1975 IBM SOA REFERENCE
Royal Caribbean Cruise lines

Prashant Naik, IT Enterprise Architect Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines

In the North American market, Royal Caribbean is the second biggest cruise line company. Currently, I'm engaged in a major transformation project that's paving the way for Royal Caribbean to be a vacation company compared to being a cruise line company that we are today.

IT has to deal with the constraints of our legacy systems. So we had to kind of figure out a way by which we can transform the foundational building blocks of our application so we can cater to better agility in the future.

We had a competitive pressure last year to be able to introduce something called "Flexible Dining". One of our competitors, you can just walk up to the dining room and eat anytime you want. Whereas our products, we only offer two different dining slots. So we had to estimate what would it entail for us to implement this functionality in our systems. We came back with 20 man-years. Most of the changes were in our peripheral systems and the custom point to point integrations between the transactional applications and the systems that run on the ship.

The SOA approach would allow us to implement these kind of features in a much more faster and efficient manner. We would be able to take a phased approach: introduce base functionality, and then enhance it over a period of time of future releases. Then the business doesn't feel that they are locked in or constrained by the limitations of our IT infrastructure. Because a business themselves wouldn't know exactly what a product needs to be – what the features need to be upfront. And it's not a static world, it's a very dynamic, competitive world.

I reviewed quite a few competitor vendors and in my opinion, IBM is definitely leading the bunch. It's spearheading the whole SOA methodology, tools and products that provide the foundation for an SOA infrastructure. As well as taking it to the next level of evolving SOA into a more configuration based, dynamic SOA compared to a static, binding kind of SOA.