

2008 STEW Scenarios

Scenario 1: Reuse

Executives at JK recognized that the company's growth was being hampered by a number of customer relationship management problems. To their credit, they mobilized to address the problems and return the company to a path of higher revenues and happier shareholders.

Using IBM SOA tools and methods for Component Business Modeling, business process simulation and analysis of existing IT assets, company leadership was able to create a highly informed plan of action certain to deliver the business flexibility they were seeking.

The plan called for the use of implementing their account opening process as a set of services, or linked, repeatable business tasks. So the executives began exploring the creation of these services by way of three options: reusing existing IT assets by service enabling them, creating new services from scratch, and accessing external services provided by third parties.

JK decision-makers knew many of their existing applications were extremely valuable to the company. They were also aware of consultant studies showing that it is five times less expensive to re-use functionality in existing applications than to write new code.

It made sense that reusing proven applications would mean lower risks and faster time to market. And in the long run, they could expect maintenance of overhead to shrink with greater use of

proven and tested code for common functions.

They also wanted to explore service-enabling existing assets—through enhanced reuse and more integrated connectivity across and beyond the enterprise.

With this in mind, they found many potentially useful IT assets upon examining their inventory. But they needed a simple way to package these assets as self-contained, reusable software modules with well-defined interfaces that were independent of applications and the computing platforms on which they ran.

By expanding the level of access to core assets like this, JK was bringing this crucial functionality into reach of a greatly expanded pool of skills.

For example, JK wanted to create a service to support the Account Inquiry task, which is an individual step in the Account Opening process. To do so, they needed to combine pieces of functionality that resided on the billing system in one of their mainframe systems and their general ledger which sat in their SAP ERP system.

Using IBM tools, they combined these functions together into a single service that they could use to support a task in their newly designed business process. And they extracted greater value out of existing investments without altering or even touching the original back office systems themselves.

JK continued this process of service-enabling crucial IT assets to create the building blocks of its new business process.

Although JK Enterprises was able to support most of its new Account Open business process by reusing existing IT assets, they needed to fill in gaps by creating a limited number of new services from scratch.

To do this, they used visual tools that simplified the creation of new services—services constructed in a manner that allowed them to be reusable themselves, and ensured they were maximized for interoperability in other environments.

After a service was created and deployed, they entered descriptive information about the service in a centralized service registry so that information about the service—its metadata—could be made available throughout the enterprise and the service could be further reused.

To support some un-differentiating, commodity-level steps in its account opening process, JK looked outside the company to find third-party services. For example, they decided to access a customer credit checking service to retrieve commercial credit reports. This would free JK of the need to conduct credit checks itself or manually manage this step in the account opening process.

One of the benefits of services is that, from the perspective of the business process, it makes no difference how the service is performed, nor by whom. JK was able to plug the externally delivered service into its account opening process just as if it was an activity that took place in JK's own, internal environment.

JK was able to build the portfolio of services it needed for its new account

opening process by service-enabling existing assets and filling gaps by creating services from scratch and accessing externally provided services.

And by documenting relevant service information, the company was better equipped to manage, deploy, and further reuse these assets. JK's SOA transformation was well underway but the company had further work to do: they needed an efficient and scaleable way to connect their services together into a meaningful flow: they needed SOA Connectivity.