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LZA Homework Exercise #3
Development of a Business Case for SOA

Description of the Organization in which SOA solution will be proposed:

The organization is a large, international retailer/publisher based in Nashville, TN. The company has 2000+ staff with a medium-sized IT group. There are multiple channels of business that spans many channels. Traditionally, the IT organization has been largely project oriented – implementing siloed solutions that solve particular business problems but not taking into account the enterprise implications of those systems. Broadly speaking, these systems are integrated through point-to-point interfaces causing n+1 integration issues, as new systems require access to any of the application’s services.

There are many challenges that must be addressed in order to transform the corporation’s IT infrastructure so that it can offer greater business agility, speed to market, and overall cost reductions to the enterprise. The first challenge is that we currently have no repository of existing services that can be referenced that newly planned business services can leverage. This causes duplication of work – as existing services are not easily identifiable as well as issues with cost and speed to market.

A second challenge is that there is no governance of both existing and new services in the enterprise. We have to ensure that new services meet an established set of criteria before they can be developed and added to the catalog of available services for business service composition. This criterion should help ensure that we stop the “quick and dirty” solutions that tend to be prevalent in our software systems. It will also give us a more cohesive architecture that will increase our reuse of existing services. In doing this, we will be able to reduce costs.

Description of Pressing Business Problem to be solved thru SOA

Currently, customer information is stored in multiple legacy systems within the enterprise. Traditionally, customer data has been stored in each new system that’s been designed and developed because there are not business services to store new customers or any type of customer repository. This causes a duplication of data across all of these systems. As each system develops customer functionality – it increases the costs across the enterprise.

Choose one or more ROI characteristic(s) of SOA To Be Applied and explain how it will address Business Problem

Reuse – One of the main goals for creating a common set of services for customer creation is of course reuse. As each application in the enterprise capitalizes on these

services – it will allow for quicker agility in composing new business services that will enhance our business processes.

Cost Reduction – Cost reductions will be a by-product of the proper reuse of the customer creation services that we provide to the enterprise. As a result, this will give us cost reductions that will allow for us to use that cost savings on additional initiatives in the enterprise. Further, as we decommission some of the legacy system’s reliance on custom-built customer creation solutions in favor of reusing the established customer creation services – we will reduce the legacy costs associated with those systems.

Identify who your Key Influencers will be in the decision making process and their influencer role

Executive – I think the executive team will need to perform some top-down management and initiate some mandates for how the funding of these business services will be approved. In addition, resource allocations will need to be put in place an architecture board with responsibilities for the governance of the new business services and others to be developed in the future.

Technology – There will require some realignment in the IT group that will allow for the architecture group to play a larger role in the governance of IT initiatives. Further, there will need to be technology decisions put in-place so that a bottom-up approach not taken for these new customer creation services.

Business – The business group will need to be given the responsibility to define the business processes that are required to add a customer to a customer repository. These business processes should then be used along with the technology team to create the business services of customer creation. Both the Business and Technology teams must also agree on a common semantic model for the definition of a customer.

For each Influencer, identify how SOA solutions will benefit them and how important the addressed business problem is to their daily responsibilities

Economic – Executive management will benefit from both a cost savings perspective as well as a business agility perspective. Agility will play an important role in rolling out new business services as the catalog of available service components increase. These customer creation services are a first step in achieving this. Further, as legacy systems reduce their dependency on their proprietary implementation of customer management – cost savings will be produced that will affect the bottom line in a positive way.

Technology – The technology team will benefit from the newly proposed structure. Further, the design and development of these new customer services will provide a reference implementation of how services will be built and deployed in our new Service-oriented architecture.

Business – As the business is given the responsibility of defining the business processes of the customer creation business process it will engage their group – giving them involvement in the definition of their business services. This will facilitate an increased involvement by the business that will allow them to steer the direction of these services.