

Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)

An Overview



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Introduction

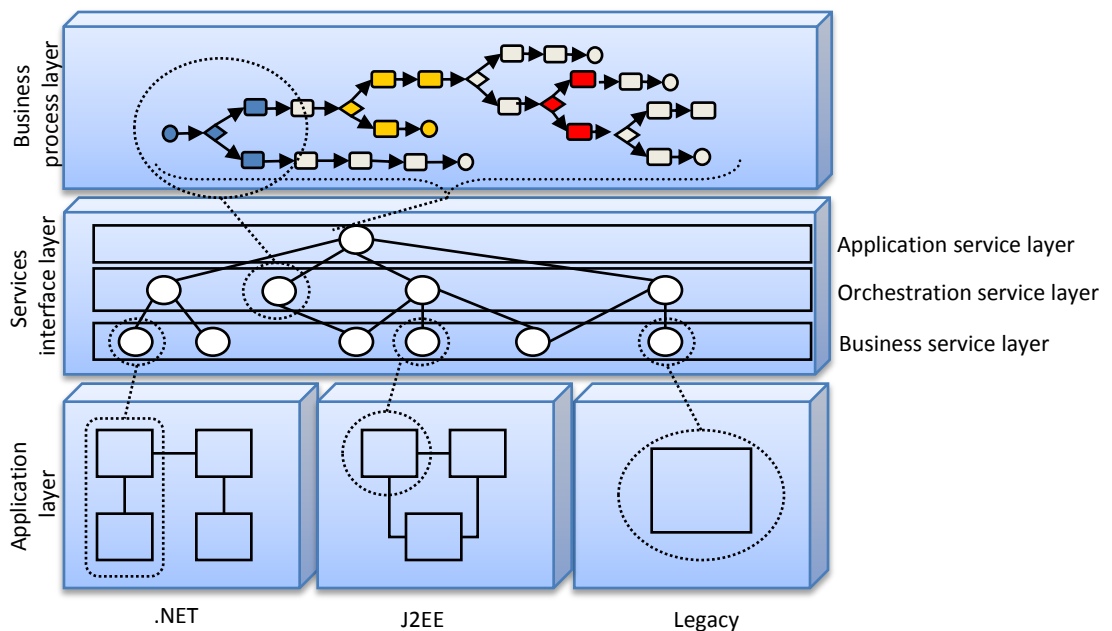
Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) is the latest talk in technology and most Enterprises are gravitating towards it, to redesign their IT for the future. Most companies have already embarked on this journey of SOA or initiating efforts in this direction this year.

In this document we provide an overview of SOA and touch upon some of the steps that companies need to embark, to enable SOA in their Enterprise.

What is SOA?

To start with let's take a minute to try and understand what the whole concept of SOA is really about. Some schools of thought think of SOA as just Web services standards to achieve better application integration. In reality SOA is a key element of strategic business transformation. It is a form of Business Architecture.

SOA-based business architecture has the business of the enterprise decomposed in the form of services. This provides a modular, digital-world representation of the business, which can be assembled and aggregated flexibly to match business scenarios. The services can be connected to any customer, employee, supplier or partner, wherever and whenever. This business architecture increases both business and application flexibility by changing the style of design, deployment and management of applications and software infrastructure.



Focus on the Business – Process and Services



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Key characteristics of SOA based business architecture:

- All Business Resources are defined and published as services
- These services on a SOA can communicate with each other and these services can be composed together to match the business processes
- The Services are autonomous, QoS-capable, vendor diverse, interoperable, discoverable and reusable

In an SOA environment, the following benefits accrue to an enterprise:

- It enables enterprises to directly link technology with business results
- SOA creates a flexible IT architecture and enables quicker deployment of new business applications
- SOA lowers IT expenditures as it helps organizations meet new business needs with existing resources

Thinking through the ROI of SOA

It is important to think of ROI in broader terms and not treat SOA as purely a technology solution. SOA matters to the business in many ways as it improves both business results and IT results. Improving business and improving application flexibility are the drivers for SOA.

Justifying SOA Investments:

- Will the organization recover what it has spent on SOA
- Is the overall solution available at a cost that will deliver value to the organization
- Can the value provided be proven

Evolution of any solution will be facilitated by calculating ROI and the organization needs to establish a standard and consistent way of doing this. Towards this, the steps that need to be undertaken are

- Identify what the real benefits are likely to be and who will benefit within the organization
- Quantify the benefit after establishing the value of technology and obtain buy-in from those likely to be benefited
- Asses the benefits, calculate the value and confirm that they are realizable

To be continued...

Check out part II of this whitepaper in the Downloads Section



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