



ITS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

ON YER BIKE!

"By 2003, 40% of Global 2000 companies will move from narrowly defined technical architectures to holistic enterprise architectures." (META Trend: Volume 3 Number 13 - August 1999).

England 1912. Bicycle manufacturer William Morris looked around and saw a world turning more and more to mechanization. He decided to diversify, turned his attention to cars, Morris Motors was born and the marque endured for the next 70 years. From a small, hands-on operation with a few employees, the company grew into an industry giant with fully-automated production lines. But what would have happened if Mr. Morris had held out against the noisy, dirty internal combustion engine and just plowed on making push bikes? Undoubtedly sales would have declined, maybe even to the point of extinction as cycling was relegated to a leisure pastime, not a primary means of transport. Or if he had resisted the need to automate and insisted on each unit being made by hand?

Either way he would probably have died still a lowly William Morris, not Lord Nuffield, head of one of Britain's largest and most successful motor manufacturers. Morris and his fellow industrial pioneers and captains of industry without knowing it were laying the foundations of what is now termed Enterprise Architecture.

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Many leading present-day organisations often fall from grace and plummet into the depths of failure when markets turn against them. Sometimes this failure can be attributed to tunnel vision and slow reaction to threat – realising too late that commuters would prefer to drive to work or go by bus rather than cycle. Other times it can be as a result of too much action – more specifically, action of the wrong kind, of a trench warfare mentality, digging in for the long haul, sticking to their tried and tested coping methods and maintaining their core practices unchanged.

These organisations are victims of their own success – they have performed so well in the past that they think that they have developed a winning formula. But they fail to recognize that these formulae or methodologies can quickly become outdated and rigid and no longer work when there is a quantum change within the market they operate.

Before rushing into inappropriate and superfluous action, they should take time to ask and answer the question “What is causing us to respond inadequately to the market?”, before they can properly ask and answer “And what must we do to counteract it?”

Ask yourself if some of the following statements ring true within your organisation, and if they do, time might be ripe for taking a fresh look at the way it works:

- “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”
- “We run a tight ship around here”
- “We don’t allow for any flavour of the months here”
- “We have well-entrenched organisational values here”
- “We will never do away with our core business”

Bikes or cars, labour-intensive or streamlined and automated – it’s your choice.

If one or more of these statements ring true, then re-examining how your organisation is put together and approaches its “way of work” is becoming crucial. Enter the domain of Enterprise Architecture – nothing to do with your working premises but rather the very building blocks of the work itself and how it is carried out. These blocks encompass all the aspects of organisation and business process - design, systems, knowledge management, etc.

Enterprise Architecture is required to transform a legacy of fragmented applications, disjointed organisational structures and separated processes (both manual and automated) into an integrated environment with optimised processes that are responsive to change. Extending the architectural analogy, these are referred to as ‘silo’ structures – large, functional but stand-alone and disconnected. To achieve a strategic competitive advantage, forward-thinking companies are moving from these narrowly defined, organisational units to holistically integrated, enterprise architectures, technically inter-linked and acknowledging their inter-dependency. This connectivity is essential for survival in what has become a global, Connection Economy.

“Increasing flexibility and reducing time to market is not going to happen by accident or through one more technology acquisition or one more package or one more application implementation. It will only happen because of a responsible and intellectual investment in this case, in developing and maintaining Enterprise Architecture, to deliver quality information, in fact, to produce a quality Enterprise” (John Zachman).

In order to answer the question “What is causing us to respond inadequately to the market?” the following needs to be clarified:

- *What* information is important to the organisation or system;
- *How* are processes or activities performed;
- *Where* are processes performed;
- *Who* performs these activities and *what* are their role;
- *When* do business events occur, and
- *Why* are these process performed.

For an organisation to prosper in the Connection Economy, it is critically important to not only know the answers to these individual questions but also holistically understand the relationship between them. This is where the role of the Enterprise Architecture specialists comes into play.

There are many approaches to Enterprise Architecture but only a few that really add value. It is therefore important for any organisation embarking on this methodology of business improvement, to carefully select the approach that would best deliver the desired results.

Most organisations misunderstand and therefore misuse the potential benefits of Enterprise Architecture. Mainly, these are:

- It is a source of market advantage which can be difficult for competitors to copy.
- Innovation is a key enabler in delivering strategies, particularly where speed and flexibility are key.
- High performance operations implement changes in organisation, processes and systems in carefully-aligned and complementary sets.
- Momentum and responsiveness to the market are probably more important qualities in an organisation than just looking at "structural" issues.

Needless to say, even in organisations willing to embrace the new connectivity, there are also many myths surrounding Enterprise Architecture. Many organisations believe that:

- Enterprise Architecture can be done in a "quick one day workshop" – defined maybe, but you can spend years implementing
- Just tell us what best practice is to save us re-inventing the wheel – if only it were that easy! Remember that design is a strategic issue and works best when it is custom-made.
- We can do this without external help - the problem is objectivity in a very "political" arena. The aim is consensus, not coalition.
- We need to wait until we've finished our BPR project – building without a blueprint. Business processes should reflect the vision of the organisation design
- Enterprise Architecture is just about lines and boxes – wrong – it's about linkage and accessibility but one still needs to look at all dimensions of the organisation

Enterprise Architecture yields a wealth of organisational information to assist in sustainable success within the market place. These are:

- Decision/Responsibility matrices
- Span of control and staff productivity measurement
- Performance and performance measurement analysis
- Reward and incentive analysis
- Cultural diagnostics and work dynamics
- Structural assessment
- Benchmarking of similar/competing organisations

Enterprise Architecture provides your organisation with an opportunity to radicalise and remain successful – not merely consolidate but diversify and expand. William Morris took a calculated risk but he'd have taken an even bigger one by standing still. And if anyone says to you 'on your bike', tell them, no thanks, I'd sooner drive!