

Why Collaboration on SDN Matters

Applies to:

Composite applications, reverse engineering, and SAP xApp Analytics Resource Center.

Summary

Wipro Technologies is a global services provider delivering technology-driven business solutions that meet the strategic objectives of its clients. Wipro has over 40 “Centers of Excellence” that create solutions around specific needs of industries.

In 2004, Wipro Technologies needed rapid-fire responses to questions it had when first implementing SAP NetWeaver. In subsequent years, the company continued to need a trusted forum for sharing ideas and knowledge relating to Enterprise Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).



Kartik Iyengar, SAP NetWeaver Competence Group Head and Solution Architect with Wipro Technologies, discussed Wipro’s collaboration and contribution efforts on SDN with Senior SDN Editor Talila Baron.

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Author Bio

Talila Baron is senior editor of SDN. She manages the SDN Newsletter, SDN homepage, and other special projects for SDN.

Baron: What was the challenge or "pain point" that motivated collaboration on SDN?

Iyengar: We have been evangelizing SAP NetWeaver for the past three years. We were just starting to get our hands dirty with SAP NetWeaver in 2004. I had two options for support: Use Service Market Place or SDN. Back then, SDN didn't have too many members. But we needed to get our infrastructure up and running ASAP. And we found that the response time on SDN was very fast. Initially, we were most interested in forums. We thought, 'Here is a community that is open and willing to help you find what you're really looking for!' Eventually, we moved into producing blogs, whitepapers, and today, composite applications for the SDN and BPX Community.

Baron: What are the most relevant industry trends or challenges that apply to your company?

Iyengar: Monetization of ESOA is our top industry challenge. About 18 months ago, organizations started moving to ESOA pilots, but not to real-time systems. Through collaboration on SDN, we formulated the idea for – and developed – the Wipro Composite Application Factory (W-CAF) Model. And this has been adopted by customers. Essentially, we took what we learned from SDN and applied it to monetize ESOA.

Wipro also created Reverse Engineered xApps to help customers along this front. **Reverse Engineered xApps**, such as the iPRO xApp, can be defined as composites that are built using ESOA and the SAP NetWeaver platform. Reverse-engineering business processes makes companies leaner, helps to improve productivity, enhances functionality, and drops redundant functionality. Most importantly, it helps to align the company's ESOA roadmap, providing a safe, cost-efficient way to shift from legacy, custom, or best-of-breed applications.

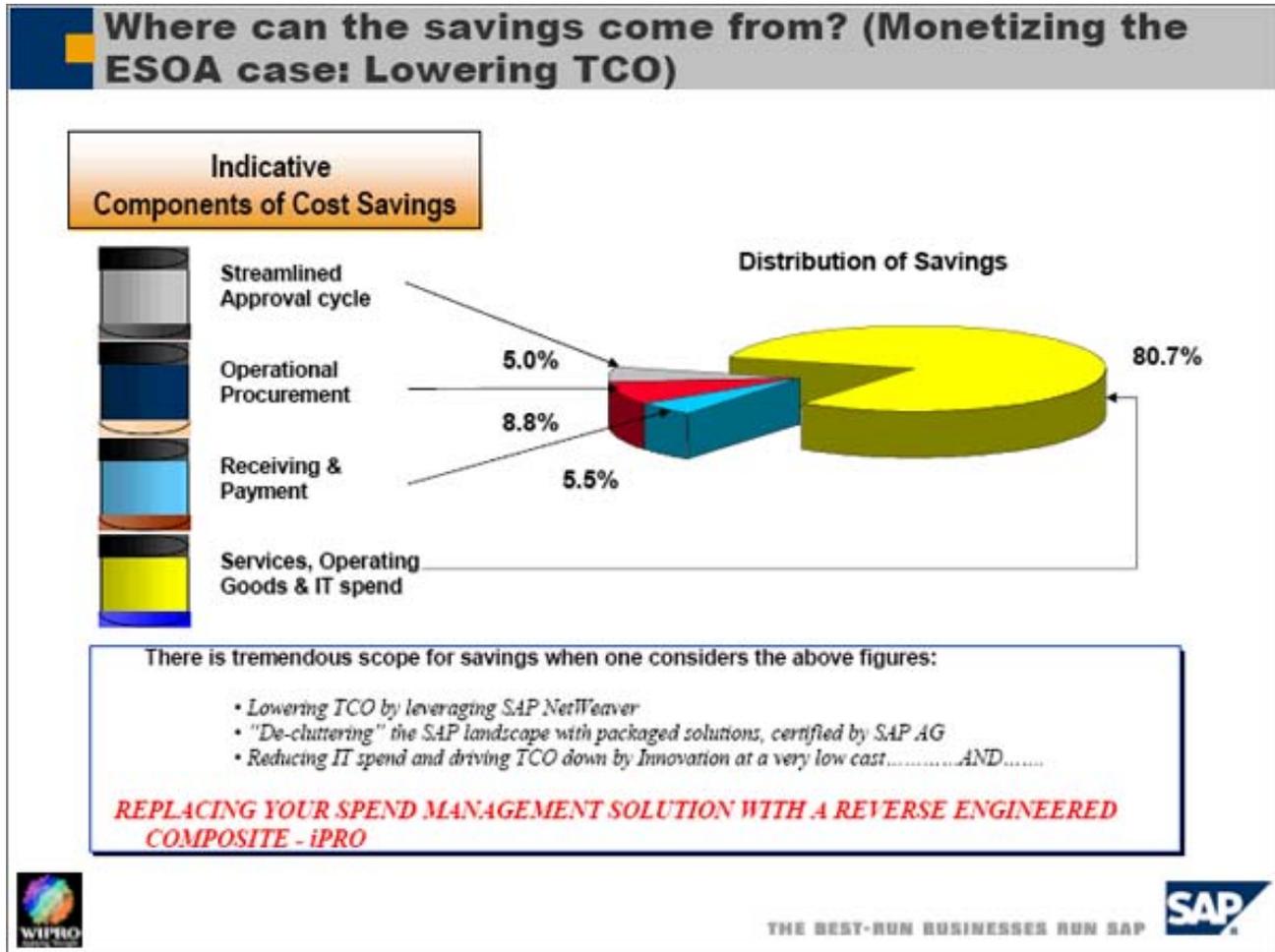


Figure 1: Reverse-engineered composite applications can cut costs.

Baron: Can you describe Reverse Engineered xApps (RexApps), Wipro Composite Applications Factory (W-CAF) and iPRO (the e-procurement composite) in more detail?

Iyengar: Reverse Engineered xApps is an idea defined and propagated by Wipro. Our customers are finding Reverse Engineered xApps (composites) a compelling business case – not just a technology solution. These organizations run on a multi-platform environment cluttered with custom-built, third-party, legacy, and best-of-breed applications. Such applications, which enable a business process, can easily be replaced with the SAP NetWeaver Composition Platform and ESOA. Enabling businesses to leverage the SAP NetWeaver platform as a Business Process Platform (BPP), Reverse Engineered xApps could pave the way for organizations to truly lower TCO rendered by composition.

W-CAF (or, forward-engineered business processes as xApps) provides customers with the option of building and implementing composite applications on the SAP NetWeaver platform

leveraging the Composite Application Framework (CAF). In essence, W-CAF will help the Corporate IT of any organization to serve its business users better by providing solutions customized to business needs at a significantly lower total cost of ownership. That's the advantage of leveraging ESOA.

iPRO is a comprehensive e-procurement business solution that gives customers a path to ESOA at one-fourth the cost of implementing a new spend management solution, or replacing the existing spend management solution. Additionally, iPRO leverages CAF 7.0 and the SAP NetWeaver platform.

We are planning to see how iPRO can be test-driven through the SAP xApp Analytics Resource Center. We want to give it back to SDN because we know our customers are grappling with the monetization of ESOA.

The ideas that can be bounced off a process (and that are technically strong) are the ones for which we see maximum adoption. And these ideas around ESOA have been born on SDN and BPX.

Baron: Back to the idea of business challenges, what company-specific challenges applied when you first joined SDN?

Iyengar: We had a high rate of attrition. Our presence on SDN attracted competing firms all the time. Ironically, we found we were losing our talent due to SDN. However, over the years, the more we contributed, the more we created mindshare, the more we found we were able to attract better talent. We've been able to neutralize that initial loss of talent.

Baron: What were you trying to achieve through collaboration on SDN?

Iyengar: Using the collaboration tools on SDN, we can walk into our customer-specific ESOA workshops with much more confidence. You know you have the right answers through SDN. There's always someone out there to help you 24/7.

Baron: What is the overall impact of SDN to your business?

Iyengar: Contribution and collaboration on SDN was a good starting point for attracting new customers. We've been active contributors since 2004. There's been no looking back. Today, participation in SDN and BPX has been our logical path to reaching out to our customers and assuring them "marketing-free" discussions.

Baron: How do you work with other developers on SDN?

Iyengar: We work routinely with eight to ten individual consultants. We touch base on SDN and offline. It's hugely important for brainstorming, developing new applications, and creating innovative methodologies.

Baron: To what extent do you use the Wiki?

Iyengar: We have yet to utilize the power of Wiki and Open Source projects.

Baron: What value does SDN collaboration create for your customers? What is the differentiator with SDN (over other developer sites)?

Iyengar: When I'm in a customer meeting, I can download stuff from SDN, demo it, and allow customers to see its value. Ultimately, SDN lets us reach the 'influencers,' not just the purchasers at a customer site. For example, I can get the 2004s SR1 on my laptop, connect to the ES Workplace, and build an application on a flight from Bangalore.

In fact, we're constantly using the ES Workplace and the download areas – that's where the fun begins. And these areas are unique among developer communities.

Baron: What other benefits does SDN deliver?

Iyengar: The free t-shirts and iPods are great, too. What else could a solution architect ask for?

Baron: How does SDN impact your partner relationships?

Iyengar: It opens up new alliances and new opportunities. For example, our Rule Burst partnership was created through SDN. We're now also in the process of creating a joint composite application with another partner.

Baron: How has SDN built the recognition and credibility of your company? Again, what's the SDN differentiator?

Iyengar: The recognition makes a world of difference. Due to SDN, the perception of us, as an organization, has changed radically. In fact, the more we're involved in SAP TechEd, SDN Day, Sapphires, on SDN forums or blogs, the more it gives us an advantage over the competition. Today, we play more strategic roles with our customers based on what we're doing on ESOA.

In terms of what sets SDN apart, the ES Workplace is the key thing. We can consume enterprise services, use download areas, and create an application – all without depending on an external infrastructure. That's the biggest differentiator with SDN.

Baron: Do you ever use SDN to train your employees, and if, so what's the benefit?

Iyengar: We've never found it useful from a training standpoint. But we encourage employees to visit SDN regularly.

Baron: What are your next steps on SDN?

Iyengar: SDN and BPX members will continue to find tools that we have developed for ESOA monetization on SDN. Working with one of our customers, we'll showcase such tools at Sapphire '07, both in the U.S. and Europe. And we'll soon have another reverse-engineered xApp for the community. In fact, we always want to give back to the community, because we learn from all the smart people out there!

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