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## SOA in the Real World

Topic Description

# Agility Principle: Service-Oriented Network Architecture

By Mark Milinkovich, Director, Service-Oriented Network Architecture, Cisco Systems , 07/12/2007

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### Today's IT Challenges

Agility has become an increasingly urgent requirement for business success. Customers want customized solutions and more product choices, and they want them faster, with global service and support, and at the lowest cost. Whether it means adopting Web-based business models from front-end storefronts, developing a unique brand experience, or reorganizing back-office payments and partner-based supply-chain management, successful companies - no matter what their size or organizational structure - must be quick and flexible

enough to respond to customer demands, market opportunities, competitive threats, regulatory mandates, and other events and pressures.

However, companies cannot just decide to transform or reinvent themselves at a crucial moment if their core business processes and operational systems are not architected for flexibility.

In the typical enterprise, the IT infrastructure is made up of hundreds of applications that may reside in different data centers and run on disparate platforms, often traveling over separate networks. As new applications are added, each requiring its own management system, operational complexity increases.

These proliferating silos of computing resources and associated operational complexity confound the organization's ability to adapt quickly when each application demands its own unique set of resources, resulting in yet another silo.

So when business unit managers request IT organizations to meet new business demands, what is a realistic plan of action for CIOs and IT architects?

### Architecting a Service-Oriented Network

While it may not be practical to take a uniform or standardized approach to all business applications, IT architects can take a uniform approach to the network, which is the common denominator for all applications, computing resources, video and telephony. The network is pervasive, touching all fixed and mobile devices, end users, and even those outside the enterprise, such as supply-chain

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partners.

Moving to an increasingly more intelligent network provides the kind of dynamic, application- and service-aware infrastructure that a nonintegrated infrastructure simply cannot provide.

Traditionally, the network has been regarded as a transport pipeline to move data or voice from point A to point B. Today, the network is evolving as a platform for business solutions that enables communications and collaboration throughout the organization. A strategic asset for a Web-based business transformation, the network dynamically enables resources across multiple silos to deliver business agility as needed. It integrates IT assets with critical business processes, creating a platform for application optimization and process improvements.

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