

A Coevolutionary Framework of Business-IT Alignment through the Lens of Enterprise Architecture

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Abstract : The major challenges for sustainable business-IT alignment (BITA) in a company root in its volatile external competitive environment, increasingly complex internal relationships, and subversive IT roles. Failure to adequately address BITA results in wasting organizational resources, losing competitive advantages, and failing to produce adequate returns on investments. The coevolution is more suitable to describe the dynamic relationships of business and IT and has received certain attention in recent years. Multiple mechanisms for achieving BITC (e.g., sharing domain knowledge, modular design) were obtained. However, instead of a complete managing process, BITC achievement is still hard to operate in practice. This study emphasizes what the BITC management process looks like and how to execute this coevolution step-by-step. A practical coevolutionary framework that combines the enterprise architecture (EA) method with misalignment analysis is proposed in this paper. It contains steps of EA design, misalignment detection, misalignment correction, and EA management /misalignment prevention. The step of misalignment correction is especially discussed at length. This study also evaluates the proposed framework by comparing the characteristics, principles, and approaches of coevolution in the literature.

Keywords : business-IT alignment, business-IT coevolution, enterprise architecture, misalignment analysis, misalignment correction

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