

# Get Serious About SOA Governance: A Five-Step Action Plan for Executives

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## INTRODUCTION

Whether your organization's service-oriented architecture (SOA) has 50 services being used by one customer, or 50 customers using one service, you need SOA governance; increased business agility depends on it. SOA governance provides the ability to quickly and continuously translate and transmit business strategy and requirements into the processes, policies, and controls that will guide the evolution of your infrastructure and your enterprise.

Failure to provide effective SOA governance exposes your organization to serious risks resulting from

- Insufficient adoption of services
- Fragmented approaches to SOA
- Resources wasted on services that can't be reused
- Rampant and redundant service creation across siloed SOA initiatives
- Ineffective communication of priorities and best practices
- Cultural resistance to change

**Effective governance ensures that communication, collaboration, and the two-way flow of information keep SOA initiatives and investments inextricably connected to the enterprise to deliver sustainable business value.**

For any organization that has adopted SOA as its primary approach to enterprise architecture, governance becomes the conduit that connects and aligns corporate, IT, and business unit objectives. For these organizations, effective governance ensures that communication, collaboration, and the two-way flow of information keep SOA initiatives and investments inextricably connected to the enterprise to deliver sustainable business value.

## The Importance of Executive Support

As an IT executive, you play a decisive role in establishing SOA governance. By playing the role of visionary, director, and ultimate decision-maker, your actions will profoundly affect the success of your organization's SOA governance initiative. This white paper describes five key practices that you must take into consideration as you move your organization along the road to SOA success. There's more to SOA governance than these five practices, but they provide a solid foundation upon which to grow and justify your SOA investment.

**As an executive, you need to be the visionary who helps people in your organization picture the next stages of your business.**

### **STEP 1—CREATE A VISION**

SOA can do much more than boost business efficiency and cut costs. A well-managed SOA nurtures innovation and collaborative value creation by providing a highly agile environment in which services and systems can be used in imaginative, unanticipated ways, with the potential to open new revenue streams. As an executive, you need to be the visionary who helps people in your organization picture the next stages of your business. How can various departments in the organization use each other’s services to better serve customers?

Will sharing services with trading partners open new channels and revenue opportunities? Seeing those opportunities takes visibility into when, where, and how SOA assets are produced and consumed. That visibility is an essential element of SOA governance and provides the information and control necessary to keep maximum agility from deteriorating into complete chaos.

### **STEP 2—ESTABLISH CLEARLY DEFINED GOALS**

Part of your job in establishing SOA governance is to set the goals for your SOA. These goals should be clear and unambiguous so that the organization can quickly and unquestionably determine the success or failure of your SOA investment. Whether your goals are integration, compliance, agility, or all of the above, they are the basis for your governance framework. That framework then shapes your road map and provides the basis for the creation and enforcement of the standards and policies that will guide the design, development, deployment, and use of services. It is through those guidelines and policies that overarching business and IT goals for the SOA initiative are communicated to all stakeholders.

| <b>Quarter 1</b>             | <b>Quarter 2</b>               | <b>Quarter 3</b>             |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Projected # of Services: 1–5 | Projected # of Services: 10–20 | Projected # of Services: 30+ |

**Measure progress against goals defined in the road map.**

### **STEP 3—DESIGN AND ARTICULATE THE PROJECT ROAD MAP**

Once you’ve helped establish your organization’s vision and goals, you need to create the associated project plan. Assess where you are and determine where you want to be at specific time intervals. This involves building a road map, publicizing it, and then backing it with credibility and confidence. Many companies have already been down this road, so you can save time and avoid pitfalls by seeking advice from experts on governance processes and implementation. Also, as projects come up for funding, make SOA governance a requirement. This is how you fund the vision and discourage noncompliant initiatives.

### **STEP 4—DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

If no such group already exists, form an SOA steering group. This team should consist of the CTO, a senior architect, and a business unit sponsor, or similar roles as relevant to your organization. This group will then identify and fill key roles

within architecture, services development, line-of-business shared development, business unit services development, and an SOA alignment team. Treat services as products and adopt a product management approach, defining the decisions each role is responsible for and the criteria for those decisions.

### **STEP 5—MEASURE AND COMMUNICATE SUCCESS**

**Many organizations have found that it helps to provide a scoreboard to fuel momentum, demonstrate commitment to programs, and provide recognition of progress among stakeholders.**

Set tangible metrics against which to measure progress toward SOA goals. Without metrics, there can be confusion about whether goals are being met and return on investment achieved. Savings through the reuse of services is a key metric, because it represents development costs avoided and a reduction in system complexity. Or you might set a goal to build a certain number of services to achieve progress on the road map, supported by a metric measuring the number of new services delivered per quarter. Many organizations have found that it helps to provide a scoreboard to fuel momentum, demonstrate commitment to programs, and provide recognition of progress among stakeholders.

### **CONCLUSION**

SOA has entered the mainstream, and many organizations have begun reaping the rewards of their transformation efforts. Most organizations, however, face significant challenges along the path to SOA, their efforts complicated by a confluence of cultural, organizational, and technological challenges. These are symptoms of ineffective or altogether absent governance. Organizations that enact effective SOA governance possess the processes, policies, and measurements to prevent, correct, and prevail over these issues.

As an executive, you have a critical role in your organization's SOA success and governance should be a top priority—without it, you will fail. The five practices presented in this white paper are key to any SOA governance program.

For more information on SOA governance and on Oracle's SOA governance solution, please visit [oracle.com/technologies/soa/soa-governance.html](http://oracle.com/technologies/soa/soa-governance.html).



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