

Five Rules to Make Enterprise Architecture Work for Your Business



EA is :

Painstaking 

Time-consuming 

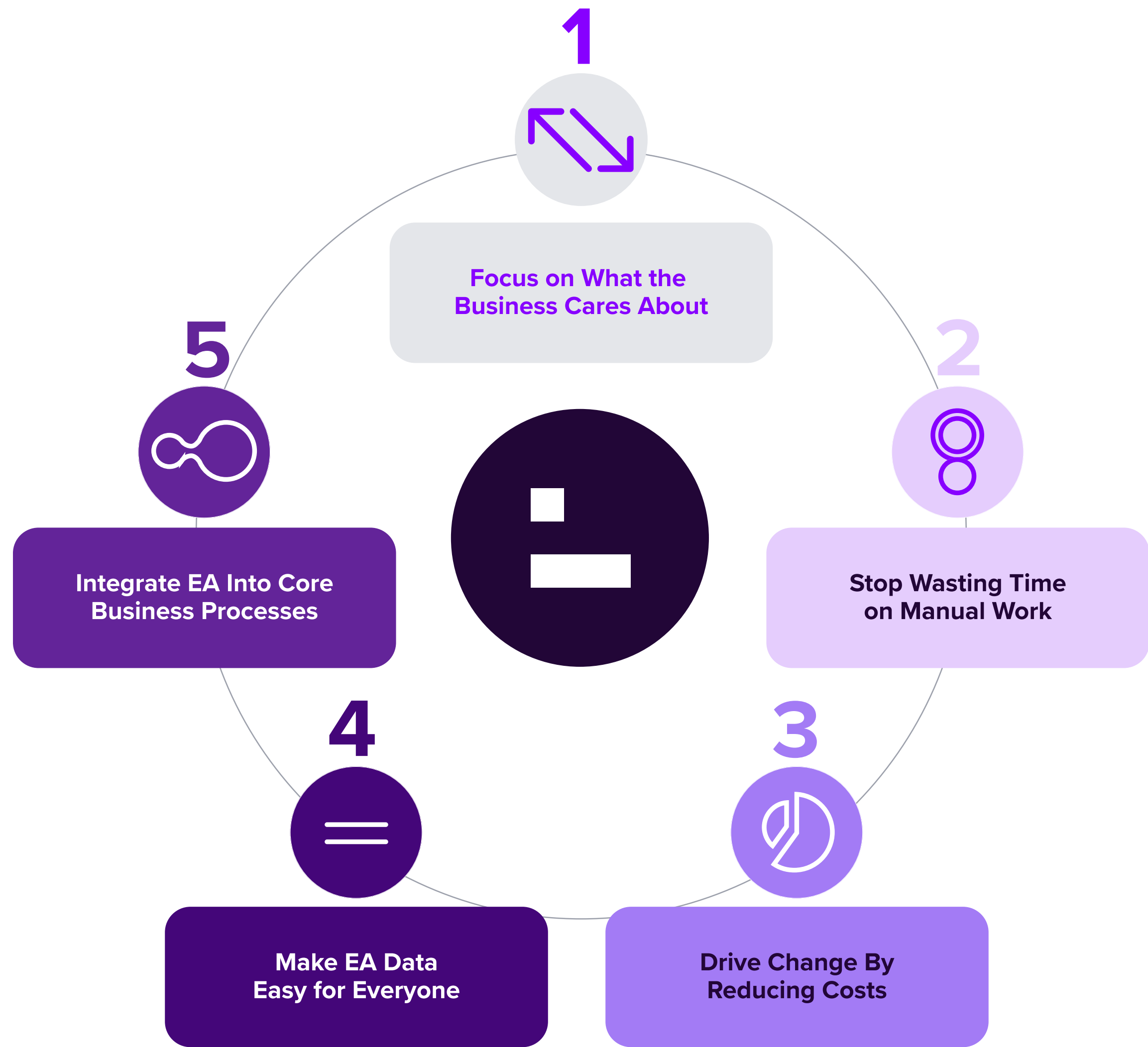
Unappreciated 

But...

It Shouldn't Be.



Five Rules to Make Enterprise Architecture Work for Your Business



We know that EAs are under immense pressure.

You're stuck between a rock and a hard place.

On the one hand, you put your heart into crafting maps and models, following industry standard frameworks down to the last detail. Frameworks matter because they're time-tested approaches from the brightest architectural minds - your best bet for creating what you think the business needs.

On the other hand, these artifacts you pour so much time into haven't caught on with everyone, leaving you thinking about new ways to show just how much EA can bring to the table.

**The way it
used to work,
just doesn't
work anymore**



Not at the speed and scope that is needed. For EA and EAs to thrive and get a seat at the decision-making table, planning change, and guiding strategy, a massive shift is required.

We've distilled this shift into

Five Rules to Make Enterprise Architecture Work for Your Business

We hope these guidelines will help you understand that the struggle many EAs currently face is huge and universal. **And there is a better way.**

Rule 1

Focus on What the Business Cares About



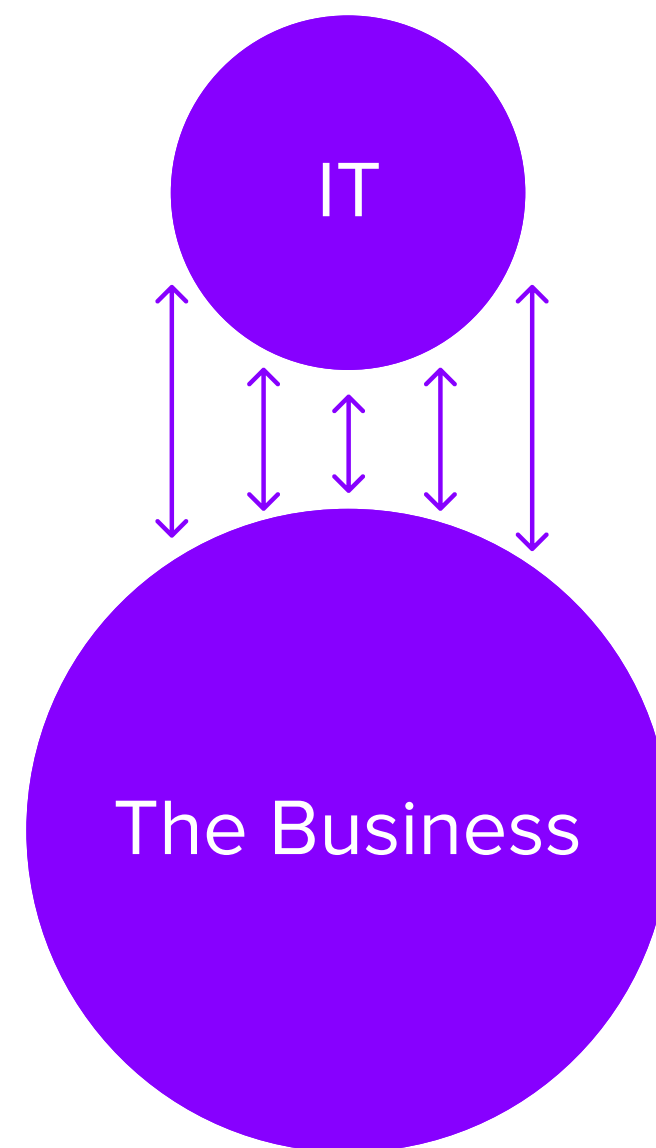
You need to understand 'why' you are creating all these models and which EA deliverables are needed to address the business' concerns.

- Jason Baragry, Chief Architect at Ardoq





Prioritize Understanding Business Needs



Put aside frameworks to talk to your business teams.

WHY TRADITIONAL EA IS PROBLEMATIC:

- Frameworks can be great guidelines, but they often become the ends to an EA team’s goals instead of the means to greater insights for the organization.
- The quest to perfectly model or design EA artifacts according to frameworks becomes an endless, unappreciated venture.
- Overly technical focus and rigidity are obstacles to closer collaboration with other teams.

HOW EA CAN WORK FOR THE BUSINESS:

- Leaner and more flexible, centred on what decision-makers consider critical business concerns.
- Providing always-on insights to address these concerns through living artifacts that evolve and update themselves automatically.
- Repositioned as an internal service with a customer-centric approach, focused on how to best enable the rest of the business instead of being a bottleneck.



WHAT'S DRIVING THE DISCONNECT?

Framework and Model Fixation Limits Flexibility, Agility, and Competitiveness

Many EA teams geek out on adhering to specific frameworks (e.g., TOGAF, Zachman) and creating detailed models rather than using them as tools to **achieve business goals**.

Sometimes, these artifacts don't even address the problem at hand. This creates a perception that EA is more concerned with process and documentation than **delivering tangible value** and practical solutions to the business.

EA Artifacts Are Lost in Translation

Discussions about "reference architectures" and "meta-models" are meaningless to someone focused on increasing sales or reducing costs.

Without EAs translating technical concepts into **business-relevant language**, others don't understand how the efforts of the architectural team contribute to business outcomes.

Architects Are Stuck in Ivory Towers

Anchoring an EA practice to EA artifacts often means working in isolation, disconnected from the realities and concerns of the organization.

Without being embedded in the business and working closely with stakeholders, EAs will lack insight on directing and designing things that actually meet pressing business needs.



HOW TO REFRAME YOUR EA APPROACH?

Frameworks and Models as the Means, Not the Ends

When EAs free themselves from the yoke of perfecting documentation as the ends, they can then step back and reconsider what insight the business needs, such as:

- **Sales:** How can we improve the efficiency of our sales process to close deals faster?
- **Finance:** How can we streamline our financial reporting processes to reduce costs and improve accuracy?
- **Marketing:** How can we measure the impact of our marketing efforts more effectively?

Ground EA in Business Needs, Nurtured With Two-Way Communication

EAs have to ensure they create feedback loops with stakeholders to guide their work and iterate as the business needs.

Many of our customers find that working backward from specific business needs helps them answer what they should, in turn, build to be of value.



THINK ABOUT:

What questions do **stakeholders in the business** struggle to answer?

How can my team and I **develop or upgrade our EA tools** to facilitate stakeholders' self-service?

Are we using frameworks and models to **support our goals**, or have they become the goals themselves?

Rule 2

Stop Wasting Time on Manual Work



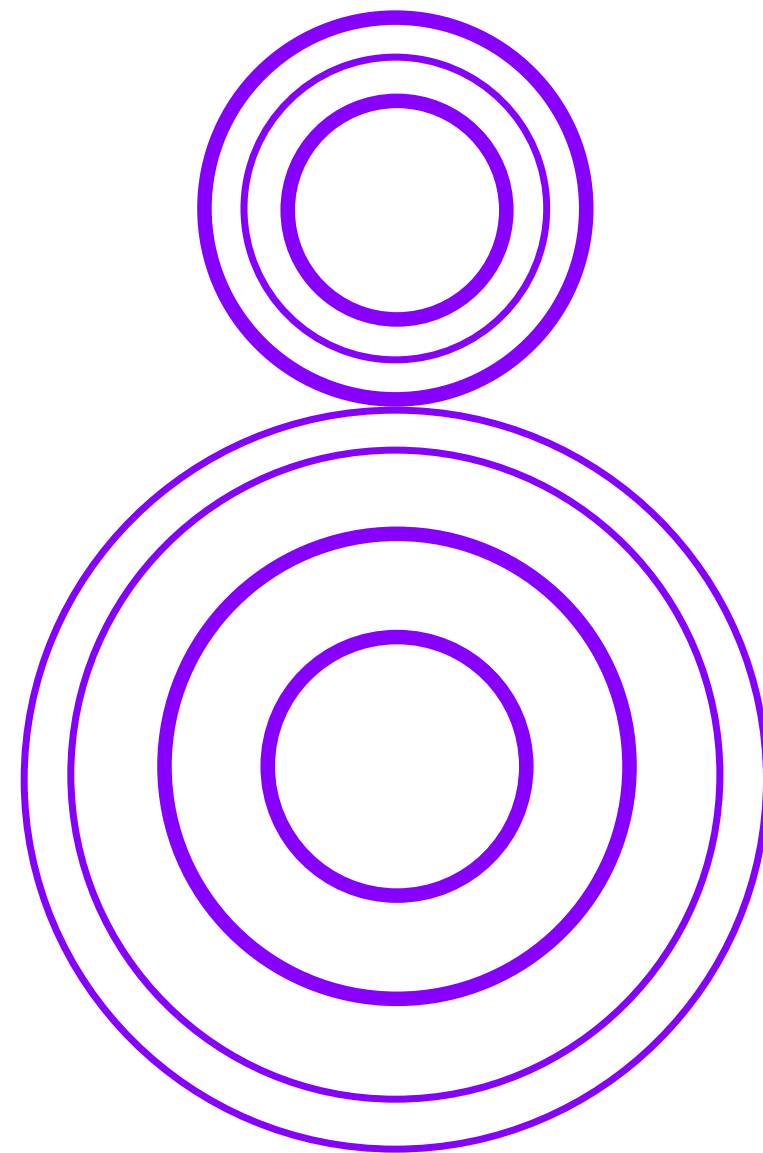
The pivotal shift came when I stopped relying solely on drawings and diagrams, and instead found my true insights through 'graph data'-powered analysis.

- Christer Berglund, Business Architect





**Automate EA Data Collection,
but only capture what you need to
answer pressing business questions**



Use tools like AI and automation so you can focus on the bigger picture.

WHY TRADITIONAL EA IS PROBLEMATIC:

- Focused on producing complex models of unclear value to the rest of the organization.
- Long data collection cycles with equally long processes to translate data into actionable insights.
- Boggled down playing catch-up: 80% of time going toward grunt work, updates, and governance vs. 20% delivering strategic deliverables.

HOW EA CAN WORK FOR THE BUSINESS:

- Iterating EA artifacts according to what the business needs most urgently.
- Highly automated data collection and governance, creating capacity for the strategic work that matters most to business objectives like cost, efficiency, and customer value.
- Flip the balance to 20% governance vs. 80% delivering insights for the business.



WHAT'S DRIVING THE DISCONNECT?

People Don't Know What Enterprise Architects Do

With EA's legacy as an IT-focused practice, many EAs end up maintaining a siloed way of working.

As a result, the rest of the organization does not see all the effort that goes into architectural maps and diagrams.

EAs Are Always Playing Catch Up

With technology becoming the backbone of modern organizations, EAs need to deal with a higher volume of data and complexity than ever before.

The manual-heavy approaches many EAs still deploy lead to always playing catch-up, with deliverables often being outdated and dead on arrival.

Inaccessible, High Maintenance EA Artifacts

Unfortunately, EA artifacts are generally built by and for architects.

This means that the very deliverables EAs work so hard to create are also a core cause of isolation from other business stakeholders who see them as time-consuming and not intrinsically valuable.



HOW TO REFRAME YOUR EA APPROACH?

Stop Burning out in the Data Grind

When EA began, there was no better way to design architecture than manual diagrams and spreadsheets. But that's no longer the case today.

Automation, data-driven visualizations, smart customizable surveys, and dashboards can take so much of the pain out of EA, giving architects the energy and time to look outwards and answer questions the business desperately needs their help with.

Start With Key Priorities To Speed Up Time To Value

Instead of overinvesting in complete documentation, focus on creating artifacts that will quickly help address pressing business questions.

This could mean focusing on applications instead of the complete technology stack or modeling capabilities for a specific business area before others. These artifacts can always be expanded and extended to answer subsequent business needs.



THINK ABOUT:

How much time am I currently taking to maintain and develop EA artifacts with my current EA toolset?
Are these EA artifacts **understood by other stakeholders?** Are they used in decision-making?
What is the most critical area to focus on that will **deliver quick value to the business?**

Rule 3

Drive Change By Reducing Costs



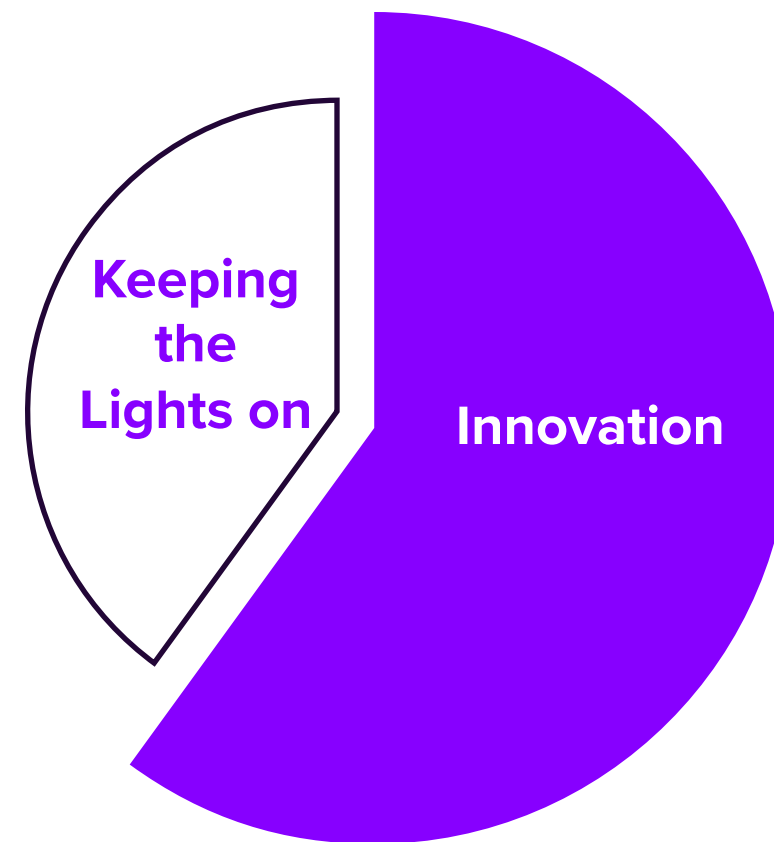
We need to know where we can reduce IT spending. To make this possible, we need to know at any given time what systems we are running, who are the owners and experts, and what are the costs of the various applications.

- Brett Derry, Head of Architecture at The Prince's Trust





Reduce IT Complexity to Drive Change



Use IT cost optimization to prove EA's strategic value to the business.

WHY TRADITIONAL EA IS PROBLEMATIC:

- EA teams are often reactive and tend to get pulled in different directions.
- Distributing their efforts among many small projects leads to diluted impact and unclear value of the EA function to upper management.
- EAs often do not know how to present the business value and financial impact of their activities.

HOW EA CAN WORK FOR THE BUSINESS:

- Proactively seek partnership with the CIO and other key decision-makers to get a mandate for smarter IT cost control.
- Help CIOs reallocate money from run cost to strategic change, improving the quality of spend.
- Use IT cost optimization as a foundational stone for proving EA's strategic value to the business.



WHAT'S DRIVING THE DISCONNECT?

Reactive EA Function

Without a strategic vision aligned with the business' objectives, EAs find themselves reacting to pressing immediate problems with no capacity to work on change projects.

Often, they are looped in very late in the process and are simply executing on projects where all the strategic decisions have been made without them.

Diluted and Unclear Impact

Spread thin across urgent concerns, EAs find their actual impact on the enterprise diluted.

Without a clear way to capture their results in business metrics, their value is often unclear to key stakeholders, including the CIOs they report to.

EA Lacks a Mandate

Even though they report to the CIO, many CIOs don't fully appreciate all the capabilities of an EA team.

EAs have the means but not a clear mandate, so they are unable to justify reallocating already limited resources without a C-suite empowering them.



HOW TO REFRAME YOUR EA APPROACH?

Proactively Seek Partnership

EAs need to step out of their comfort zones to court their CIOs and get the mandate they need.

Only then will they be able to drive change, beginning with cost reduction through application rationalization and then expanding to other areas in and beyond IT, such as risk management and strategic execution.

Advocate For Smarter IT Cost Control To Help Fund Strategic Change

For traditional organizations, 70% of IT spend goes to keeping the lights on while 30% goes to change.

Instead of cost-cutting, EAs should frame smarter IT cost control as a way to shift the balance and unlock more resources for innovation and strategic change.

Show That Reducing Complexity Heightens Organizational Agility

EAs should also seek to demonstrate that cost-saving opportunities will also help reduce the complexity of the business and, therefore, increase its agility.



THINK ABOUT:

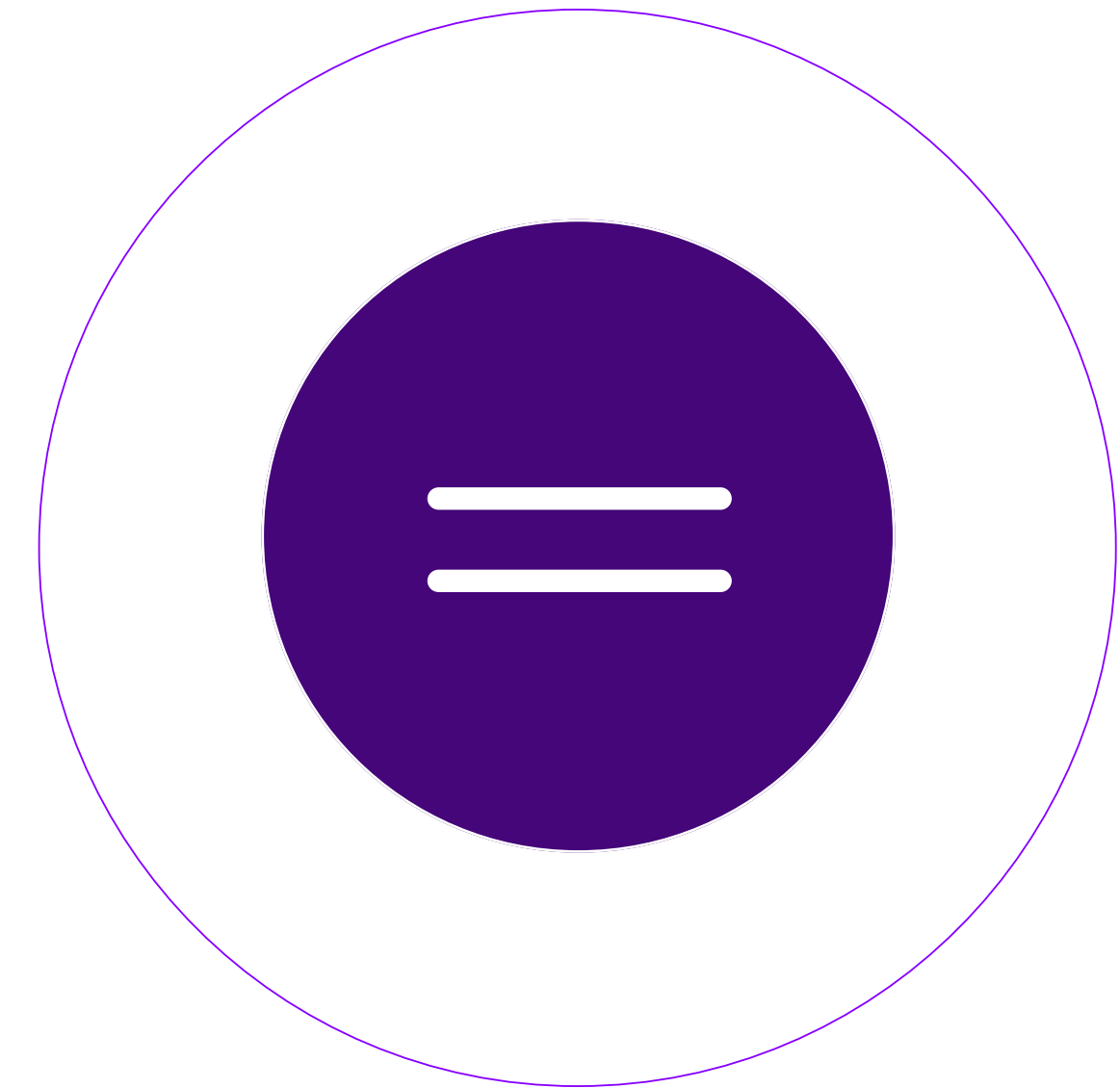
- How can EA help to **address the biggest cost drivers** via tech optimization or process improvement?
- What metrics could track our progress and **demonstrate the success of our cost-reduction initiatives**?
- How can we **demonstrate the ROI of EA initiatives** to gain buy-in from stakeholders?

Rule 4

Make EA Data Easy for Everyone To Use

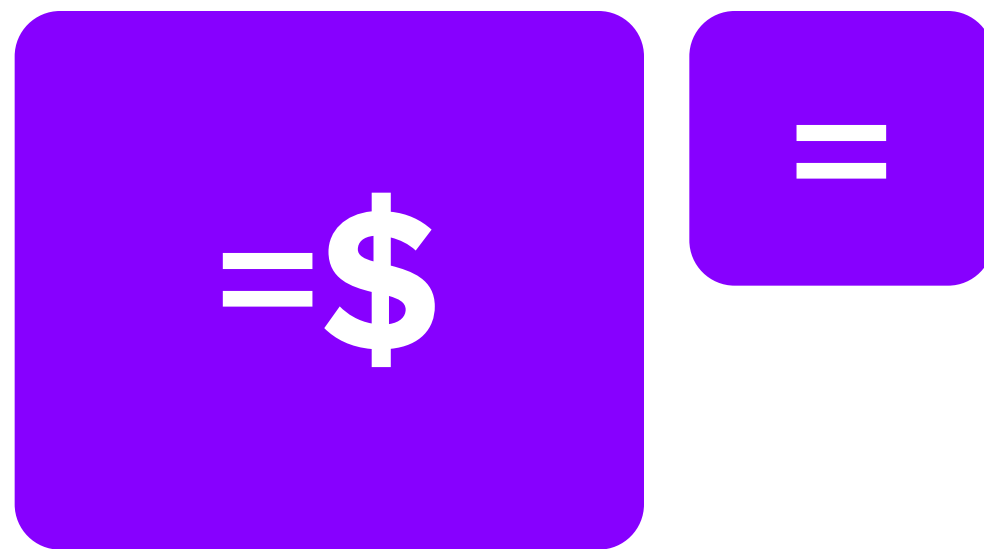
33 Instead of forcing the business into our discourse,
we're asking what they want to achieve.

- Jan-Joost van Walsum, Lead Enterprise Architect at UMCG





Start by Agreeing What the Business Needs to Visualize



Create user-friendly self-service tools to help stakeholders get the insights they need quickly.

WHY TRADITIONAL EA IS PROBLEMATIC:

- Typical EA artifacts are not useable for anyone else in the organization, so EAs end up becoming a bottleneck, in addition to their heavy workload of manual maintenance.
- Valuable insights are lost due to an inability to translate data and detail into something actionable for others.

HOW EA CAN WORK FOR THE BUSINESS:

- Delivering stakeholder-friendly insights through accessible, data-driven visualizations, reports, and dashboards.
- Work with the business to model things and communicate in a way that makes sense for what they care about.



WHAT'S DRIVING THE DISCONNECT?

Traditional Tooling Is Inflexible

If the organization has a dedicated EA tool, the likelihood is that it's made for and used by architects exclusively. They tend to be clunky, maintained manually, and difficult to collaborate on.

The learning curve for other business stakeholders to use the platform is too steep to be practical or possible. Most have to rely on an EA, making them a bottleneck.

EA Artifacts Are Inaccessible

Typical EA deliverables are too complex and specialized for other stakeholders to interpret or use in their day to day. There is heavy reliance on the EAs to translate these artifacts into something actionable.

The EAs are torn between keeping the repository up to date and interpreting them for other teams. This compounds the issue of EAs becoming a bottleneck.



HOW TO REFRAME YOUR EA APPROACH?

Choose a Platform That Enables Collaboration

EAs should consider a platform with an interface and functionality that enables greater collaboration with the business.

Ideally, it should allow stakeholders to self-serve insights on-demand in a helpful format.

Be Flexible

Don't force other teams to work within the confines of EA frameworks and traditional terminology.

Instead work with them to find a middle ground that makes sense for their objectives and what they're trying to get insight into.

THINK ABOUT:

Who are the stakeholders needing access to EA data (e.g., business leaders, IT managers, project teams, developers)? What are their specific information needs?

What are the most common **questions these stakeholders ask that EA data could answer?** What decisions are they trying to make?

What format and level of detail is most useful for each stakeholder group? Do they need dashboards, reports, interactive tools, or raw data?

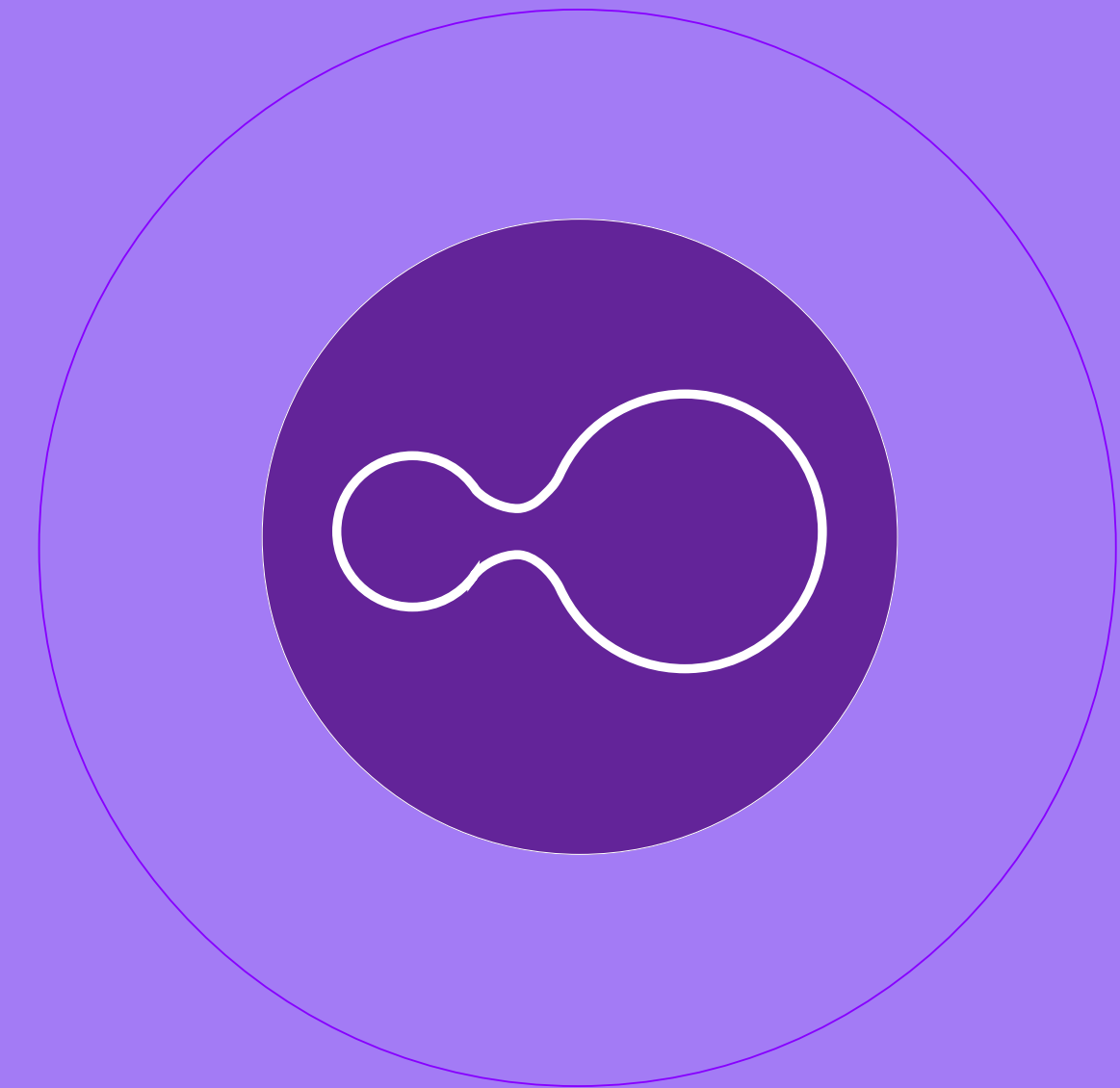
Rule 5

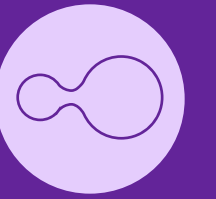
Integrate EA into Core Business Processes



Bring all of that disconnected and single use data together to create a single source of truth, maintained by experts across domains and accessible to the entire organization, supporting better decision making through data.

- HM Courts & Tribunals Service





Integrate EA Into Core Business Processes



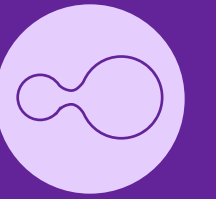
Reposition EA as a strategic service to become part of the change planning process.

WHY TRADITIONAL EA IS PROBLEMATIC:

- EA is often an enabling function that supports other teams but lacks its own operational goals.
- EAs are always working in isolation, retroactively, to keep information up to date.

HOW EA CAN WORK FOR THE BUSINESS:

- Integrated into the company's operational processes to improve execution and ensure complete documentation and audit readiness.
- Moving further up the strategic process, from purely execution to defining and planning, serving as a valued advisor able to weigh in on possibilities, trade offs, and impact.



WHAT'S DRIVING THE DISCONNECT?

EA is an Afterthought

Most EA teams aren't actively involved with the business, so they're always collecting information, modeling after the fact, and playing catch-up to ensure their models are up to date.

This is especially painful when it comes to preparing for audits or ensuring compliance. Incomplete and scattered documentation coupled with a reactive approach to EA, prolongs audit processes and makes demonstrating compliance much more time-consuming.

Working in Isolation

EAs often do not work closely with other teams outside of IT, lacking structured or regularized avenues for building relationships and direct communication channels. By working in isolation, immersed in EA lingo, they remain disconnected from the rest of the business.

Other teams are also not likely to approach a function they don't understand or speak with regularly, keeping EAs out of the organizational loop. The result is that EAs lack the clout, mandate, or network to drive greater integration into processes.

HOW TO REFRAME YOUR EA APPROACH?

Reposition EA as A Strategic Function and Advisory Service

When EAs upgrade to modern, data-driven platforms, they can free up valuable time from maintenance, analysis, and collation to work more closely with business stakeholders.

This new capacity will allow them to shift energy from uninspiring, unappreciated labor to value-creating and collaborative working.

Work Towards Integrating EA Into Processes

With modern EA tooling, EAs are empowered to be part of operational processes and improve execution.

EA should be integrated into everyday ways of working so that architects no longer become the hand-holding data collectors but the facilitators in improving decisions made in various business areas, such as governance, procurement, security, IT financial management, and portfolio management.



THINK ABOUT:

What are the core processes where EA and automation could **ease pain & speed up time to insights**?
Are there **areas of compliance that could be more effective** using EA insights and documentation?
Do our tools enable us to present information in a way necessary for compliance and audit purposes?

Quick Takeaways

Five Rules to Make Enterprise Architecture **Work for Your Business**

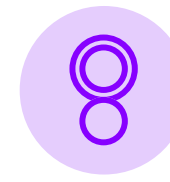
1



Focus on What the Business Cares About

Put aside frameworks to talk to your business teams.

2



Stop Wasting Time on Manual Work

Use tools like AI and automation so you can focus on the bigger picture.

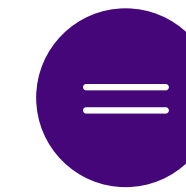
3



Drive Change By Reducing Costs

Use IT cost optimization to prove EA's strategic value to the business.

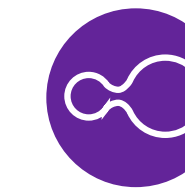
4



Make EA Data Easy for Everyone

Create user-friendly self-service tools to help stakeholders get the insights they need quickly.

5



Integrate EA Into Core Business Processes

Reposition EA as a strategic service to become part of the change planning process.

The Shift to Business-Driven EA



Traditional EA

Static. Siloed.
Reactive. Slow.

Siloed, IT Centric
Manual, Static Diagrams
Rigid, Inflexible Frameworks
No Real-time Insights
Limited Integrations
Static, Disconnected Reporting
No Automation or AI
No Visibility Beyond IT

From
Static →
To **Strategic**

The Ardoq Way

Dynamic. Data-Driven.
Business-Centric.

Business-Centric EA
Data-driven, Automated Visualizations
Flexible, Customizable Metamodel
Real-time, Living Architectures
Open, API-Driven Platform
Interactive, Dynamic Reporting
Enriched With Automation and AI
Built for Stakeholder Engagement



See the **data-driven EA platform** that will help you make EA work for your business.

[BOOK A DEMO](#)

2025 Edition