How to present architecture issues to higher management

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Abstract
Architects struggle with their visibility at higher management echelons. The introvert nature of architects is a severe handicap. Participation of architects in management teams is important for balanced technical sound decisions and strategy. Improved managerial communication skills of architects are required.

This article describes how to give a more effective presentation to higher management teams. Subjects discussed are the preparation, content and form, do and don’t advise.
Architectural issues related to managerial viewpoints

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March 6, 2013
AMIintroduction
Characteristics of managers in higher management teams

**common characteristics**

+ action-oriented
+ solution rather than problem
+ impatient, busy
+ want facts not beliefs
+ operate in a political context
+ bottom-line oriented: profit, return on investment, market share, etc.

**highly variable characteristics**

? technology knowledge from extensive to shallow

? style from power play to inspirational leadership
How to prepare

Always prepare with small team!

- content
  - gather facts
  - perform analysis
  - identify goal and message
  - make presentation
  - polish presentation form

- mutual interaction

- understand audience
  - 70% of effort
    - gather audience background
    - analysis audience interests
    - identify expected responses
    - simulate audience, exercise presentation
  - 30% of effort

70% of effort

30% of effort

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AMIpreparation
Recommended content

+ clear problem statement (what, why)
+ solution exploration (how)
+ options, recommendations
+ expected actions or decisions

supported by facts and figures
Mentioned info, shown info and backup info

mention the red information only

Bill of material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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Schedule

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Typical performance

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Operating principle

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Power details

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Market drivers

- cost
- ttm
- wow
- DRM
- integration
- multiple suppliers
- nifty features
- fashionable design
- Hollywood pact
- standards
- MPEG4
- MP3
- color display
- ePen
- GPS sensor
- GSM
- UMTS
- BT
- 802.11b

Options

- A
- B

Typical performance

- load

Power budget

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Recommendation

- recommendation: select A
- follow up: allocate Jan, Piet, Klaas per 1/11
gogo 1/1/03

profit-investment

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Form is important

poor form can easily distract from purpose and content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>presentation material</th>
<th>presenter's appearance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ professional</td>
<td>+ well dressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ moderate use of</td>
<td>+ self confident but open</td>
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<tr>
<td>color and animations</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ readable</td>
<td>but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ use demos and show artifacts</td>
<td>stay yourself,</td>
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<td>stay authentic</td>
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Don’t force your opinion, understand the audience

**do not**

- preach beliefs
- underestimate technology knowledge of managers
- tell them what they did wrong
- oversell

**do**

+ quantify, show figures and facts
+ create faith in your knowledge
+ focus on objectives
+ manage expectations
How to cope with managerial dominance

**do not**

- let one of the managers hijack the meeting
- build up tensions by withholding facts or solutions
- be lost or panic at unexpected inputs or alternatives

**do**

+ maintain the lead
+ be to the point and direct
+ acknowledge input, indicate consequences (facts based)
Exercise presentation to higher management

+ Bring a clear architecture message to

+ a Management team at least 2 hierarchical levels higher

+ with 10 minutes for presentation including discussion
  (no limitation on number of slides)

* architecture message =
  technology options in relation with market/product

* address the concerns of the management stakeholders:
  translation required from technology issues into
  business consequences (months, fte's, turnover, profit, investments)
Exercise schedule

prepare in team of 4

13:30 14:00 15:00

present and discuss

1 1 2 2

feedback

3 3 4 4

16:00 17:00

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AMIexerciseSchedule

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