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The #1 Prerequisite of a Successful Enterprise SOA Project



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Enterprise SOA is designed specifically with these goals in mind: simplification, technological agility, and alignment with business priorities.

As enterprise service-oriented architecture (enterprise SOA) gains momentum and business leaders explore how it can transform their organizations, many strategic and tactical questions arise:

- What does enterprise SOA mean for my business?
- What IT and financial resources will the move to enterprise SOA require?
- Does implementing enterprise SOA mean that I have to overhaul my entire IT landscape?
- How can I ensure that my company will reap the benefits of enterprise SOA?
- What is my company's plan for enterprise SOA, and how can we successfully deploy it?
- How do we get started?

Let's face it: There isn't one simple answer to these questions. But once you have a basic understanding of what enterprise SOA is, there is a way to significantly improve your chances of success with it – it's the new SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework.

First, Some Stage-Setting Definitions

Allow me to clarify what I mean by *enterprise SOA* and explain how it differs – or even *that* it differs! – from another key term, *enterprise architecture*.

What Can You Do with Enterprise SOA?

- Create new applications on top of existing enterprise solutions
- Automate new or existing business processes
- Increase the value of your current systems
- Achieve greater flexibility while controlling technology costs
- Improve your ability to link other applications to SAP solutions
- Deploy innovative solutions to extend your business partner networks

Enterprise SOA is a business-driven software architecture that allows you to share and reuse enterprise services – small, reusable “chunks” of business-driven functionality – within your company and with strategic partners. Think of it as a way to structure your IT systems so that as your business needs change, you can quickly adjust your technical processes without the longer lag that's traditionally associated with reconfiguring or developing new systems. Enterprise SOA goes beyond just stringing together Web services; it's a new way of thinking about technology to achieve better business results (see sidebar).

Enterprise architecture is the underlying blueprint for structuring your technology and business process framework. To develop and deploy the enterprise services that are the basis of enterprise SOA, your organization needs to have a clear understanding and mapping of both your business processes and the technology required to support them. This master plan is the enterprise architecture.

Getting Started with Enterprise SOA – The Other Essential Step

From a strictly technical perspective, you'll need to upgrade your technology and functional platforms to ones that are service-enabled – this is a prerequisite. SAP delivers enterprise SOA capabilities on its SAP NetWeaver 7.0 platform, as well as through the latest release of its SAP ERP application suite.

But there's another essential step here. True, enterprise SOA *can* transform the way your organization supports your most important business processes. But enterprise SOA will struggle to fulfill its promise of flexibility and robustness if it's not planned out to best suit your business needs. To truly take advantage of all the business benefits of enterprise SOA,

you'll need a well-defined enterprise architecture. And to define your enterprise architecture, it's critical to select an overall approach.

There is a variety of widely available and accepted frameworks, including The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) and the Zachman Framework.¹ SAP has recently developed its new **SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework (SAP EAF)**, an extension of TOGAF designed to support the effective adoption of packaged solutions in a service-oriented enterprise (see **Figure 1**).

SAP EAF, which current TOGAF practitioners can easily adopt, offers defined iterations that are suited to package and package-service based scenarios. It more precisely defines specific tasks, products, and terminology, and it provides required hooks into SAP-specific products and services.

The comprehensive SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework allows your organization to better align its business objectives with existing and future IT landscapes and initiatives. It provides the methodology and discipline required to document business processes that will most benefit from an enterprise SOA approach.

The SAP EAF also allows you to reduce the complexity of your environment by organizing your entire technology and business solution landscape consistently. Using this disciplined approach, you can avoid the costly deployment of redundant processes and technical solutions.

Don't Forget About Governance

Defining a proper governance model – the processes, organization, and standards you need to keep your new environment under control – is a key requirement of enterprise SOA. Structured governance processes are required from both the development and deployment perspectives. Without this structure, you risk creating an environment of ad hoc solutions, which could lead to redundancy and confusion.

The SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework allows you to clearly define guidelines and standards for developing new technology and business processes. SAP EAF provides accelerators and predefined standards, specific to packaged services and packaged solutions, that enable you to quickly develop the necessary guidelines and standards.

Need Help?

To take full advantage of the SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework, I recommend that you speak with the team at SAP Consulting. These specialists provide expert guidance and services at any phase of your enterprise SOA transformation. They can help you in understanding the value of SAP EAF.

Specifically, the *SAP Workshop for Enterprise Architecture* is a comprehensive and interactive knowledge-transfer session. It provides you with the expert know-how you'll need to make the most of both enterprise SOA and the SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework to transform your business.

If you are still struggling to understand your readiness for enterprise SOA, try the free *SAP Self Evaluation for enterprise SOA* at www.sap.com/usa/esoaselfeval. And if you are ready to start your transformation, look into the one-day *SAP Discovery Workshop for enterprise SOA* and the interactive *SAP Readiness Assessment for enterprise SOA* service.

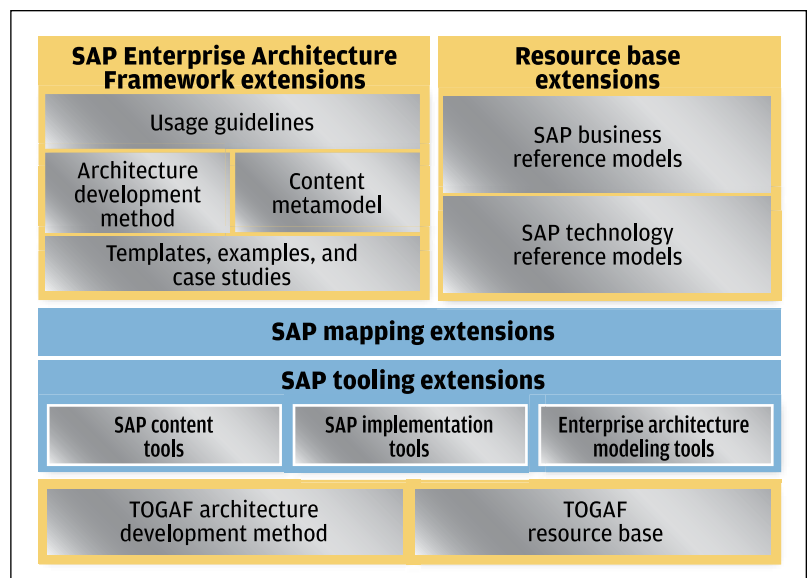
Summary

Enterprise SOA promises to be a revolutionary way to develop and deploy business solutions more efficiently and effectively. But remember that having an enterprise architecture is the critical first step in this transformation.

To learn more about SAP's consulting and educational services for enterprise SOA and the SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework, please contact your customer engagement manager, call +1 866 609-1124, or visit SAP Services at www.sap.com/usa/services/consulting. ■

Just as you would never remodel your house without a plan, you would never want to restructure the way your business uses technology without a detailed blueprint.

FIGURE 1 ▼ The SAP Enterprise Architecture Framework is an extension of TOGAF designed specifically for SAP customers



¹ Please see www.opengroup.org/togaf and www.zifa.com for more information about these respective frameworks.