

Gaining business agility through a Service Oriented Architecture



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.

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.

Do your systems talk business?

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.

“The full, intuitive picture you get from data visualization makes you more proactive in your work, and this isn’t unique to crisis response. We’re only beginning to understand the range of uses to which we can put this technology.”

Stephen Fortune
Information Management Director, BP

- 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

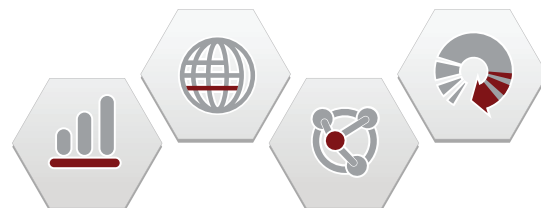
Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 enables staff to make better-informed decisions by securely sharing information from diverse sources, including line-of-business systems and business processes across organizational boundaries. This helps improve organizational effectiveness by providing comprehensive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



www.microsoft.com/applicationplatform

¹ Meryll Lynch May 12, 2006