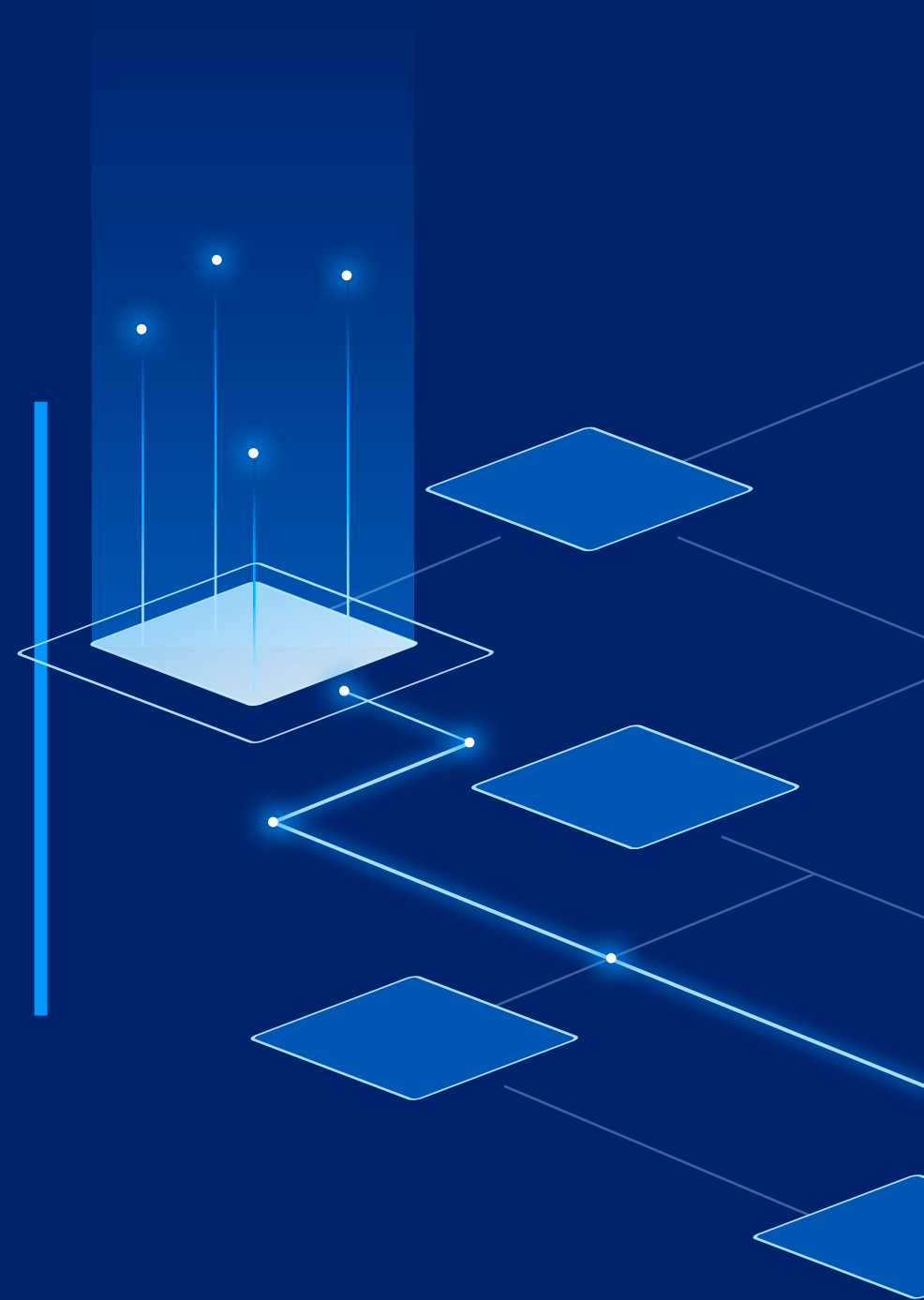


Building Adaptive, AI-Ready Technology Foundations

A roadmap for heads of enterprise architecture



As AI adoption accelerates, heads of enterprise architecture face a strategic crossroads

AI-driven business transformation is reshaping how organizations fund, govern and deliver technology.

Key shifts include:

- Reallocating technology spend toward AI, data and automation
- Decentralizing decision making closer to business domains
- Adopting product-centric, platform-driven delivery models
- Balancing value creation, cost control and risk management

These shifts are redefining the role of enterprise architecture (EA). To remain relevant, heads of EA must move beyond enabling digital transformation and focus on orchestrating AI-driven business models.

Traditional EA approaches are no longer sufficient.

Centralized control, static roadmaps and long planning cycles cannot keep pace with the demands of an AI-first business.

The evolution of enterprise AI

Predictive AI (Pre-2022)



Focused on analysis
and forecasting

“Customer X is likely
to churn”

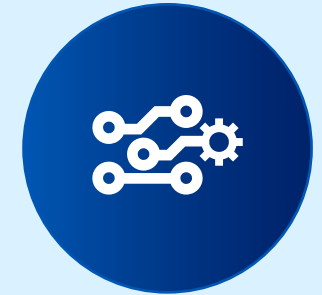
Generative AI (2023-2025)



Focused on content
creation and assistance

“Draft an email to
Customer X”

Agentic AI (2026+)



Focused on autonomous
task execution

“Authorize refund,
update CRM”

Source: Gartner

Maximize EA effectiveness in an AI-driven environment

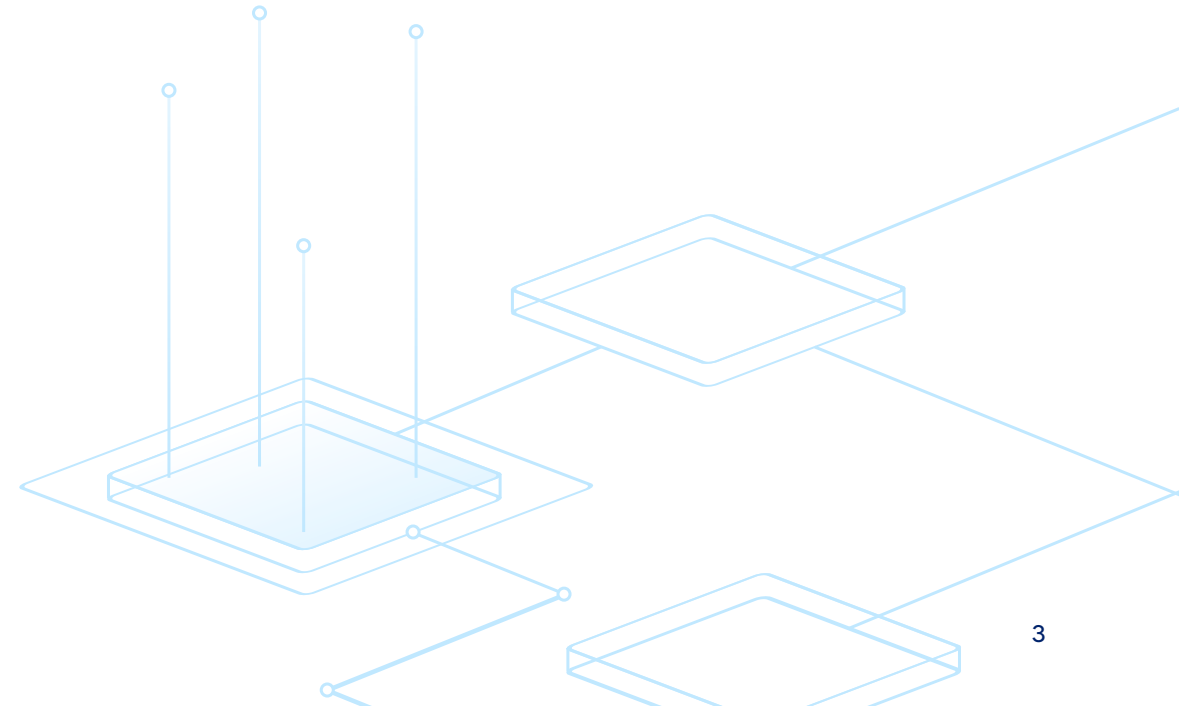
The new business reality

- AI initiatives are emerging across business units.
- Vendor fragmentation and technology duplication are increasing.
- AI and cloud costs are rising — and creating new pressures.
- Governance is often bypassed in favor of speed.

New opportunities for heads of EA

- **Lead the shift** to AI-driven operating models.
- **Design architectures** that enable autonomous business execution.
- **Build AI literacy** and new capabilities across architecture teams.
- **Establish adaptive governance** that balances innovation, cost and control.

Heads of enterprise architecture expect **30%** of EA activities to be AI-augmented by 2027, citing needs to reskill and retool for success.



Position EA as a key AI innovation enabler by addressing 3 critical questions

1 How can EA orchestrate the enterprisewide shift to an AI-led future?

2 How can EA transform emerging technologies into strategic platforms?

3 How can EA guide the organization to keep pace with rapid, unpredictable change?

What are the key stages?

Redefine your role and EA's impact by leading enterprisewide AI strategy, enabling rapid experimentation and establishing adaptive governance that balances innovation with cost, risk and control — all while designing architectures that support autonomous execution.

Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy



Foster innovation



Speed experimentation and delivery



Apply AI-led adaptive governance



Redesign EA deliverables



Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy

Assume a critical role in shaping and executing a vision that delivers measurable business value.

Key actions for heads of EA:

Set a bold AI vision and articulate the future-state enterprise architecture.

Identify and prioritize AI use cases that align to business value and strategic objectives.

Map data, platform and capability gaps that could hinder AI enablement.

Align AI investments to the organization's strategic business outcomes.

Sample of associated Gartner resources includes:

Insights

- [Enterprise Architecture in 2026 and Beyond: AI Enablement, Shifting Operating Models and the Fight for Strategic Relevance](#)
- [Enterprise Architecture 2030: Navigating Agentic AI Scenarios](#)
- [Heads of Enterprise Architecture Agenda Report 2026: Navigating AI, Governance and Modernization Challenges](#)

Analyst Consultation

- Discuss how you can work across the organization to extend threat analysis and opportunities beyond technology.

Tool

- [Heads of EA Effectiveness Diagnostic](#)

Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy



Foster innovation



Speed experimentation and delivery



Apply AI-led adaptive governance



Redesign EA deliverables



Foster innovation

Proactively identify, evaluate and scale innovation to drive strategic advantage.

Key actions for heads of EA:

Prioritize high-value AI and emerging technology investments.

Establish structured frameworks for experimentation and validation.

Identify and scale repeatable patterns, platforms and solutions.

Eliminate low-value pilots and redundant technology investments.

Sample of associated Gartner resources includes:

Insights

- [2026 Heads of Enterprise Architecture Priority: Capitalize on Disruption With Emerging Technologies](#)

Webinar

- [Emerging Tech Adoption Radar 2026: Redefining Enterprise Architecture for Frontier AI Technologies](#)

Presentation

- [Trends That Shake Up Enterprise Architecture: What Heads of EA Should Keep an Eye On](#)

Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy



Foster innovation



Speed experimentation and delivery



Apply AI-led adaptive governance



Redesign EA deliverables



Speed experimentation and delivery

Empower teams to experiment, iterate and scale successful initiatives.

Key actions for heads of EA:

Facilitate rapid experimentation and validation of new technologies.

Empower teams to pilot and refine high-potential use cases.

Build standardized processes and reusable assets to shorten the transition from pilot to scaled implementation.

Continuously assess and adapt delivery models to maximize speed, value and business alignment.

Sample of associated Gartner resources includes:

Insights

- [Drive Enterprise Value Through Streamlined Architecture Artifacts](#)

Tool

- [Testing Enterprise Architecture Readiness to Enable AI](#)

Toolkit

- [Assess Readiness to Augment EA With AI Use Cases](#)

Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy



Foster innovation



Speed experimentation and delivery



Apply AI-led adaptive governance



Redesign EA deliverables



Apply AI-led adaptive governance

Replace traditional governance models with frameworks that speed innovation while ensuring risk management, compliance and strategic alignment.

Key actions for heads of EA:

Establish adaptive, AI-led governance frameworks.

Implement guardrails for quality, security, cost and performance.

Enable decentralized decision making with enterprisewide oversight.

Continuously refine governance to address evolving risks and regulations.

Sample of associated Gartner resources includes:

Insights

- [Enterprise Architecture Risk Assessment Framework for AI Initiatives](#)
- [Automate Governance With an Agentic Architecture Review Process](#)
- [Take Control of the AI Architecture by Regulating Shadow AI](#)

Case Study

- [AI Governance for Heads of Enterprise Architecture](#)

Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy



Foster innovation



Speed experimentation and delivery



Apply AI-led adaptive governance



Redesign EA deliverables



Redesign EA deliverables

Deliver dynamic, consumable assets that enable real-time, autonomous decision making.

Key actions for heads of EA:

Replace static artifacts with modular, reusable architecture assets.

Develop reference architectures, patterns and guardrails for AI and platforms.

Provide decision frameworks that empower independent team action.

Continuously refine deliverables based on real-time feedback and usage.

Sample of associated Gartner resources includes:

Insights

- [Enterprise Architecture Must Become Dynamic to Succeed in the AI Era](#)
- [90% of Enterprise Architecture Deliverables Have to Change by 2029](#)
- [Build Your Future-State Architecture in 5 Steps](#)

Tool

- [Accelerators](#)

Define an AI-driven enterprise strategy



Foster innovation



Speed experimentation and delivery



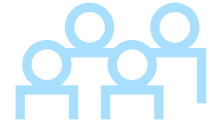
Apply AI-led adaptive governance



Redesign EA deliverables

Who needs to be involved?

Establish a **cross-functional operating model** where EA orchestrates AI strategy, governance and execution across the enterprise.



CIO

Partners with heads of EA to align AI strategy with business priorities and drive transformation of the enterprise operating model. The CIO oversees technology trends, infrastructure and platforms, ensuring that AI use cases deliver measurable outcomes and realize value across all functions.

Heads of EA

Align AI initiatives with enterprise objectives by partnering with the CIO, AI leaders and product owners. Heads of EA set architectural standards for AI adoption, enable the integration and scaling of AI-driven solutions and manage technology risk. They embed AI capabilities into core operations and foster collaboration across teams.

AI leaders

Own the enterprise AI strategy, model life cycle and adoption. They drive the development of AI platforms and capabilities, partnering with EA to scale AI solutions and ensure alignment with business priorities and value realization.

Data and analytics leaders

Ensure a strong foundation for AI-ready data by governing data quality, access and life cycle. They collaborate with architecture and AI leaders to support robust analytics and data-driven decision making, and champion data governance initiatives to mitigate risk and build trust.

Infrastructure and operations leaders

Build scalable AI, data and cloud platforms. These leaders optimize cost, performance and scalability, and collaborate with architecture and application teams to ensure the technical foundation supports current and future AI requirements.

Application and product leaders

Deliver AI-powered products at the point of value. They work with heads of EA and AI leaders to execute innovation within established guardrails, ensuring that applications drive business impact while maintaining compliance and operational standards.

Actionable, objective insights

Position your organization for success in an AI-led world. Explore these complimentary resources and tools for heads of enterprise architecture:



Tool
Accelerators
Achieve mission-critical priorities with step-by-step guidance and tools tailored for you.

[Learn More](#)



Tool
Gartner Head of Enterprise Architecture Effectiveness Diagnostic
Discover key actions to enhance your leadership and operational effectiveness.

[Learn More](#)



Tool
Gartner IT Score for Enterprise Architecture
Assess team maturity and receive a roadmap and resources to evolve the function.

[Learn More](#)



Tool
Gartner AI Use Case Insights
Discover, evaluate and prioritize AI applications that can help your organization achieve tangible business outcomes.

[Learn More](#)

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