

Executive Summary

EA Modeling Applications:

Part II — Six More “Recipes” to Resolve IT-Related Management Problems

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For many years I have been fascinated by the Theory of Constraints and networking effects. The strength of these two concepts is present in so many aspects of business and technology matters that I consider them universal. I’ve spent some time studying their consequences when applied to various areas of human activities: business tactics (network economies), the social sciences (social networks), and technology (enterprise architecture [EA]).

IT IS COMPLEX, NOT UNMANAGEABLE

The information and communications technology (ICT) world is constantly evolving in complexity. As computational technology advances, it allows for the building of more capable systems, architectures, and solutions. We’ve added so much agility to the behavior of systems that many now consider them as complex adaptive systems, suspected of developing their own intelligence. I would rather call it “stochastically featured” because — due to their omnipotent presence, internal complexity, and strength of interrelationship — we are not able to predict their deterministic behaviors in definitive ways.

I have seen a certain pattern in the science world in which a decomposition path is utilized to understand the “pieces” but — as Albert-László Barabási described in his book *Linked*¹ — people then often fall into an understanding trap of not being able to reconstruct the pieces into proper “wholes” due to links, which have been lost or missed during subsequent decompositions. I have observed the same pattern in technology management, where we focus on analysis until we understand the pieces, then we reconstruct the solution based on such an understanding. But what a pity — over and over again, this does not work.

To manage complexity is not to understand it in details, but to control the whole. Porting it into the ICT world means focusing on architecture and synthesis instead of systems and analysis. Enterprise architecture, as a philosophy, makes this control feasible.

WRONG PRACTICES OR WRONG VIEWS?

During the last decade we have developed many management practices to aid us in dealing with IT problems. But, despite efforts of practices implementation and maturation, the problems tend to continually slip from our control. Where is the solution? Are these practices outdated? Do we need some new silver bullet? Or maybe humans are too weak to handle the IT world and cannot control it anymore?

My opinion is that none of these statements is true. We have focused so much of our attention on practices that the subject of our effort — the IS environment itself — has evolved unnoticed. It became too complex for us to handle using these practices in their entirety. Thus, we must consciously decompose these practices by subject, but in a way that guards us from the trap. We can continually exercise the practices as long as we incorporate an EA philosophy into their bodies. This is where we will gain both control and efficiency.

I suppose all IT managers at one time or another scream, “But we did that already!” As long as organizations only embed EA philosophy in “this or that” ICT management practices, they will make no significant



gains. Such philosophy should become the most fundamental technology management tool practiced, and we should perceive it as the bond among various ICT-related tasks and endeavors. This is the view I present, and hopefully prove, in the accompanying *Executive Report*.

BACK TO WHERE WE LEFT OFF ...

The report, Part II in a two-part series,² continues explaining my practical experience with applying an EA way of thinking to various aspects of IT-related management practices. The report starts with recalling the toolbox I have developed for advisory projects. The report then extends on the six EA model applications presented in Part I by adding six more “recipes” to the mix. Each application describes how to extend the toolbox, if needed, and how to resolve particular IT-related management problems. The six applications answer the following questions:

1. How do we prepare for disaster recovery capability by assessing its execution based on business value?
2. How do we consistently plan for competency and staff with relation to real needs and level of support required?
3. How do we organize IT systems maintenance in order to not be surprised by systems faults and performance problems?

4. How do we prepare for quality-of-services (QoS) measurements and service-level agreement (SLA) handling?
5. How do we optimize infrastructure efficiency in order to gain on costs and quality?
6. How do we plan for hardware supplies to shorten infrastructure capabilities delivery and, at the same time, save on costs?

We first must understand the subject of management before applying the management practices. The central idea of the report is that organizations must move their level of understanding from the individual systems to EA, and such a shift influences management practices. This report shows how to achieve this using a universal EA approach.

ENDNOTES

¹Barabási, Albert-László. *Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means for Business, Science, and Everyday Life*. Plume, 2003.

²Konkol, Sebastian. “EA Modeling Applications: Part I — Six ‘Recipes’ to Resolve IT-Related Management Problems.” Cutter Consortium Business & Enterprise Architecture *Executive Report*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2013.



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