

## One Step Closer to Enterprise SOA

### Applies to:

Enterprise Architects, Business Process Experts

### Summary

"Real-time business" is essential in today's highly competitive environment. Business processes need to be molded mapped and controlled in real time to enable companies to respond to the demands of the market, customers or business partners as quickly as possible. However, a number of preconditions must be met if this is to be achieved. This article describes some of those preconditions.

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### Author Bio



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## Introduction

"Real-time business" is essential in today's highly competitive environment. Business processes need to be molded, mapped, and controlled in real time to enable companies to respond to the demands of customers, business partners, or the market itself as quickly as possible. However, a number of preconditions must be met if this is to be achieved.

For example, processes which generally extend across several software applications should be integrated not only within the company, but also at suppliers and customers where required. Technical and industry-specific standards are particularly vital where data is exchanged with other business partners. Content management is required to convert unstructured and structured data from the applications into a usable picture. Employees should have information relevant to their requirements and roles at the right time, in the right place.

Recurring processes must be defined as generally available "Shared Services" and it must be possible to access them for new processes that have to be set up. Orchestrating and maintaining a process which is to be mapped requires software lifecycle management. Downtime is no longer inevitable just because applications have to be changed or new ones set up.

## Customers Explore Enterprise SOA Potential

Suppliers of applications and infrastructure carry out developments based on service-oriented architectures to satisfy all these requirements. These enable companies to use Web services as technological program modules and implement processes with them. For some time, IT providers have been monitoring the use of service-oriented architectures. But how can these actually be implemented?

SAP NetWeaver supplies one solution. To a certain extent, a service-oriented architecture is already

possible with cross-application solutions using SAP xApps based on SAP NetWeaver. In 2003, SAP unveiled its comprehensive SOA-focused concept of an Enterprise Services Architecture (ESA). In what is now known as enterprise SOA, the processes are mapped in reusable "Enterprise Services," which are made available within repositories such as mySAP ERP.

This structure enables configuration of process steps and, along with Web services, provides business management support in the design of cross-enterprise processes. Enterprise Services are used to produce a comprehensive definition of business-related processes and to implement them across a range of IT systems. For example, Enterprise Services break up rigid delivery chains and turn them into cooperation networks that support flexible expansion. Enterprise SOA is being developed to provide IT specialization and consolidation strategies with the flexibility required on today's market.

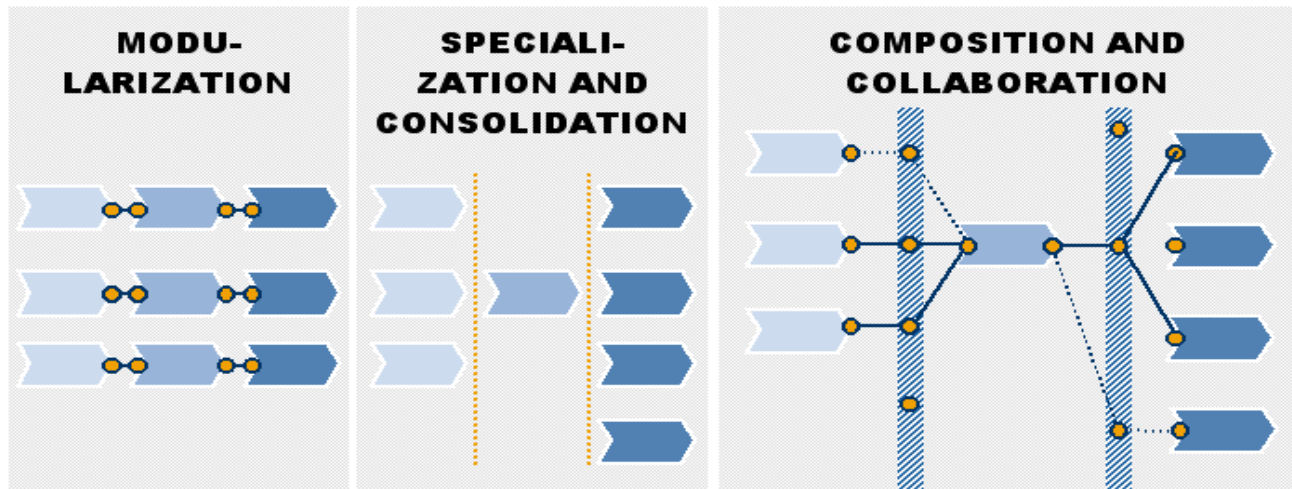
## En Route to Real-time Business

SAP has developed its Enterprise SOA Adoption Program to enable all of its customers to implement their own IT strategies for a real-time business step-by-step. An initial evaluation phase involving joint workshops with SAP and customers will find out how enterprise SOA can support the customer's specific business processes.

The next step is to define an enterprise SOA roadmap specific to the needs of the company in question. The enterprise SOA roadmap uses the customer's existing architecture to highlight concrete measures for the phased introduction of a service-oriented architecture over the coming years. These measures will be put in place in a subsequent implementation phase. One of the key focuses is on ensuring that the service-oriented architecture is introduced without downtime.

Tools are available to measure the outcome of implementing the SOA in a cost/benefit analysis and evaluate them in terms of Return on Investment (ROI). The SAP Developer Network (SDN) provides customers and partners of SAP with a more extensive insight into the Enterprise SOA Adoption Program.

## Rigid Supply Chains evolve into Adaptive Business Networks



### Enterprise Services Already a Reality

SAP recently unveiled the [Enterprise Services Workplace](#) (SDN login required) to give partners and customers an insight into Enterprise Services. It currently contains 500 pre-defined Enterprise Services for key business processes from sectors such as Financial and Management Reporting or Sales Analytics. Further examples of these Enterprise Services include Alert Management with warning functions and General Ledger Processing for working with balance sheets and taxes. Yet another example is the delivery or procurement processes such as procure-to-pay or order-to-cash. The ES Workplace shows how Enterprise Services handle such process steps and automatically support the entire workflow for all users. This extends from identifying a problem to finding a solution. The purpose of an Enterprise Service is to retrieve a misdirected delivery and process it properly.

With the Adoption Program and the ES Workplace, SAP offers its customers comprehensive advice and customized solutions on introducing the Enterprise Services Architecture whatever the size of the company. What is more, SAP NetWeaver lays the groundwork for future competitiveness, corporate success and real-time business.

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