



## CIO EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINT

## Service-Oriented Architecture

## Achieving Change-on-Demand Agility in Today's Dynamic Enterprises

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Barbara drives global marketing strategy and program execution for Ramco. She has 20-plus years of strategic management and international business experience in enterprise applications and infrastructure technologies, and has supported more than 30 companies as a strategic management consultant.

“As IT infrastructure becomes more commoditized, business content is king,” says Barbara Angius Saxby, CMO of Lawrenceville, New Jersey-based Ramco Systems. “Your business value is in your business processes.” To better manage them, CIOs need the “change-on-demand” agility that comes with service orientation. Saxby offers the following insights into the state of SOA and business applications.

#### How are CIOs transitioning their focus from cost containment to competitive advantage?

In the old days, all IT decisions were based on reducing overhead and development costs. Today, service orientation and process modeling enable enterprises to react faster and take advantage of business opportunities, while still helping reduce these costs.

#### Why is there a gap between business process modeling and today's enterprise software?

Historically, IT departments have solved process challenges by using a variety of discrete modeling tools that represent workflow, but they are manual and static. They map a particular business process at a given point in time, and developers still write lines of code to describe it. But now you can go from the model to software much faster. With dynamic modeling techniques, you model a business process and create a set of business services that make up the actual application.

**“Service orientation lets you model software to your business, so you can quickly change any process.”**

#### What is the key to achieving change-on-demand agility?

The ability to model business processes and then quickly convert them into applications is what allows for change. The components

are stored as business services, so if you need to modify a particular process, you simply change the rules or the flow for the one process. Change-on-demand improves agility, because instead of finding and rewriting specific lines of code in an application built on a server, you can simply remodel and implement the change quickly.

#### What role does SOA play in business alignment?

IT departments are able to react faster with SOA, because of its more natural alignment with the business. However, traditional packaged software applications tend to present a process with the expectation that you'll train your whole company to work that way. SAP applications, for example, are notorious for this. Service orientation, on the other hand, lets you model software to your business—not the other way around—so you can quickly change any process. This is the real promise of SOA.

#### How are CIOs achieving such innovations in the real world?

An example is Preferred Meal Systems, a distributor of packaged lunches to school and airlines, which required a change-on-demand model to execute its business. Not only does it have to get new contracts up and running quickly with a host of unique dietary requirements but it must also utilize all of its perishable goods. This represents a change-oriented, customer-driven approach to manufacturing. They're able to update and modify processes in just a matter of days—even in a very extensive and complex ERP system—which is revolutionary, really.

#### What should CIOs think about when building a business process platform?

They must consider several key components: an integrated environment to assemble applications, a repository to store business services and the analytics capabilities to view and track end-to-end processes. And, of course, a partner with extensive



“prebuilt” business services and strong domain expertise and consulting experience, who can get where you need to be much faster.

#### Why must the business process platform be separate from the infrastructure?

Being locked into your infrastructure components and proprietary vendor stacks stunts flexibility. With a business process platform approach, business services remain separate from the infrastructure; the business logic is abstracted and can be deployed in any environment. Keeping them separate gives you a lot more flexibility and agility to do the things you need to, from both a time-to-market and a cost-efficiency standpoint.

#### For More Information:

Check out this white paper, “**Ramco Business Process Delivery System**”, at [www.cio.com/whitepapers/ramco](http://www.cio.com/whitepapers/ramco)

