

Organisation's need for a Decision Centre

An Organisation is a complex mechanism operating within an even more complex external environment. To ensure the sustainability of such a mechanism it needs to be agile and morph constantly to ensure operational delivery is maintained at efficient levels - which are aligned to the ever changing customer needs and competitor capabilities.

Still, it seems very difficult for organisations to change in the structured and aligned manner that would be expected when the strategic intent of the change has been clearly defined.

- How often do we see change decisions being made within an organisation where the impact of such decisions, on underlying operations, are not clearly understood?
- How often are project implementation goals not met, and project budgets being exceeded, because of "unforeseen" circumstances?
- How often do we see the changes, of the persons shouting the loudest, being implemented – regardless of the long term benefit of such decisions on the organisation as a whole?



These problems are being experienced because the change decisions are usually made by experts or innovators within distinct functional areas in the organisation. The need may be valid or even a brilliant solution to an operational problem but, if not evaluated for its impact on the organisation as a whole, could result in an unplanned impact on other areas of business. In worst case scenarios, such changes can even impede the organisation from achieving its strategic targets.

The constraint in this way of planning change is that functional heads mostly have a depth of knowledge in their own functional areas and not the breadth of knowledge required for the cross-functional, cross-capability (process and technology), cross-information flow view required to identify the full impact of any change within an organisation.

Therefore, to overcome these change design and implementation limitations, organisations need to create “Decision Centres” with an end-to-end view of the organisation, where changes can be modelled and reviewed for their impact on the organisation as a whole. Such a Decision Centre needs to be manned by individuals who specialise in knowing the cross-functional, cross-capability and cross-information flow views of the organisation.

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Enterprise Architects specialise in multiple architecture types (business, application, information, infrastructure, etc.) that informs the global views of an organisation and are therefore uniquely positioned to serve as the custodians of such a “Decision Centre”.

Zeta however advises certain changes to the way Enterprise Architects currently operate to ensure the establishment of a fully functional and efficient “Decision Centre”. These changes are best explained in the requirements for the “Decision Centre” summarised below.

The Decision Centre should:

- Report directly to the office of the CEO, and not the CIO or CTO as currently the case for most Enterprise Architecture functions;
- Extend their visibility and working scope from only “Micro Enterprise Architecture” to also include “Macro Enterprise Architecture”;
- Maintain a view on both the achievement of the strategic objectives issued by the Board; and, the health / sustainability / operational risk of the organisation;

- Respond to organisational requests for business intelligence (as related to their “Micro and Macro Enterprise Architecture” work). Examples of such business intelligence topics are:
 - Technology opportunities that can expand the sales footprint;
 - New competitor business models that may threaten the current way of doing business;
 - Functional overlaps or inefficiencies that cause weaknesses in service delivery to customers; and,
 - Unique resource characteristics (e.g. people skills or technology features) that can be used to outperform competitors.
- Operate a “Change Hub” where
 - Organisational change requests are received, modelled, evaluated and prioritised; and,
 - Organisational changes are designed, built and managed before being released into the operational environment of the organisation.
- Assist operational environments with the realignment of their operational targets after changes affecting operations have been implemented.



Figure 1: Positioning of the Decision Centre within an Organisation

Zeta therefore advises the use of Enterprise Architects in “Decision Centres”, to plan and build operational changes, to attain effectively agile organisations.