



Gaining business agility through a Service Oriented Architecture

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In a recent survey, Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) was cited by 87%¹ of CIOs as 'the next big thing' in enterprise software. And with good reason. Complex, distributed IT resources are a concern for businesses. Too frequently, the existing IT portfolio does not adequately meet specific business needs, is costly to manage and maintain, and is inflexible in the face of business growth and change. The solution, however, is not to rip and replace systems or applications, nor to completely renovate them, but rather to find a way to leverage existing IT investments so that overall organizational goals are supported effectively. A Microsoft-based Service Oriented Architecture can achieve this.

Connecting people to the information they need

A Service Oriented Architecture provides a platform for a far more agile IT environment by enabling IT professionals to design flexible systems that can be adapted rapidly to meet a company's changing business needs and priorities.

This is achieved by using XML and Web services to separate business logic from business data so that business logic can be rapidly and easily revised to support new business processes and leverage data from diverse systems across an organization.

Implementing a solution architecture based upon service orientation helps organizations plan ahead for change, rather than responding reactively.

With a Service Oriented Architecture, you can connect systems and automate previously manual information-transfer processes. This enables you to

develop new applications; connect systems, workgroups, or geographically distributed subsidiaries; and collaborate with trading partners. SOA solutions enable you to gain:

- **Stronger connections with customers and suppliers.** By making dynamic applications and business services available to external customers and suppliers, not only is richer collaboration possible, but also customer/partner satisfaction is increased.
- **Enhanced business decision making.** By aggregating access to business services and information into a set of dynamic, composite business applications, decision makers gain broader visibility, more accurate and more comprehensive information.
- **Greater employee productivity.** By providing streamlined access to systems and information and enabling business process improvement, businesses can drive greater employee productivity.

Is your Application Platform **people**  **ready?**



How a Service Oriented Architecture improves customer service—and business.

New pension laws in Norway provided an opportunity for Vital Forsikring ASA, a life and pension insurance company, to boost the number of subscribers to its products. The company decided to build a new pension application based on service-oriented architecture using Microsoft® BizTalk® Server 2006. Vital has improved customer service by ensuring that all transactions are completed successfully and by providing around-the-clock access to its pension products. Vital can also bring new products to market faster and expects to cut development costs for its next project by US\$2.4 million. Microsoft BizTalk Server ensures that information is linked between disparate systems and that the same data is updated simultaneously in every system, or not at all. This enables Vital caseworkers to respond more quickly to customer requests and consistently present them with reliable, up-to-date information.

SOA: Business Benefits

- Increase customer access to company resources and information, and improve customer retention through faster sales and more efficient services.
- Improve regulatory compliance through process control, regulation, and monitoring, while reducing risk of data errors and security breaches.
- Improve efficiencies across organizational boundaries through better visibility and control, as well as automation, and integration.
- Use your IT assets more efficiently by creating new and reusable SOA components, and new composite applications which integrate with previous applications.

SOA: Application Stack

Microsoft® BizTalk® Server

Microsoft BizTalk Server is a business process management server designed to automate and optimize business processes. It provides the following:

- Easy linking between collaborative and transaction processes through integration with Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server 2007 and line of business applications—including ERP, CRM, and Logistics—within your business and across organizational boundaries.
- A broad suite of adapters to major line-of-business systems which helps businesses to expose processes contained within existing applications and to integrate them.
- Enhancements to Business Activity Monitoring (BAM), which gives business users out-of-the-box access to key, real-time process metrics through a pre-configured BAM Portal.

Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 enables staff to make better-informed decisions by securely sharing information from diverse sources, including line-of-business systems and business processes across organizational boundaries. This helps improve organizational effectiveness by providing comprehensive control over content and accelerating shared business processes.

Microsoft® .NET™ Framework

The .NET Framework provides the development environment for independent software vendors and corporate IT developers to build workflow inside custom .NET-connected applications. The .NET Framework 3.0 can deliver Windows Workflow Foundation as a common run-time technology for workflow automation, helping with scheduling, tracking, synchronizing, and more.

The Microsoft Advantage

Microsoft provides a highly integrated suite of products which support your total business needs and interoperate with legacy and third party applications so that you can maximize existing investments, while establishing a strong foundation for the future. Consistent standards and built-in capabilities create an adaptive platform with affordable enterprise level scalability.



“We wanted to use a SOA because of the greater flexibility and reduced costs it provides. The market is changing very quickly, and time-to-market is very important, so we need to be very flexible.”

Rolf Nergaard
Enterprise Architect, Vital Forsikring ASA



How to get started with a Service Oriented Architecture

Implementing a Service Oriented Architecture can provide significant benefits for your business. Below are some recommendations based on customer experience that may help you get started.

1. Assess your current maturity across multiple dimensions looking at business strategy, technology strategy and technology implementation.
2. Establish targets for where you want to be.
3. Document important goals and metrics for tracking progress.
4. Prioritize capabilities and investments over time.
5. Recognize that aspects of the roadmap may shift with experiences gained and adopt regular checkpoints for re-assessment.
6. Your SOA Project should achieve the following: address a well known business problem that can benefit from SOA; include LOB and IT objectives and well defined metrics; incorporate aspects of governance; stretch beyond current capabilities to address gaps (e.g. skills, processes etc.); be something you put in production and; leverage SOA value patterns below.
7. Cross check your project against SOA value patterns, which are: information and process integration; the delivery of modern composite applications; the consolidation of services and/or resources and the modernization of legacy systems.

Five Practical Tips for Implementing SOA

- Always start from the business need—not the IT here and now
- Design the services—then design their implementation
- The key benefit is business agility—service reuse is the upside
- Start small and prioritize—plan, but don't boil the ocean
- Expect change—don't avoid it

Case Studies

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

See how the Commonwealth Bank of Australia used the Microsoft SOA platform to integrate applications and provide a single unified view of customers across their organization. Read more and view the video at: www.microsoft.com/biztalk/solutions/soa

Microsoft Advocates "Real-World" Approach to SOA for Increased Business Value

This useful Q&A session features customers and industry partners discussing a "real-world" approach to SOA, and how it can be used to solve troubling business challenges.

Read more: www.microsoft.com/soa

10% discount to help you get started

Microsoft is offering a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and Business Process Pack promotion. It includes the applications you need to streamline and automate key business processes, and achieve a higher degree of agility while leveraging your existing IT investments. The SOA & Business Process Pack includes:

- Microsoft® BizTalk® Server 2006 R2 Enterprise Edition
- Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server 2007
- Microsoft® SQL® Server 2005 Enterprise Edition
- Microsoft® Visual Studio® 2005 Team Suite

If you buy the SOA & Business Process Pack between September 1, 2007 and February 29, 2008 you will receive a 10% discount compared to individual product pricing. For terms and conditions of this 10% discount, visit: www.microsoft.com/soa

How To Buy

Ask your Microsoft account executive about purchasing the SOA & Business Process Pack at a 10% discount. They'll also be able to advise you on the business value SOA and BPM can deliver for your organization and assist you in planning your next deployment.

The SOA & Business Process Pack gives customers everything they need to get started with SOA.

For more information visit www.microsoft.com/soa

May we help?

For more information—white papers, architectural guidance, case studies, web casts and other resources—please visit www.microsoft/soa.

If you are planning to advance your application platform, talk to a Microsoft partner. With thousands of reference sites and successful deployments across the world, we have both the experience and expertise to help you assess your IT infrastructure and select and deploy cost-effective, proven solutions that meets your needs today and tomorrow.

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