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magazine

DRIVING RESULTS
Through EA

Becoming Strategy-Driven: Moving Beyond Simple 'Business Alignment'

Taking the Bird's Eye View on Legacy Transformation and Modernization

Part Two: Mike Walker Talks Business Architecture and the Best Practices for Using It

Five Essential Capabilities Every Organization Should Invest In

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Driving Results

By George S. Paras

Our theme this issue is “Driving Results Through EA.” Depending on the reader, that phrase may lead to one of two interpretations. The most common comes from pragmatists, members/leaders of EA functions that are primarily involved in supporting project delivery, and others who have struggled to make EA meaningful to their leadership. They interpret “results” to mean direct, hands-on engagement by EA personnel in the delivery of specific business solutions, a nearer term focus.

For others, the definition of “results” might be viewed in the larger context of achieving growth, efficiency, effectiveness, transformation, or any of a number of broader strategic business changes. The EA team operates cross-domain, engages with business-side leadership, and focuses on establishing an enterprise context including operating model optimization, integration, fulfillment of a desired capabilities portfolio, and achieving desirable traits such as agility, risk reduction, and leverage.

Of course, readers of A&G will note our editorial perspective has always been that both answers are correct. Balance is key. You can’t focus just on the big picture without also applying it to current business problems, nor can you rely only on being smart in solution delivery and hope that, in aggregate, short-term decisions will be integrated and future-proofed. Organizations overdoing it on one perspective will harm themselves and their organization as a result of under-investing in the other.

Today, many EA teams are biased toward delivery. In this issue, our authors share their ideas on how to shore up the more strategic part of an EA practice. Topics include strategic business alignment, business rules, large-scale transformation, business architecture, and capability modeling. A well-balanced EA team delivers results on multiple levels. We hope this issue will give you a few ideas on how you can drive the most impactful results for your organization. **A&G**

GEORGE S. PARAS is editor-in-chief of A&G and managing director of EAdirections.

THIS ISSUE

BECOMING STRATEGY-DRIVEN:
Moving Beyond Simple 'Business Alignment'

By Ronald G. Ross

If you want your business and IT architectures to become smarter—and who doesn't these days?—your approach should become strategy-driven. What does that mean in practice? It certainly goes well beyond simple 'business alignment.' This article explains laying out six fundamental principles for becoming strategy-driven.

Much has been said about the importance of business alignment. I daresay no one would argue much against it. It's like motherhood and apple pie. But for all the hand-waving, real questions remain. What are you aligning? How do you align?

Discussions of business alignment generally center on aligning IT with the business. But shouldn't that be a given? Methodologists recommend having lots of touch points in your IT development approach and creating and maintaining good interpersonal relationships. But does that ensure good business practices—or just good GUIs? And why just IT? Aren't there other kinds of projects in the business?

It's time we move beyond simple "business alignment." In its place, we should focus on engineering real business solutions to real business problems based on deliberately structured strategy. The approach should work exactly the same whether the business solution involves comprehensive automation, just partial automation—or none at all. We should be aligning business solutions with business strategy, not simply IT with the business.

Principle #1. Align business solutions with business strategy—not simply IT with the business.

In short, if you want your business and IT architectures both to become smarter (and who doesn't these days?), your approach to solution engineering should become strategy-driven. What does that mean in practice? Here's our[1] definition:

Strategy-driven: having a consistent ability in any set of circumstances to make a timely decision that, given all that you then know, is most likely to be optimal for the organization as a whole

TIME FRAMES AND SCOPE

Before explaining further, we need to consider time frames and scope and some misconceptions about them.

1. Business Rule Solutions, LLC (BRS), www.BRSolutions.com

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Table 1. Overview of a Strategy-Driven Approach

Kind of Strategy	Focal Points	Time Frame	Scope	Typical Concerns	Alignment Issue
Enterprise Strategy	business-planning decisions	1+ year	whole enterprise or LOB	• Do we enter this market or that one? • Do we build this new production capacity, or purchase a company that already has it? • Do we price our goods as a commodity or as a specialty?	–
Business Capability Strategy	business-capability-planning decisions	1 - 18 months	business process or set of operational business decisions	• Do we re-engineer this business process this way or that way? • Do we envision these operational risks as very serious, or less so? • Do we establish these business policies, or those?	consistency with enterprise goals & business policies (i.e., with the Enterprise Strategy)
–	operational business decisions	immediate	one particular operational business decision	• How do we best price this purchase of this product by this customer at this point in time? • What's the best resource to assign this request right now? • Do we suspect fraud on this transaction happening right now?	policy performance measured around the elements of the Business Capability Strategy

When you hear "strategy" or "strategic," there's a natural tendency to think longer term, rather than shorter term. And to think more broadly (e.g., some entire line of business or the enterprise as a whole), rather than more locally (e.g., some particular business process or business capability[2]). Hence, what is "strategic" is generally differentiated from what is "tactical" and "operational."

It does not follow, however, that strategy is irrelevant at shorter time frames or more narrow scopes. Indeed, becoming strategy-driven requires coordinated engineering of business solutions at each level of time frame and scope.

Principle #2. Strategy applies at each level of time frame and scope.

Let's take a closer look. Table 1 outlines a strategy-driven approach.

2. *Business capability* is a term BRS uses to refer to an area that represents substantially less than the whole enterprise, but still encompasses significant business activity. A business capability often, but not always, corresponds to a complete business process. In other cases, it might pertain to a complex set of operational business decisions the company must perform on a continual basis.

Several points stand out from this analysis.

- A well-thought out strategy—or more accurately, strategies—are appropriate at each of the first two levels, not just the first. Indeed, in terms of the work that most business analysts do, developing strategies at the second level (for business capabilities) is probably more directly relevant than the first.[3] By the way, contrary to what you might think, developing a Business Capability Strategy does not take a lot of time—if you have the right approach[4] and the right people in the room.

3. The seminal piece on using strategy as part of business modeling for re-engineering business processes and business capabilities was written in 1998 by Gladys S.W. Lam, co-founder and principal of BRS. Refer to "Business Knowledge—Packaged in a Policy Charter," available on www.BRCommunity.com, May/June, 1998. URL: http://www.BRCommunity.com/a1998/a385.html. Deliberately structured strategy that is truly business-oriented rather than project-oriented is notoriously missing in most IT methodologies still today.

4. The focus must be on envisioning the day-to-day "to-be" business and the risks associated with its ongoing operation. It has nothing to do with project strategy, business case, cost-benefit analysis, etc. Refer to chapters 1, 2, and 4 of *Building Business Solutions: Business Analysis with Business Rules*, by Ronald G. Ross with Gladys S.W. Lam, An IIBA® Sponsored Handbook, Business Rule Solutions, LLC, 2011, 304 pp, http://www.brsolutions.com/bbs

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- Alignment should occur (*must* occur) for the second level with respect to the first, and for the third level with respect to the second.
- The kind of alignment appropriate for the third level involves the performance of operational business decisions, not the performance of business processes per se.

There is widespread confusion on the last point. When many experts talk about the performance of business processes, they may or may not also mean the performance of operational business decisions with respect to business goals, risks, and policies (i.e., strategy). Even when they do also mean that, unfortunately they seldom say it very clearly.

Principle #3. To align at the operational level, look at the performance of operational business decisions, not of business processes per se.

STRUCTURED STRATEGY

To clear up the confusion, let's examine the notion of strategy more carefully. Is a strategy something you can see and touch? Does it have form and texture? You may have noticed earlier that I used the words *deliberately structured* in conjunction with strategy. Can a strategy really have *deliberate structure*?

Absolutely! In fact, there is a standard for it.[5] Strategy is definitely something you can model explicitly and succinctly.

By the way, a model of a strategy looks nothing whatsoever like a model of a process. The latter focuses on transforms (tasks) and inputs and outputs. The former focuses on ends and means—that is on goals and objectives, and tactics and business policies, respectively. It also focuses on how you arrived at those particular ends and means in the first place[6]—in particular, risks. These are not the kinds of things you should see in a process model.

5. "The Business Motivation Model: Business Governance in a Volatile World" by Business Rules Group (BRG), available free on www.BusinessRulesGroup.org. Also an OMG standard. For the OMG's UML version, see: http://www.omg.org/technology/documents/br_pm_spec_catalog.htm.

6. In the Business Motivation Model, these are called *assessments*.

Principle #4. Strategy has structure.

Lest there be any doubt in your mind, becoming strategy-driven in no way diminishes the importance of business process models. Nothing gets done in a company (or at least done very well) without well-organized processes. Processes produce the actual value add and puts it into the hands of customers.

But processes alone simply aren't enough. With processes, you can streamline workflow, but not respond intelligently to emerging risks and opportunities. You can measure throughput and identify bottlenecks, but not assess whether your business policies are actually effective in achieving the results management wants. You can standardize work for large numbers of people doing repetitive work, but not fine-tune the results of minute-to-minute decision making.

What business process models lack is a direct connection to a key ingredient in any business strategy—*business policies*. What are business policies? Think about them as business-rules-in-the-making[7]. Business policies usually require additional clarification (read "disambiguation") before they become fully practicable[8].

More importantly for this discussion, business policies provide criteria for making optimal operational business decisions during actual minute-to-minute business operations, often in highly risky or sensitive matters. The point is that becoming strategy-driven ties directly to decision management[9]. As Neil Raden and James Taylor said in their 2007 book *Smart Enough Systems*[10], "All [operational business] decisions must be driven by your strategy if you are to deliver effectively on that strategy."

7. Refer to *Business Rule Concepts: Getting to the Point of Knowledge*, (4th edition), by Ronald G. Ross, April 2013 www.brsolutions.com/publications.php

8. *Practicable* is a notion from the OMG standard SBVR. The test for whether a rule is practicable is this: Given a rule and a business situation where the rule applies, could a person (worker) who knows about the rule and who understands the associated vocabulary (important!) decide directly whether or not the business was in compliance. For more about SBVR, see the SBVR Insider section on www.BRCommunity.com.

9. For techniques to support decision management, see http://www.brsolutions.com/b_ipspeakprimers.php

10. *Smart (Enough) Systems*, by James Taylor & Neil Raden, Prentice-Hall, 2007, p. 12.

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Table 2. Process-Driven vs. Strategy-Driven Measures of Business Performance

Process-Driven Measures of Business Performance	Strategy-Driven Measures of Business Performance
• Throughput • Status of work in progress • Average, maximum and minimum elapsed time between events • Percent of work following exception path • Percent of work requiring manual intervention • Delays and waste by task • Queue volumes • Bottlenecks and resource load comparisons • Task performance speed by worker • Rate of work product defects	• Achievement of business goals and objective • Policy performance • Emerging business threats and opportunities • Actor activity near the thresholds of risk • Violation rates and potential patterns of fraud • Out-of-tolerance conditions • Rare circumstances (unmodeled scenarios) • Relative effectiveness of sanctions • Rate of new product/service roll-out

Principle #5. Becoming strategy-driven requires business rules and decision management.

MEASUREMENT

How do you demonstrate business alignment? You must be able to *measure it*. In other words, to prove you have business alignment you must measure the business performance of actual business operations.

In the past, much discussion in this regard centered on business activity modeling (BAM). Frankly, I found much of that discussion clouded by a narrow focus on business processes. Measuring the effectiveness of business processes is simply not the same thing as measuring the effectiveness of a strategy.

Where can we look for greater clarity? Roger Burlton has famously said, "The really rapid change is in the rules, not in the processes. If you separate the rules, you can develop remarkably stable processes."

I think that hits the nail on the head. With business processes, the focus is on the stability of how you operate; in strategy, the focus is on rapid response and the capacity (or necessity) to evolve (read "change") your decisions as quickly as possible. With strategy you need to measure the dynamic aspects of operational business activity. These are very different animals. Appropriate separation of concerns is presented in table 2.

Principle #6. Strategy-driven measures of business performance are about the capacity to change.

The bottom-line is this. To achieve business alignment, you must become strategy-driven. To be strategy-driven, you must be able respond dynamically and effectively to change. To respond dynamically and effectively to change, you need business rules and decision management. It's really as simple as 1-2-3. **A&G**

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Taking the Bird's Eye View on Legacy Transformation and Modernization

By Rajeev Kumar

Before embarking upon the "transformation" journey—however big (or small) it is—take time to align your IT strategy with the corporate strategy and vision.

Granted, legacy transformation or legacy modernization is not new. Usually the first association people have when hearing the word legacy transformation is the process of replacing old technology with newer IT systems and applications. Upgrading a company's IT systems has been an "evergreen" topic for IT departments.

However, the dimension and the impact of legacy transformation have changed. It is more than an "IT replacement" story. It has become a growth story. Companies are realizing the business growth potential facilitated through IT. They want to capitalize on new opportunities to identify, reach, and engage customers by using big data, cloud, mobile, and social technologies—and need the IT infrastructure to do so quickly. As such, IT modernization has moved up on the CIO agenda as a priority.

Today modernizing the IT infrastructure has become a critical factor in supporting a company's business growth and competitiveness.

This means you need to take the bird's eye view when devising your company's legacy transformation strategy. Before embarking upon the "transformation" journey—however big (or small) it is—take time to align your IT strategy with the corporate strategy and vision.

A complete plan will encompass not only the technology you wish to upgrade to in order to meet business goals, but more importantly, how you will mobilize your team and keep everyone on the same page during the transformation process.

To get started, here are some key questions you should be asking yourself to help you decide on an approach that best fits your environment:

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1 **Stakeholder commitment:** What is the plan to get ongoing support and interest, especially for a multiyear project, from your business stakeholders? How do you manage priorities between running the business and supporting the transformation? What is the plan to have a quick ROI?

2 **Technology governance:** Technocrats are creative and innovative. They experiment. There is no end to the best technology—it's like a parking lot syndrome. How do you decide what technology is best for your organization?

3 **Organization realignment:** How do you plan the reskilling of the resources with changed roles and responsibilities? How do you leverage the architecture office or create one to provide guidance and governance? Distribution of skills, not just technical but business too, for better resource utilization and long-term retention is a must.

4 **Delivery channel optimization:** Diversity of people and skills breeds innovation. And if managed correctly, it will reduce cost and improve speed to market. How do you tap into the core competency of your internal staff, an incumbent IT partner, or bring in a new partner? What type of partnership do you need with the IT vendor?

5 **Process optimization:** How do you measure process efficiency? What levers do you need to apply to move the needle on process optimization? How flexible is your process to adapt to the changing needs of the agile executing process? Remember change is the only constant in this process.

While there is no "one-size-fits-all" plan, looking at best practices, successful legacy transformation projects have the following characteristics in common:

- **Take a Look at the Crystal Ball:** Envision the socio-economic environment in which the company will operate in five, 10, or 20 years from now. How do your business processes need to change and be designed to stay competitive, and keep your company's greatest asset—the people—at the very center? Based on this projection, map the business processes and IT system requirements, emphasizing flexibility and openness.
- **Walk Before You Run:** Start small to win confidence within the entire organization. Management and employees generally need to see the potential for improvement in their business processes before they will fully support a full-scale transformation process. Only once everyone is on board can a transformation process truly begin to pick up speed and move efficiently.
- **Choose a Legacy Transformation Team:** IT transformation projects typically run in addition to the regular IT work. This is like keeping the car moving at 90 m.p.h. and trying to change the tire at the same time. Assess the skill set and work load of your team members and put together a legacy transformation team. Bring in an IT partner to fill skill set gaps, or avoid work overload, with the flexibility to ramp up and down as your legacy transformation project progresses. This will allow for your team members to play their part in the transformation process while still being able to meet their own daily work goals.
- **Establish a Legacy Transformation Office:** To run the work stream on time and on budget, establish a transformation office (for the duration of the project). Dedicate one team member to oversee and manage the legacy transformation process and keep business partners throughout the organization engaged. Part-time assignments reduce the success rate and increase the time frame for the project.

In short, the success of a legacy transformation project is directly related to the time spent preparing and evaluating options prior to the start, putting the right team in place, and working together with the business partners across the organization. A&G

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MIKE WALKER

PART TWO

Part Two: Walker Talks Business Architecture and the Best Practices for Using It

Editor's Note: This is Part 2 of an interview with Mike J. Walker, who last summer became director of enterprise architecture at Dell, leaving a successful career behind at Microsoft for a move to the Austin technology company. Walker has few peers when it comes to being a leader, innovator, and expert in the technology industry, which is why we selected him for an interview. Part 1 of the interview appeared in the previous issue of Architecture & Governance Magazine.

A&G: Describe examples of business architecture (BA) and/or information architecture (IA) you have seen at organizations you have worked for or been exposed to (generic, no company names)? And how would you rate those efforts?

WALKER: In regard to business architecture success stories, I've seen a company transform its entire IT landscape to make business architecture a first-class citizen. It did this by creating an executive business steering committee. And that executive business steering committee was responsible for centralizing the corporate strategy. Having that structure tied down then led to a formal business architecture team. The business architecture team reported directly to the strategy steering group. So, for the first time in that company's history, it had a business architecture translating the business corporate strategy into something consumable by the enterprise. That function was elevated all the way up to executive vice presidents, the highest level in the corporation, to focus on the discipline of the business architecture.

The outputs of that were things like road maps, business and IT strategies, and architectures and future state models of where the company wants to go. The company was so ambitious that it said let's forget the sins of the past and let's focus on what this company would look like 10 years from now, and let's create that view. Committee members spent several months creating that view, and then they went back to the enterprise and said, okay, what is the gap, because this is where we need to go as a company. It really gave the company focus and direction in what's important and what's not important.

A&G: Have you seen anyone make an attempt at BA or IA and fail? If so, what led to that failure?

WALKER: A lot of times it comes down to a few factors. Executive support: it has to be something that's important to your CIO level executives. If they don't buy in, it's not going to happen. I've seen those failures. I've seen environments where the CIOs were believers but the people didn't have the right level of business acumens, or they didn't have the right leadership skills that would make it happen.

All that is important to note here is none of these failures were the result of having a bad tool, a bad technology, or a bad model. I've seen all those failed organizations overcompensate on capability models and strategy maps, etc. The result was that they lacked the critical soft skills to make that a successful venture in their companies.

The linchpin in all of this is: if the people who are booting this up don't have great people skills, they will fail. Because, at that level, this job is based on influence

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and making people understand that this is important. It's not about the model you use; it's about how you conduct yourself and how you win the hearts and minds of the organization.

A&G: If you had to pick one critical success factor for BA/IA, what do you think it would be?

WALKER: The critical success factor really comes down to two things. One is business acumen: knowing the business, what the company wants to accomplish, its goals and objectives, its strategies, etc. That will help you have a meaningful conversation. Second is soft skills. I've talked a lot about this on my blog: emotional intelligence, which is self-awareness of yourself but also self-awareness of other people, things like empathy. If you don't have a high degree of emotional intelligence, if you're not empathetic, you're not making a connection. And if you're not making a connection, they're less likely to buy into what you're doing. Why is this important? Because when you're at the business architecture and information architecture levels, the stakes are much higher because they have broad and pervasive impacts. It becomes much harder to convince someone to change or architect their business architecture versus buying a new server.

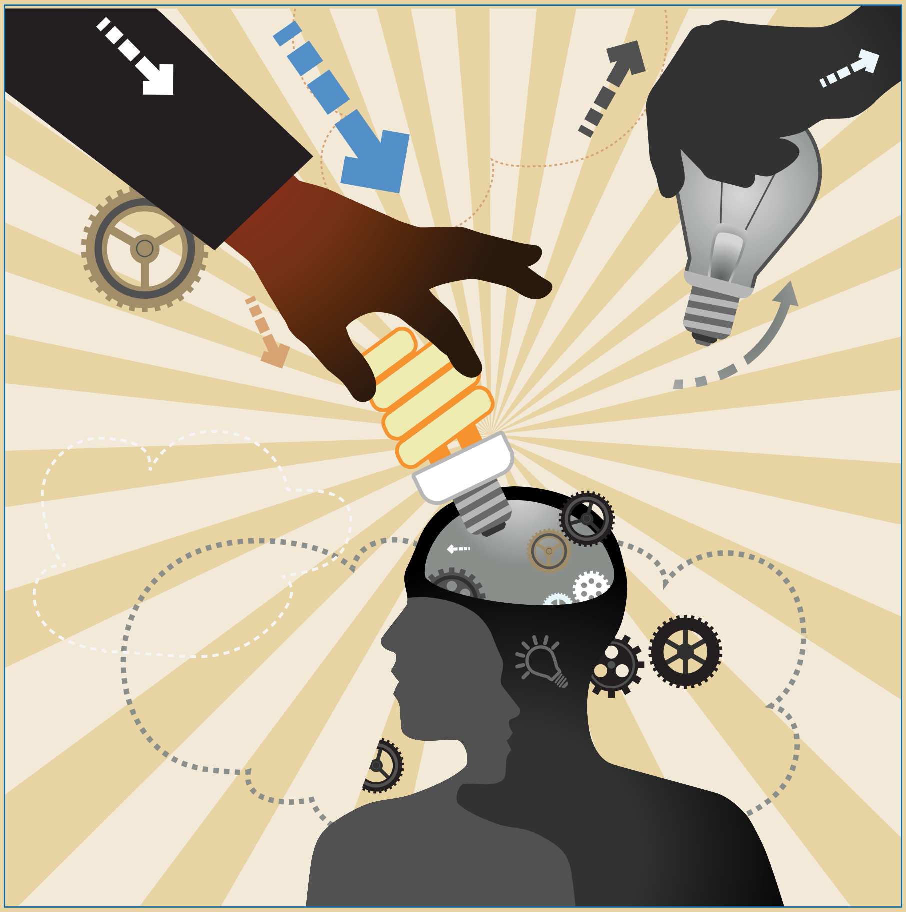
A&G: What other general comments/thoughts do you have about business and information architecture as it relates or does not relate to enterprise architecture? To solution development and delivery?

WALKER: Both of those disciplines, in my opinion, are part of enterprise architecture. There are specific things you do to make sure you have the right enterprise architecture. If you look at any methodology out there, it says you should start out with understanding the corporate strategy. Then, you should go and do a business architecture. Then, you should go understand your information architecture, application, technology, etc.

These two disciplines roll under enterprise architecture. If we look at the BAIT model, which is business, application, information, and technology architecture, enterprise architects are focused more on the business and information and will look at application and technology more secondary. The IT architects have a tendency to focus more on the application and technology architecture. Primarily speaking, they can't divorce themselves from the other stuff, but if they're going to focus on transforming the company those are the two disciplines they have to spend more time on. A&G

The linchpin in all of this is: if the people who are booting this up don't have great people skills, they will fail. Because, at that level, this job is based on influence and making people understand that this is important. It's not about the model you use; it's about how you conduct yourself and how you win the hearts and minds of the organization.

FIVE ESSENTIAL CAPABILITIES
Every Organization Should Invest In



By Jeff Scott

One of the biggest challenges we face when building capability models is getting teams to move from *functional* thinking—the things we do—to *capability* thinking—the ability we have to do things. Organizations generally create functional teams around capabilities, making it difficult to distinguish the two. For example, most organizations have a marketing *capability*; they also have a marketing *function* where most of that capability resides. Even when companies distribute marketing across multiple lines of business, we still tend to consider it a function first. In fact, one common way to develop a capability model is to start with an organization's functional business areas and then discover the capabilities within them. This leads to a capability model tightly related to functions.

But what about capabilities that are truly distributed across the entire organization without a corresponding functional area—crucial capabilities like leadership, collaboration, and innovation? Many capability models I see lack these capabilities because they aren't intuitively obvious. But their importance is clear. Here are five essential capabilities every organization should include in their capability model:

1 **Leadership.** Leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate people to fulfill a mission. We often think of leadership embodied by a set of people at the top of the organization, but it is a capability that can, and should, exist at every level. At the top of the organization, leadership focuses largely on directing others, while in the lower ranks, people accomplish

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One of the biggest challenges we face when building capability models is getting teams to move from *functional* thinking—the things we do—to *capability* thinking—the ability we have to do things.

it through influence. Your company's leadership performance at all levels has a lot to do with how much the organization can accomplish in a given amount of time.

2 **Collaboration.** Collaboration is the ability to work productively with others. At the low end of performance, collaboration enables an organization to effectively break down complex tasks and distribute the parts across a group of people or organizations. At higher levels of performance, collaboration creates organizational synergy, producing a performance boost where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Some organizations might require a higher degree of collaboration than others—but every organization needs to collaborate at some level.

3 **Adaptability.** At no time in our history has adaptability been so critical. Products, services, organizations, companies, and even whole industries come and go in a heartbeat. Adaptability is the organization's ability to give up the existing skills, processes, and technologies that have led to its past success and create new skills and approaches that ensure success tomorrow. Organizations need to be adaptable just to survive and highly adaptable if they expect to thrive.

4 **Creativity.** The problems we face today are much more complex and time-critical than those of the past, and we often cannot solve them by relying on traditional approaches. Creativity describes the organization's ability to think differently and allow that changed thinking to influence day-to-day and strategic decisions. At the low end of the performance curve, tradition and best practices trap organizations, rendering them unable to solve persistent problems. At the high end, organizations have more new ideas than they can act on.

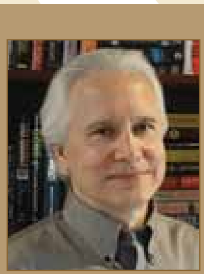
5 **Innovation.** Innovation builds on creativity, enabling an organization to turn creative ideas into reality. It is the ability to translate a good concept into a compelling value proposition that others are willing to support and invest in. When innovation ability is high, companies go beyond creating innovative products to designing innovative processes, organizational structures, management practices, and employment engagement approaches.

The bottom line:

These five essential capabilities permeate the entire organization and every individual associated with it, so it's crucial to optimize them. Functional units can be established to act as centers of excellence that support and encourage the development of these capabilities, but that is not where the value resides. High-performing organizations see these capabilities as essential to success and invest heavily in them.

What other capabilities would you put in this category? Are they in your capability model? **A&G**

JEFF SCOTT is vice president of business and technology strategy for Accelare Inc., a management consulting firm enabling strategy execution excellence. He is a former Forrester analyst and an internationally recognized thought leader in the areas of business architecture and strategy execution. Jeff currently writes the blog: The Business Architect.



A&G CALENDAR

Gartner Enterprise Architecture Summit
National Harbor, Maryland
May 21–23, 2013
www.gartner.com/technology/summits/na/enterprise-architecture/

Forrester Enterprise Architecture Forum EMEA
London, UK
June 10–11, 2013
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IRM UK's Enterprise Architecture Conference
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OMG BA Innovation Summit
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