

# Chapter VII

## Strategic Programs: Planning and Execution

### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters describe how IT strategy and enterprise architecture can be defined in line with business strategy. The success of business and IT strategies, as explained in Chapter IV, depends on the firm's ability to translate the strategies into work packages known as strategic programs, and diligently plan, prioritize, and execute the strategic programs in a sequence that is in accordance with the business strategy and priorities. Chapter VI describes enterprise architecture as the link between business strategy and information systems planning and implementation (which, in effect, executes the strategy). The gap analysis of the current enterprise architecture in comparison with the target or future state architecture will identify the scope and extent of change required on the current architecture to transition towards the target architecture. Compared to business strategy gap analysis, architecture gap analysis offers a more granular and integrative assessment of the business and system changes required to realize the business strategy. The scope and extent of architecture change required constitutes the overall scope of the strategic programs that need to be defined and developed to deliver the objectives of the business strategy. These programs will be prioritized by IT governance using IT project portfolio management principles. Their implementations in time sequence will define the migration path of the current enterprise architecture towards the target future state architecture. This chapter explains the theory behind and the practice of strategic program planning and program management. We first describe two contrasting approaches to IT strategic planning, namely: the Cassidy model, and the Y model discussed in Chapter IV. The Cassidy

(2006) model uses the business vision to define the IT architecture direction from which the IT strategic plan is then specified including its business case justification. In terms of the Y model, strategic program planning and execution fall in stages 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the model. Discussions of the Y model and analysis of barriers to strategy implementation will give the readers a basic understanding of IT strategic planning and program execution (introductory project management practice). We conclude the chapter by describing the principles and methods for enterprise architecture-driven strategic planning as well as IT project portfolio management principles. This is a more advanced practice, typically taken by firms with higher maturity in IT management practice.

## CASSIDY STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL

Similar to the Y model, the Cassidy (2006) model for strategic planning starts with identifying the future target and current states of the enterprise, assessing the IT gap between these two states, and determining the path (roadmap) or IT strategic (program) plan to get from the current state to the future target state.

The Cassidy strategic planning model comprises four phases, as shown in Figure 7.1. The four phases start from business vision and ends with recommendations for the IT strategic program plan or roadmap for realizing the business vision.

The Cassidy model is summarized below (Cassidy, 2006):

### **Phase 1: Visioning (Business Focus)**

#### *Initiate and Manage the Project*

This phase establishes and initiates the planning project. Like any project, it has a project plan, schedule, tasks, and deliverables. It also has a resource plan of the resources (including roles and responsibilities of business and IT personnel) expected to contribute to the formulation of the strategic plan. It also establishes the governance and communications processes for project control and status reporting, which include the formal announcement of the commencement of the project to the stakeholders.

#### *Understand Business Situation and Vision*

From business (either via business plan documentation or interview of selected executives), clarify and confirm IT understanding of business mission, vision, values, strategic goals, and priorities. This process has some resemblance to the business architecture process described in Chapter VI.

#### *Document and Confirm the Business Analysis*

Analyze the external environmental trends: what future customers (market) and suppliers and regulatory requirements are to be satisfied by the envisioned future business operating model. Analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the business. How will the business vision address SWOT, and how will this business situation impact IT environment?

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