

# Using Models for Building Strong Organizations

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When Darwin wrote his opus magnum *On the Origin of Species* he most likely did not have businesses and other enterprises in mind. Yet, the adage “*survival of the fittest*” definitely applies to many modern day enterprises. At the moment of writing, it appears we are just heading out of a long economic/ financial crisis. Many corporations have folded, others have struggled to stay afloat. This poses both a challenge and a threat for most of us: we’re all in this together, some will survive and others will not. A few things seems clear: organizations that want to survive must (a) adapt to changing circumstances, and (b) do so effectively (that is: fast, and continuously). We also know that these changes will touch upon all aspects of the organization: people, processes, information/ data, infrastructure, and information systems alike.

To face these challenges, organizations should adopt a holistic approach to challenges and the associated changes. This means linking strategy to execution, business to IT, and an engineering approach to change to organizational learning. Based on an extensive body of research (ranging from change management to enterprise engineering, business transformation, and enterprise architecture), as well as many organizations world-wide (in government as well as industry settings), we believe that models play a crucial role in making that happen.

In our view, models...

- ...can be made at various levels of abstraction: strategy, architecture, design, ...
- ...should be linked across abstraction levels
- ...provide a solid basis for gaining a deeper understanding of one’s business and the (impact of) of challenges and change
- ...provide an indispensable tool for migration planning, risk management, and communication with all stakeholders in the face of business challenges and change.

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Having an effective enterprise modeling capability along is not sufficient however. As indicated previously, an approach to change that combines engineering aspects (implementing a vision) and an organizational change/learning approach (interventions and supporting people to act effectively towards achieving organizational goals) are essential.

We will present an approach that combines methods and tools from the realm of enterprise architecture (such as TOGAF and ArchiMate), other modeling approaches (business model canvas, the decision model, BPMN, ERD) to show how a model-based approach will help you build a strong organization in the face of the business challenges that we face today.