

The background is a dark, abstract composition featuring long, horizontal light trails in yellow, orange, and red, suggesting motion or energy. A faint, green-tinted map of the Middle East is visible in the upper half, with the text 'The Middle East' written in a small, light font on the right side. The overall aesthetic is modern and dynamic.

A Seat at the Table

Political Architecture

We are going in a different direction



Names, industries and timelines have been altered

The politics are real

We need to let you go ...

A Seat at the Table is not a Reward

You have influence
You are visible
You are exposed
You are accountable
You are a threat
You are part of the political game



It is a **risk position**

A Story of Failure

The Mandate

The Conflict

The Consequences

The Lessons

The Echo



And what I learned

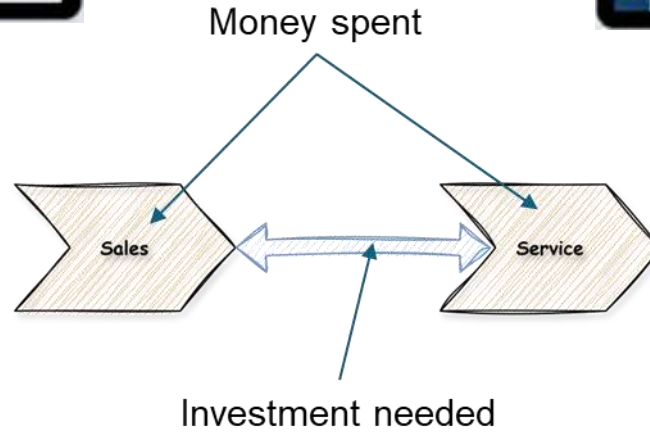
The Mandate

A large industrial machine, likely a cable weaving or braiding machine, is shown in a factory setting. The machine features multiple vertical frames holding numerous copper wires. The wires are being processed, possibly braided or woven, into a complex structure. The machine is made of metal and has various components like pulleys and guides. The background shows a typical industrial environment with metal structures and windows.

Enterprise Architecture partnered with Strategy and Transformation to ensure digital investments delivered measurable value across a multinational industrial enterprise

Steer Global Digital Transformation

The Disconnect - Money was Spent in Siloes



Strategy lost to local interests
KPIs told one story
Local politics told another

Value was not delivered

We Intervened



- We had the CEO's ear
- We were trusted advisors
- We were "right"
- We asked the Executive Board to instruct operational leadership to align

We believed authority would overcome politics
We were wrong!

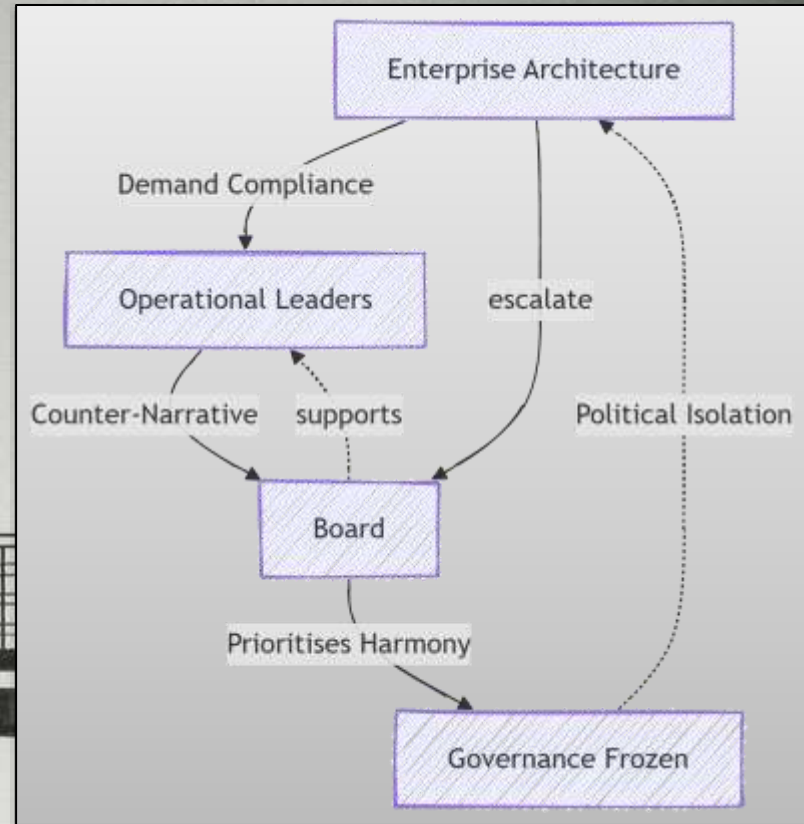
We went in heavy

Reaction

We created unity - against a common threat: us!

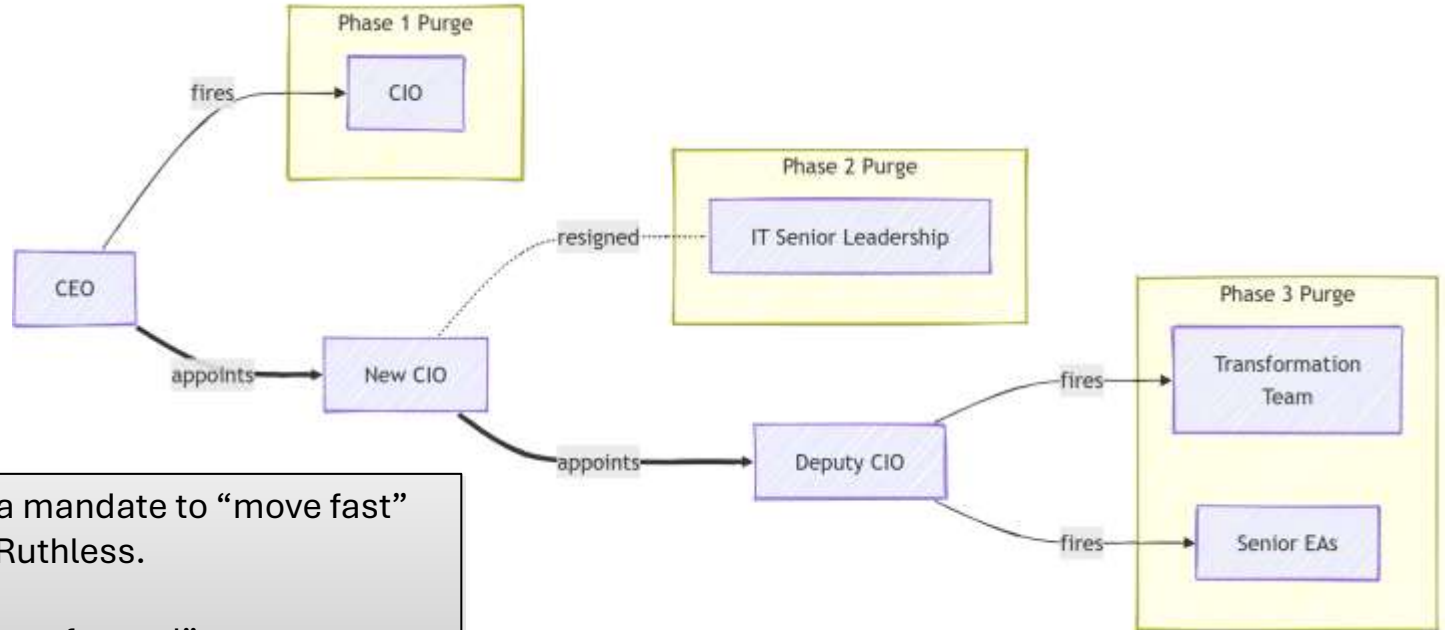
- “EA is destroying profits!”
- “EA is stopping us doing our jobs!”
- “EA is slowing the business down!”

A common enemy is a powerful political tool



Logic does not survive a unified political defence

Purge



A new CIO arrived with a mandate to “move fast”
Aggressive. Confident. Ruthless.

In six months, IT was “transformed”
We were removed

When politics wins, the scapegoat must go

The fallout was swift and brutal

Narrative



We were right about architecture
We were wrong about politics

Lesson:

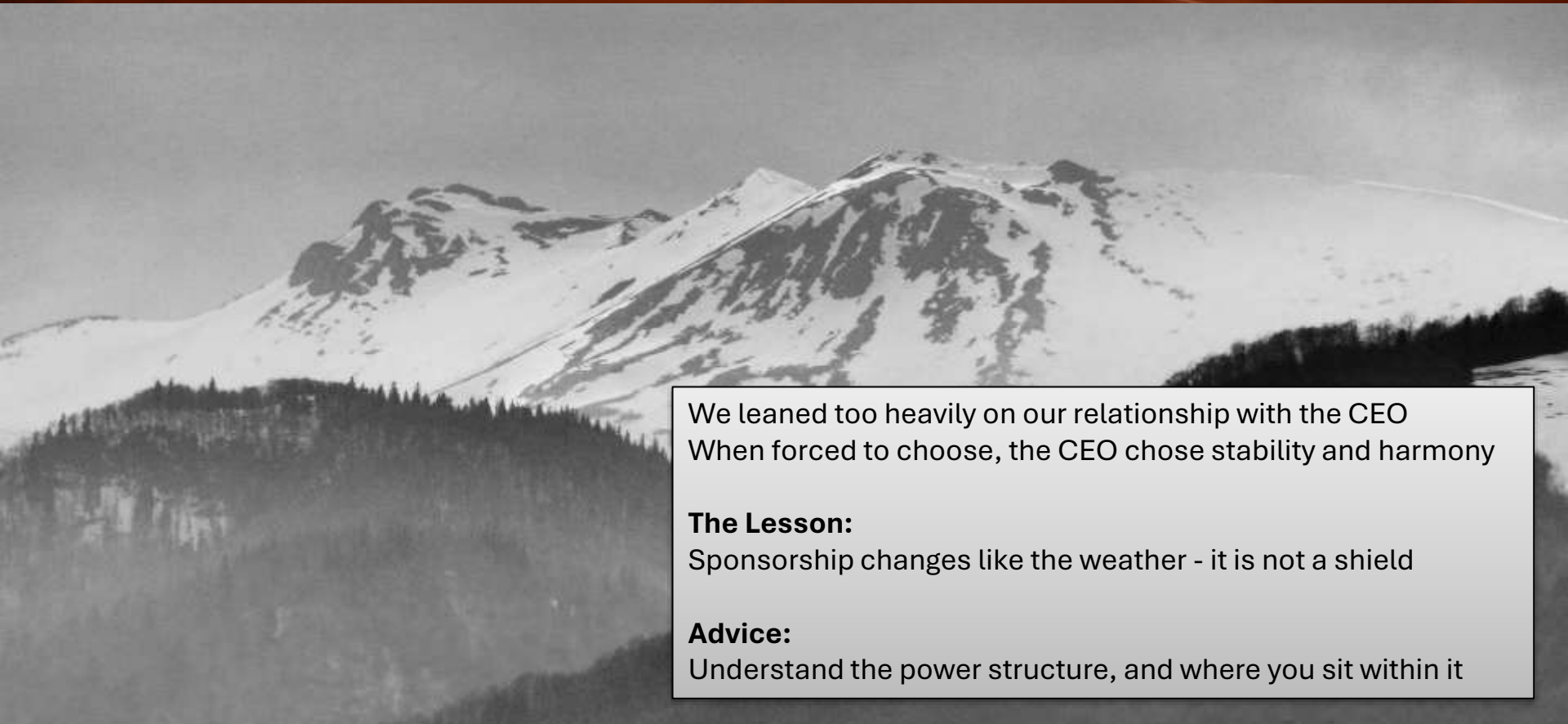
Do not call out executive non-performance
They will destroy your credibility to protect their own

Advice:

Co-create solutions with operational leaders
Do not impose alignment

We had the facts, we didn't control the story

The Trap



We leaned too heavily on our relationship with the CEO
When forced to choose, the CEO chose stability and harmony

The Lesson:

Sponsorship changes like the weather - it is not a shield

Advice:

Understand the power structure, and where you sit within it

Executive sponsorship is conditional, contextual & revocable

Architecture is Political

We focused on the **what**

We ignored the **who**

Who always wins

The Lesson:

Good solutions without political support fail

Advice:

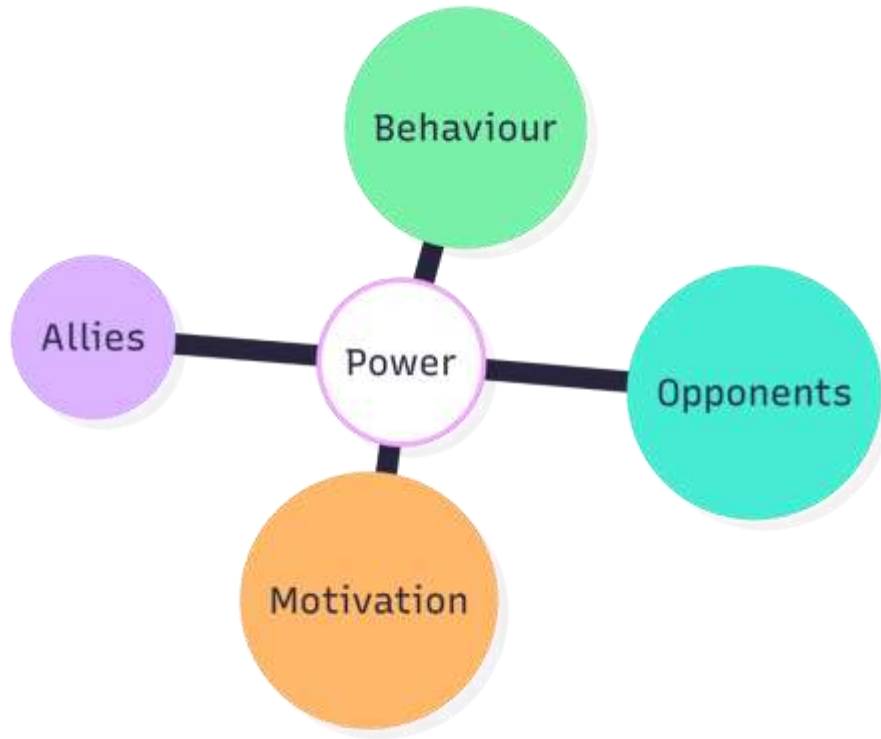
Model the political architecture & make trade-offs



1. Map the power landscape
2. Build coalitions before confrontations
3. Choose influence over correctness

Incremental gains are better than oblivion

Political Map

**Power:**

Who can block you? Who can protect you?

Motivation:

What do they gain or lose?

Personal and work motivations

Evidenced not assumed

Behaviour:

What story are they telling? When are they silent?

Who are they talking with?

What decisions are they making

Allies:

Who benefits if you succeed?

Opponents:

Who benefits if you fail?

We need to gather political insight

Behaviour Architecture



We need to create the political conditions for success

A Behavioural Plan for Political Change



Develop a behavioural plan

Tools for Navigating Power



Choose influence over correctness

28 Months Later



Transformation turns RED!
Politics are expensive



Corporate KPIs are resilient!

We contributed to this outcome!

The biggest losses are talented people and corporate memory

Echoes

A photograph of a beach with sand dunes and a green plant in the foreground. The plant has long, thin, green leaves that curve upwards and outwards. The sand is light-colored and textured. In the background, there are more dunes with some green vegetation. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

Leadership moves on

Our good work remains and continues delivering value

If we had been less certain, we could have done more

The next architecture team has something to build on

Transformation succeeds when architects understand political architecture

Your work outlives you

A seat at the table is political



Let's talk

Architects must master power & influence