



Altus

clear thinking for Financial Services

EA Engagement Reviews

The need to adapt to constant waves of regulatory change, turbulent market fluctuations and competitive pressures has never been more urgent for Financial Services organisations.

Business leaders understand that technology is key to meeting this challenge and are increasingly looking to their IT and Architecture colleagues to help them. Such collaborations are not always plain sailing though.

Architects typically turn to procedures and methods in search of improvement but there are few things more exasperating to business leaders than having to wade through lengthy processes, red tape and weighty documentation. This cultural mismatch lies at the heart of many strained or unproductive relationships between architects and the business.

Altus can help. By understanding the different working styles across your business we can quickly diagnose the source of friction and delays and help you to address them.

Our experience tells us that improvements can be quickly realised by looking beyond standard balanced score card and maturity model techniques and taking a closer look at relationship building and engagement styles. Applying this knowledge enables organisations to tailor their approach for greater business alignment and understanding, altering their working style dependent on business drivers and needs.

An Altus EA engagement review won't solve all your problems but it will put your business and architecture colleagues in a much better position to solve them for you.



EA Engagement Reviews

The Issue

IT organisations typically rely on Balanced Score Card and Capability Maturity Model (CMM) assessments as a means of gauging success with a focus on internal processes and document production.

Business leaders tend to measure interactions with IT on cost, timescale and delivery, applying subjective judgements to the 'quality' of the working relationship.

Given the differences between what is measured and how, it is no wonder organisations experience alignment issues.

Recent surveys have identified that a typical architect spends only 15% of their time collaborating with the business. Meanwhile only 6% of business functions actively support their EA functions¹.

Over reliance by IT organisations on their performance metrics often indicates insufficient consideration and time spent investing in the benefits of building good working relationships. Once service level (SLA) and metric (KPI's) based terms are agreed, each party ends up in an established position, and the resulting static relationship can easily turn into a classic power game of buyer versus supplier.

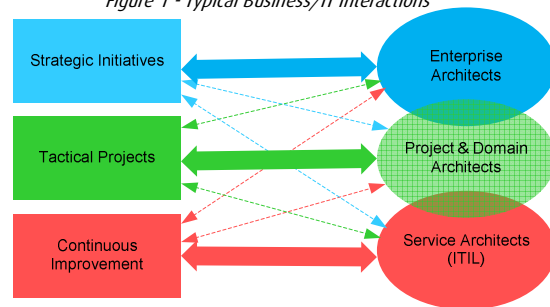
Failing relationships significantly impact the achievement of business benefits which can result in an inability to realise cost improvements and often a decrease in service delivery effectiveness.

The real problem often lies in IT's lack of understanding of the most appropriate way of engaging with the business.

Altus Approach

Business/IT engagements are complex and dynamic, requiring a mix of IT skills dependent on the type of business change and typically the business interactions are led by different teams.

Figure 1 - Typical Business/IT Interactions



Altus take a structured approach to reviewing the basic characteristics of your business/IT engagements across the main change categories, taking account of multiple engagement styles across different business and IT teams. Understanding your natural engagement style enables you to adapt it appropriately to make relationships more fruitful.

To facilitate the approach, we have developed a diagnostic tool that compares the engagement styles and compares this to the needs of the business and maturity of the architecture function.

The review offers a quick, low investment technique that brings clarity to decision makers within the organisation. Our approach highlights gaps and differences between preferred engagement styles of business areas and their IT service providers, recommending remedies and alternative engagement techniques.

The purpose of the review is to learn the overall approach and to determine the balance of styles that will facilitate the optimum relationship for the business.

¹Forrester 2009 Global Annual State of Enterprise Architecture Online Survey

EA Engagement Reviews

The Deliverables

The Altus EA engagement review provides a common frame of reference that facilitates a clear understanding of the engagement styles of both the business areas and their supporting architect providers based upon the degree of support and direction they provide / require.

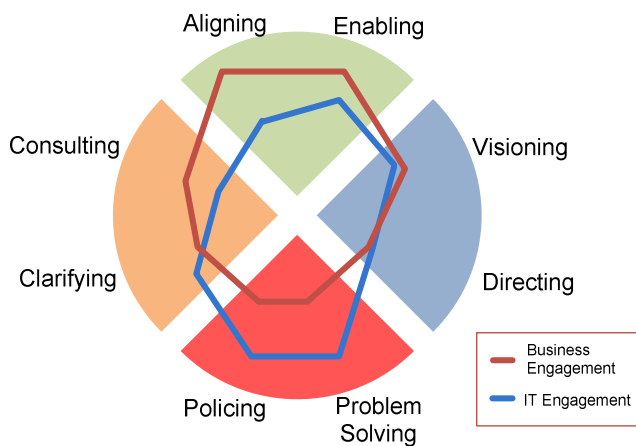


Figure 2 - Altus EA Engagement Model

Altus engage with key representatives from both the business and IT communities, stepping them through an initial engagement assessment and interview process to understand the existing engagement styles across different change drivers.

We assess the styles of both the architects and business areas and combine this information with our knowledge of financial services, EA Frameworks, visualisation techniques and operating model design to identify a set of recommendations that can be applied to the:

- Organisation design
- EA Design deliverables
- Business/IT governance processes and
- Operating model

The Benefits...

Fostering constructive working relationships which flex and adapt to different types of business change is a key skill, that is central to good business / IT alignment, supporting and enabling an organisation achieve its current and future objectives.

An objective external review can help provide clarity, build confidence and ensure that roles and responsibilities are aligned across both the business and IT communities.

Where engagements are aligned performance improvements are seen not just in terms of numerical outputs but also desired business outcomes. Companies operating in this way are increasingly bringing out faster products of greater quality, and their culture is one of risk reduction rather than individual goal orientation.

While EA-engagement reviews are most often thought of when needing to identify issues around a deteriorating relationship, they can also be used to:

- Identify optimisation opportunities across successful engagements
- Provide clarity during periods of organisational change
- Shape and review outsource contracts to help keep both client and suppliers in step

More importantly, regular reviews are key to greater collaboration, building trust based relationships, good governance, and ensuring that business and IT alignment progresses through "EA processes" rather than the imposition of technological constraints and content.



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Altus understand Financial Services - the products, the processes, the people and the systems that make the whole thing tick. With years of experience in complex change programmes, we understand that successful solutions begin with the business.

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