

konvergent

The Value and Effectiveness of Architecture 2023

Survey Results
1st Edition



About the Survey

Throughout February and March 2023, and coinciding with our March 2023 roundtable, we asked nearly 3000 Chief Architects, architecture teams and other senior IT leaders to take part in the 1st edition of Konvergent's Architecture Survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather insights relating to the value within architecture, and its efficiency within organisations, so that improvements can be made during this time of economic challenge.



Architecture functions within businesses play a crucial role in designing, planning, and implementing the technology and business systems necessary to achieve the company's goals and objectives, but the importance of optimising efficiency and delivering and showcasing value cannot be overstated in 2023, especially as most organisations will be demanding budget reductions.

Turning quantitative information into qualitative data is something that we are very passionate about, as it helps you demonstrate results with far greater clarity. We hope that these previously unquantifiable benefits will help guide changes which can be used to help make your architecture function and deliver more value to your organisation.

Collected using an online platform, this research connected us with professionals across most industries, with our research and analysis delivered in the following pages.

Key Findings: The blocks to value, efficiency and better ROI

Poor communication creates a myriad of problems

Communication has long been a thorn in the sides of architecture functions, and I think most of us are aware it needs to improve.

Technical jargon can make it difficult for business stakeholders to understand the value and benefits of enterprise architecture and how it supports the business objectives. A lack of collaboration can lead to misaligned goals and objectives, resulting in communication breakdowns. Organisational siloes can make it difficult to share information and collaborate effectively with other departments and stakeholders. When stakeholders and team members do not have timely access to the information they need, they may be unable to make timely decisions. This can hinder the ability of the enterprise architecture functions to deliver the intended benefits.

Effective communication is essential for enterprise architecture functions to deliver value to the business. By enabling clear and timely communication, organisations can ensure that enterprise architecture is aligned with business goals, based on accurate and complete information, and implemented efficiently with the collaboration of all stakeholders.



There is still a huge hiring issue

The fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic is still being felt by architecture functions, as hiring challenges was ranked as the 2nd biggest challenge architecture faced in 2023, by C-Suite respondents. Rapid growth with technology has led to a shortage of skilled talent readily available for internal teams, while high turnover rates remain within the industry. This is making it tough for architecture functions to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape leading to inefficiencies. Overcoming the challenge may require new ways of thinking should functions wish to navigate the turbulent job market.



Many businesses are without a clear strategy to base their architecture upon

We were shocked to discover that 50% of respondents felt that their organisation did not have a clear business strategy upon which they could base their architecture. Architecture functions are unable to ensure that technology investments and capabilities are aligned with the overall business strategy, if there is no overarching strategy to base their decisions.

Furthermore, there was an overwhelming majority of respondents who only focus on the metrics of Reducing Technical Debt and Quantifiable Cost Reduction. Architecture functions provide more value to their organisation than just penny pinching, as outlined above. **Demonstrating value must be done in more than one way.**



Metrics bring measurable value to your architecture



Our results showed that there was an overwhelming majority of respondents that **only focus on** the metrics of **Reducing Technical Debt and Quantifiable Cost Reduction**.



We understand that it is far easier to demonstrate cost savings than it is to demonstrate value creation, but **cost savings have a diminishing return** – once the quick wins have been removed, you will find yourself with smaller returns year on year.



Demonstrating value must be done in more ways than one, and once calculated correctly, will usually **yield a higher ROI than the cost savings** anyway.

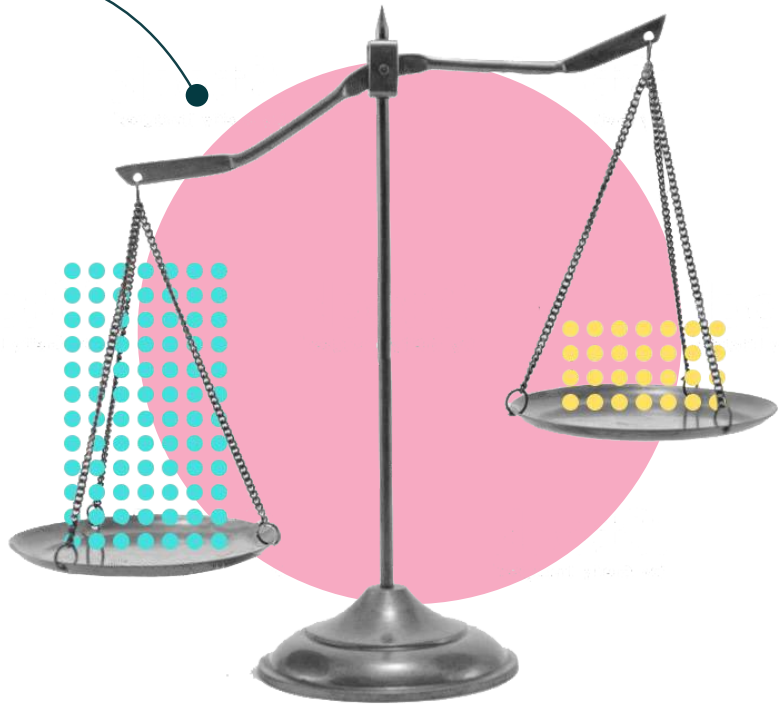


Where respondents stated that they measured more than just Reducing Technical Debt and Quantifiable Cost Reduction, and their architecture metrics were clearly linked to business objectives, **we saw some staggering uplifts to architecture...**

...the perceived value of architecture increased by

2.5x

where respondents stated that they measured more than just Reducing Technical Debt and Quantifiable Cost Reduction (and their architecture metrics were clearly linked to business objectives).



The perceived value of architecture ranked as the **number one** challenge for architecture in 2023.

For functions successfully linking their architecture metrics back to business objectives, the perception of the value is much higher, as they are tackling the hard issues of the efficiency and value of their function, rather than just focusing on cost reduction. **This is the best way to solve the challenges of perception.**



...organisations are

20%

better at hiring the right people.



...time spent trying to gain consensus decreased by

15%



...the performance of the architecture team improved by

18%



It is striking to note that according to CIO.com, only 38% of IT Leaders were actively engaged in aligning their IT initiatives with their organisation's business objectives. This data, combined with our findings above, underscores the importance of increasing this percentage if teams aspire to enhance their overall performance.

Metrics bring measurable value to your architecture

Hiring the right people and seeing a visible improvement in their performance leads to a

206%

increase in the number of people who would bring the majority of their team with them to a new organisation.



Your talent buys into you as leaders, buys into your organisation, and so the feeling is reciprocated.

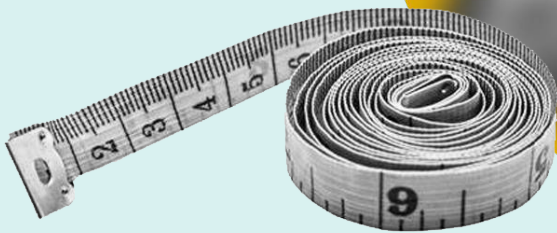


Performance increases such as those above ultimately reduce the risk of a low perceived value as efficiency and the value of the function have visibly improved.

This can lead to a significant reduction in reputational damage.



The majority of respondents who had clear architecture metrics to measure their team agreed that they had a clear business strategy to base this on.



54%

of respondents stated they had poor links to business strategy, so ensuring that the business has a clear strategy is key for architectural success.



Just

43%

of C-Suite respondents believe they have poor links to their business strategy...

...compared to:

55%

of Chief Architects...

...and:

65%

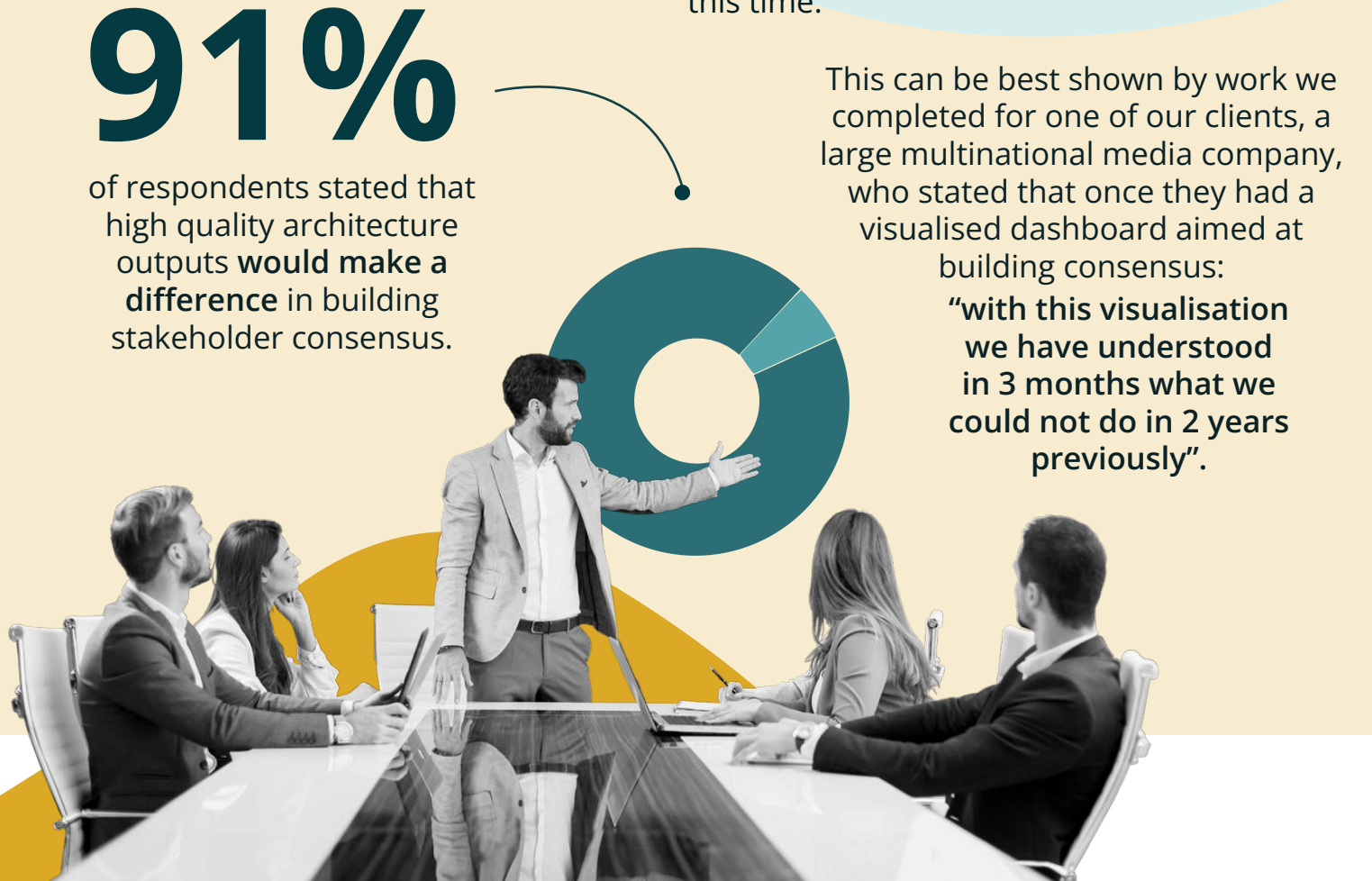
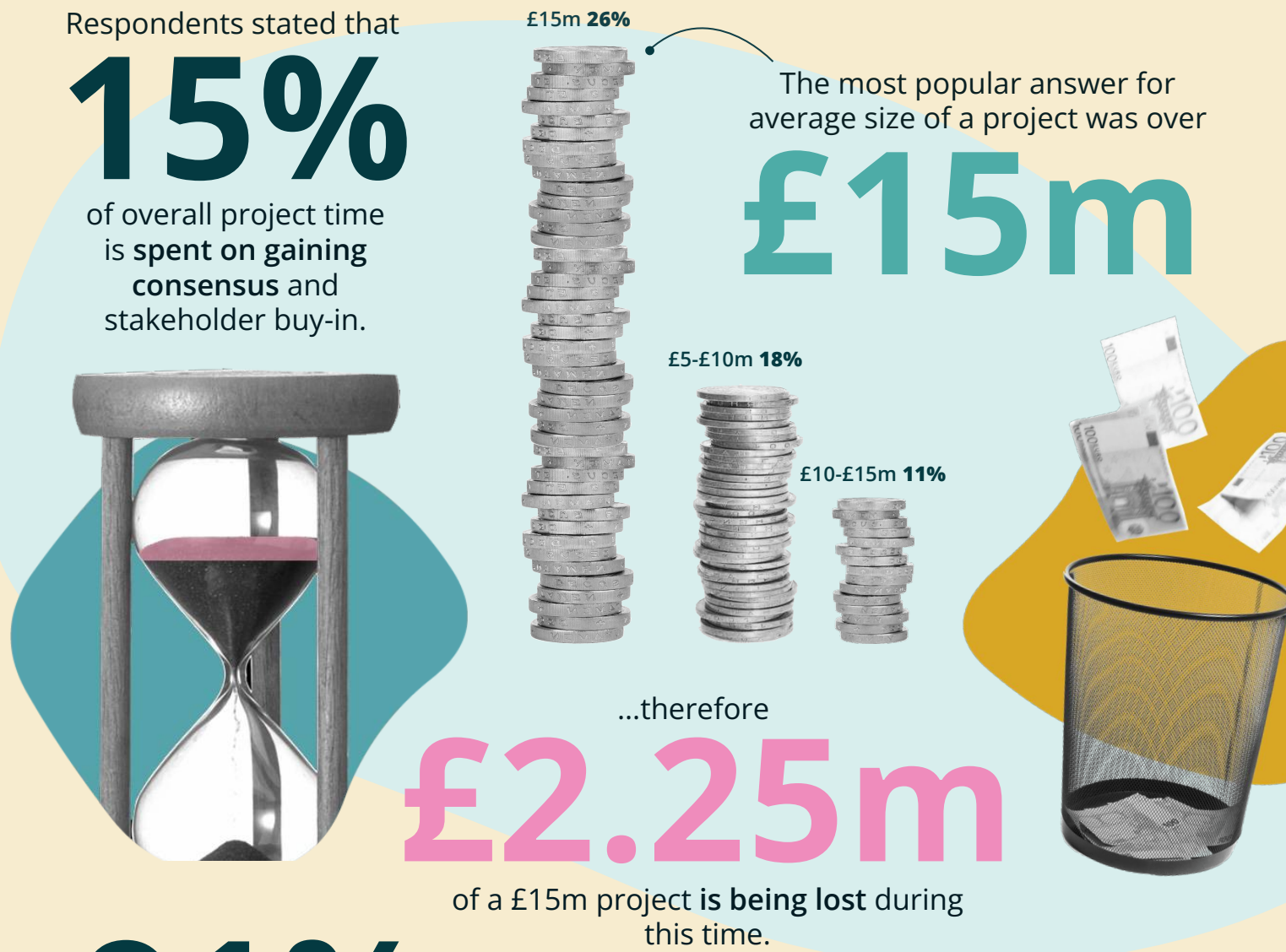
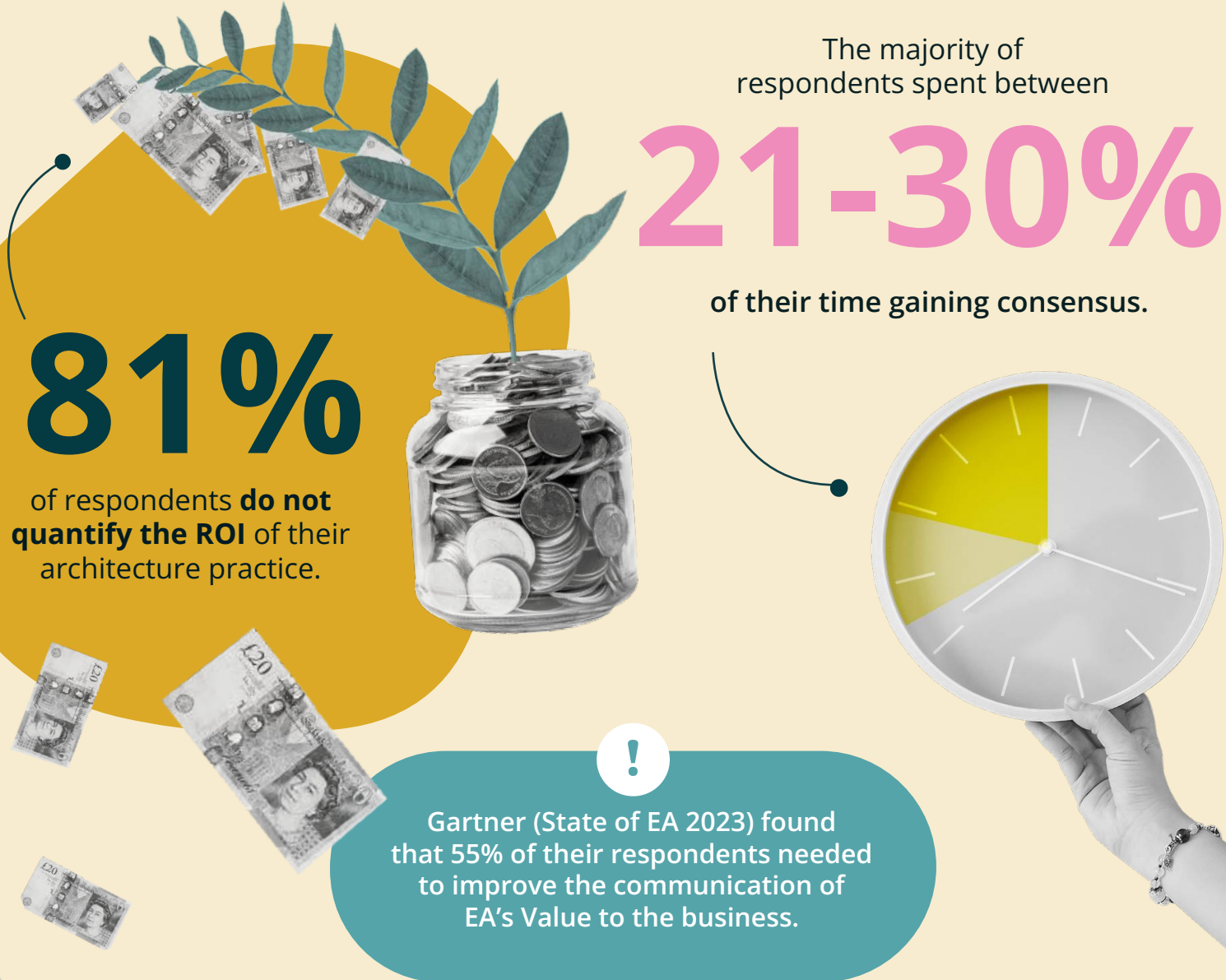
of Architecture Team members.

This highlights the need for improved communication from architects – both top down and bottom up.

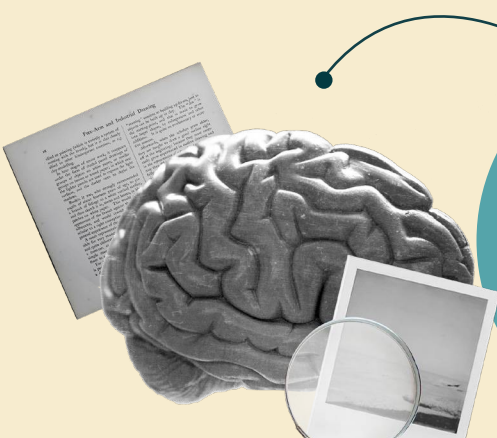


According to the 2023 CIO Survey conducted by Foundry, the main objective that CEOs have set for their CIOs is to enhance the partnership between the business and information technology (IT) departments. The prevailing macroeconomic unpredictability and rapidly evolving market circumstances have made collaboration critical in facilitating speedy transitions and navigating them seamlessly.

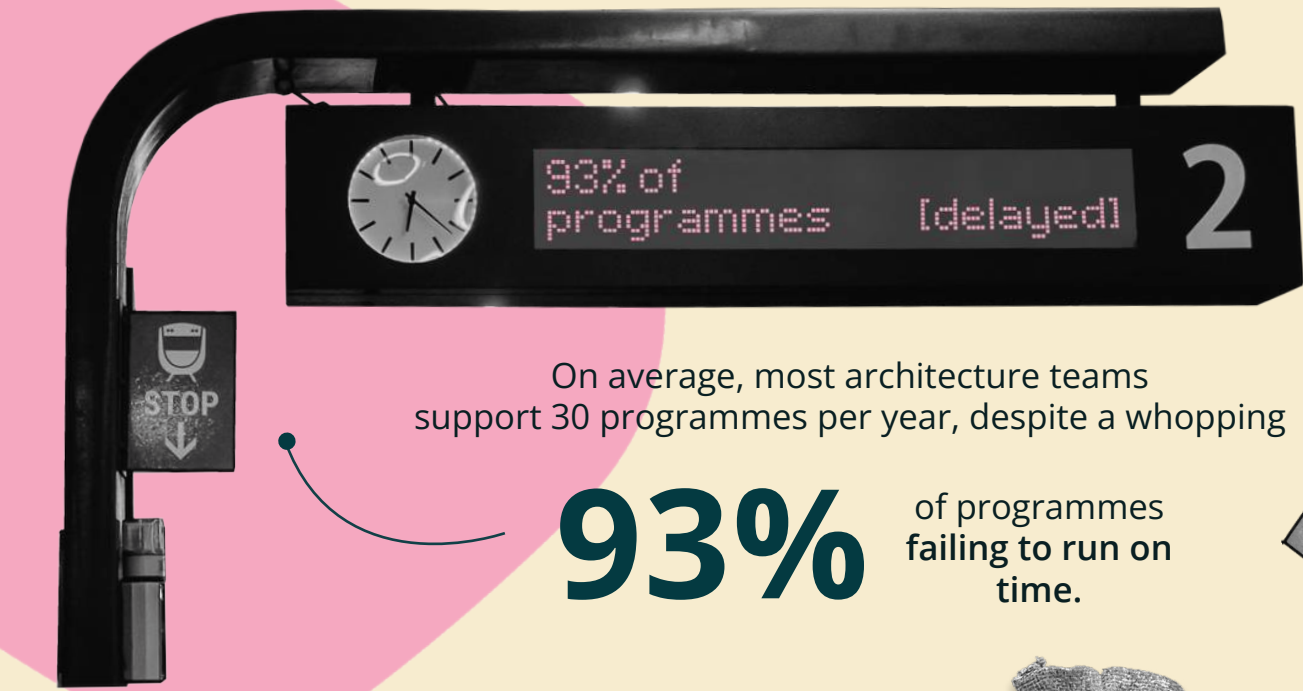
Improving internal consensus delivers dramatic ROI gains



Improving internal consensus delivers dramatic ROI gains



- “Nobody in a boardroom is going to be interested in technical details,” CIO.com state.
- Architecture and IT leaders need to become storytellers.
- This skill is made easier with visual cues, as people remember visual content 5x better than written content.



On average, most architecture teams support 30 programmes per year, despite a whopping

93% of programmes failing to run on time.

Respondents also stated on average, their programmes went

20% over budget.



This indicates that an earlier and **greater level of consensus** would lead to programmes being completed **on time** and a **greater ROI** for architecture.

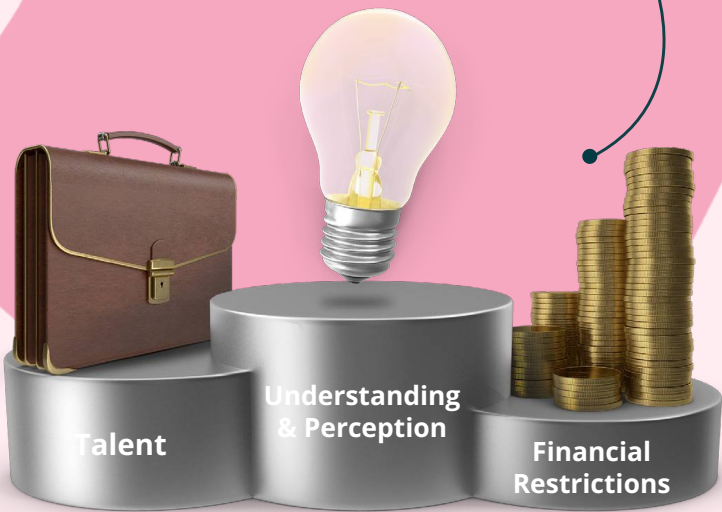
This efficiency improvement and ultimately, value created by architecture cannot be overstated.



Gartner (State of EA 2023) found that 55% of their respondents needed to improve the communication of EA’s Value to the business.

The right architecture resource is essential

Talent concerns ranked as the 2nd biggest challenges respondents said architecture was facing in 2023.



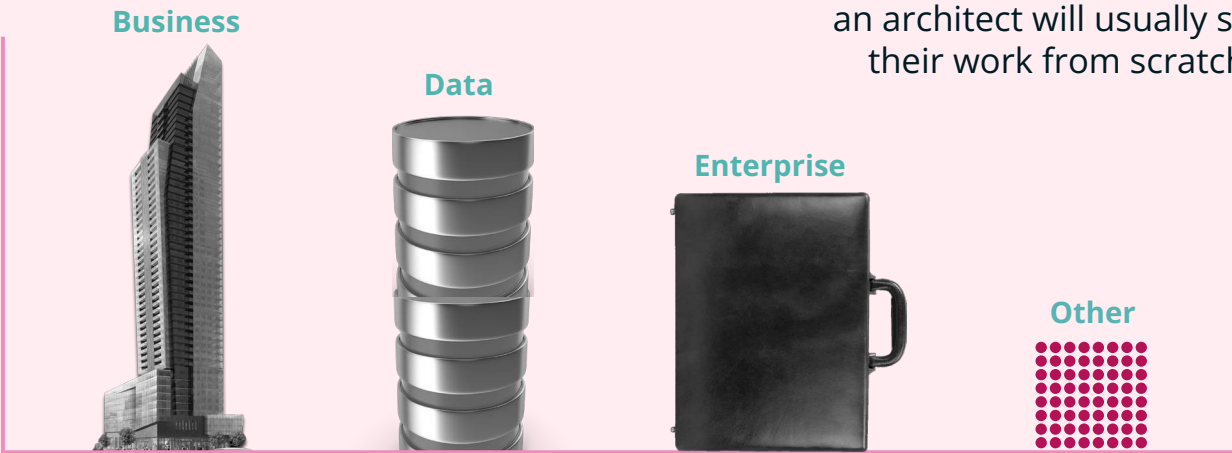
On average, respondents rated their architecture team's overall capability as

6/10

If this is how respondents are rating their teams, it is no surprise that senior executives are unable to realise the true value of architecture. More must be done to raise the level of performance for teams.



As Architecture & Governance point out in [this article](#), it can take several months or longer for a new architect to acquire enough knowledge about how their new employers' business and how IT platforms operate, without the help from other staff. There is a serious cost to this knowledge gap, as well as a 'Lack of Reuse' cost, whereby an architect will usually start their work from scratch.



Business, Data and Enterprise

(in that order) were the three skills areas that respondents had the most concerns over in 2023.

64%

We found that 50% of respondents were facing talent issues, yet Gartner (State of EA 2023) report that 64% of EA Teams are under resourced. Combined with a 62% increase in demand, this makes for worrying capacity issues and will see projects fall by the wayside, demotivated staff and a reduction in the quality of work.

of respondents had less teams which were made up of 80% or higher permanently employed staff. Right-sizing your team for specific projects or skill needs through use of external resources can uplift your architecture team, and increase its rating. It will also allow you to gain skilled workers at the right time for areas of your team which are of concern.



LinkedIn research suggests that the technology sector has the biggest staff turnover of any sector at 13.2%. XpertHR suggest this rate could even be higher at

18.3%

Flexible, skilled teams improve efficiency

71% of respondents had seen an increase in workload by up to



With many individuals spending 50-60 hours per week in their roles, this increase in workload is only going to **heighten burn-out, dissatisfaction of their role and lead to ineffective architecture.** This was highlighted during the 'Great Resignation' of 2021. An overloaded function will be an inefficient one.

This **highlights the need for flexibility**, which can rapidly enhance your team with the exact capabilities and specialist skills needed to deliver your goals.



32%

of leaders felt that their **reputation had been negatively affected** by the performance of their team. **Imagine how much this figure could exponentially decrease** if the overall capability of their teams ranked more towards an 8 or 9 out of 10, rather than the 6/10 rating given by respondents.

50% of respondents stated that they find the **gulf in performance between good and bad architects** to be up to

3x

This suggests that many organisations are **'making do'** with their current performance, which can drastically improve.



You may not have bad architects within your ranks though.

54%

of respondents felt that they frequently had to put **'square pegs in round holes'** within their architecture team.

If your teams' skills are not being utilised correctly, a downturn in performance is more than likely, and your value decreases as teams are being incorrectly utilised.

Architecture teams who had a **greater percentage of non-permanent employees** were rated

60% higher

than teams with more permanent employees. We expect there are far more square pegs in round holes due to the inability to adapt and flex to capacity demands, which the majority of respondents were stating was a huge issue for 2023.

Taking a new approach to your operating model may provide the flexibility and expertise required to deliver major projects without costly recruitment and management overheads.



Your 3 critical steps to success:

Get your metrics in place, and push the business to find what is important to them

There is no one clear approach, as the needs of each organisation will vary according to their strategy, but architecture teams need to turn their activities into quantified benefits. Implementing metrics leads to significant improvements in key performance indicators across all areas of the architecture function, including performance, hiring, and time management. However, the most noteworthy benefit is the substantial 250% increase in the perceived value of architecture. This approach represents the most effective means of addressing this longstanding challenge within the industry.

Konvergent also recently ran a roundtable on [Quantifying the Monetary Value of Architecture](#). The slides from this roundtable (linked) are useful in showcasing how architecture can calculate tangible values it brings to its organisation. As a discipline, it needs to shift away from using cost reduction as its only measure – it is so much more valuable than that.

Improve your internal communication, both verbally and visually. It will help build consensus:

Jonathan Whelan, co-author of Visualising Business Transformation, emphasises the importance of visualisations in building bridges among stakeholders. There is a need for this, as 91% of respondents would agree this will make a difference to their work, but in reality, the percentage of those implementing this process is much lower. Whelan acknowledges that in complex transformations involving numerous parties and ever-changing circumstances, maintaining shared meaning can be a significant challenge. Creating engaging collateral that is accessible to non-technical audiences can promote better decision-making, faster delivery, and improved return on investment.

Improving visual communication alone is not sufficient for enterprise architects to succeed in their roles. Verbal communication is equally important, particularly as architects are required to explain complex technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders. This facilitates collaboration and ensures clarity across all groups involved in complex transformations. By honing their verbal communication skills, architects can make persuasive arguments for their ideas, drive success within their roles, and generate positive outcomes for their organisations. In today's fast-paced and ever-changing business landscape, effective verbal communication has become a critical skill that cannot be overlooked.



Urgently consider new models for building your team:

Flexible operating models can not only help achieve cost savings and improve ROI, but also minimize the problem of “square pegs in round holes,” leading to a better fit between team members and their roles. By ensuring the right team is in place every time, can reduce the 5x performance gap we found and improve overall performance.

Too many teams are facing demand issues, with some unable to cope. The skill gap this creates is contributing to an overwhelming majority of programmes going over budget. Organisations who adopted a more flexible operating model would be able to plug their skills gap, gain consensus quicker, and adapt to changes in demand more efficiently.



About Konvergent

Konvergent bridges the gap between business consultancy and technology consultancy to deliver truly joined-up thinking that enables organisations to successfully transform.



Business Design

Combining elements of business strategy, business architecture and human centric design, our business design consulting helps define the future of your business. Whatever level of transformational change is required, Konvergent identifies the optimal technology eco-system you need to deliver to define your target operating model, deliver your strategic goals and drive ROI.

Enterprise Architecture

Working with and supporting internal architecture and technology teams, Konvergent brings to your team a proven portfolio of playbooks and templates that deliver consistent methodologies and approaches across business functions. This delivers consensus for the future vision, business-wide consistency and better technology investment decision making.



Solution Architecture

Konvergent helps augment your internal architecture team and ensuring they are ready and capable of meeting their delivery commitments. Focused on business outcomes, our solution architecture expertise provides you with complete oversight and delivery assurance, reducing complexity, improving effectiveness and accelerating delivery.

Stakeholder Communication

Uniquely, Konvergent combines revolutionary stakeholder communication capabilities with business design, enterprise architecture and solution architecture. We make business capability models, strategic plans and customer journeys compelling for non-technical audiences. Now, the scope of your transformation and the impact on the user experience is clear right across the business. This ensures consensus is built, leading to better decision making, faster delivery and improved ROI.



Discover more about us at www.konvergent.co.uk

If you have any questions or feedback regarding this survey, please do [let us know](#).

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