

# Seven Steps to Successful SOA Governance

# Table of Contents

- Understand your SOA Enviroment .....5
- Identify What is to be Governed .....5
- Build a Framework .....6
- Define the Solution .....6
- Deploy the Technology .....7
- Create Repeatable Processes .....8
- Measure Outcomes .....9
- SOA is a Complex Solution .....10

The promise of Service-Oriented Architecture is to make the business more agile by creating an environment where services can be reused to expedite development and where business decision-makers and IT are tightly coupled in the creation and deployment of services. By its nature, SOA is an enterprise-wide initiative that cuts across departments and requires high levels of communications, coordination, collaboration and control. SOA governance is the framework that enables, measures, defines and enforces the rules for communication, collaboration and control across the enterprise and among IT and business decision-makers.

In order to build a successful strategy for SOA governance it is important for organizations to recognize that SOA governance is not a separate discipline from IT governance. Therefore, it is critical to look at SOA governance as part of your entire IT governance framework and to do a critical assessment of the systems and processes you have in place across your IT infrastructure. Another important prerequisite to successful SOA governance is to get executive-level buy-in. There are two main benefits to making sure you have executive-level buy in: (1) It will provide you the support required to institute changes on processes and procedures across the organization; (2) It will force you to come up with a plan to justify the need for SOA governance and the possible ROI and business benefit of your SOA governance solution.

Once you have buy-in and are ready to move forward with SOA governance, these are several key steps you will take. As you move forward, remember that SOA governance is not just about the technology solutions you deploy: It's about having the right people in place; making sure they understand their roles and responsibilities; understanding and working within the corporate culture; putting in place clear and enforceable policies; AND having the right technology in place so that you can appropriately automate, manage and measure the entire SOA governance process.

Having the right technology solutions for your organization is critical: With today's leading software platform you can automate many of the key functions involved in SOA governance and create a closed loop system whereby IT projects and policies are defined, enforced and audited throughout their entire lifecycle. Without automation, SOA is difficult to deploy and SOA governance is nearly impossible.

In addition, by deploying a single set of management processes and tools, organizations can simplify and automate management of services originating from other SOA-based infrastructure or from packaged applications. By deploying tools that automate management functions of SOA environments, organizations are also in a much better position to not merely create new services, but to also have the governance in place to ensure their success. What is the path to successful SOA governance? Here are seven steps to get started.

**1. Understand your SOA Environment.** Actually, it's important to understand your entire IT infrastructure, but focusing on the SOA environment – what's in place and what might be designed for the future – will help you determine how to establish processes and determine which automation tools will be required for SOA governance. To get started you want to know what assets you have in place, as well as those that are planned or in development. Starting out you want to have a clear understanding of the relationships and dependencies that connect services, aspects, business processes, policies and applications. You also want to identify key decision-makers and understand the decision-making processes, identifying goals, metrics, timing and other factors that will impact the deployment of applications and services.

**2. Identify What is to be Governed.** Unless the SOA is an enterprise-wide initiative, it is important to isolate how and where SOA services and applications will be deployed. Which departments, which people, which activities? How do they relate to one another and what are the goals for each? Understanding your corporate culture and decision-making processes is equally important. Successful SOA governance is about people processes as well as governance tools. When SOA projects have failed it is often not because of technological issues, but because of issues related to the interactions between people within the organization.

**3. Build a Framework.** During this process you will look at some of the ways in which changes will be made in the corporate culture and processes. You may be establishing committees for governance, defining approval processes, or establishing timetables and schedules for project management, completion and measurement, among others. All of this planning and preparation work will pay off in the long run and is absolutely necessary. Some organizations estimate that as much as 75 to 80 percent of their time in building a successful SOA deployment is invested upfront in planning and preparation. Some organizations go through the process of establishing a separate governing body for SOA governance. This would generally consist of both IT and business decision-makers and would be in place to make sure the processes, procedures rules and goals are clearly communicated and adhered to. The role of the governing body would become less important over time, especially if organizations build in tools that would automate processes to define, enable, assess, enforce and measure the use and re-use of services throughout the SOA environment. But having a governing body is always a good idea.

**4. Define the Solution.** Typically an SOA governance solution will seek to accomplish the following goals: 1. Set up a structure for the control and management of applications development and deployment in conjunction with business processes: 2. Monitor and track the relationship of services to other assets within the enterprise,

and 3. Measure and audit how the collection of these elements in an SOA environment delivers a direct advantage to the business, through ROI, increased profitability, better collaboration, etc. While governance may start by managing service artifacts and processes, a successful governance framework will ultimately shape the behavior of the entire organization by creating a system whereby IT and business decision-makers alike are focused on common goals, shared services and standards. In defining what this solution looks like within your organization, you will be looking at your infrastructure and determining key tools and functions that will be required. Building a roadmap for SOA governance for your organization will require you to look at areas such as automation; change management policies; enforcement tools; tracking and reporting tools; measurement tools, as well as tools to support key metrics of success, such as compliance, performance and ROI.

**5. Deploy the Technology.** While a large part of the success of SOA governance will be determined by your planning process and by the ways in which you address the issues around people and processes, there is no way to deploy SOA governance successfully without having the proper software tools in place. In today's environment, if you are working with a market-leading software platform, there is a compelling opportunity to take advantage of governance automation tools that are available to align and maintain

business processes, facilitate compliance and put in place an end-to-end solution that can monitor and deliver measureable ROI. In an SOA environment it makes sense to use a governance solution from a single vendor to enhance automation, reduce tooling complexity, make software delivery more efficient and more easily implement governance policies and processes. It is also simpler with an automated approach to embed best practices into the governance processes.

**6. Create Repeatable Processes.** The goal is to increase agility and roll out new services more quickly and at far less cost. SOA enables this by creating repeatable processes for services development and lifecycle management. SOA governance makes sure the right processes are repeated and are available to those in the organization that can take advantage of them. Automation tools can enhance an organization's ability to create repeatable processes by automating the registry function and enabling decision-maker to access performance summary data at design time. With automated artifact harvesting at each stage of the lifecycle, users can reduce risks involved with making decisions based on stale data because they will have enhanced visibility into SOA dependencies. SOA governance should provide visibility into existing assets as well as those planned so organizations can avoid redundant efforts. Automation should also be used to map and update



relationships that connect services, artifacts, business processes, policies and applications for change impact analysis.

**7. Measure Outcomes:** It's critical to understand what processes, procedures and rules have enabled successful services within the organization, with measurable metrics on ROI, total cost of ownership, speed to market, etc. In addition to measuring results, you also want to make sure you have the tools in place to communicate results and also to change and amend processes to fix anything that might be an impediment to success. Experts suggest that the first step in measuring ROI for an SOA environment is to define the organizational goals. Is success strictly a function of profitability or revenue, or are there other goals that need to be considered, such as: Speed to market, customer service, product innovation, operational excellence, increased collaboration, etc. The challenge is to define the set of desired outcomes up front – and these are generally business goals – and to set up a process that defines success for each area and then measures and monitors each of these goals as part of the ongoing governance process. A report by the Cutter Consortium in 2008 reported that 67 percent of global firms reported increased business flexibility in adopting SOA and 44 percent reported an improved ROI on existing IT applications. Providing and communicating measurable outcomes will be an important internal tool as the SOA environment expands.

## **SOA is a Complex Solution to Implement, Manage and Measure.**

With a successful SOA deployment, organizations will be able to lower costs, increase agility, achieve measurable and sustainable business value, improve efficiency and put in place an architectural framework that will enable and perhaps even inspire innovation. The key to any successful SOA deployment is to put in place a comprehensive governance solution. In fact, many experts say that the biggest reason for SOA failures is lack of adequate SOA governance. A couple of years ago analysts from Gartner put together their “hit list” of most common organizational errors and “overlooking governance” was at the top of that list. ComputerworldUK suggests that you treat governance as a “fully funded initiative that runs alongside your SOA implementation.”

Embarking on any kind of SOA initiative without focusing on governance is a mistake that could doom the effort. Make sure corporate decision-makers understand the importance and value of SOA governance and make sure the governance effort is properly funded. Then make sure there is buy-in for the policies and processes that will make the SOA successful, based on the common goals outlined for the organization, whether those are ROI-related goals or business-specific initiatives such as improving customer service or speeding up product development. And make sure you have the proper tools that enable automation of

the governance process so that you can achieve the necessary levels of visibility into and control over your entire SOA effort. By following the seven steps outlined here you will give your SOA governance effort – and your overall SOA environment – a much better chance for long-term success.