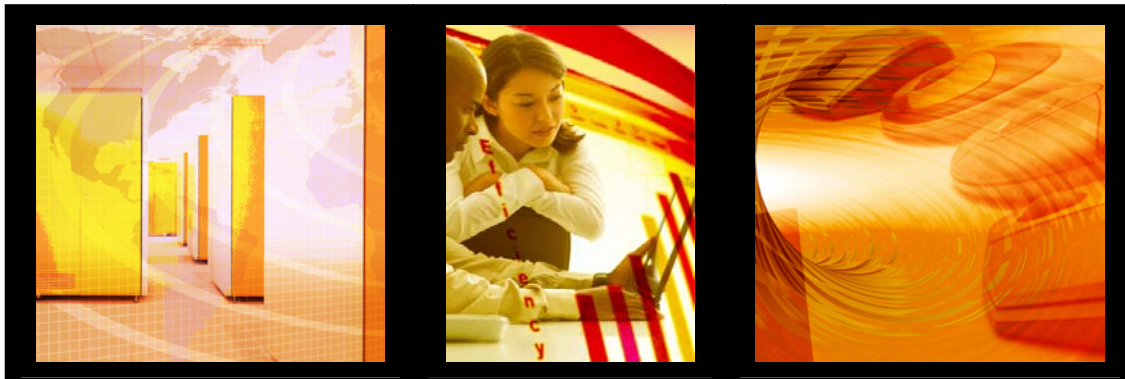


AN ENLIGHTENED WHITE PAPER



SERVICE ORIENTED ARCHITECTURE (SOA): APPROACH TOWARD IT AND BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

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1.0 ABSTRACT

Constant evolution of technology in a rapidly evolving and changing enterprise has challenged the CIO's, and CTO's of 21st century to address the issue of IT and business integration. Connecting variety of applications across the enterprise and working with complex tools to achieve IT and business efficiency is littered with failed integration initiatives. Proprietary non-standard based integration efforts along with point to point rigid non-reusable interfaces have added to the problem. The optimal approach to address these shortcomings is Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) which can reconcile data across disparate systems, allowing your applications to work together. SOA can optimize the flow of information across all of your business-critical applications, so customers, partners and suppliers can seamlessly share information in a consistent and standards based manner.

2.0 BUSINESS CHALLENGE

With the evolution of technology, the choices business must make in order to stay competitive have gotten more complex. This is evident in the challenges many businesses face: attempting to maintain disparate information stores and applications, increasing total cost of ownership (TCO) through purchase of software packages, staying within compliance of regulations, adjusting continuously to changing markets, and aspiring to business to business integration. Attempts to address these challenges have come in the form of one-off solutions, employing non-standard and non-reusable technologies and frameworks. These have resulted in a perception that IT does not understand the needs of business, nor that IT's ongoing cost is providing measurable benefit. If only there were approaches such that IT could provide services versus deploying software packages, that services could be subscribed to, that service quality to business could be maintained, and that IT could align better with business.

3.0 SOLUTION DESCRIPTION

Over the past several years the IT landscape has changed and the path to enterprise efficiency is looking much clearer today. As technologies have matured and evolved, IT has a new approach that is service-oriented, open, reusable, standards based, and extensible that promises to ease integration challenges, making the rapid creation and delivery of new composite applications and business processes attainable. This approach towards IT, Business, and Enterprise integration is recognized as Service Oriented Architecture.

The goal of applying technology like SOA in an enterprise is to create architecture for integration that can be pervasive across the entire enterprise and beyond. SOA achieves this pervasiveness by:

- Adapting to suit the needs of general-purpose integration projects across a variety of integration platforms and situations, large and small.
- Providing a durable architecture capable of withstanding evolutions in protocols, interface technology, and even process modeling trends.
- Linking applications together that span the extended enterprise using a single unified approach and a common infrastructure
- Extending beyond the boundaries of a single corporate IT center to include all service partners across different geographical regions
- Providing integration architects to have a broad and abstract view of organizational assets and automated business processes
- Having flexibility and ability to react and meet the needs of changing business requirements and competitive pressures.

In an *event driven enterprise*, business events that affect the normal course of a business process can occur in any order and any time. In any agile enterprise, applications that exchange data in automated business processes need to communicate with each other using an event driven SOA to have the agility to react to changing business requirements. SOA provides enterprises with a broad abstract view of applications and integration components to be dealt with as high level services. SOA with Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) as its backbone can pull together applications and discrete integration components to create assemblies of services to form composite business processes, which in turn automate business function in a real-time event driven enterprise.

4.0 SOLUTION BENEFITS

An enterprise can reap benefits of SOA if it had successfully carried out application integration, enterprise integration for SOA, and business integration. Application integration is IT's response to the need to closely integrate applications to provide essential business functionality leveraging SOA. This is the very first step moving towards overall enterprise SOA. Enterprise integration for SOA exists as part of a greater strategic SOA initiative to foster reusability and flexibility within a company. Enterprise integration provides data access, service integration and application, and process service enablement—core components in the success of any SOA initiative. The first two areas of integration are IT-centric initiatives. Business integration occurs when a line-of-business and IT cooperate and iterate together to provide true business value through systems and processes that map to how their company does business. Business integration enables streamlining of processes and also greater customer satisfaction. It frees the company to innovate and compete more effectively.

Figure 1 depicts an end-to-end successful SOA Integration strategy for an agile enterprise.

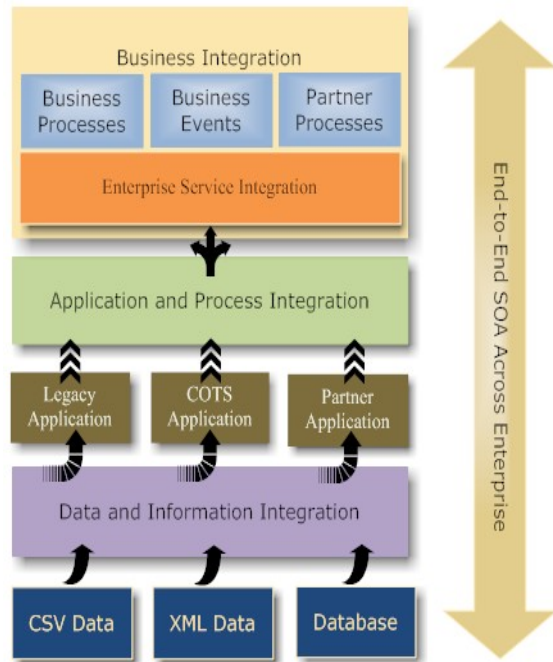


Figure 1: SOA Integration Strategy

5.0 CONCLUSION

Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) is gaining momentum and companies worldwide are turning to the promise of agility and interoperability a SOA strategy can deliver. By integrating existing systems with standards-based services, you can automate, standardize, reuse and share business processes, applications and data to obtain the highest business value from existing and future IT investments. A thorough understanding of the benefits a SOA approach can deliver is critical - helping you examine when and where a SOA is appropriate and how to build a business-case for SOA in your organization when the time is right.

Leveraging industry best practices and knowledge gained from past SOA projects, Enlightened can help you achieve SOA successfully throughout your enterprise. SOA is not about technology, but instead it's all about overall business efficiency for your enterprise. Email or call us today to learn more.

6.0 COMPANY INFORMATION

Enlightened, Inc. is a full-service Information Technology (IT) consulting firm that helps our clients solve complex business problems by leveraging technology.

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