



REPORT

# **The Future of Enterprise Architecture: 7 Tips to Improve Your Journey Towards Progressive EA**



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# Introduction

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Today's businesses experience a constant state of change as new business demands rapidly emerge. Notably, enterprises are becoming increasingly IT-intensive as companies invest in the latest tech tools to drive success. However, these IT changes can quickly become challenges, as businesses aren't always able to have a complete overview and continuously govern the change. That's why organizations look to Enterprise Architecture (EA) to determine impact and optimize their business output amidst these changes.

EA can offer much more than helping organizations identify IT systems that support operations or navigate their application landscape. EA can be a significant asset, central in aligning IT and business strategy, extracting additional value from the infrastructure and investments, and staying one step ahead of the competition.

**Strategic Enterprise Architecture empowers organizations to unlock the future of business—but only if they can overcome common stumbling blocks.**

To understand what's keeping so many companies from accessing EA's full potential, we surveyed nearly 300 practitioners worldwide. These EA professionals and related stakeholders were looking for assistance in readying their businesses for the future. They shared with us the challenges they believe their organizations still need to overcome to succeed with change. Fortunately, they came to the right place.

Keep reading for the seven steps your organization can take to mature its Enterprise Architecture function, succeed with change, and prepare for the future.

**24% of organizations still prioritize detailed and formalized architecture documentation over democratized and mass-consumable knowledge capture.**

**TIP #1**

## Meet Your Colleagues Where They Work to Get the Best Data

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Before they can put plans into action, enterprise architects (EAs) have traditionally gathered business data using centralized documentation. They rely on their own collection process and maintain control over documentation sharing. Organizations with this centralized focus risk falling into the trap of zeroing in on their particular business segment instead of basing judgments on the organization as a system of interrelated departments.

EAs know they need a complete overview of their organization to understand how their role influences it. However, sourcing the sheer volume of data necessary to achieve a 360-degree viewpoint is no small undertaking for a single team. The task of managing this centralized data would be a full-time job—and if it wasn't, then accuracy of the data would soon lapse as the responsible EAs focused on other tasks or data sets.

**Our survey found that 24% of organizations prioritize detailed and formalized architecture documentation over democratized and mass-consumable knowledge capture.**

Instead of relying on the traditional method of slow, manual and error-prone capture of information, the democratized process captures perspectives across the business and alleviates the burden on EAs. Democratic data collection hands documentation to the people with the most relevant knowledge. It makes collection manageable by staying up-to-date, improving the quality of information, and yielding more representative insights while making collection more manageable.

Delegating frees you, the architect, to spend more time on strategic design and decision-making rather than chasing people for documentation. By handing responsibility to others, you'll capture insights on systems and processes that don't appear in spreadsheets (like user-friendliness and business and technical fit). So that you can prioritize, plan, and realize the true benefit of change and highly informed business decisions.

If the thought of making IT decisions in an organization-wide conversation makes your head spin, don't worry: Ardoq's [Engagement Platform](#) makes collecting insights manageable by granting the democratic access that most EA tooling lacks. To start, you can delegate subject matter experts within the platform (versus letting every team member share their insights).

[Broadcasts](#), Ardoq's highly configurable messaging platform, adds structure to the collection process by sending out invitations and reminders for [Surveys](#) that ask for feedback regarding specific business areas. The feature can even assess your architecture models' structure to route the right messages to the right people, adding a level of personalization that can go a long way towards getting the desired response.

As an added benefit, opening the floor to collaboration positions you and the Enterprise Architecture team to be more involved in change processes at a strategic level. Bringing people into the data collection process raises awareness for the organizational value EA is driving while building relationships and trust across the organization—which EAs need to get a seat at the decision making table.



**Only 28% of organizations regularly share their EA insights with other teams in the business.**

## TIP #2

## Automate Insights to Share With Every Stakeholder Easily

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Collaboration shouldn't stop after your EA teams tap colleagues for feedback on their IT usage. **And yet, only 28% of organizations regularly share their EA insights with other teams in the business**, likely because document sharing and understanding with those outside the EA team can be challenging to pull off. But boxing yourself in—whether intentional or not—compromises how much trust and responsibility stakeholders are willing to give you.

As an enterprise architect, you need to promote your value to stakeholders so that they view you as a critical fixture in business and IT governance and planning. You achieve this by not only sharing your insights and documents but by using the information you've collaboratively collected in strategic planning and prioritization.

Besides initial planning, stakeholders also want to know how change projects are progressing. If you aren't able to share easy-to-understand updates with them, they may lose confidence in your team's abilities. That can mean losing buy-in for future projects and being relegated to order taker instead of trusted counterpart—positioning the entire EA program as a subset of business instead of a core feature.



However, you can become a proactive, rather than reactive, collaborator in the continuous change process of the organization by using tools that filter EA data so that it's presented in a way that speaks to stakeholders' individual priorities (e.g., cost reduction, compliance, etc.)

Ardoq's Engagement Platform is valuable not only for collecting data but also for sharing it. With Presentations, you don't have to spend hours making static PowerPoints

that break down ROI for stakeholders. Instead, the platform automatically generates an overview of progress understandable to individuals in other departments and across the hierarchy, which gives you confidence in your expertise. With models and plans that speak to both sides of the business, you can collaborate with stakeholders to assess whether your efforts are contributing to wider business objectives, and fine-tune plans towards the best path forward.



**Nearly half of organizations (42%)  
admitted to using significant amounts  
of shadow IT.**

### TIP #3

## Take Control of Your IT Portfolio

**Nearly half of survey respondents (42%) admitted to their organization using significant amounts of shadow IT.** While shadow IT can increase productivity for the departments that adopted them, its presence throws a wrench in EA's governance efforts.

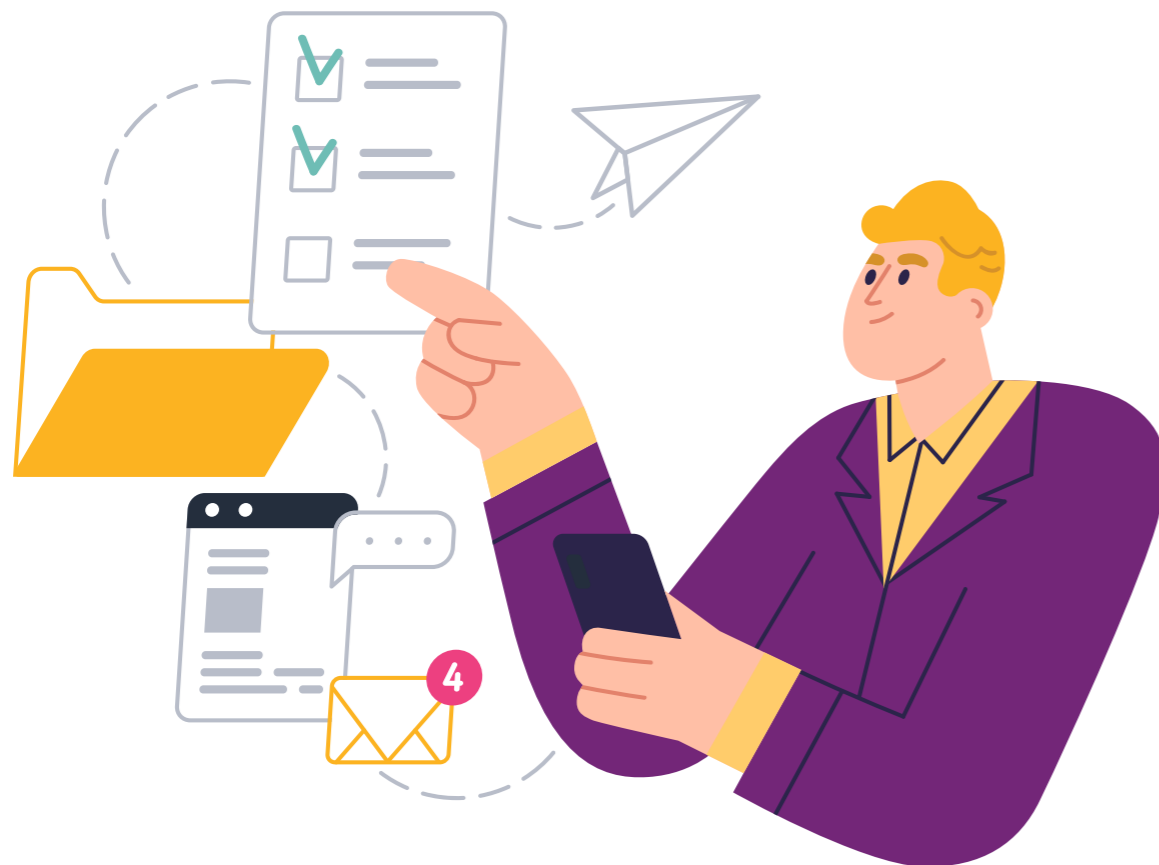
It isn't easy to cohesively manage IT-intensive organizations—especially if you don't own or have visibility into all the pieces. If you don't know what's in your IT portfolio, including how much tools cost, their risk exposure, how they impact change, etc., you can't be sure you're governing them all appropriately. That's how risk arises.

Get your IT infrastructure in order through strategic [Application Portfolio Management](#) (APM). With a centralized overview of every application and system in the IT portfolio, you'll be able to identify vulnerabilities that should be addressed, like a dated system that's incapable of evolving to meet new time-to-market requirements. Comparing your IT investments side by side, you'll also be able to see any overlapping capabilities that

signify a tool that could be cut or applications that have the potential to be cross-functional across departments and projects to deliver higher ROI.

Be sure to promote your APM efforts to others within the organization. This way, they'll know they can work with you to determine more strategic solutions for their business needs—and you'll prevent more shadow IT from accruing in the future and sabotaging the health of the IT portfolio.





It's time to kick low-value systems out of the IT stack. After you execute Application Portfolio Management, you may find low-value systems holding your business back, either through the time it takes to maintain them or costs that outrank the benefits they offer. Keep in mind, removing applications without performing a thorough assessment of their influence on the organizational ecosystem presents its risks.

Before removing applications, it's vital to understand how many employees use them or how they interact with other systems to avoid upsetting workflows or losing data stored in those platforms. This knowledge also ensures coverage for the employee's responsibilities once those tools are gone.

**Only 33% of organizations set Enterprise Architecture goals, objectives, and investments in cooperation with key stakeholders across both business and IT teams.**

## TIP #4

## Add Business Context to Your Change Process

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A business invests in IT infrastructure so that it's armed to succeed. It's only logical, then, that IT decisions should map to overarching business objectives—and yet, **only 33% of organizations set Enterprise Architecture goals, objectives, and investments in cooperation with key stakeholders across both business and IT teams.**

If change efforts don't serve explicit, relevant purposes, they'll create unnecessary disruption within the enterprise, taking time and resources away from other core business activities and diminishing output by consequence.

Try viewing IT changes through a business lens to test if they're worthwhile. Proactively connecting with business leaders and stakeholders assists you in understanding their expectations and priorities while allowing you to devise strategies that map towards them. That way, you can be far more discerning in which variables should change in order to deliver the results that will move your business forward.



### Collaboration is a Two-Way Street

**It can't be said enough: communication between colleagues is crucial for Enterprise Architecture efforts to succeed. EAs' should move their organization into the future—so you need to know what that future looks like to make that happen. Therefore, collaborating with stakeholders gives you vital information to guide your work.**

Robust data collection positions you to be a strategic agent of change. Leaders in the business have their ideas for what needs to change. With a detailed overview of the organization's business and IT ecosystem, you'll be able to illuminate new optimization opportunities for them.

Ardoq allows you to fuse business and IT to engage stakeholders with ease. The platform's [Business Capability Modeling](#) lets you assess how the capabilities you have available within your organization contribute to those outlined business goals, as well as how you can mature your applications, people, and processes to achieve them.



**Just one-fourth (26%) of organizations believe they have complete visibility and control of risk within their IT portfolio.**

## TIP #5

## Manage Change, Cost, and Risk as You Scale

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Organizations need to maintain visibility into their infrastructure to control risk. Otherwise, they can't plan and execute change successfully since they're putting out fires from unmitigated variables. Yet, despite this, **just one-fourth (26%) of organizations believe they have complete visibility and control of risk within their IT portfolio.**

You need to be vigilant with your EA efforts since there are many sources of risk in an IT portfolio. For example, older solutions cannot meet the time-to-market change requirements of business. Other common risks include reliance on employees with limited bandwidth and dependence on external consultants.

You only have so much capacity—both in terms of time, people, and money—to deliver new benefits to your organization. So don't waste it by dealing with issues that could have been controlled through a proactive risk assessment.

As we've covered, maintaining connected information about your IT and business environments offers visibility to help you identify risk factors proactively. With clear insights into the application experts within your ranks and where you need support, you can be confident that IT tools are being managed correctly.

For the IT landscape areas that require additional expertise, consider outsourcing commodity operations to a company that has more capacity and skill to run them efficiently and effectively. To do this, you'll first need to execute cloud migration.

If all systems and applications exist within the cloud, you can more seamlessly extend access to them while still maintaining ownership. This provides you with the flexibility to scale your IT portfolio over time without having to scale your internal teams in tandem. Plus, by proactively migrating your IT portfolio to the cloud, you reduce operating risks that can occur during unplanned downtime since external experts will be able to intervene immediately.

**Only 33% of organizations make IT investments carefully, looking ahead to future consequences, not just the immediate issues at hand.**

## TIP #6

## Understand the Impact of Strategy and Projects Across the Whole Business

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In the rush to digitally transform, it's easy for business leaders to get swept up in technology trends without thinking about how they can play a part in the business long term. As evidence, **only 33% of organizations make IT investments, looking beyond immediate issues and carefully examining the future consequences.**

Before stakeholders make any changes to the business or IT infrastructures, they need to understand how those decisions will impact strategies and projects across the whole business. That's where EAs have an opportunity to shine. Backed by your organizational data, you can influence the change prioritization process—and save your company from making poor investments. By referencing architectural models to clearly see when the change fits into existing workflows, it ensures change decisions are made in the best interest of the business.

### Decisions rooted in data produce more accurate outcomes.

It isn't enough to ask what needs to change and what the outcome may be. Besides planning the structural organizational and IT changes, you'll want to answer important questions before launching a new project:

- ✓ What are the strategic objectives of our company?
- ✓ What projects realize the strategic objectives and when?
- ✓ Who is responsible for the most critical projects, and what are these impacting?
- ✓ What are the potential conflicts in the projects we are running?
- ✓ How will the benefits be realized? How will they be measured?
- ✓ How will the projects impact the prioritization process if the results don't match the hypothesis for change?

You don't need to have all the answers or have mapped out every possible data point before putting plans into action. As you'll remember from the first tip, chasing down a perfect data model of the enterprise will slow you down, resulting in more time theorizing change instead of executing it. As long as you have a strong idea of your company's As-Is state, you're ready to make strategic recommendations to stakeholders.

With continuous data collection, Ardoq's dynamic, data-based platform offers the overall picture you need to drive [Strategic Planning and Execution](#). Its automated insights capabilities allow you to discern whether a proposal truly connects to the business goal. With it, you can model how defined changes will impact other variables within the organization through defined KPIs and ensure there's a realistic benefits realization plan available before the investment is made. You'll be able to make smart decisions at speed, without sabotaging other areas of the enterprise.



**Only 20% of organizations model  
how future states will affect  
their business.**

## TIP #7

## Simulate and Compare Current and Future States At-Speed

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If there's one constant in business today, it's that nothing stays the same for long. And yet, far too many organizations aren't prepared to weather change swiftly and efficiently. **Only 20% of organizations model how future states will affect their business.**

The ability to respond to challenges in real-time requires skill, but consistently operating reactively exhausts resources and bandwidth. Moreover, addressing business matters episodically doesn't enable an organization to grow cohesively. A long-term business strategy, however, does.

**External factors—like a global pandemic or economic meltdown—can upend even the best-laid plans, which is why you need to have a few roadmaps in your back pocket.**

Consider [Scenarios](#) as your looking glass into the future, portraying the potential outcomes, problems, and risks that various future states could bring. Knowing the future state you're aiming for, helps you understand the target tasks and how to achieve them. You can also assess whether current plans in the works are still the best course of action by comparing the mainline to your scenario to spot where they diverge. This way, you can toggle plans before they take effect and avoid any unwanted outcomes.

EA tools are notoriously difficult at reconciling the AS-IS situation and the TO-BE target state. Ardoq's approach with Scenarios lets you create branches in your enterprise data that will automatically track the evolving AS-IS situation while also defining TO-BE changes that can be automatically merged into your mainline when complete.

The collaborative nature of the platform also allows your colleagues to input their ideas throughout the scenario analysis. Then, with the power of feedback and foresight, you'll have the knowledge you need to enter the future with certainty.

[Learn how OMERS transformed itself into a future-forward enterprise with Ardoq.](#)

# Enterprise Architecture Should Be an Asset, Not an Afterthought

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Launching an Enterprise Architecture initiative is an opportunity to transform the way work gets done today so that you can achieve the business success you want tomorrow. An effective EA program will require shifts in mindset beyond adjusting how your company's IT is handled.

Along with a dynamic Enterprise Architecture platform, adopt these best practices to ensure it's put to use correctly:

- ✓ **Align change with business objectives:** IT and business can't work in silos. Push for collaboration with stakeholders and other business leaders to understand their priorities and communicate EA plans and progress in terms that map accordingly. Once stakeholders see you as a strategic agent of change, you'll have the opportunity to become a proactive decision-maker. Then stakeholders will listen when you steer away from decisions that don't serve the business in the long term.
- ✓ **Ground decisions in data:** By leveraging up-to-date models of your organization's As-Is state, you can find a middle ground between stakeholders' goals and where the opportunities for optimization truly are within the business's architecture.
- ✓ **Democratize and automate the process of keeping architecture information up to date:** To secure a 360-degree view of your enterprise, you'll need to enlist the help of others. Your colleagues are valuable assets in driving strategic change, so prioritize collaboration and communication. Distributed access to your Enterprise Architecture platform empowers others to share their insights, while automated data management ensures constant up-to-date accuracy, giving you more time to drive value.



**Become the future-forward,  
data-driven organization you're envisioning with Ardoq.**

**Book a 15-minute call**

**[www.ardoq.com](https://www.ardoq.com)**

## About the Survey

Between July 2020 and June 2021, we surveyed 278 Enterprise Architecture professionals and related stakeholders across the world via our website, email and social media pages.

### Geography

Half of the responses (55%) came from Europe. Approximately 30% of the responses were from North America, while the rest were spread across the globe.

### Roles

67% of respondents are Architects, while 18% hold roles within IT, and 6% identify as C-suite.

### Industries

The respondents work across 59 industries, 18% being active in Information Technology and Services, 10% in Accounting, and 7% in Financial Services.