The Need for SCCM Has Become Compelling in 2003

Once the province of developers and system administrators — and usually buried deep within IT — software change and configuration management is evolving into a key process element in the business management of IT.

Core Topics
Application Development: Managing Application Development; Measuring, Operating and Maintaining Applications

Key Issues
How will software change and configuration management keep pace with enterprises' application and infrastructure portfolios?

Which common application development technologies will offer the most speed and cost advantages?

Strategic Planning Assumption
Production-oriented systems, incorporating functionality for developers, administrators and production managers, will double their share of the overall change management market by 2007 (0.7 probability).

As an enterprise's business strategies, processes and relationships undergo creation, revision and retirement, the requirements and operational demands on its IS organization experience constant change. Initiatives aimed at controlling or reducing costs, achieving the agility of the real-time enterprise (RTE) and exploiting the efficiencies of enterprise architectures have driven increased recognition of the key role of change management processes.

Although the goal of end-to-end, integrated change management eludes all but the simplest organizations, the events of the past few years have caused enterprises to realize that broad initiatives to improve the identification, management and implementation of change in IT are critical to achieving mature organizational levels and the performance predictability this maturity implies. The number of inquiries from Gartner clients on the topic of software change and configuration management (SCCM) has skyrocketed in the past two years.

Our SCCM agenda for 2003 reflects the continuing evolution of enterprise change management as a high-level, business-oriented IT process. We continue to develop an integrated view of the elements common with organizational and operational change processes whose Key Issues are defined in other research.

Based on our Key Issues, we will focus on some major questions inherent in the maturing SCCM practices that deal with the challenges of the key business initiatives and the ultimate needs of end-to-end change administration.

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Can the business needs for change be met by adopting an integrated view of SCCM in context with other planning and operational processes?

Can an organization achieve a dramatically more-effective return on its development and operational assets by implementing common change governance and administrative processes?

Enterprises often have drastically different attitudes toward the introduction of change within different organizational elements, which leads to varied processes. Challenges in aligning IT initiatives to business needs are often created as much by the rich variety on the business side as by the inconsistencies in IT processes. Research on this issue will focus on the challenges and benefits of extending common governance and process structures to include the chartering of new development and the management of application portfolios, with the software changes driven by production needs.

How can an enterprise's SCCM implementations and processes keep up with the need to more-effectively maintain, enhance and replace the elements of its software application and infrastructure portfolio through 2008?

Approaches will be needed to deal with the increased complexity and volatility implicit in the heavy use of service-oriented architectures (SOAs) and complex package integrations. Similarly, RTE initiatives imply that there is the need to support dramatically shorter and more-intense development cycles. Cost control initiatives will drive the need for broader implementations of SCCM to reduce the cost of rework and administration.

Mission-critical systems are found on all platforms, and the need to establish secure, repeatable processes throughout heterogeneous environments is growing. An IS organization that doesn't have at least one of these challenges ahead is rare indeed. To resolve the question posed in this Key Issue, research will focus on the organizational structures, functional capabilities and processes that can be deployed to meet the various levels of operational needs.

How can enterprises identify the processes and stakeholders in their current change management systems and manage the transition process to best practices at a higher capability level?

Determining and enhancing SCCM process capability will require identifying the needs and wants of the major stakeholders, determining the governance and processes that will create stable

bridges between their differing views and managing the adoption program through the turmoil. Issues to be examined include an array of best practice discussions, including characterization and needs identification of the principal stakeholders, typical implementation issues within and among groups of stakeholders, and the techniques to select and implement more-advanced processes.

What are the strategies of the leading vendors in SCCM?

An important question to ask is, "Are my current product providers capable of meeting my needs, or are they ill-equipped to deal with the emerging worlds of Web services and service-oriented development of applications (SODA)?" Meeting more-complex requirements will demand increased investment from vendors. Pricing pressures will be a disadvantage for those that offer only commodity solutions. Enterprises looking to streamline multisupplier portfolios will need to assess which vendors will survive, as well as which are most amenable to working together. We'll research the vendors' strategies and assess the vision and execution of the primary players.

Acronym Key

RTE	Real-time enterprise
SCCM	Software change and configuration management
SOA	Service-oriented architecture
SODA	Service-oriented development of applications

The governance, processes and tools of software change and configuration management play a key role in the delivery of program assets to the end-user community. Our research in this area will help clients manage their risk exposure as they attempt to roll out technologies and business process support that exposes their IT operational capabilities to clients and prospects.