

ZAPTHINK ZAPNOTE™

GRAND CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS *INTEGRATION ON DEMAND*

Analyst: Jason Bloomberg

Abstract

The Grand Central *Business Services Network* offers an implementation of Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) that follows the “on demand” model of delivering software functionality as a Service. Through a virtualized set of integration and Service capabilities, businesses connect to the Business Services Network, allowing them to combine and share business Services within and between organizations without the constraints of having to pay for and host their own integration infrastructure.

In addition to a wide range of Services that Grand Central provides, third-party companies and partners also publish Services to the Network for global access and sharing by partners, customers and other business units. The Business Services Network thus offers the capabilities, business value, and agility benefits of Service-oriented integration as a Service to multiple companies, allowing them to conduct business with each other in a flexible, cost-effective manner, without having to bear the burden of ongoing infrastructure investment.

All Contents Copyright © 2004 ZapThink, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this publication in any form without prior written permission is forbidden. The information contained herein has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable. ZapThink disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. ZapThink shall have no liability for errors, omissions or inadequacies in the information contained herein or for interpretations thereof. The reader assumes sole responsibility for the selection of these materials to achieve its intended results. The opinions expressed herein are subject to change without notice. All trademarks, service marks, and trade names are trademarked by their respective owners and ZapThink makes no claims to these names.



Integration as a Service

The majority of vendors that focus on Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) to date are software companies that seek to sell solutions that companies install and own to companies that want to build, run and manage their SOA infrastructure. However, this focus on locally installed and owned software products belies the fact that SOA is inherently a layer of abstraction that reduces the relevance of the location and ownership of the technology that provides the Services that make up the architecture. In fact, in a truly abstracted, loosely coupled SOA, an enterprise's Services may just as easily be interfaces to software located at a business partner's facility.

Grand Central Communications has taken this fundamental property of SOA and extended it to a broad, Service-oriented integration network they call the *Grand Central Business Services Network*. The Business Services Network follows the "on demand" model of delivering software functionality as a globally accessible service, driving down the cost and complexity of deploying and maintaining enterprise software by significantly reducing the investment companies need to make in runtime infrastructure. Grand Central calls this capability *Integration On Demand*.

Once enterprises connect to the Business Services Network, their business units can combine and share business Services within and between organizations without the constraints of having to purchase, configure, deploy, and manage their own integration infrastructure. Customers only pay for the Service once they have successfully deployed a project on the network. In addition to the native capabilities of the Business Services Network, Grand Central allows business to utilize Services that third-party companies publish to the Network for global access and sharing by partners, developers, customers and other business units. Network subscribers can then access the *Grand Central Business Services Directory* of publicly available Web Services and incorporate them into their own business processes. The value of the Business Services Network thus grows with the number of participants, as shown in the figure below.

The Grand Central Business Services Network: The "Track" Infrastructure Connecting Services and Applications



Source: Grand Central Communications

Benefits of the Business Services Network

Grand Central's Business Services Network is accessible globally through an Internet-based, scalable, fully managed network service. Businesses of all sizes and types can connect, create, share and manage business processes within and between organizations by leveraging the Network. Companies that join the Network can integrate applications, Services, protocols, devices, partners and customers via a simple configuration task. Once connected to the Business Services Network, enterprises can access and share Services across their extended value chain. An enterprise can publish the Services that it creates to the Network for sharing with partners, customers and other business units. Companies can also access value-added third party Services and applications as well, including billing, data transformation, and content Services such as the SEC's EDGAR database, to name a few.

At its core, Grand Central's Business Services Network is an implementation of a loosely coupled SOA that provides secure, reliable messaging Services that plug into their customers' existing infrastructure. It also mediates the technology differences between applications and Services, protocols, and devices, without requiring additional software, the use of proprietary protocols, or the adoption of additional standards. The Network supports connectivity options that range from traditional file and batch-based systems such as FTP, inbound FTP and secure FTP, to evolving standards such as AS2 (EDIINT), XML/HTTP, secure HTTP, and Web Services protocols such as SOAP.

In addition, in the latest release of its network, Grand Central has added connectivity to a wide range of business applications and services including CRM, ERP, and HR applications, e-Commerce applications and services, financial and payroll applications, and BPM and Workflow Automation applications. These applications are available as connectivity Services in the Business Services Directory. By including these Services, the Network can handle technical issues such as user authentication for single sign-on, real-time event notification, data mapping, and exception management. These Services can also handle any changes that the application providers make to the functionality of their applications, providing loose coupling between the applications and the users. Customers can then incorporate these applications into reusable business processes for their extended enterprise using the Services in the Business Services Directory.

The Network also offers self-service provisioning, or "on-boarding" tools, data mapping services that mediate differences between data formats, including an XSLT service for XML-based data formats, and Services for advanced mapping, with enhanced support of EDI and flat-file based formats. Grand Central also offers security Services that manage access, authentication and encryption technology differences between companies via a policy framework, without exposing the data and applications behind each participant's corporate firewall, as well as single sign-on capabilities. The Business Services Network also provides business process orchestration and deployment Services that combine simple message routing, a Business Process Execution Language (BPEL) environment, and *Grand Central Process Designer*, a graphical drag-and-drop business process management tool that allows both casual business users and more technical developers to design business processes. In addition, the Network also offers a range of management capabilities, including change

TAKE CREDIT FOR READING ZAPTHINK RESEARCH!

Thank you for reading ZapThink research! ZapThink is an IT market intelligence firm that provides trusted advice and critical insight into XML, Web Services, and Service Orientation. We provide our target audience of IT vendors, service providers and end-users a clear roadmap for standards-based, loosely coupled distributed computing – a vision of IT meeting the needs of the agile business.

Earn rewards for reading ZapThink research! Visit www.zapthink.com/credit and enter the code **GCBSN**. We'll reward you with ZapCredits that you can use to obtain free research, ZapGear, and more! For more information about ZapThink products and services, please call us at +1-781-207-0203, or drop us an email at info@zapthink.com.



management, alerts and exception management, message tracking and correlation, monitoring and reporting, and policy and permission management.

The Business Services Directory also allows customers to discover functionality available on the Network and allows the Service providers to have a single view of their users, groups and Services. Because customers can now manage the relationships among their organizations, users, and business Services, they can establish policies for specific audiences. Grand Central based the directory on the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP).

Grand Central Services

Grand Central Business Services Network

Overview:

The Grand Central Business Services Network is a hosted implementation of a loosely coupled, SOA-based network that allows companies to integrate their applications, data, users, and processes across the extended enterprise. The Network provides a platform for creating and managing Services and business processes that companies and third-party firms provide to the Network, without requiring companies to make significant investments in implementing, owning, and running their own SOA infrastructure.

Value Proposition:

The Business Services Network lowers cost and risk by removing the need for upfront hardware, software, and staffing costs as well as recurring costs, such as maintenance, training, and upgrade fees, by providing integration-on-demand capabilities through a hosted Services model. The Network also reduces implementation costs, application development costs, and capital investments typically required for integration projects.

The Network reduces the time required for integration through its Web-based interface and self-service tools, rapid integration, and the ability to publish and share Services with a community of developers, partners and customers throughout their value chain, by providing increasing benefit as the number of available Services increase on the network.

Finally, the Business Services Network lowers risk through its "pay-as-you-go" and "use-what-you-need" approach, enabling customers to scale up and down rapidly as their business dictates. The Network also handles the complexity of integration, providing flexibility and customization to respond to a rapidly changing business environment.

The ZapThink Take

In general, the concept of hosted Services offered to businesses on an as-needed, on-demand model is starting to gain significant traction in enterprises worldwide. While companies understand the competitive advantages and benefits of using hosted enterprise application services, such as those provided by Salesforce.com, the greatest challenge Grand Central faces when bringing the Business Services Network to market is in explaining exactly



what it is. After all, people understand what new things are by comparing them with other things that they understand, yet the Business Services Network is like many diverse things. Is it like an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB)? Or is it more like a Value-Added Network (VAN) from the EDI world? Maybe it's more like Salesforce.com or some other "software as a service" provider? Or maybe, the Network is a next-generation Application Service Provider (ASP)?

In truth, the Business Services network has elements in common with each of these products and services, and yet none of them provide a clear idea of the breadth of capabilities in the Network. What Grand Central provides is the optimal combination of capabilities for providing Service-oriented integration and a runtime infrastructure that offers the necessary security, reliability, messaging, business process, and transformational capabilities, without requiring significant software investment on the part of its customers.

Profile: Grand Central	November 2004
Funding:	Benchmark Capital, Cargill, Inc., Eastman Chemical
CEO:	Halsey Minor
Employees:	75
Product:	Grand Central's Business Services Network
Address:	50 Fremont Street, 16th Floor San Francisco, California 94105
URL:	http://www.grandcentral.com
Main Phone:	415-344-3200
Contact:	sales@grandcentral.com

Related Research

- *Service Orientation Market Trends* Foundation Report (ZTR-WS110)
- *Service-Oriented Integration* Foundation Report (ZTB-0104)
- *Software AG* ZapNote (ZTZN-1156)
- *Xlipstream* ZapNote (ZTZN-1137)
- *Best Practices in Event-Driven Service-Oriented Architecture* Presentation (ZTP-0159)
- *How to Succeed through Service Oriented Integration* Presentation (ZTP-0146)

About ZapThink, LLC

ZapThink is an IT market intelligence firm that provides trusted advice and critical insight into XML, Web Services, and Service Orientation. We provide our target audience of IT vendors, service providers and end-users a clear roadmap for standards-based, loosely coupled distributed computing – a vision of IT meeting the needs of the agile business.

ZapThink's role is to help companies understand these IT products and services in the context of SOAs and the vision of Service Orientation. ZapThink provides *market intelligence* to IT vendors who offer XML and Web Services-based products to help them understand their competitive landscape and how to communicate their value proposition to their customers within the context of Service Orientation, and lay out their product roadmaps for the coming wave of Service Orientation. ZapThink also provides *implementation intelligence* to IT users who are seeking guidance and clarity into how to assemble the available products and services into a coherent roadmap to Service Orientation. Finally, ZapThink provides *demand intelligence* to IT vendors and service providers who must understand the needs of IT users as they follow the roadmap to Service Orientation.

ZapThink's senior analysts are widely regarded as the "go to analysts" for XML, Web Services, and SOAs by vendors, end-users, and the press. They are in great demand as speakers, and have presented at conferences and industry events around the world. They are among the most quoted industry analysts in the IT industry.

ZapThink was founded in October 2000 and is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. Its customers include Global 1000 firms, public sector organizations around the world, and many emerging businesses. ZapThink Analysts have years of experience in IT as well as research and analysis. Its analysts have previously been with such firms as IDC and ChannelWave, and have sat on the working group committees for standards bodies such as RosettaNet, UDDI, CPExchange, ebXML, EIDX, and CompTIA.

Call, email, or visit the ZapThink Web site to learn more about how ZapThink can help you to better understand how XML and Web Services impact your business or organization.

ZAPTHINK CONTACT:

ZapThink, LLC
11 Willow Street, Suite 200
Waltham, MA 02453
Phone: +1 (781) 207 0203
Fax: +1 (786) 524 3186
info@zapthink.com
www.zapthink.com

