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NO LOCAL DATABASES OR CUSTOM EXTERNAL ACTION BLOCKS REQUIRED!

QAT SOA Services

Service-Oriented Architecture

Enterprises that effectively align technology with business goals achieve competitive advantage. QAT is helping enterprises to achieve faster time to value by driving compatibility across the application infrastructure through open standards and service-oriented architecture (SOA).

Service-Oriented Architecture is an IT strategy that organizes the discrete functions contained in enterprise applications into interoperable, standards-based services that can be combined and reused quickly to meet business needs.

By organizing enterprise IT around services, not applications, SOA provides these key benefits:

- Improves productivity, agility and speed for both business and IT
- Allows IT to deliver services faster and align closer with business
- Allows the business to respond quicker and deliver optimal user experience
- Masks the underlying technical complexity of the IT environment

This results in more rapid development and more reliable delivery of new and enhanced business services.

MEETING TODAY'S BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The pace of your business is moving faster than ever. With customers, partners, and employees expecting higher-quality service-twenty four hours a day, seven days a week-it is nearly impossible for today's enterprises to keep up.

Particularly overwhelmed is the IT staff, which has been tasked with:

- Improving Operational Efficiency: Molding existing investments to achieve higher productivity, which in turn, improves the way business is conducted. In particular, preserving and expanding new strategic development efforts, amidst shrinking budgets and expensive, ongoing maintenance costs, and trying to "do more with less" in virtually every area of the business.
- Improving Customer Response Time: Satisfying the stakeholders that support the business-whether internal or external customers-rests largely on IT, including gathering and using the information flowing through the business, no matter where it resides, and making this data available to the people who need it to do their jobs.
- Improving Business Agility: The ability to rapidly adapt the business, including internal and external touch points, as the business changes, and avoiding starting from scratch with new applications and infrastructure as business requirements change.

With these challenges already at hand, how can IT meet the need to achieve faster time to value? The answer is in developing and deploying a service-oriented architecture (SOA). An SOA approach will once and for all align IT with business goals and enables IT organizations to re-use assets, deliver value faster to the business, and more easily support ongoing requirements for change.

WHY ADOPT SOA?

Simply put, "to achieve competitive advantage." A service-oriented architecture (SOA) is a higher level of application development that enables IT to focus on business processes, rather than the underlying IT infrastructure. Enterprises that adopt a service-driven approach experience the following business and IT benefits:

BUSINESS BENEFITS OF SERVICE-ORIENTED ARCHITECTURE

- Efficiency: Transform business processes from siloed, replicated processes into highly leveraged, shared services that cost less to maintain
- Response Time: Rapid adaptation and delivery of key business services to meet market demands for increased service levels to customers, employees, and partners
- Adaptability: Rollout changes throughout the business with minimal complexity and effort, saving time and money

IT BENEFITS OF SERVICE-ORIENTED ARCHITECTURE

- Reduced Complexity: Standards-based compatibility versus point-to-point integration reduces complexity
- Increased Reuse: More efficient application/project development and delivery through the reuse of shared services that were previously developed and deployed
- Legacy Integration: Legacy applications, leveraged as re-usable services, lowers the cost of maintenance and integration

Today's service-driven enterprises are experiencing these benefits and more as they leverage IT in the rapid development and reliable delivery of new and enhanced services.

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WHERE DO I BEGIN?

First, deconstruct your business model. Next, break the model into discrete business processes and functions. Most importantly, begin your SOA journey with QAT.

WHY QAT?

QAT's SOA Services has the background, expertise, offerings and tools to accelerate and ensure SOA success for your organization. QAT SOA Services encapsulates a set of organizational, financial, operational, design, and delivery practices, each of which must be considered with equal weight to provide a solid framework for a Service-Oriented Architecture. QAT takes a customer tailored comprehensive approach to SOA. A SOA transition is equally about an organization's strategy and process as it is about a standards-based technology implementation. Our approach encapsulates the following:

- Business Strategy and Approach - business-oriented view of your enterprise IT architecture
- Architecture - a target architecture and strategic transformation "blueprint"
- Building Blocks - a definition of existing and required building blocks and a development roadmap
- Project and Applications - an analysis of existing applications and pilot recommendations
- Organization and Governance - a list of the required skills, roles and responsibilities, best practices, implementation standards, and guidelines for promoting reuse
- Costs and Benefits - a detailed analysis of costs and transition ROI including risk assessment

Begin your Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) implementation with QAT.

SOA Business Value

by Rich Barndt

Here is one of the many burning issues that have come out of the SOA discussion – IT organizations are assembling teams of architects with the goal of building architecture for the future that will be in place for the next 10-15 years. Most architects intuitively understand the value of building a SOA, but they are struggling with how to associate the business value of building it, and explaining that to the business managers who control the budgets and provide that little matter of funding for such initiatives. While there doesn't seem to be one good answer that fits everyone, the various discussions seem to reduce it down to these main points:

- Enterprises need the business agility to react to ever-changing business requirements, and continually implement new programs to attract and retain customers.
- In support of this, business processes need to be automated, streamlined, refined, and measured.
- The underlying IT infrastructure which supports those business processes needs to be flexible and capable of adapting to change. Continued measurement of success means that the change needs to happen in real time and results need to be measured in real time.
- IT systems contain lots of existing functionality in the form of in-house business logic that represents domain expertise that is pertinent to the particular business you are in. Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) applications contain business logic that automates common business functions, such as HR management, Accounting, and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Most installations of these systems represent heavy investments in licensing, installation, consulting, and custom tailoring to meets the individual needs of an organization.
- The key to realizing the business benefits of building a SOA is to recognize the ability for a SOA to be able to leverage existing application assets, and expose them using service level abstractions that are loosely coupled, and standards based. New automated business processes can be built more rapidly by stitching together composite applications that invoke these services and combine them with new business logic that is also exposed through service level interfaces. This is what forms the basis of a SOA.

The key to tying this back to the business benefits is how well the SOA infrastructure is capable of being configured, streamlined, and measured. Implementing new programs to react to competitive pressures can only be effective if they can be done in a timely manner. New initiatives to attract and retain customers usually have a direct measurable impact on the business. These programs can only be proven successful if they are capable of being measured in real time for their effectiveness, and also capable of rapid course corrections based on the results of the measurements.

Explaining the business value of SOA to business manager is not so much a conversation about how to extract business value from SOA, its more about how to extract value from the assets that you have in place. A SOA can be the architectural approach to help make that happen. That's the net/net of the discussions on this subject so far. For more information, please visit http://www.qat.com/soa.asp