Architecture best practice and innovation

Using data and AI to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of architecture-led transformation

Architecture sets the direction for successful business and technology transformation. However, today's architecture functions face increasing pressure to deliver more with less and keep pace with rapidly changing business demands and technology trends. **Architecture must evolve**, to not just maintain relevance but to truly act as a strategic enabler for change and innovation. Organisations need a capability that is data-driven, consistent, transparent, scalable, and aligned with engineering practices.

Why it matters

Reduce cost and risk

Increase agility and innovation

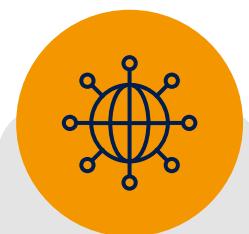**Exploit the business value in data**

Ensure legal and regulatory compliance

Our solution: a modern architecture practice

We help organisations transform how architecture operates - moving from fragile, manual, subjective practices to a **structured, governed, data-driven** capability. By introducing a modern **Architecture as Code** approach, organisations can uplift architecture maturity, enforce standards, and improve decision-making, to transform the architecture function into one that is:

Aligned with business and product strategy, and reactive to stakeholder needs

Built on shared standards, patterns, and governance

Embedded into delivery - not treated as an afterthought

Measurable, repeatable, automated, and scalable

Ready for evolving demands: data, cloud, regulatory change, AI

How we do it: the components of a modern architecture practice

Icon's Architecture Reference Model is a product of our collective knowledge and experience in delivering successful engagements across a broad portfolio of financial services clients. It contains our definition of architecture best practice, including associated structures, processes, assets and tools:

Provides the blueprint to effectively set and govern technology direction

Addresses specific competencies, including Enterprise, Domain and Solution Architecture, as well as how they are realised through choice of methodology and tools

Supports stakeholders with information and metrics that underpin informed decision-making

Icon's Architecture Capability Review is a toolset which specifies a consistent, repeatable approach to help align architecture capabilities with an organisation's needs, using Icon's aggregated knowledge and experience to turn meaningful insights into actionable results:

Assess current architecture practices, artefacts, operating model, etc. against Icon's Architecture Reference Model

Outline prioritised recommendations for Architecture improvement, aligning with organisational needs and strategy

Create target state view for Architecture and outline plan, balancing simple remediation with longer-term strategic change

Identify dependencies on investment, resources, or other areas to implement the necessary transformation activities

What is 'Architecture as code'?

Architecture as Code treats architecture as structured, version-controlled data, managed with the rigour of software-engineering discipline. By codifying architecture, organisations gain greater accuracy, consistency, and transparency, while keeping architecture closely aligned with real delivery.

The manifesto for Architecture as Code

- Objectivity over subjective interpretation
- Curated, correct, declarative data over static diagrams
- Observable transparency over opaque inaccessibility
- Testability over unscientific lack of rigour

Why it matters

- ~25% reduction in architecture-related operational costs
- ~50% improvement in decision accuracy through empirical data insights
- ~75% reduction in design approval time via automated governance processes
- ~25% faster solution design completion via tooling operating on Architecture as Code
- ~25% faster time-to-market via direct integration with delivery pipelines

What our clients say

"What you [Icon] produced was practical, future proofed and automated with some great recommendations on how we can connect various systems and reuse collateral with minimal maintenance effort to provide a holistic view.

Technology Platform Director, Digital Banking, Tier 1 UK Bank

Find out how we can help you on your transformation journey

+44 20 7147 9955   info@iconsolutions.com   iconsolutions.com

icon solutions