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Why Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA)?

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Organizations that can combine its IT applications with their business goals will achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Using a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) through open standards allows an organization to achieve this by driving compatibility across the application infrastructure.

As the pace of business is changing faster than ever, management, customers, partners, and suppliers expect IT application to be up 100% of the time with no delays and no bottlenecks. Added to this requirement is the ever increasing demand for:

- **Improved Operational Efficiency/Reductions in Costs:** Making existing IT investments achieve higher productivity, by supporting the ever changing needs of the business. The requirement is to support existing and new strategic business requirements, while reducing costs in an environment of expensive, ongoing maintenance costs of legacy applications.
- **Improved Supply Chain Reaction Time:** It has been tasked with needing to be more responsive to the supply chain that support the overall business process whether they are internal or external customers. This includes gathering and using the information flowing through the business no matter where it is, and making it available in the appropriate format on a timely basis to the people who need it to do their jobs.
- **Improved “Time to Market”:** It needs to rapidly adapt business applications, including internal and external interfaces, as business changes, and avoiding having to begin from scratch with new applications and infrastructure as business requirements change.

With these significant tasks already at hand, how can IT meet the ever-increasing need to achieve faster “Time to Market”? The answer is in developing and deploying a service-oriented architecture (SOA). Using a SOA approach aligns IT with business goals and enables IT organizations to re-use applications,



delivering value while reducing ongoing support costs. Some of the benefits for IT are:

- **Reduced development time and cost while maintaining high quality applications:** As reaction time to changes in business is becoming a critical factor in IT development, the fact that SOA services are easily reused, can be rapidly assembled into new, composite applications while maintaining application quality, is a key factor in choosing software that has been developed with a SOA.
- **Lower integration and maintenance costs:** Standardized services know how to work together, enabling disparate applications to be quickly, easily and reliably connected at a lower cost for integration and maintenance.
- **Reduce “Technology Obsolescence” risk**—Fewer, reusable services provide greater control over corporate and IT governance policies by creating common business interfaces for internal and external applications while reducing the risk of applications becoming obsolescent.

While most innovative Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions have employed SOA to manage internal systems and business processes, the issue increasingly becomes how to manage and maintain your external supply chain network’s business processes as 80% of external businesses document information flow now relies on electronic transfer of information. Using a SOA solution such as SoftCare’s TradeLink allows an organization to create, manage, and implement business solutions across a multi-enterprise environment no matter the technology or standards used. TradeLink provides the ability to extend the benefits of SOA beyond your internal organizational boundaries to your supply chain. TradeLink is an multi-enterprise SOA software solution that creates, designs and schedules business processes across multiple systems and organizations enabling you develop a solution which can handle any document,



any data format, any communication protocol, any security standard and any legacy systems of your supply chain.

With TradeLink's SOA you can:

- TradeLink provides the integration foundation to rapidly connect to legacy systems and standard enterprise platforms along with business applications to you supply chain.
- Extend business information and processes to all of your business partners regardless of data formats, communications protocols, security requirements and applications that they deploy.
- Create, manage, deploy and reuse business processes that connect existing applications systems to the supply chain while maintaining a complete and sophisticated audit of the movement of business information. The audit provides tracking the physical movement in coordination with information flows, and maintaining all "states" of the information (Source, interim and Target formats) for regulatory compliance.

As a complete B2B Gateway integration solution, TradeLink can be customized to accommodate your business needs by offering automated, audited, flexible, secure, managed, and visible solutions for your entire supply chain.

About SoftCare

Founded in 1989 SoftCare EC Inc. develops e-business software. Our OpenEC® product suite allows companies to conduct business-to-business e-commerce. Our e-business software is open and scalable allowing for integration with existing and future technologies, lowering operating costs and streamlining the business process while delivering benefits to all electronic trading relationships.

To learn more about EDI, Scan Based Trading, B2B Commerce and eCatalogs for Retailers, Suppliers & Manufacturers, see the numerous company case studies at www.softcare.com/whitepapers.
