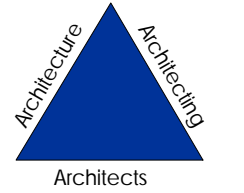


# ARCHITECTURE RESOURCES

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## Strategy

### Architect Competency Elaboration

Architects play a critical role in translating business strategy into technical strategy and leading the effective execution of that strategy. Architects also have the perspective to help shape a more powerful business strategy, by informing the business strategy process of opportunities and constraints presented by their organization's current and potential technical capabilities. Strategy entails finding ways to create unique and sustainable value, and architects who are talented strategists identify opportunities to apply technologies and technical competencies to enhance the capabilities of the business and create value.

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# Competency: Strategy

## Background

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## What You Know: Strategic Perspective

Understands the industry, market, customers, competitors, suppliers, partners and capabilities of the business. Identifies opportunities and threats, and actively identifies trends and future scenarios.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Understands the use context for the product or application.	Understands the market for the product or service. Understands the product strategy.	Has a good understanding of the market that the portfolio/product family serves. Understands the portfolio/product family strategy and its rationale.	Understands the competitive landscape of the whole business, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• industry structure</li> <li>• market segments and respective users needs and values</li> <li>• the competition, and their products, strategies and processes. Has insight into where competitors are headed.</li> <li>• the supply chain, and the value proposition of different players</li> </ul> Understands the company's capabilities and weaknesses. Understands the business strategy and its rationale.

**What You Do: Contribute to Business Strategy**

Is viewed as a valuable resource whose input is sought in creating product and business strategy.

<p>Level 1</p>	<p>Level 2</p>	<p>Level 3</p> <p>Advises on product strategy for the set(s) of products.</p> <p>Plays a role in the strategic process including portfolio investment decisions.</p> <p>Investigates new technologies and product opportunities that could be used to generate competitive advantage.</p>	<p>Level 4</p> <p>Advises high-level business strategy setters, identifying threats and opportunities especially in the area of technology and technical capabilities.</p> <p>Leads system envisioning teams to identify entirely new markets and business opportunities.</p> <p>Plays a role in the strategic process including the business investment decision process, and evaluating strategic relationships such as possible acquisitions.</p>
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## What You Do: Create Technology Strategy

Translates business strategy into technical strategy which shapes the architecture.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Aligns implementation decisions with the architecture and the technical strategy.	<p>Sets technical direction for the team.</p> <p>Technical solutions are clearly relevant to the customer, meet business needs, and contribute to the business strategy.</p> <p>Identifies technology trends and creates scenarios to better understand their future impact.</p> <p>Is guided by the architectural strategy at the next level of scope (product or application family, system or solution, or enterprise).</p>	<p>Sets technical direction for set(s) of products/applications.</p> <p>Creates technical strategies that are generally viewed as good for the groups involved because they create value that is greater than that of the sum of the parts.</p> <p>Creates technology-focused roadmaps for the product set. Identifies trends and creates scenarios to better understand their possible impact.</p> <p>Looks for opportunities to create leverage across a family of products.</p> <p>Balances short-term demands with the need to make progress towards long-term goals.</p>	<p>Sets technical direction across the organization.</p> <p>Identifies strategic themes and helps create synergies across groups to accomplish them.</p> <p>Identifies avenues to create unique and sustainable value to create strategic advantage.</p> <p>Identifies new technologies and capabilities that will give strategic advantage.</p> <p>Looks for opportunities to create leverage across multiple families of products.</p> <p>Translates corporate strategy into technical strategy.</p> <p>Communicates strategy in terms that are meaningful to the technical community.</p>

### Self-Assessment Questions

#### Do I think and act strategically? What can I do to be better at strategy?

##### Know: Strategic Perspective

- Do I find the technical problem absorbing and do I find the business perspective a distraction, or am I constantly scanning for information about the competitive landscape to inform our strategic direction?
- Do I create, and keep up-to-date, technology roadmaps, product and business context maps, industry structure maps, and other ways of understanding and communicating our competitive landscape to better inform strategic decisions at every level of scope and responsibility?

### **Do: Contribute to Business Strategy**

- Does management ask for my input on strategic matters? Am I seen as having a valuable perspective on the industry (customer, competitors, channel, etc.) as well as our internal technical capabilities and technology opportunities?

### **Do: Technical Strategy**

- Am I good at seeing new ways to contribute value?
- Do I think in terms of the strategic differentiation of our products and services?
- Is my focus on short-term, day-to-day concerns, or do I strive to achieve a balance between thinking about long-term direction (and building long-term capabilities) and short-term demands?
- Do I help others make the trade-off between short-term pressure and progress towards longer-term strategic goals?
- Do I create architectural themes and principles and other ways to communicate architectural strategy?
- Do I work to ensure we have (measurable) strategic architecture goals that are traceable to business strategy goals and measures?
- Do I help create a shared understanding of operational priorities versus strategic priorities?

### **Learning on the Job**

- “Practice strategic alignment.” Consider how you can contribute to the achievement of your business’s strategy, and integrate that into your daily action. Lead by example in the implementation of strategies set at a higher level (business strategy, enterprise technical strategy, portfolio or product set strategy, etc.).
- “Learn by doing it.” A number of top architects have gained this kind of experience by working in management positions for a few years. You should also make the formulation of architecture strategy the first step of your architecture process. Focus on doing this well, at whatever your level of architecting.
- “Earn a place at the table.” Avidly seek to understand your industry, your competitors, your channel and partners, as well as your customers. Have a compelling contribution to make to business strategy, and seek opportunities to make this contribution. Become valuable to the strategy process so that you are invited to the “table” (strategic management team off-sites, etc.) because it is recognized that you will make a substantial difference to the outcome.
- Get “360° feedback.” Ask architects you report to (even if this “reporting” relationship is only informal), and architects or technical leads that report to you, as well as your manager, extended team members and other stakeholders for feedback on your architectural strategy and your effectiveness in communicating that strategy so that it can be executed.

### **Training**

#### General guidelines

- Attend strategy conferences and training courses.
- Attend conferences or seminars targeted at business leaders in your industry.
- Attend management training classes, especially those targeted at fast-track acceleration of talented managers.

#### Specific suggestions

- American Management Association, *Strategic Planning Processes for Formulating Winning Strategy*, <http://www.amanet.org/seminars/cmd2/2526.htm>

- Bredemeyer Consulting's *Architectural Leadership and Other Skills* workshop has a module on Architectural Strategy. See [http://www.bredemeyer.com/role\\_of\\_architect\\_workshop\\_overview.htm](http://www.bredemeyer.com/role_of_architect_workshop_overview.htm). Bredemeyer Consulting's *Software Architecture Workshop* also includes a module on Architectural Strategy (Meta-Architecture). See [http://www.bredemeyer.com/architecture\\_workshop\\_overview.htm](http://www.bredemeyer.com/architecture_workshop_overview.htm)
- Grove Consultant's *International Strategic Visioning* training will provide you with a very useful skill in graphically facilitating groups through the strategy process. See <http://www.grove.com>
- Wharton Business School Executive Education Program, *Strategic Thinking and Management for Competitive Advantage*, <http://aresty-direct.wharton.upenn.edu/execed/course.cfm?Program=STM>

#### Multi-Media

- American Management Association, *Strategic Planning, Audio Cassette/Workbook*, <http://www.ama-net.org/selfstudy/00941.htm>
- Thomson NETg, *Strategic Management: Analyzing Strategic Options*, CD-ROM, <http://www.netg.com/Catalog/detail.asp?c=US42502&pStatus=A>

### Recommended Reading

- Christensen, Clayton, *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*, Harvard Business School Press, 1997.
- Kaplan, Robert and David Norton, *The Strategy Focused Organization*, Harvard Business School Press, 2001.
- Kaplan, Robert, and David Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard*, Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
- McGrath, Michael, *Product Strategy for High Technology Companies*. 2nd ed. McGraw-Hills, 2001.
- Porter, Michael, *Competitive Strategy*, Free Press, 1998.