

IBM Software Demos On Demand Business and SOA Overview

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Today's businesses are faced with mounting pressures from globalisation, industry consolidation and growing regulatory requirements.

Customers are more knowledgeable and are demanding new levels of service.

Competitors are fighting harder for market share, doing the unpredictable, and everyone is eyeing the bottom line.

Faced with this accelerating change, businesses must find ways to continuously deliver new value, increase productivity, and compete aggressively.

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They need to be flexible, able to rapidly change business processes to take advantage of new opportunities.

Efficient, to handle continuous change, while uncovering hidden value in a company's operations, and responsive, to outperform the competition and to meet increasingly demanding customer expectations.

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This is what on demand business is all about.

An on demand business is an enterprise whose business processes—integrated end-to-end across the company and with key partners, suppliers and customers—can respond with flexibility and speed—to customer demand, market opportunity or external threat.

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Integration is key to achieving the benefits of on demand business.

With end to end Integration businesses can give their sales people the same customer information as their support people. Integration lets manufacturing know what R&D is doing long before their work hits the factory floor. And It connects corporate planners with distributors to discover seasonal trends in advance. Integration results in a more efficient business by eliminating delays in every transaction.

There are three levels of integration

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VERTICAL INTEGRATION Removes the silos that impede the flow of information within a single process or line of business, and makes that vertical more productive.

INTEGRATION ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN aligns a business with its suppliers, distributors and strategic partners, and creates symbiotic relationships that save money and allow everyone in the value chain to focus on their core competencies.

HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION connects the processes within the organization, from purchasing to distribution, and helps the organisation to seamlessly move products and information across lines of business, saving time and reducing waste.

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End to end integration means breaking down the barriers between functional islands, and extending them beyond their traditional boundaries

This requires a flexible IT infrastructure that supports a modular and incremental approach, one that works in a heterogeneous environment, and provides support for integrated business processes implemented as collections of linked services.

To achieve the on demand advantage, businesses need to align their IT investments with their business goals. You can't get true integration of all your people, processes and information any other way. And a business can only be as flexible as the IT systems that support it.

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Flexibility is achieved through a Service Oriented Architecture or SOA.

A Service Oriented Architecture uses application services provided by business components that are dynamically deployed.

New business solutions can be quickly built by assembling a collection of components that communicate through services.

These composite applications can be quickly modified to adapt to changing business requirements

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A Service Oriented middleware platform provides for effective componentization and integration, allowing re-use of existing assets as services. The modular nature of the platform supports incremental implementations, realizing ROI on a project-by-project basis.

Think about SOA in terms of a lifecycle. Business processes are designed and developed in the modeling and assembly phases. Then they are deployed into production and managed from both an IT and business perspective. Information gathered during the Manage phase is fed back into the lifecycle for continuous process improvement. Underpinning all of these lifecycle stages is governance which provides guidance and oversight for the SOA project.

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Projects begin in the Modeling phase with the gathering and validation of business requirements. Processes are modeled end-to-end, and simulated to verify the design. With a Service Oriented Architecture, business analysts and programmers can focus on the business goals instead of dealing with implementation issues. IBM Rational and WebSphere modelling tools help analysts simulate the effect of proposed changes to optimize business value.

Once the processes are optimized, a composite application is constructed from new and existing services.

The assembly phase is supported by Rational and WebSphere tools to visually build and test these applications.

SOA applications are then deployed into a secure and integrated operating environment that provides services for integrating people, processes and information.

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Process integration supports composite applications formed from interconnected services, workflows, and data objects. IBM WebSphere software provides the infrastructure for efficient, flexible process integration.

People are integral to any business process. People integration means helping them focus on the task at hand, and collaborate in the context of their business applications. IBM Workplace solutions deliver secure, modular, role-based collaborative work environments. Built on WebSphere Portal, IBM Workplace lets people access information, interact with the applications they need, and collaborate with each other.

Information on demand means making information available as a service. Data is freed from the application silos of the past, and is easily available to the people and processes that need it. IBM delivers Information on demand through data services for transactional and analytic workloads, content and discovery services, integration services to virtualize information access, and Information accelerators to speed implementation of advanced information solutions.

Once solutions are deployed to an SOA-based runtime environment, monitoring and management capabilities are required to manage the solution from both the IT and business perspective.

WebSphere Monitor and Business dashboards provide key performance indicators on how in-flight business processes are performing.

And Tivoli IT Service Management solutions ensure performance and availability, prioritize operation activities according to business value, provide security and identity management, and ensure compliance with established organizational policies.

Finally information gathered during the Manage phase is fed back into the lifecycle enabling continuous process improvement.

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IBM has developed the IBM SOA Foundation to help companies easily get started with SOA. It is an integrated, open set of software, best practices and patterns. It starts with a flexible, robust infrastructure, and adds know-how and best practices based on IBM's extensive experience. The SOA Foundation is scalable allowing you to start small and grow as fast as your business requires. And the SOA Foundation provides extensive support for business and IT standards; facilitating greater interoperability & portability between applications.

IBM SOA foundation enables your business to become more Flexible, Efficient and Responsive.

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Imagine the benefits:

if your customer relationship management system could sense and shape demand...

If your supply chain was truly just in time...

And if your sales & service employees had real-time access to customer, product, and scheduling information on the road.

These are the promises of on demand business.