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Practitioners of Enterprise Architecture (EA) are tasked with undertaking the analysis of a business's structure and processes to address the goals of effectiveness, efficiency, agility and durability. They use capability modelling, a technique for creating a business anchor model that represents an organisation's distinct and differentiated business capabilities, independent of its existing systems, people or domains.

Creating this capability model is one of the most interesting and difficult challenges EA can offer, but for an enterprise that doesn't already have such a model in place, developing the first one can be a tough assignment. In theory, EA incorporates Design Thinking principles and is an extremely valuable piece of business intelligence for enterprises pursuing transformation. In practice, however, EA positions are often associated with IT infrastructure specific to a software programme or a particular project rather than the enterprise itself.

Enterprises are no longer content with academic EA initiatives that are long on documentation and short on business value and results. They are disappointed if they cannot see a tangible impact on innovation outcome after investing heavily in training/workshop programmes. Enterprise Architecture programmes must be more closely aligned with the realities and social dynamics of established businesses for them to be fruitful.

There are many ways to frame the capabilities of an organisation in a capability taxonomy – and framing is

important. The most effective capability models reflect the needs, ownership, and strategy of the organisation in subtle ways. The techniques of Design Thinking are well suited for the task of generating a capability model. Enterprise Design is a term that has come to be used by Enterprise Architects to describe the merging of the disciplines of Service Design, Information Management and Enterprise Architecture.

Design and information systems guru Richard Buchanan first coined the term “wicked problems” to describe situations where neither the problem nor the solution are entirely clear or well-defined. Such cases require effort be applied to defining and scoping the problem. Applying the adage that “in every problem lies an opportunity”, Enterprise Design represents a “wicked” opportunity and an approach for solving “wicked” architectural design issues.

Design Thinking in business has a heritage based in consumer-product design, traditional architecture and urban planning. This has proven to be particularly useful when solving intractable business and customer-service problems.

Enterprise Design is an approach that is increasingly shaping the way we define and deliver our services. Leveraging an iterative Design Thinking methodology, together with engineering and design-principle precision, it places the consumer and the services they receive right at the centre of every EA initiative.

WHY ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE NEEDS DESIGN THINKING.