Context is Everything
Making context and culture work for you

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VP/ Business & Technology Strategy

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Cultural & political support is the biggest barrier to business architecture success

“What are the three most significant barriers to BA success?”
(Percentage reflects rank of 1, 2, or 3)

- Cultural/political constraints: 47%
- Lack of executive champion: 42%
- Lack of visibility/influence within our organization: 32%
- Lack of strategy/vision: 29%
- No clear value proposition: 21%
- Funding constraints: 21%
- Lack of staff: 19%

Base: 85 IT professionals who report unsuccessful business architecture initiatives in their firms

Source: Q2 2012 Global Enterprise Architecture Maturity Online Survey
March 2013 “The State Of Business Architecture And Business Architects In 2013”
And it’s not just business architecture

84% of respondents and 86% of C-suite respondents believe that their organization’s culture is critical to business success.

60% said culture is more important than the company’s strategy or operating model.

96% said some form of culture change is needed within their organization.

51% believe their organization is in need of a major culture overhaul.

48% do not think they have the capabilities required to deliver lasting change.

57% are skeptical due to past failed change efforts was the number one reason for resistance to change.

2013 Culture and Change Management Survey, conducted by the Katzenbach Center at Booz & Company - 2,200 participants
33,000+ books on organizational culture ... but they don’t help
Culture eats strategy for breakfast!

But, only if you ignore it.
Building a contextual model
Five contextual elements shape the professional landscape

- External Context
- Structural Context
- Management Context
- Cultural Context
- Personal Context

Shapes

Interprets & supports
Management context

Executives and other senior managers set the tone for the organization by what they say and what they do.

- Corporate values
- Accessibility
- Openness
- Leadership style
Structural context

The structural context is created by the way the organization is explicitly designed.

- Organizational structure
- Budget mechanisms
- Hiring practices
- Incentives
Cultural context

The cultural context describes how people believe things \textit{REALLY} work.

- Working together
- Risk taking
- Truth telling
- Creativity & innovation
Personal context – the “me factor"

The personal context describes how **YOU** perceive the world.

- Strongly held beliefs
- Investment in position
- Risk avoidance
- Personal agendas
- Control needs
- Resistance to change
- Career impact
Putting the model to work
Step 1: Identify target organization’s important contextual elements

Most organizations have a common set of contextual elements

Common elements will manifest differently

Organizations also have a unique set of contextual elements

Sub-organizations may have unique elements and will often have unique interpretations of common elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Creativity &amp; innovation</td>
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Step 2: Define each element by its extremes

**Working together**

[cultural]

Working together defines the organization’s preferred style of engagement outside of structured projects. Collaborative organizations work well together across organizational boundaries with little friction. Competitive organizations see the success pie as fixed – more success by others results in less success for me.
Step 3: Assess each element’s current state

- Collaborative: 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Competitive: 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Working together: [cultural]
- Structured: 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Opportunistic: 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Investment Model: [structural]
- Empowering: 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Controlling: 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Leadership Style: [Management]
### Step 4: Select elements impacting your current initiative

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Step 5: Identify where you need the elements to be to support initiative success

- **Collaborative**
  - Working together
    - [cultural]

- **Structured**
  - Investment Model
    - [structural]

- **Empowering**
  - Leadership Style
    - [Management]
Step 6: Assess the gaps

- Collaborative
- Structured
- Controlling
- Strategic
- Organizational Success
- Information Sharing

Challenges:
- Working Together
- Investment Model
- Leadership Style
- Planning Focus
- Incentive Structure
- Information Sharing

Opportunities:
- Competitive
- Opportunistic
- Empowering
- Tactical
- Personal Success
- Hording
Step 7: Build an action plan

1. Which elements can I safely ignore?
2. Which elements can I leverage to my advantage?
3. Which elements can I mitigate to some degree?
4. Are there elements I can change?
5. Which elements do I need to develop coping strategies for?
A quick example
## Selected context elements

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<th>Element Name</th>
<th>Range of effect</th>
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<td>Leadership Style</td>
<td>Empowering, Controlling</td>
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<td>Management</td>
<td>Planning Focus</td>
<td>Strategic, Tactical</td>
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<td>Structural</td>
<td>Investment Model</td>
<td>Structured, Opportunistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Incentive Structure</td>
<td>Personal Success, Organizational Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Working together</td>
<td>Collaborative, Competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>Sharing, Hording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Power Orientation</td>
<td>Influence, Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Autonomous, Collaborative</td>
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Impact analysis

Contextual Impact

Investment Model
Information Sharing
Teamwork
Incentive Structure
Working Together
Leadership Style
Planning Focus
Power Orientation
Action plan

- Leverage strategy to exploit organization’s orientation to investments.

  Develop a comprehensive investment prioritization model based on capability and strategy alignment.

- Mitigation strategy to overcome short term planning focus.

  Build “next state” views instead of future state views. Over time extend the time horizon for next state views.

- Mitigating strategy to overcome empowering leadership style & personal control needs.

  Develop a collaborative “governance” process focused on building, not enforcing, business architecture. Build different structures for different organizations to satisfy local differences.
Action plan

- Ignore
  Information sharing, teamwork, and incentive structure

- Cope with
  Working together
The bottom line

- Context is **THE** most powerful force in our companies
- It can have a **POSITIVE** or **NEGATIVE** impact on everything we do
- If we ignore context **IT WILL** eat our lunch
- Context **CAN BE MANAGED**
- Our personal context is the **EASIEST TO MANAGE** but often the **HARDEST TO UNDERSTAND**
Stay in touch

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www.linkedin.com/in/logicalleap
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