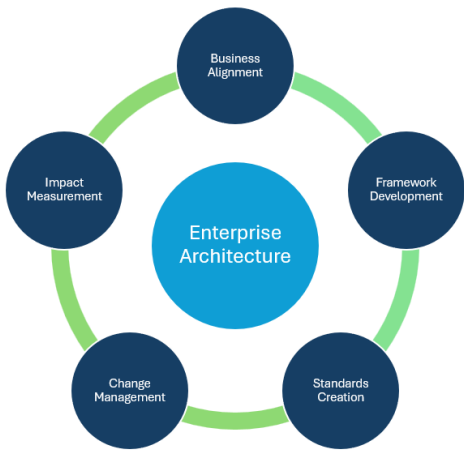


Blueprint to Strategy: Why Enterprise Architecture Matters More Than Ever



(Part 5 of 5) - This article is the last in a five-part series exploring organizational factors impacting Enterprise Architecture (EA). Throughout the series, we examined what EA truly is and, just as importantly, what it should avoid becoming. In this installment, we focus on measuring the impact of EA.

“Enterprise architecture (EA) is increasingly utilized by many types of organizations. Despite its growing popularity, the challenge facing many organizations is how to measure and demonstrate evidence of the value that EA provides to an enterprise.”¹

The quote “You can’t manage what you can’t measure” is often attributed to Peter Drucker and W. Edwards Deming, though neither expressed it in exactly those terms. In enterprise architecture, this reflects a core principle: what cannot be measured cannot be improved. This principle underpins the use of metrics to evaluate the performance, alignment, and value of the architecture practice. Without such measurement, architecture cannot effectively guide optimization, govern change, or demonstrate business impact.

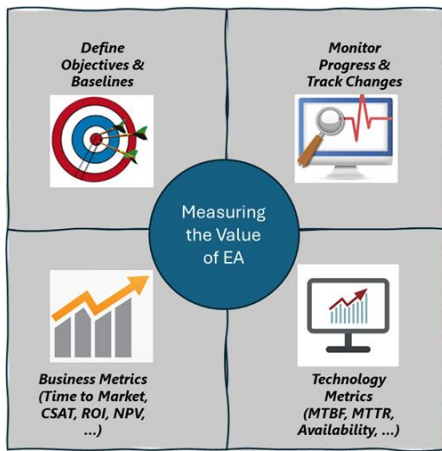
Quantifying the impact of an EA practice helps organizations make better decisions about technology investments, identify opportunities to improve the strategic architecture, and ultimately achieve better business outcomes. It also provides a way to justify the investment required to establish and maintain the EA function by demonstrating measurable value.

When EA outcomes can be measured, leaders can more easily identify areas for continuous improvement, strengthen alignment between business and technology, and optimize the architecture to better support strategic goals. In addition, showing tangible EA value increases credibility, which builds trust and encourages stronger collaboration across the organization. EA is therefore not simply about producing diagrams or documentation; it is about enabling business success through strategic alignment, cost optimization, risk mitigation, and improved agility.

Business value metrics are often measured indirectly, whereas technology metrics can usually be measured directly. Proxy indicators of business outcomes include customer satisfaction, market share, and time to market. More direct financial measures, such as Net Present Value (NPV) and Return on Investment (ROI), may be used when the returns or cash flows from an EA investment can be reliably measured. However, EA often produces intangible benefits that are evident in practice but difficult to quantify precisely.

Technology value metrics are often easier to measure directly. Resiliency metrics such as mean time between failures (MTBF), mean time to resolution (MTTR), and system availability can be captured through improved monitoring and telemetry. Technology cost per user is another direct measure that can be used to assess efficiency. This cost may decrease as redundant technologies are retired from the portfolio and underutilized technologies are reallocated or discontinued.

¹ Cameron, B.H. Methods for Defining and Analyzing Key EA Performance Metrics. Business and Enterprise Architecture, (18,2). 02/23/2015.



To measure the value of EA, organizations should begin by defining objectives, establishing baselines for current-state performance, and setting targets aligned with strategy. Relevant data can be collected from EA repositories, surveys, operational monitoring, and financial systems, with progress reviewed through Application Development Method (ADM) phases, quarterly checkpoints, or other governance forums. Metrics should be organized into two categories: business value metrics and technology value metrics.

A data-driven approach helps demonstrate alignment, cost savings, and agility improvements while justifying continued investment in EA. Because many EA benefits are intangible, organizations should use proxy measures where direct measurement is difficult, such as change deployment frequency, cycle time, or longitudinal trend analysis. In practice, this means selecting a small set of business-relevant KPIs and explicitly linking EA activities to changes in those metrics. Measuring EA value involves four activities:

1. **Establish baselines** — capture current-state business and technology performance before EA initiatives begin.
2. **Define metrics** — select quantifiable business and technology measures that align with strategic objectives.
3. **Track change** — monitor metric movement over time to identify changes associated with EA initiatives.
4. **Assess contribution** — analyze how EA-driven improvements support higher-level business goals and translate those improvements into strategic value.


G. K. Behara, in a blog post, offered a useful framework for grouping metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Enterprise Architecture practice. He identified four categories of metrics, customer, financial, growth, and process, which are used here. It should be noted, however, that not all metrics will be relevant to every organization, and some may be affected by confounding factors.

Customer metrics are measurements used to understand how customers experience, use, or respond to a business’s products, services, and support. They help indicate whether customers are satisfied, loyal, engaged, and deriving value from the relationship. Customer metrics include both sentiment and behavioral measures. Sentiment metrics reflect how customers feel, such as satisfaction or effort, while behavioral metrics reflect what customers do, such as retention, repeat purchase, or churn.

Examples of customer sentiment metrics that can be used to evaluate EA initiatives include customer satisfaction score (CSAT), net promoter score (NPS), and customer effort score (CES). Additional indicators such as customer churn, retention rate, journey completion time, drop-off rate, first-contact resolution, and self-service adoption can help show whether architecture changes reduced friction and improved the customer experience.

A risk in using customer metrics is that they may be misleading if strategy is not aligned with customer needs. As Ulwick notes, companies often struggle because they fail to understand and rationalize their customers’ needs.²

² Ulwick, A.W., “Jobs to be Done”. Strategyn Holdings, pg. 26, 2016



Financial metrics are measurements used to understand how well a business is performing financially. They help show whether the organization is profitable, liquid, efficient, and sustainable over time. Financial metrics can include both performance and position measures. Performance metrics focus on results such as revenue, net income, and margin, while position metrics track financial strength such as cash flow, working capital, and debt levels.

Examples of financial metrics that can be used to evaluate EA initiatives include revenue growth, gross margin, operating cash flow, total IT cost savings, and return on investment (ROI). Include measures tied specifically to architecture work: capital expense reduction through rationalization, elimination of one-off solutions, removal of unused licensed applications, and elimination of redundancy through standardization. Other useful EA-linked metrics are IT portfolio total cost of ownership (TCO), cost reduction or cost avoidance from rationalization, time to value (time to realize financial benefit), and forecast accuracy for IT spend.

A risk in using financial metrics is that short-term cost reductions can obscure longer-term technical debt or capability loss if rationalization is pursued without governance. To avoid misleading conclusions, tie each financial metric to a specific EA action (for example, “retire app X” or “implement shared platform Y”), track both one-time and recurring effects, and report qualitative controls (standards, licensing reviews) that ensure savings are sustainable.


Growth metrics are measurements used to understand how well a business is expanding its revenue base, customer base, market presence, and capabilities over time. They help show whether the organization is gaining market share, launching new offerings successfully, and building sustainable momentum for future performance.


Growth metrics can include both top-line and capacity measures. Top-line metrics focus on revenue-related outcomes such as revenue growth rate and new revenue from new products, while capacity metrics track organizational ability to grow, such as time-to-market, product adoption rate, and innovation pipeline strength.

Examples of growth metrics that can be used to evaluate EA initiatives include revenue growth rate, new revenue from new products or services, market share growth, customer acquisition rate, product adoption rate, time-to-market for new offerings, digital channel growth, and innovation pipeline size. Include measures tied specifically to architecture work: time-to-market reduction through standardized platforms, new capability delivery enabled by EA, scalability of new products, and reuse rate of shared services that accelerate development.

A risk in using growth metrics is that they can look strong even when architecture is not actually supporting long-term scalability. If the organization is growing but accumulating technical debt, the growth may be unsustainable. To avoid misleading conclusions, tie each growth metric to a specific EA action (for example, “standardize platform X” or “implement shared service Y”), track both the speed of delivery and the quality of the underlying architecture, and report qualitative controls (standards, governance gates) that ensure growth is supported by sound architecture.

Process metrics are measurements used to understand how well an organization’s business and IT processes are performing in terms of speed, quality, efficiency, and reliability. They help show whether processes are streamlined, consistent, and delivering value without unnecessary waste or variation.





Process metrics can include both efficiency and effectiveness measures. Efficiency metrics focus on resource use and speed, such as cycle time, throughput, and automation rate, while effectiveness metrics track outcomes such as error rate, rework rate, and compliance with standards.

Examples of process metrics that can be used to evaluate EA initiatives include cycle time, throughput, process automation rate, error rate, rework rate, first-pass yield, process compliance rate, and mean time to resolve (MTTR). Include measures tied specifically to architecture work: reduction in process steps through architecture-driven simplification, elimination of manual handoffs, standardization of process patterns, improved integration between systems, regulatory compliance, adoption of standards, compliance with policies and procedures, adherence to reference architectures, and business objectives supported by the IT Roadmap.

A risk in using process metrics is that optimizing for speed or throughput can unintentionally degrade quality, regulatory compliance, or governance if standards are not enforced. To avoid misleading conclusions, tie each process metric to a specific EA action (for example, “implement workflow engine X,” “adopt reference architecture Y,” or “update policy Z”), track both efficiency and compliance dimensions together, and report qualitative controls (governance gates, standards reviews, policy enforcement) that ensure improvements are sustainable and aligned with enterprise goals and the IT Roadmap.


Categorizing metrics along customer, financial, growth, and process lines as well as how each can be tied to specific EA actions and governance controls provides a good foundation for how EA value can be measured in a balanced and sustainable way.


This installment has shown why and how to measure the value of enterprise architecture (EA) using a structured, data-driven approach anchored in the principle that “you can’t manage what you can’t measure.” Effective EA measurement must include both business value and technology value. Business value is often indirect, requiring proxies such as customer satisfaction, market share, and time-to-market. Technology value, by contrast, can often be measured directly using metrics such as MTBF, MTTR, availability, and cost per user.

Ultimately, EA measurement must balance short-term and long-term value, recognize that metric selection is both art and science, and avoid one-size-fits-all playbooks. Metrics must be tailored to each organization’s unique context, strategy, and maturity level. By combining sentiment and behavioral measures, financial and process metrics, and linking them explicitly to EA actions and governance controls, organizations can build a measurement system that not only demonstrates EA’s impact but also guides better architectural decisions and sustainable improvements over time.

Finally, I hope you found the 5 installments informative and would like to conclude with a couple of closing thoughts. Enterprise Architecture (EA) is not a one-size-fits-all discipline; its success depends on tailoring frameworks, governance, and practices to the unique characteristics of each organization. By integrating business, data, application, and infrastructure architectures into a cohesive strategy, EA transforms technology from a cost center into a strategic enabler of business value.

A mature EA practice delivers measurable benefits which include improved agility, reduced complexity, and stronger alignment between technology investments and business objectives. These outcomes are achieved through clear governance, standardized processes, reusable building blocks, and continuous evaluation of emerging technologies.





EA is a continuous journey, not a static exercise. Organizations that embrace EA as a strategic partner will gain the ability to adapt rapidly to change, optimize resources, and innovate with confidence. The value of EA lies in its capacity to bridge strategy and execution, ensuring that technology decisions consistently drive business success.

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Leaders in developing change to asset managers

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Mike is an Enterprise Architect in Alpha's Technology Consulting Practice. He has over 30 years of experience, during which he has built his career as a technologist within financial services, spanning securities, banking, credit card, and mortgage servicing industries. Over the years, he has served as Principal Engineer, Director of Architecture, Enterprise Architect, and Chief Architect, leading the design and evolution of complex enterprise platforms.

