



Present your Strategy 2020 with an A0-sized Enterprise Architecture Blueprint in the Boardroom

According to Mark Pauwe, the Founder of Dragon1 [1], many companies nowadays are like spaghetti; largely caused by the integration and separation of old and new IT systems with different technologies, for several decades. To untangle these spaghetti strings one by one, creating visualizations of the organization give a better overview of what is actual going on and who is in charge of decision-making.

Growing complexity of SMEs and LMEs

Companies nowadays are complex organizations. Two questions are therefore ongoing harder to answer:

1) Which key processes are responsible for manufacturing, delivering and selling our products?

2) Which IT systems and applications are necessary to make more efficient use of information about our customer data?

Only a few directors and managers today can give a quick and direct response to these questions.

The urgency of more people in the organization being able to answer these questions becomes clear when, for example, IT systems fail and become vulnerable to outside influences (cyber attacks, security leaks), making products and services to customers stagnate (no internet banking, no mobile telephone).

Or customer data stored in two or more IT database systems which do not interact with each other with the potential risk that the customer data is inconsistent.

But how do we get a good overview and insight of the organization? What information do you need as decision-maker, and what are the costs that have to be made to solve the problem to continue the business operations?

Visualizations untangle complexity

One way to make information available is by visualizing these information with A0-sized overview posters. This works better than large textual documents that are written and end up in the drawer. One of the advantages of visual products is that stakeholders have a more aligned common glossary of terms and images.

Dragon1 considers each company as enterprise structure, which you can divide in five layers:

1. Markets and customers
2. Governance
3. Business
4. Information systems and
5. IT Infrastructure, interacting integrally with each other.

By visualizing all entities of a company in these five layers, the dependencies between all entities will be visible and the impact of changes between these entities will be more manageable. Possible risks of changes will be better decidable to any stakeholder within the organization.

At each layer you visualize the entities, for example, with which concepts the people work, what responsibilities people have and what resources and policies are used. Between all these entities you indicate the relationship (or no relationship).

Managing risks and impact

With regard to the company you visualize the ambitions, goals, assumptions associated with the strategy chosen by the directors. If the strategic information of the company, through the five layers, are visualized on the overview poster, you as director can start to manage.

What IT systems should be replaced within the next two years and why? Which identical applications run double or triple on different servers? What processes do not contribute directly to the products and services that the company wishes to make to 2020? Based on the overview posters decisions can be made, budgets can be set for the coming years and projects can be canceled or established.

Benefits of visualization

A question business people often ask is: why should we create visualizations of our business and the business problems? The answer is an old saying: 'A picture is worth a thousand words'. Of all the sense receptors in the human body, 70% reside in the retinas of our eyes. We perceive the world primarily through our eyes.

This knowledge gives a number of benefits creating and using visualizations in an organization:

Overview & Insight – Focus & Context – Common understanding – Concretized pictures of the end result – Goal achievements - Stress relief – Joy – Inspiration – Confidence – Coherence in deliverables.

Visualizing architecture is of strategic importance

Every organization today should have employees that are able to visualize the architecture of the enterprise. That is: being able to create insights and overviews quickly of business concepts, products, processes, services, applications, databases, interfaces and their interdependencies.

With these insights and overviews CxOs and management in an organization can take impactful decisions to minimize unproductive steps, optimize usage of resources and improve performance.

Make reuse of all the information administered in Dragon1 EA Tool

To create the 5 layered enterprise architecture blueprint, and to manage this visual overview, a software tool is indispensable. In recent years Dragon1 Inc. has been developed Dragon1 EA Tool, a web-based software tool, with which you can check at any time and location how your organization is doing.



[1] About Dragon1

Dragon1 EA Tool is one of the specialized tools on Dragon1 Innovation Lab for Business Professionals.

Dragon1 is also an internationally recognized EA Framework and EA Method.

Mark Paauwe is the Founder of Dragon1.

Dragon1 is often used by enterprise architects, CIOs and (project) managers to visualize (parts of) the enterprise and support stakeholders to ask the right requirements to create and build IT systems and to define business transformations.

Of any decision or change that takes place within the organization, the impact (i.e. cost) can be weighed by the different stakeholders, so they may or may not decide to proceed with this change.

Dragon1 consists of a way of thinking, working, representation and supporting which are written in detail on the Dragon1 Wiki, and are described in the study book 'Dragon1 Fundamentals'.

Why follow a Dragon1 training?

Because you will learn the following basics of Dragon1 in a few days and start to visualize the various architectures and aspects of the organization aligned to stakeholder needs in such a way it supports strategic decision taking of CxOs and management.

When you make changes, those changes are made immediately visible in terms of impact on the overview poster. You can print the overview poster and hang it on the wall or you can make it available with an interactive touch screen. Even visualizing one layer in the software tool brings advantages, taking impactful strategic decisions.

What's on the layers in the blueprint?

Market and customer layer - how well do I answer with my product range and organization the market demands and the demands of my customers?

On the market and customer layer you find entities such as identity, positioning, target groups, market segments of the organization.

Governance layer - how is my organization controlled?

On the governance layer you find a segmentation in business domains where a responsible person is designated to make decisions. And governance systems per business function such as quality, risk and finance. But also the entities as culture, mission, vision, goals, targets and projects.

Business layer - how efficient and effective have I organized the work effort to manufacture products and services?

On the business layer you find the primary and secondary processes responsible for the assortment of the company. And the range of the products and services provided to the customers in miscellaneous markets. The key question here is what processes are responsible for delivering the products and services to the customers.

Information facility layer – how well do I provide information to the business processes and the people for taking the right decisions?

On this layer you find the whole of information systems, information resources, digital communications channels, websites, datasets and links between the systems.

Infrastructure layer – Do I support my business processes efficiently with IT?

On the infrastructure layer you find the numerous applications (usually thousands) that run on even as many servers and form mutually networks within parts of the organization. One difficulty here is that often there are tens of thousands to millions of dollars to be paid to for software and hardware licenses by the organization. Only the numbers of needed licenses, license-expiry dates and systems-end-of-life are not always that easy accessible-information to manage costs on.

Visualizations of IT Infrastructure make cost and risks much easier to manage and control.