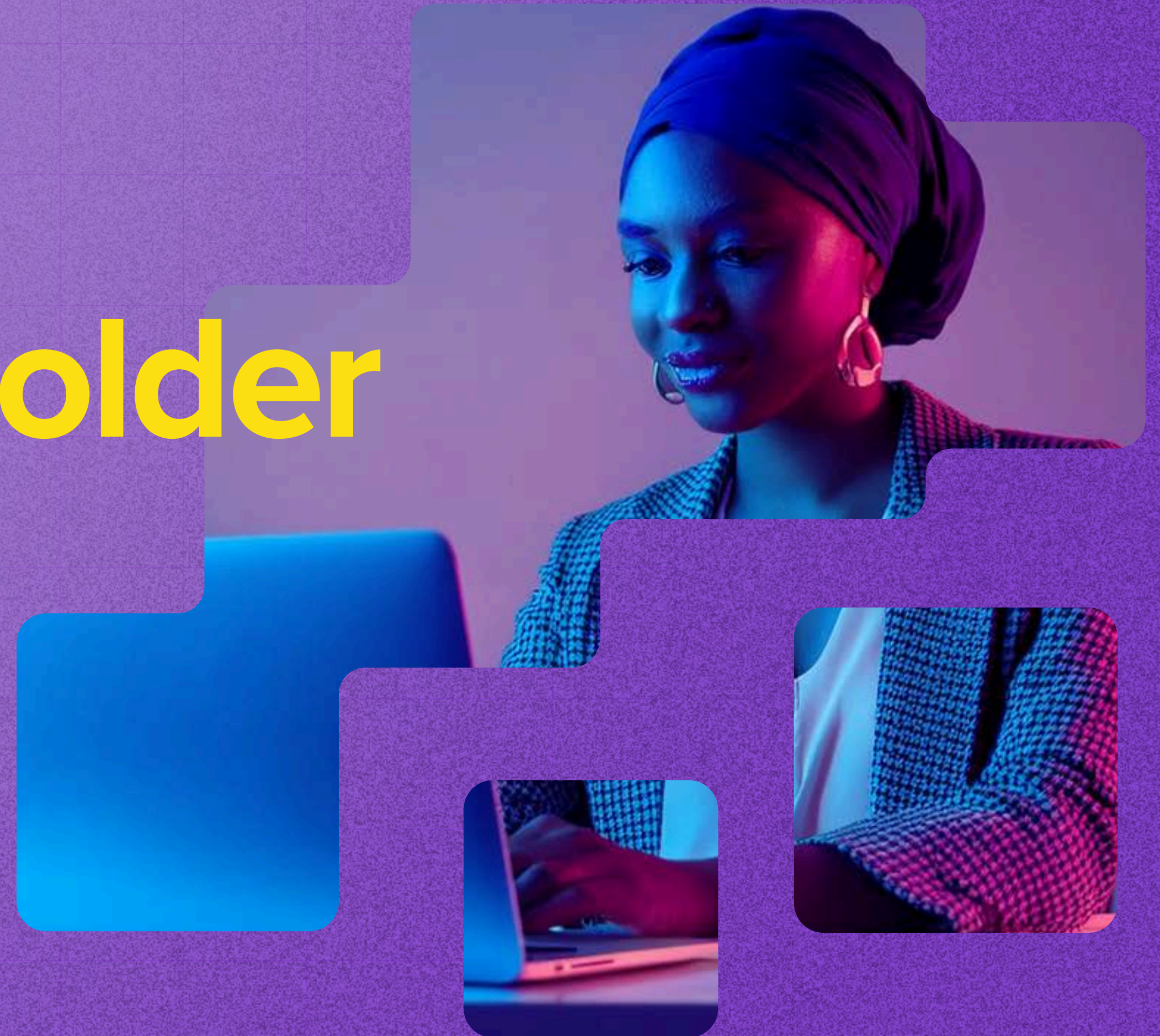


Building Better Business Stakeholder Relationships

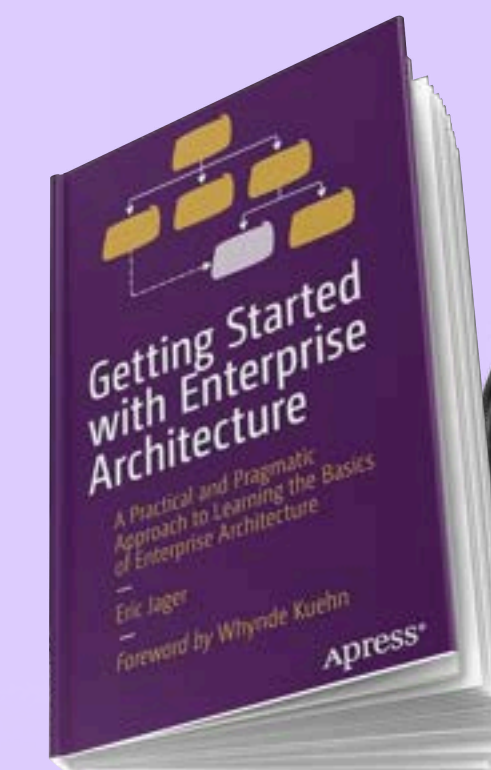
An **Enterprise Architect's** cheat sheet
for knowing who your customers are
and what they care about



“

It is **essential** to identify key stakeholders and **understand their concerns.**

Eric Jager,
Author of *Getting Started with EA*



[Learn More](#)



Focus On What The Business Cares About

To create value as an Enterprise Architect, you need buy-in from across the business.

Unfortunately, many Architects report that **building effective business relationships** is their biggest challenge.

In this guide, we share what we've learned about the steps successful Enterprise Architecture teams take to build relationships with a wide range of business stakeholders.

[The Three Relationships Every EA Needs](#)

[Steps to Build Business Relationships](#)

[Crafting Your EA Value Narrative](#)

[How to Talk to Your Stakeholders](#)

[Understanding Stakeholder Needs](#)

The Three Relationships Every EA Needs

Your journey to real EA impact starts here - with your stakeholders.

Don't wait to get strategic. The earlier you identify your key players, the sooner you unlock momentum. At Ardoq, we break stakeholders into three powerful groups: **Sponsors**, **Consumers**, and **Suppliers** - each playing a critical role in driving transformation.

Each group demands a tailored approach, and mastering those dynamics is what sets great EAs apart.

In the next section, we'll provide a step-by-step process for engaging each type and turning insight into action.



Primary Sponsors: Your reporting line, usually the CIO or CTO.

Secondary Sponsors: Senior business stakeholders (i.e. C-Suite) that are deeply vested in the programs that you support.



Line of Business Leaders and Process Owners: Your "customers" that will rely on insights and information that only Enterprise Architects will deliver.



Data and Systems Owners, Process Participants: Those that have the data you need to capture to help visualize your architecture.

A Step-by-Step Guide To Building Business Relationships

1 

**Agree Business
Priorities and The EA
Value Narrative With
Sponsors**

2 

**Understand the
Needs and Priorities
of Consumers**

3 

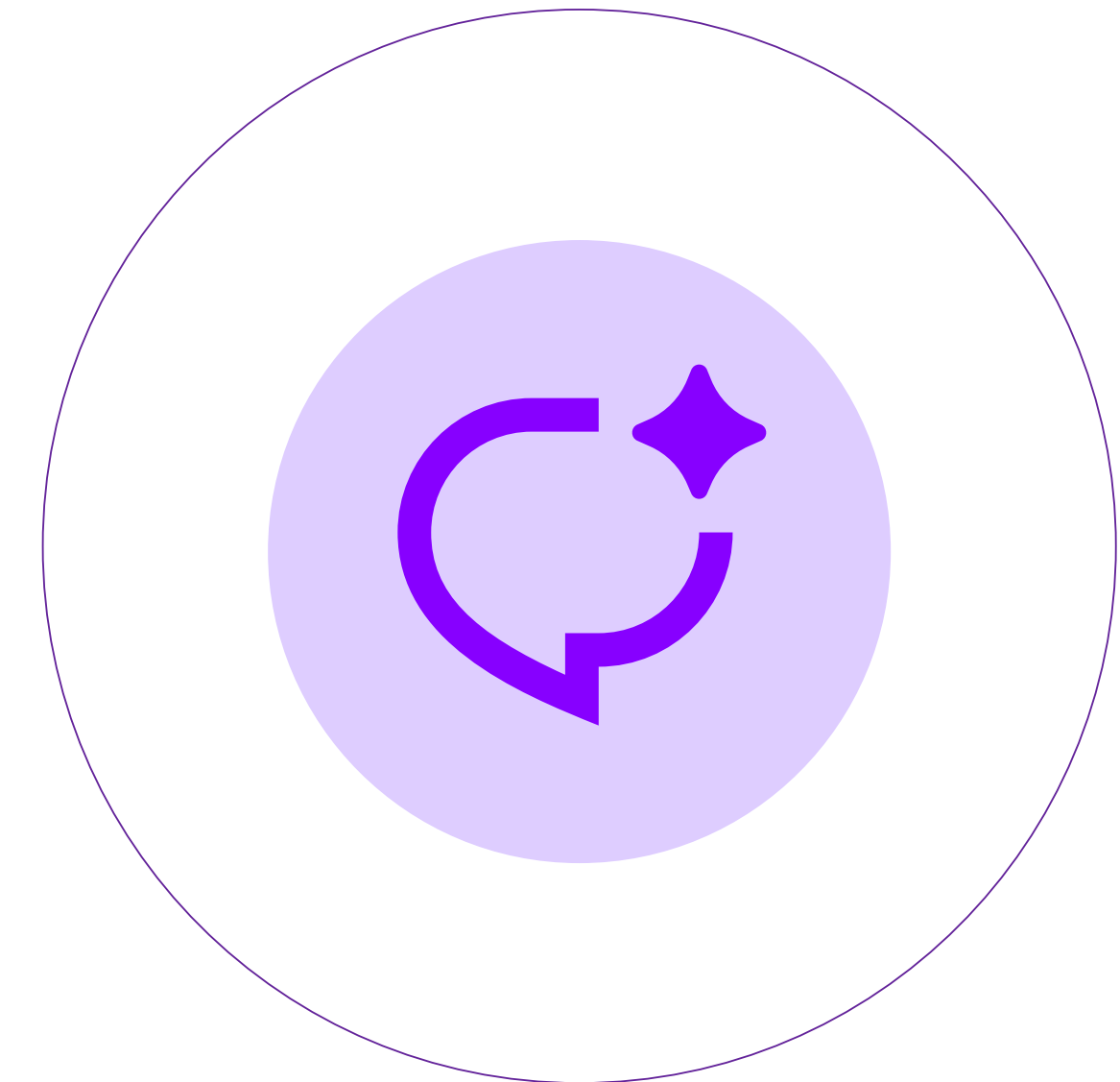
**Engage With
Suppliers to
Collect Data**

4 

**Use Wins to Show
EA's Value to More
Consumers**

Step 1

Agree Business Priorities and The EA Value Narrative With Sponsors



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 Enterprise Architect at Ardoq



BUSINESS GOALS MEET EA STRATEGY

1. Gain a shared understanding of business goals, priorities, and challenges with your CIO and other Primary Sponsors.
2. Identify 5 business consumers to work with to help achieve those goals.
3. Agree the EA Value Narrative, laying out the business outcomes that EA will help the business to achieve. This narrative will be communicated to the business by you and the sponsor (see next page).

Typical EA Reporting Line





CRAFTING YOUR EA VALUE NARRATIVE

Highlight these four business outcomes when introducing the value of Enterprise Architecture to key stakeholders across the business.

For more, see Ardoq's eBook:

Four Business Outcomes: Expert Advice for **Introducing Enterprise Architecture**

How to Frame the
Value of EA for Non-EAs

[DOWNLOAD EBOOK NOW](#)



1 

Driving IT Cost Efficiency

Reducing waste in the application and IT portfolio, spotting overlaps and inefficiencies.

2 

Improving IT Transparency

Understanding how and where applications and IT infrastructure support the business' most critical focus areas.

3 

Improving Business-IT Alignment

Help business teams understand the IT infrastructure and resources that can help them hit their goals.

4 

Faster Compliance, Improved Governance, Better IT Risk Visibility

Replacing manual processes with automation, working towards "always-on" compliance instead of one-off audit prep.



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE SPONSORS

Ardoq surveyed 25 new customers to identify the most common **Sponsors, Consumers** and **Suppliers** that EAs could expect to build relationships with. Here are the top Sponsors, along with the types of information they may expect EAs to deliver.

CIO

Chief Information Officer

- Cost reduction opportunities
- Critical applications
- Understanding system development needs to support business strategy
- Align IT behind business priorities
- Reduce tech complexity / debt

CTO

Chief Technology Officer

- Alignment of technology to business strategy
- Technology modernization planning
- Complexity reduction
- Cost rationalization
- Compliance and security
- Risk: application resilience and disaster recovery

CEO

Chief Executive Officer

- Cost reduction opportunities
- How IT investments support business strategy
- Understanding transformation programme impacts

CFO

Chief Financial Officer

- Cost reduction opportunities
- Application rationalization impacts
- Costs of business processes
- Opportunities to increase process efficiency
- Financial projections

COO

Chief Operating Officer

- Trace from business strategies and capabilities through to technical capabilities
- Business applications involved in operations
- Mitigating risks
- Understand opportunities to increase efficiency
- Strategy execution

Step 2

Understand the Needs and Priorities of Consumers

“

You need to be the bridge builder and provide solutions to their problems. Get to know their business and strategy and what's happening in their domain. This is not traditionally the role of the EA, but it needs to be.

Ole-Jakob Rosenvold, Architect





ALIGN EA WITH BUSINESS PRIORITIES

- 1.** Meet with the 5 business consumers you identified in Step 1.
- 2.** Collect insights about challenges they face in executing key strategic goals.
- 3.** Identify opportunities for EA to help them solve their problems by improving processes, producing insights, and delivering business-IT alignment.

Common Consumers, Based On Ardoq's Experience

Functional Heads

- Sales & Marketing
- R&D and Engineering
- Product Management

Operations

- Finance
- HR
- Supply Chain
- Facilities
- IT Operations

Tech Leadership

- IT Director
- App Portfolio Manager
- Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
- Chief Data Officer (CDO)

Program Management

- Transformation Steering
- Programme Managers
- Integration Managers
- Project Management



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CONSUMERS

Begin With Business Outcomes

With its technical language and complex diagrams, EA can be alienating. Lead with what your stakeholders would like to achieve. What are the blockers, and how could EA help?

Avoid Technical Jargon

Chances are, most people won't be thinking about their jobs in terms of technology and capabilities. Adopt the language of the people you are working with. Pay attention to how they describe the business problem and reflect this language back.

No Need to Explain How

Stakeholders want answers. They don't necessarily need to understand how you will help them solve their problem — just that it will be solved. Unless you need their input on the solution, there is probably no need to go into the specifics.

Put Yourself In Their Shoes

The way you think may not always resonate with your stakeholders. So, make an effort to level with them and consider things from their perspective. Try to explain things in a way that they would understand, not you. This might require a layer of abstraction.



Architectural thinking is about being able to view things across different perspectives and dimensions. Start applying this to language and communication.

Simon Field, Senior Enterprise Architect, Ardoq





QUESTIONS TO ASK



Regardless of their role, there are general questions you can ask your consumers to understand what the problems they are facing and how you can help them achieve their goals.

*What **metrics** do you use to measure your goals?*

*What **dependencies** do you have on others across the organization?*

*What does **success** look for you and your team? What needs to happen to achieve this?*

*Do you have the **information** required to track performance effectively?*

*What **challenges** do you encounter in reaching your goals?*

*How does your team's work **help the company** achieve current objectives and strategies?*

*What **resources** do you need to execute your current strategies (and what data about those resources would help you?)*

*How well is technology supporting the work of your team? **What would help your team deliver better results, faster?***



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE CONSUMERS

Ardoq surveyed 25 new customers to identify the most common **Sponsors, Consumers** and **Suppliers** that EAs expect to build relationships with. Here are the top Consumers, along with the types of information they may expect EAs to deliver.

IT Operations

- Overview of systems, integrations, owners
- CMDB connectivity
- Support considerations
- Impact analysis
- Data and application ownership

Tech Leadership

- CMDB connectivity
- TIME evaluation
- Transparency into IT estate
- Understand cost of landscape
- Technology ownership
- Technology dependencies
- Change project impacts

CISO

Chief Information Security Officer

- Data access
- Data transferred through integrations
- Audit of data flows
- App inventory
- Vulnerability management and mitigation
- Compliance and risk data

Project Management

- Modelling of initiatives
- Impact analysis
- Change portfolio overlaps
- Strategy alignment
- Defining project milestones
- Managing project risks
- Identifying project dependencies and critical paths

CDO

Chief Data Officer

- Data flows between systems
- Understanding and planning enterprise data pipeline
- Managing data compliance and risk
- Data governance
- Data integration planning
- Supporting AI deployments

Step 3

Engage With Suppliers To Collect Data



When gathering information, it helps a tremendous amount to talk to people in the organization. [] What processes and information are performed and processed, and what applications and technologies are used to support those processes?

Eric Jager, Author - Getting Started with Enterprise Architecture



BRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE INTO THE PROCESS

1. Identify data and process owners that have information required to solve challenges highlighted by Sponsors and Consumers.
2. Partner with Primary Sponsor to get the attention of these suppliers.
3. Ensure this data is kept up-to-date to ensure it continues to reflect the reality of the business (more on this next).



Suppliers aren't motivated to solve EA problems. But if it's the CTO's problem, they will.

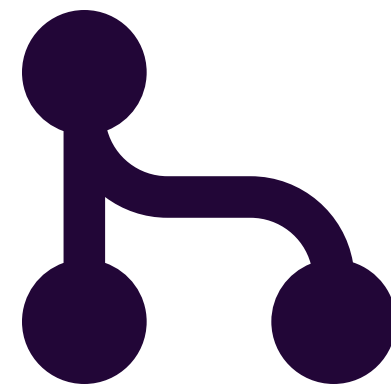
James Tomkins,
Senior Enterprise Architect, Ardoq





THE TYPES OF EA DATA

Supplying isn't just a one and done thing. EA data will need to be kept up-to-date to ensure it accurately reflects the business. Some of this will be down to you, and some down to the stakeholders. Each data type comes with its own challenges.



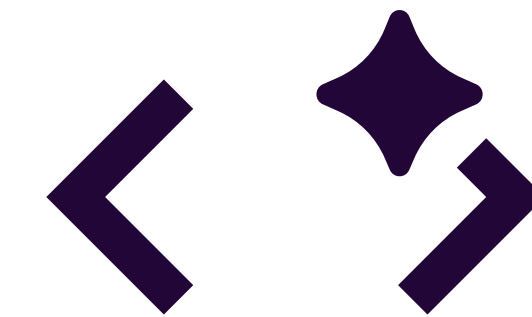
EA-MANAGED DATA

Data created and maintained by the enterprise architecture team



STAKEHOLDER-MANAGED DATA

Data created by the suppliers



SYSTEM-GENERATED DATA

Data sourced directly from IT systems



EA-MANAGED DATA

WHAT IS IT?

Wisdom and knowledge captured as architectural abstractions, models, and frameworks.



WHO CREATES IT?

Enterprise Architects and Business Architects

HOW?

Directly input following stakeholder engagement.

WHY?

Provides structural insight and the foundation for further data capture.

MAINTAIN WHEN?

Largely stable once defined, but can be augmented and defined as necessary.

EXAMPLES

Business capability model, value stream model, process model, technical capability model, information model

CHALLENGES

Some frameworks can be exhaustively large, and their management takes time away from EAs delivering real value.



STAKEHOLDER-MANAGED DATA

WHAT IS IT?

Knowledge and information held by stakeholders and specialists.



WHO CREATES IT?

Stakeholders and information owners

HOW?

Indirect data input (surveys, AI inference).

WHY?

Adds contextual information to structures. Enables analytics for governance, risk, and compliance.

MAINTAIN WHEN?

As required, but information requests should be evaluated for 'reasonableness'

EXAMPLES

Goals, ownership and RACI information, maturity, criticality, and risk assessments, high-level dependency, cost, and roadmap information

CHALLENGES

Stakeholders may be occupied with their roles in their organization and have limited time for information management.



SYSTEM-GENERATED DATA

WHAT IS IT?

Volatile or high-volume information stored as data within other systems.

WHO CREATES IT?

IT systems

HOW?

Systems integrating with Enterprise Architecture tools.

WHY?

Supports operational data-driven analysis.

MAINTAIN WHEN?

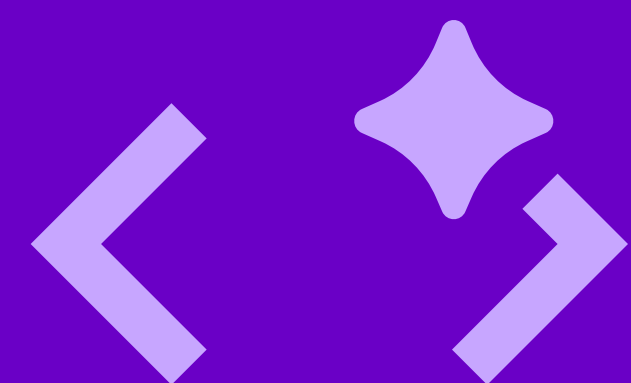
As required. Daily schedules should be sufficient for most use cases

EXAMPLES

Data catalogues, application inventory, technology inventory (CMDB), change portfolio information, low-level cost and dependency information

CHALLENGES

Data sourced directly from IT systems. Data silos can occur when parts of this data are owned and managed by different areas of the organization.



Step 4

Use Wins To Show EA's Value to More Consumers



If a Sponsor leaves, you are vulnerable to cuts if the rest of the business does not see value in what you do. Building up a solid range of satisfied stakeholders can protect against this by demonstrating that EA is vital for the future, not just when the forecast is good.

Simon Field, Senior Enterprise Architect, Ardoq

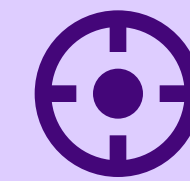




PROVE EA'S VALUE THROUGH TANGIBLE RESULTS

1. Identify and execute on quick wins through conversations with Consumers.
2. Partner with your Primary Sponsor to communicate quick wins and the EA value narrative to target consumers.
3. Seek out additional consumers to support.

Four Quick Wins



IDENTIFY REDUNDANT APPLICATIONS

Reduces cost of technology portfolio.



MAP APPLICATIONS TO TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Allows the spotting of opportunities for re-use.



SURVEY APP OWNERS ABOUT TECHNICAL FIT

Informs migration priorities and change programmes.



AGREE HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS CAPABILITIES

Identifies business impact and Improves strategic alignment.



APPLICATIONS BY DEPARTMENT

You'll have an advantage in conversations if you go in already having an idea of what applications each department relies on for their day-to-day operations.

Here is what each function might use, depending on the size of organization and its output.





CUT COSTS, SHOW IMPACT

Successful EAs often start by showing the business how to save IT spend that could be used to fund innovation.



*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.***

The Prince's Trust

HOW COMPLEXITY DRAINS BUDGETS

50% of enterprises report redundant apps as a top source of inefficiency
[Forrester](#)

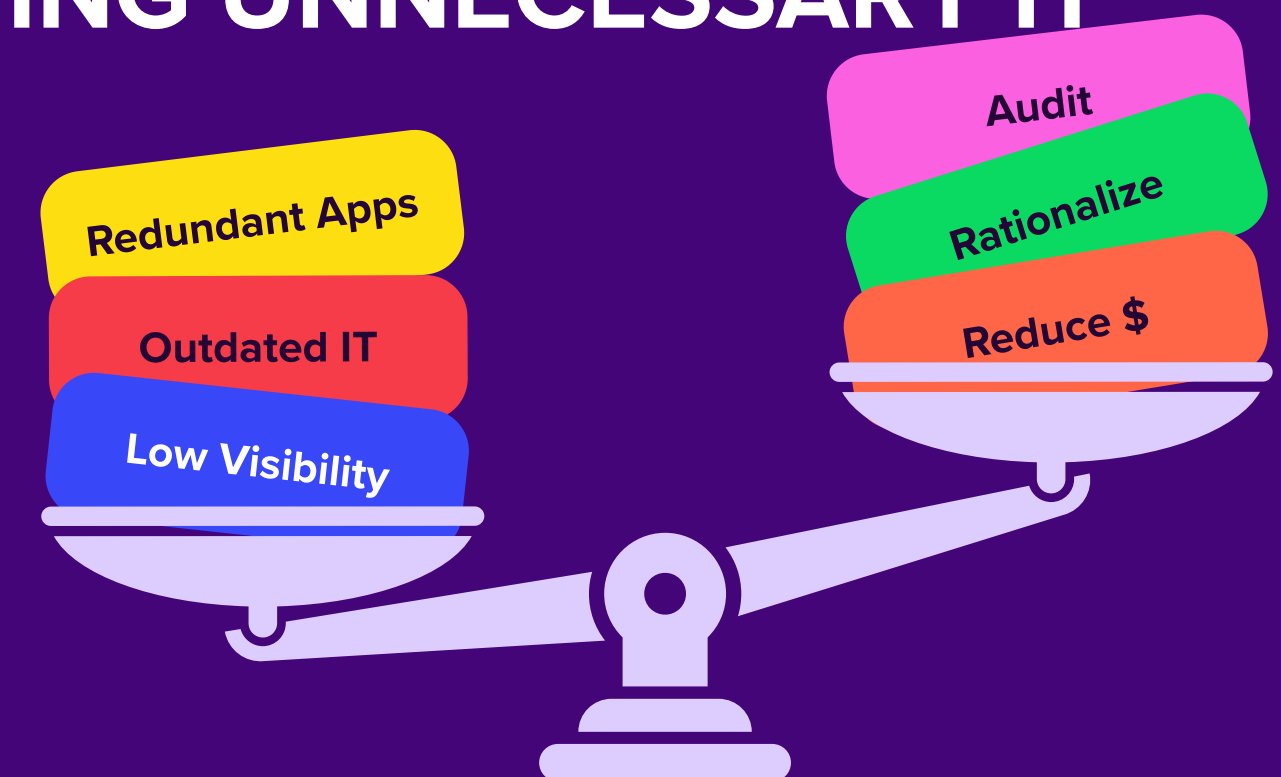
87% IIT leaders report that COVID-19 accelerated system duplication and shadow IT
[McKinsey](#)

THE VALUE OF REMOVING UNNECESSARY IT

Typical Annual Cost Savings

\$500K-\$1M

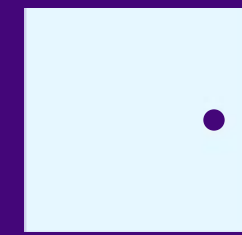
by optimizing the application portfolio*



*Savings estimate assumes company with 500 applications and is based on Ardoq's experience serving customers.



CABINETWORKS' SUCCESS STORY



CABINETWORKS GROUP

Industry:	Manufacturing
Location:	USA
Size:	8000+ employees
Challenge:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complex workflows• Slow integration• App overload

30 Apps rationalized

\$800k Annually saved by retiring unnecessary applications

6-9_{mths} time to insights reduced.

Cabinetworks would have spent an additional 6-9 months identifying integration points without Ardoq.



Everything we do needs to be aligned to business strategy. Technology for technology's sake is not going to move the entire enterprise forward.

Heidi Mattison, Chief Technology Officer at Cabinetworks Group



[▶ Watch Cabinetworks' Showcase](#)



STAKEHOLDER MAP

Based on Ardoq's experience, this is a selection of who from each category you could expect to talk to.

The next section will explain what each of these roles do and how EA could help them.





PRIMARY SPONSORS

These leaders set top-down organizational strategy for working with technology and IT. You probably report directly to one of them.



The CIO's metric is the ratio between the time they spend using IT to keep the lights on versus creating new functionality for the company.

Jason Baragry,
Chief Enterprise Architect, Ardoq



Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Manages and implements an organization's IT equipment and systems, ensuring these support strategic goals.

What could EA help with?

- Optimizing the IT budget to spend less on day-to-day IT functions, unlocking budget for transformation initiatives.
- Overseeing the organization's threat detection, mitigation, and compliance.
- Technological transformation to achieve strategic objectives.



Chief Technology Officer (CTO)

Manages all technological requirements for the organization, including research and development (R&D).

What could EA help with?

- Using technology policies and procedures to enhance products and services.
- Reducing technology risk and technical debt.
- Technology strategy to enhance customer experience.



SECONDARY SPONSORS

These leaders are highly focused on planning and executing strategy. Their buy-in will ensure EA projects align with business objectives and have the resources required to support them. Depending on the type of project and their level of involvement, these roles can also be Consumers.



Chief Data Officer (CDO)

Responsible for the governance and use of data to drive business value.

What could EA help with?

- Managing data compliance and risk.
- Mapping data flows between systems.
- Providing a holistic view of the organization's technology landscape.



Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Manages the organization's finances and oversees financial actions.

What could EA help with?

- Ensuring strategic investments are aligned and support the achievement of strategic objectives.
- Ensuring investment proposals have well-defined and understood scope and impacts.
- Ensuring the company adheres to financial regulations around reporting and fraud prevention.



Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

Develops and implements an organization's information, cyber, and technology security strategy.

What could EA help with?

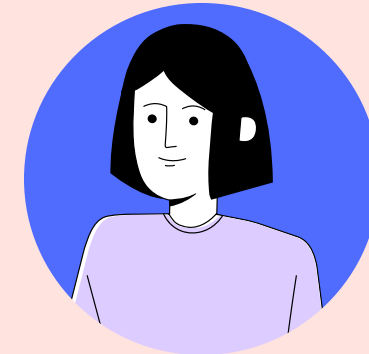
- Detecting, preventing, and mitigating risks from cyber attacks, leaks, and physical threats.
- Ways to measure and improve risk posture.
- Making decisions based on strategic requirements and gaps.



SECONDARY SPONSORS

These leaders are highly focused on planning and executing strategy. Their buy-in will ensure EA projects align with business objectives and have the resources required to support them.

Depending on the type of project and their level of involvement, these roles can also be Consumers.



Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Oversees administrative and operational functions of the business.

What could EA help with?

- Aligning business activities with business strategy.
- Ensuring operations make the best use of resources.
- Reducing operational risk and ensuring rapid impact analysis of incidents and changes.



Chief Revenue Officer (CRO)

Responsible for all revenue generation: marketing, sales, customer support.

What could EA help with?

- Overseeing the revenue funnel and how different departments contribute to it.
- Using data to determine revenue strategy.
- Growing revenue by aligning technology, people and processes.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

These stakeholders oversee groups of projects to improve the organization's strategic position and achieve goals. They will benefit from how EA provides greater transparency over projects and their dependencies.



Integration Managers

Oversee the merging of acquisitions, systems or departments to achieve strategic goals.

What could EA help with?

- Understanding dependencies that could affect mergers and acquisitions.
- Creating post-merger integration strategy.
- Integration of another organization's IT assets.



Program Managers

Oversee groups of projects and coordinate day-to-day activities.

What could EA help with?

- Ensure projects align with business strategy.
- Assignment and management of resources to support digital transformation.
- Understanding how proposed changes impact business and IT.



Transformation Steering Committee

Provides strategic direction and governance for transformation projects.

What could EA help with?

- Overseeing the strategic direction of projects.
- Understanding project dependencies to allocate resources.
- Improve strategy to execution by defining target operating model.



FUNCTIONAL HEADS

Heads of departments like these across the business will use EA to gain a better understanding of how they can satisfy business needs using data.



Product Management

Strategically drives the planning, creation, and launch of products and services for customers.

What could EA help with?

- Implementation of new day-to-day systems.
- Progress tracking and visibility.
- Operating efficiently using technology.



R&D and Engineering

Leads the research, creation, and refinement of new products and technologies.

What could EA help with?

- Implementation of new day-to-day systems.
- Progress tracking and visibility.
- Operating efficiently using technology.



Sales & Marketing

Generates leads (Marketing) and creates revenue (Sales).

What could EA help with?

- Implementation of new day-to-day systems.
- Progress tracking and visibility.
- Identifying functions and gaps.



I.T.

Manages and maintains the organization's technological systems and infrastructure.

What could EA help with?

- Aligning technology with business goals.
- Tracking performance using data.
- Identifying functions and gaps.



OPERATIONS

Operational departments need to ensure their activities align with business strategy and they can work efficiently to achieve their goals.

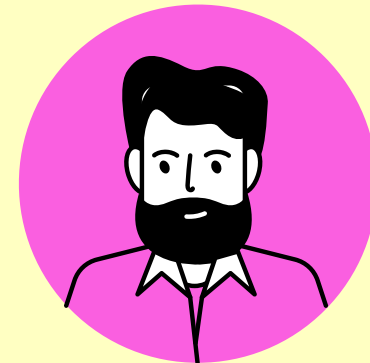


Facilities

Manages and maintains the buildings and spaces an organization uses.

What could EA help with?

- Ensuring facilities have the technology needed to support business activities.
- Managing and improving processes for issue reporting.
- Tracking facility portfolio and identifying gaps in capability.

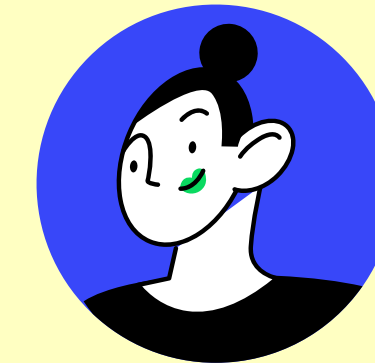


Finance

Manages the organization's finances and oversees financial actions.

What could EA help with?

- Staying compliant with financial regulations.
- Keeping track of costs.
- Identifying areas for cost optimization and reduction.

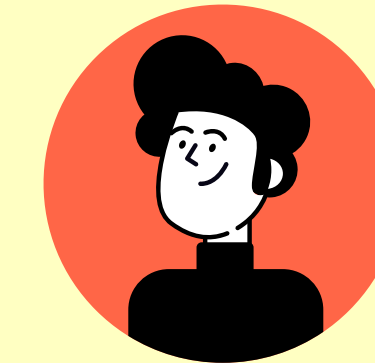


HR

Manages all employees from recruitment to training and policy.

What could EA help with?

- Keeping track of sensitive data and how and where it is used.
- Managing complex processes for employees joining, moving and leaving.
- Mapping skill sets and skill gaps to business needs.



Supply Chain

Oversees the flow of goods and data to produce products or services.

What could EA help with?

- Optimizing the use of resources across the supply chain.
- Supply chain resilience and scenario planning.
- Aligning technology to support expansion.



ARCHITECTURE COLLABORATORS

Suppliers for initiatives typically come from the operational or IT parts of the business. They could be Architects, Data and Process Owners, or other roles within the IT department.



Business Architects

Create and oversee the organization's business architecture and overall strategy to execution.

What could EA help with?

- Visualizing and understanding data infrastructure.
- Understanding the organization and its capabilities.
- Ensuring Business and Enterprise Architecture are aligned.



Cloud Architects

Design, implement, and manage the organization's cloud infrastructure.

What could EA help with?

- Visualizing and understanding cloud infrastructure.
- Ensuring cloud solutions align with overall strategy.
- Design and delivery of cloud solutions.



Solution Architects

Design technical solutions to solve specific business problems.

What could EA help with?

- Visualizing and understanding solution infrastructure.
- Ensuring that solutions align with overall strategy.
- Design and delivery of digital transformation.

Quick Takeaways

Steps to Build Better Business Stakeholder Relationships



1 Agree Business Priorities and The EA Value Narrative

- Learn about your CIO and Primary Sponsors' goals and challenges.
- Identify 5 business stakeholders to work with to help achieve those goals.
- Agree the EA Value Narrative to communicate to the business.

2 Understand the Needs and Priorities of Consumers

- Meet with the 5 business stakeholders identified in Step 1.
- Collect insights about challenges they face.
- Identify opportunities for EA to help solve their problems.

3 Engage With Suppliers To Collect Data

- Identify who has the information to solve the challenges identified in Step 1.
- Partner with Primary Sponsor to engage these suppliers.
- Ensure this data is kept up-to-date.

4 Use Wins To Show EA's Value to More Consumers

- Agree Quick Wins that show the value of EA with sponsors.
- Communicate these Quick Wins to other consumers for buy-in for further EA initiatives.

Ready For The Next Step?

Read our other guides and learn how to shift Enterprise Architecture from a nice-to-have into a must-have for your business.



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2025 Edition



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BOOK A DEMO