Chapter IX
Policy Mapping:
Relating Enterprise Architecture to Policy Goals

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ABSTRACT

Few government executives can explain the enterprise architecture of his or her agency, and it is rare to find a political executive who is able to explain how their political objectives are furthered by a government-wide enterprise architecture (Holmes, 2007). This low level of awareness translates to enterprise architecture efforts that are often undervalued and under funded because the budget priorities of political and functional executives rarely include enterprise architecture. Unsurprisingly, many points of tension exist as the CIOs and architects work to translate political goals into resources and architectural plans supporting the agency's programs. This tension, between the rational orientation of enterprise architecture advocated by the CIO and the political nature of policy goals sought by executives, often puts a CIO at odds with his or her organization's political and functional executives. This chapter discusses that tension, and advocates that CIOs and enterprise architects develop a "Policy Map" to bridge the gap between the political and the rational perspectives. A policy map provides the "Purpose Reference Model" missing from present architecture models and policies, and visually portrays and communicates key relationships between policy goals and functional programs on the one hand, and the enterprise architecture and its implementing IT initiatives on the other hand. A well-crafted Policy Map is a visual reference for aligning resources, effort, architecture, and the policy goals of political executives.

PARADOX OF GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

We spend most of our lives in organizations. Although we rarely think about it, the formal organizations with which we are familiar are abstract concepts. We see the building and think of the organization; we see the people and think of the organization. Despite the physical evidence, the notion of the organization exists primarily in our minds. At this conceptual level organizations are created and exist in order to serve specific purposes that is, they are instrumental entities. Typically these purposes are defined by the organization's leaders, individuals who may be the organization's creators, its owners, or perhaps its managers. For example, businesses are created by an individual or a group of individuals with an idea, a product they wish to sell, or a service they wish to offer. These organizations are instrumental in helping fulfill the intent of their creators. Business organizations use rational approaches in the conduct of their activities, that is, approaches based on reasoning that produce goods and services as efficiently and effectively as possible. Therefore, it would be rational for the business owners to expect a profit from their endeavors, and to run their business organization as effectively as they reasonably can. They may even create and implement an enterprise architecture, one of the latest rational and comprehensive approaches to structuring efficient and effective organizational action.

Government organizations are simultaneously similar to and yet different from the generic business organization noted previously. Government and business organizations are similar in that government organizations also seek to perform their missions or fulfill their goals as effectively and efficiently as they can – in this respect government organizations are also instrumentally rational. But government and business organizations differ in that government organizations are established through a political process that seeks to satisfy political goals. They are established to serve political purposes and address societal challenges that have been defined and justified in political terms, challenges such as reducing illiteracy, improving air and water quality, or providing a level playing field for businesses seeking to sell their goods and services to government organizations. In working to fulfill political goals, government organizations are clearly political in character, yet in pursuing these political goals through rational organizational actions they are rational in nature and instrumental in pursuing their purpose. This dual nature of government organizations, that is, an organization that simultaneously serves a political purpose (has a "political face") as well as a rational purpose (has a "rational face") creates an organizational paradox – and a significant challenge for enterprise architects and the CIOs as they try to implement their enterprise architectures. This chapter encourages CIOs and enterprise architects to create a "Policy Map" for their organizations to help resolve this organizational paradox. Your "Policy Map" can effectively serve as the "Purpose Reference Model" for your enterprise architecture, and serve to relate political goals to rational organizational activities with the goal of educating political and functional executives, congressional overseers, managers and technical specialists, and citizens.

Organizational Faces

Depending upon where you are within the organization you may see one or the other of the "faces" of government organizations. For example, legislators, parliamentarians, elected and appointed political executives devote most of their attention to the "political face" of government organizations. This perspective views organizations as political and instrumental in nature, as mechanisms for turning political ideas into societal realities.[1] The political face of a government organization is turned toward society, and exhibits its organizational strengths and capabilities as resources to

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