Architecture Governance

The Cornerstone of Digital Transformation



Leads modernization efforts through seamless collaboration across the enterprise



Establishes guardrails to ensure IT resources are aligned with strategic objectives



Enhances transparency by implementing standardized, repeatable decisionmaking frameworks



Ensures strategic alignment by directly connecting IT investments to business objectives



Maximizes efficiency by identifying redundancies, optimizing workflows, and minimizing waste



Strengthens resilience by crafting adaptable, future-proof system architectures

Pragmatic Architecture Governance Framework

Establish a Governance and Execution Team to Drive the Rationalization Process Effectively

Implementation Steps

Establish ARB

Form a centralized Architecture Review Board (ARB) comprising business stakeholders to represent strategic priorities, enterprise architects to ensure technical alignment, and domain experts to provide specialized knowledge.

Form Squads

Assemble decentralized self-organizing cross-functional teams (squads) with dedicated members from each domain, including Business, IT, and Finance, to handle specific business areas or projects.

Operational Flow

ARB Formulate Guidelines

The ARB will formulate enterprise-wide architectural goals and standards that directly support the defined strategic business and DOGE drivers.

Squads Execute Project

Each squad will autonomously execute projects within their designated business area, adhering to the standards and guidelines established by the ARB.

ARB Reviews & Approves

The ARB will conduct thorough reviews and provide approvals for all significant modernization decisions and architectural designs, ensuring they align with the overarching strategic business and technical goals.

Benefits

Enhances Collaboration

Enhances cross-functional collaboration and accountability by establishing clear roles and responsibilities within the ARB and squads, facilitating seamless communication & knowledge sharing.

Empowers Squad Autonomy

Empowers squads with autonomy to drive innovation and execute projects efficiently, while maintaining strategic alignment through ARB oversight.

Facilitates Knowledge Sharing

Promotes continuous learning by enabling squads to share best

practices, lessons, and architectural patterns.

2 Identify and Organize IT Applications and Resources to Build a Comprehensive Rationalization Baseline

Implementation Steps

Discover IT Resources

Squads will identify all IT projects and systems within their purview, collecting detailed information including technical specifications, business functions, user base, dependencies, and operational status.

Tag and Categorize

Classify applications based on their business value, technical condition, and cost, and include additional metadata such as business owner, support team, cost center, and criticality for detailed analysis.

Conduct Fit Assessment

Assess Functional and Technical Fit for each application using the captured data, evaluating how well each meets business needs (Functional Fit) and its technical suitability (Technical Fit).

Catalog and Verify

Utilize an Application Portfolio Management (APM) tool to centralize all application data, ensuring it can handle attributes like application name, description, version, platform, dependencies, and performance metrics, providing a single source of truth.

Operational Flow

ARB Provides Assessment Criteria

The ARB will provide the assessment criteria and guidelines for value mapping and tagging, ensuring alignment with enterprise standards.

Squads Conduct Assessment

Squads will perform the assessment, ensuring they follow ARB's standards, and present key findings, such as significant overlaps or critical gaps, to the ARB for review.

Squad Lead Reports to ARB

Bi-weekly reviews between squad leads and the ARB will focus on progress, challenges, and preliminary findings, with the ARB providing guidance as needed.

ARB Identifies Redundancies and Gaps

The ARB will identify redundancies and gaps for optimization, ensuring strategic alignment through regular reviews, aligning with the defined strategic business and DOGE drivers.

Benefits

Improves Understanding of the IT Landscape

A full, tagged inventory gives a clear picture of the IT landscape, highlighting redundancies, underused applications, and critical systems, enabling better strategic planning.

Facilitates Data-Driven Decision Making

With detailed metadata and classifications, decisions about application rationalization are based on objective data rather than subjective opinions, improving reliability.

Mitigates the Risk of Oversight

Systematic cataloging minimizes the chance of overlooking critical applications or dependencies, ensuring that all aspects are considered in the rationalization process, reducing potential risks.

Centralizes Information to Ensure Consistency

The catalog serves as a centralized repository of information about IT resources, reducing confusion and ensuring consistency across the organization.

Strategically Evaluate and Rationalize IT Resources for Optimal Efficiency and Alignment

Implementation Steps

Set Targets

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Clearly define measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to guide the application rationalization process. These targets should align with business objectives and IT efficiency goals.

Operational Flow

Squad Creates Value Heat Maps

Squads will analyze, score, and create value heat maps, and propose categorizations and rationalization decisions.

Benefits

Optimizes the Application Portfolio

Ensures decisions are based on fit, reducing costs by retiring low-fit

Evaluate with Weighted Scoring

Develop a weighted scoring model that considers factors such as business value, technical debt, cost, user satisfaction, and strategic alignment, assigning weights based on organizational priorities.

Identify Dead Horses

Apply Dead Horse Theory to flag obsolete or low-value applications, such as those no longer providing value or too costly to maintain, to avoid wasted effort and focus resources on more impactful areas.

Generate Value Heatmap

Use Gartner TIME Framework to finalize rationalization decisions by classifying each application as Tolerate (necessary but not optimal), Invest (high-value, warranting enhancement), Migrate (replace or modernize), or Eliminate (no longer serving a purpose), with ARB approval to ensure alignment with strategic priorities.

ARB Reviews Scoring Outcomes

The ARB examines the scoring results and classifications to ensure they align with the strategic goals, requesting additional analysis or justification for certain decisions to maintain alignment.

ARB Makes Final Decision

The ARB makes the final decisions on which applications fall under each category (Tolerate, Invest, Migrate, Eliminate), ensuring the rationalization process supports long-term business strategy and DOGE efficiency goals.

Squad Lead Documents the Decision

For each application, clearly document the rationale behind its rationalization decision, outline the key factors influencing the decision, such as business value, cost, technical debt, and strategic alignment. applications, and improves efficiency by focusing on high-fit applications.

Minimizes Technical Debt

Identification of redundancies and gaps for better optimization, ensuring strategic alignment with DOGE drivers.

Enhances Risk Management and Compliance

Effective risk management through optimized resource management, with ARB ensuring compliance and balancing execution and governance.

Improves Resource Allocation

Enables more efficient distribution of resources by prioritizing highimpact initiatives, aligning efforts with strategic objectives, and ensuring optimal use of assets to drive business growth and innovation.

Prioritize, Roadmap, and Execute Rationalization Efforts to Maximize Value and Minimize Disruption

Implementation Steps

Conduct Change Impact Assessments (CIA)

Identify interdependencies between applications, infrastructure, and business processes, ensuring the roadmap sequences actions logically and avoids downstream disruptions.

Develop Roadmap with Iterative Delivery

Build a roadmap using SAFe's Program Increment (PI) Planning principles, where rationalization actions are broken into time-boxed increments, and Integrate PRINCE2's Stage Gates to define clear milestones.

Roll Out Changes in Waves

Break rationalization into waves by value, complexity, and dependencies (e.g., Wave 1: Remove redundancies, Wave 2: Containerize, Wave 3: Modernize). Use the MoSCoW prioritization technique (Must have, Should have, Could have, Won't have) to align applications to each wave.

Operational Flow

ARB Defines and Oversees the Roadmap

The ARB defines and approves the wave-based roadmap, detailing timelines, milestones, and resource allocation to ensure alignment with business priorities.

Squads Plan and Execute Rationalization Tasks

Squads execute the ARB-approved roadmap in Agile sprints, focusing on wave-specific tasks, and demonstrate completed work to ARB and stakeholders at sprint reviews, gathering feedback for refinement.

ARB and Squads Conduct Progress Reviews

Squads report progress, while the ARB reviews outcomes, mitigates risks, and refines processes. Adjustments are approved for alignment with strategic goals, with lessons documented for future improvement.

Benefits

Ensures Timely and Efficient Rationalization

The ARB's strategic roadmap, with clear milestones and Agile sprints, drives timely execution of rationalization actions, and Lean resource allocation waste.

Minimizes Business Operations Disruptions

The phased, wave-based implementation avoids large-scale outages by rolling out changes incrementally, and guarantees stability, reducing downtime and maintaining business continuity even during complex transitions.

Facilitates Ongoing Feedback

Iterative approach offers frequent opportunities to gather feedback, enabling rapid adaptation to changing requirements (e.g., shifting Wave 2 focus based on Wave 1 insights).

5 Measure, Report, and Continuously Improve Rationalization Outcomes

Implementation Steps

Measure KPIs Post-Implementation

Collect baseline and post-rationalization data with APM, IT monitoring, and cloud cost tools. Track KPIs using ITIL's CSI model (e.g., Cost Reduction, Service Quality) and FinOps KPIs (e.g., Cost Efficiency, Utilization, Cost Avoidance).

Report Outcomes with Dashboards

Visualize KPIs with Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC and FinOps' Cost Visualization principles. Use a FinOps Cost Allocation Heatmap to break down expenses by app, team, or unit. Share real-time cost data via dashboards on a centralized portal for transparency.

Optimize Portfolio Iteratively

Apply Kaizen's PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle for incremental improvements. Conduct an annual Zero Base Review to assess the portfolio's relevance and cost-effectiveness. Use Lean's Root Cause Analysis and FinOps' Cost Anomaly Detection to investigate deviations from target KPIs and identify underlying issues.

Operational Flow

ARB Prioritizes Actions for Cost Optimization

The ARB leverages TOGAF's Architecture Change Management and FinOps' Cost Governance to prioritize actions based on KPI and cost trends. It defines a Cost Threshold Policy, flagging any application that exceeds the threshold for immediate review, triggering optimization or justification discussions.

Squads Participate in Data-Driven Retrospectives

Squads participate in data-driven retrospectives, analyzing their application performance and usage data. They identify improvement areas and propose targeted action plans to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

Benefits

Reduces Subjectivity in Decision Making

Fact-based reporting and consistent KPIs empower data-driven decisions, minimizing subjectivity and resolving discrepancies.

Enhances Portfolio Efficiency

Continuous improvement eliminates technical debt and aligns apps with business needs, as Squads execute ARB strategies.

Boosts Transparency and Accountability

Transparent reporting and ARB governance foster collaboration between IT and business, while Squads ensure operational buy-in.

Demonstrates the Value of Rationalization

Highlights how application rationalization not only drives ROI but also streamlines costs, improves efficiency, and provides a clear rationale for ongoing investment.



Feel free to leverage this Architecture Governance framework within your agency or enterprise. Customize it to drive technology modernization, eliminate inefficiencies, and maximize value.

I'd love to hear how it works for you!

