we call Architecture, but most importantly you need to be able to apply this knowledge of your enterprise to adjust immediately if you notice a market change or want to provide services and products for new customer demands. AEA focuses on one or more specific enterprise challenges for which we define its architecture in the most basic 'building blocks' we call them primitives. These primitives enable you to explicitly define your problem area, (re)engineer your patterns and let you implement fundamental solutions. All the while your

competitors are still trying to understand what their organization can do to respond to the market change and new customer demands.

Your enterprise does have an architecture, it does have principles and patterns. You better control them.

Jef Bergsma
Enterprise Integration Specialist

j.bergsma@jzz-3d.nl

Applied Enterprise Architecture



Jef Bergsma has a broad experience with developing business solutions and IT. He has an unparalleled understanding of the importance of IT within an enterprise.

We're specialised in applying Enterprise Architecture to solve current integration problems and prepare enterprises for the demanding future.

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