



# The First Steps: Finding and Observing the Enterprise Landscape

Digital transformation is a universal challenge for organizations striving to stay relevant in a rapidly evolving landscape. As organizations journey through this transformation, they often encounter a persistent issue: the difficulty of obtaining a comprehensive understanding of their enterprise landscape. Traditional frameworks frequently obscure hidden assets, stakeholder relationships, and complex interdependencies, which can lead to inefficiencies and missed opportunities. This reality underscores the need for a structured approach to establish an objective baseline—a foundational step that is often neglected.

## Understanding the Problem

At the heart of successful digital transformation lies the necessity of accurately mapping out an organization's unique landscape. Transformation initiatives often falter when leaders fail to acknowledge critical hidden assets like "Shadow IT", informal systems, and the intricate web of stakeholder relationships that exist. Without a clear understanding of these elements, organizations may struggle to make informed decisions or prioritize their transformation efforts effectively.

The journey begins with a focus on identifying and observing the components of the enterprise. By employing the FORGE methodology, which emphasizes the stages of "Find" and "Observe," organizations can prepare themselves to embark on a meaningful transformation journey. This involves not just collecting data, but engaging with stakeholders to foster an understanding of their experiences and challenges.

## The "Find" Stage: Establishing a Baseline

The first important step of the FORGE methodology is the "Find" stage. This stage focuses on uncovering essential components and stakeholders within the organization. It is crucial to engage not only with upper management but also with a diverse group of about eight to ten key

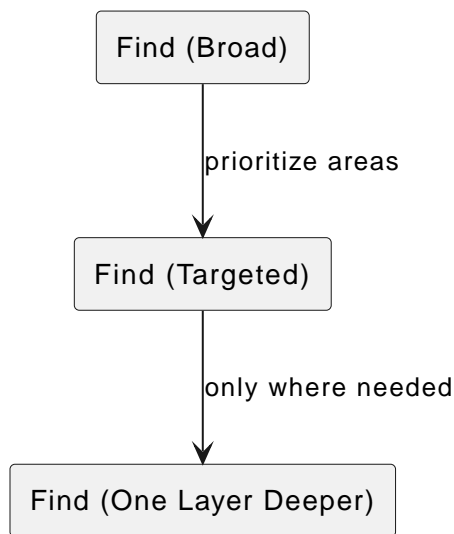


stakeholders at various levels. This ensures a well-rounded perspective that captures the true essence of the organization's landscape.

Effective techniques during this stage hinge on active listening and asking the right questions. It's fundamental to gather information broadly—understanding the mission statement, existing documentation, and stakeholders' perspectives are critical. These elements provide insight into potential hidden assets and pain points that may not be documented in traditional reports.

For example, organizations can leverage AI-assisted voice-to-text tools to ensure that discussions are captured accurately and efficiently. By focusing on breadth rather than depth in the initial stages, architects can create a foundational map that highlights existing conditions and potential areas for further inquiry.

Recognizing "Shadow IT"—the use of technology solutions implemented without official approval—is equally vital. Documenting these informal structures offers a glimpse into additional assets and capabilities that the organization may not have fully recognized, which can be invaluable in the transformation process.



## The "Observe" Stage: Mapping Interdependencies

Once the "Find" stage is complete, the focus transitions into the "Observe" stage, where the objective is to analyze interdependencies among identified components. This stage dives deeper into understanding the relationships between systems, processes, and stakeholders, allowing for the identification of how these elements influence one another.

Instead of static charts, the emphasis should be on observing dynamic usage patterns and

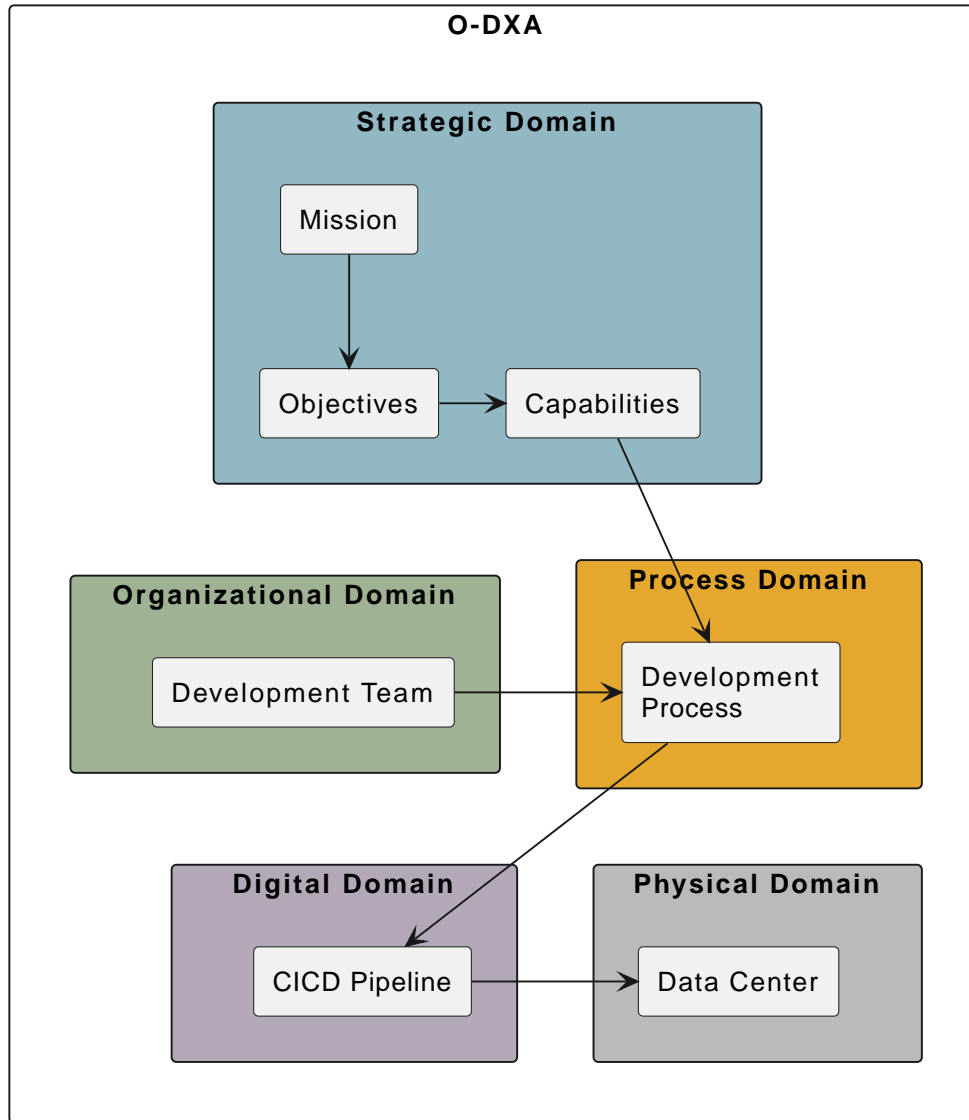


behavioral relationships. Architects should take note of where specific tools are utilized—be it cloud applications, on-premise solutions, or personal devices—which helps in understanding the operational context of the organization.

Maintaining a high-level perspective is paramount during this process. The goal is not to get lost in minutiae but rather to discern critical insights that can lead to actionable changes. For instance, mapping out interdependencies might reveal operational bottlenecks or common pain points experienced across various departments.

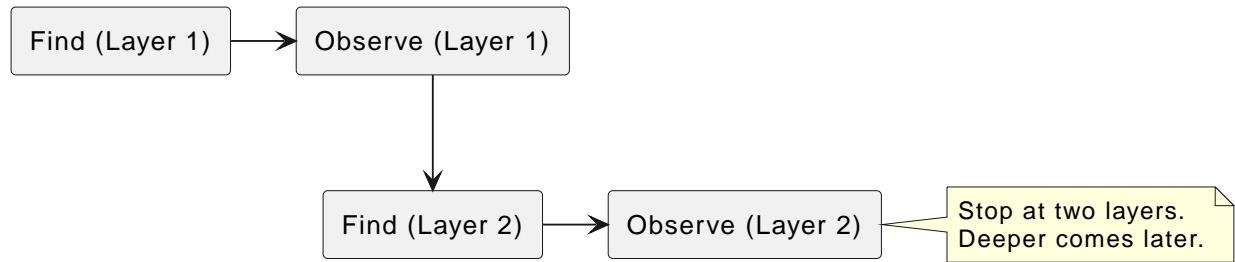
As interdependencies become clearer, organizations can pinpoint gaps—areas that require further investigation or enhancement. This preparatory work sets the stage for deeper analysis in subsequent phases of the FORGE methodology, where reconciliation of formal and informal structures takes place.

By being vigilant about these patterns and relationships at the onset, architects facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the enterprise's "Nervous System," enabling informed decision-making and strategic planning.



## Iterate to Narrow Focus

A key principle for effectively analyzing the enterprise landscape is to begin with a broad exploration before honing in on specific areas of interest. Initially, the analyst should aim to capture a wide-ranging view of the organization during the first "Find" and "Observe" layers. This broad approach helps uncover diverse pain points, gaps, and mission-critical capabilities that might otherwise remain hidden.



Once this foundational layer is established, focus can shift toward targeted inquiry and deeper observation in subsequent iterations. The decision to dive deeper should be guided by insights gathered during the initial observations—specifically where friction exists, where capabilities need strengthening, or where strategic goals indicate a priority.

Iteration may begin immediately following the first "Observe" stage or even during the "Reconcile" step, where formal and informal structures are examined and aligned. The goal throughout is to move quickly while preserving a holistic understanding of the enterprise's dynamics.

By iterating in this manner, analysts balance speed and thoroughness: they avoid getting bogged down in unnecessary details too early, but still build a comprehensive view that supports informed decision-making and effective transformation planning.

## Implications for Leaders and Practitioners

Establishing this baseline insight is not merely an academic exercise; it is critical to ensuring the efficacy of digital transformation initiatives. For leaders and practitioners, understanding their organization's landscape allows them to evaluate their current state pragmatically, prioritize future improvements, and set measurable goals based on realistic assessments of enhanced value delivery.

Architects serve as "Enterprise Interpreters" amid this complex environment, enabling connections between various stakeholders, systems, and processes. By fostering a culture of inquiry and documentation, organizations can nurture adaptability and responsiveness, which are essential traits for sustainable transformation.

As organizations move forward, they should be aware of the constant nature of change. Engaging stakeholders, observing behaviors, and documenting insights will not only enhance current operations but also prepare leaders for the iterative nature of transformation.



# Conclusion: Steps Towards Transformation

The journey of digital transformation necessitates an accurate understanding of the enterprise landscape. By implementing the FORGE methodology's "Find" and "Observe" stages, organizations lay a strong foundation for their transformation efforts. Leader engagement, stakeholder perspectives, and thoughtful documentation ensure that informed decisions can be made, ultimately driving effective and sustainable transformation.

Organizations should approach their mapping and analysis iteratively, remaining open to refining their understandings as new insights are gained. What begins with broad inquiries can evolve into targeted strategies that align closely with the organization's long-term objectives.

For those keen to delve deeper into these concepts, consider exploring additional resources, including a detailed whitepaper on the FORGE methodology, the full lecture episode, and a structured blog post summarizing these insights.

## Learn More

- Full lecture episode: [Finding and Observing the Enterprise Landscape](#)
- Series blog summary: [The FORGE Methodology: From Intent to Infrastructure](#)