

ZAPTHINK ZAPNOTE™

SEEC ENTERPRISE WORKSPACE SUITE *DRIVING BUSINESS VALUE WITH SOA*

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Abstract

Leveraging Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) to reduce integration expense provides a solid business case for businesses, but companies can realize more significant value from SOA by enabling flexible business processes with Service-Oriented Business Applications (SOBAs). The secret to obtaining value from such applications is in combining Services that represent existing functionality and data with business process logic that meets ongoing business needs in a cost-effective, agile manner. One such vendor taking this approach to applications is SEEC, a SOBA vendor focused on the insurance industry who is on the forefront of offering process-rich applications that leverage the flexibility of SOA, enabling insurance carriers to provide greater value to customers and improve their competitiveness in today's dynamic marketplace.

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Service-Oriented Business Applications: The Key to SOA Business Value

Today's insurance carriers are dependent on information technology (IT) for their daily operation. However, all carriers face IT challenges that place enormous limitations on their business. Insurance carriers must leverage host systems for personal, life, auto, and home insurance lines through siloed applications that include customer relationship management (CRM), policy administration, agent systems, billing and payments, and claims processing. A wide range of users access these disparate applications, including agents, customer service representatives, and customers, who leverage online as well as custom-built applications. As a result, significant challenges exist for IT to deal with the great number of manual processes, disparate systems, and customer data scattered across different formats and databases throughout the organization. Many of today's insurance firms must thus deal with an expensive, inflexible IT infrastructure that reduces competitiveness in today's dynamic business environment.

Many carriers are looking to *Service-Oriented Architecture* (SOA) to help reduce their integration expense, streamline their siloed IT environment, and provide greater business agility in order to strengthen their competitiveness. SOA is an approach to organizing IT resources that leverages application functionality and data as business Services that the company can compose into business processes in a flexible, agile manner. From the business perspective, the Services that companies create as a part of their SOA initiative are the building blocks for their processes. Assembling those Services to enable processes is an emerging approach to creating a new kind of application: the *Service-Oriented Business Application* (SOBA). SOBAs are composite applications that orchestrate Services into agile processes that move the process logic away from the underlying code and into the configuration of the SOBA, giving the business greater control and flexibility over their processes.

Companies that implement the infrastructure necessary to act upon this SOBA vision, however, face two key challenges: how to build the right Services, and how to create SOBAs that accurately reflect the processes that are core to their company. In other words, once you build the roads, then you need the cars and the knowledge to drive them. It's not sufficient simply to have the infrastructure; companies also require SOBAs that incorporate process knowledge.

SEEC Workspaces: SOBAs for Insurance

One company helping to realize this vision of SOBA is Pittsburgh, PA-based SEEC, which offers both software components and SOBAs that provide the process capabilities insurance carriers require. The *SEEC Advantage Library* is a comprehensive collection of standards-based, reusable software components specifically for the insurance industry. The SEEC Advantage

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Library components provide Services that deliver the flexibility companies require to solve problems faster, more effectively, and at a lower cost than traditional software approaches.

Leveraging the Service components from the SEEC Advantage Library are the SEEC *Enterprise Workspaces*, which are pre-built SOBAs that integrate Services and associated information across existing systems, delivering business process capabilities to producers, services staff, and customers. SEEC Workspaces enable customers to do business with the carrier quickly and easily. Producers and service staff have the tools they require to build customer relationships and bring in more business. The first four SEEC Workspaces in the Enterprise Workspace Suite are the *Producer/Agent Workspace*, the *Agency Workspace*, the *Policy Center Workspace*, and the *Customer Self-Service Workspace*. Each Workspace offers a set of Service components and the associated process capability, enabling true SOBAs for insurance.

SEEC has seen widespread success with its platform, with several carriers deploying SEEC's Workspace Solutions in as little as three months. The Workspaces provide a wide range of functionality essential to helping carriers gain a competitive advantage, including a 360-degree view of customer and household relationships, automated transactions, and straight-through processing of new business quotes. Workspaces offer customers insight and product advice at the point-of-service, and provide secure, round-the-clock self-service access for both agents and customers. SEEC Workspaces also provide cross-channel alignment, enabling the delivery of a seamless customer experience.

The ZapThink Take

The focus of many SOA implementations to date has been on the infrastructure underlying the Services that form the core abstraction of SOA. To be sure, the infrastructure must work properly to guarantee that the Services will be able to provide business value, and companies can achieve a positive return on investment (ROI) by leveraging SOA to reduce the cost of integration. But leveraging infrastructure that implements SOA for IT cost savings only scratches the surface of the true business value of Service Orientation. The big win that companies can expect from SOA is in enabling more agile business processes that drive business value in the face of ongoing change.

As many companies work out the infrastructural issues their SOA strategy presents, their focus will necessarily shift from the underlying technology that implements Services to the business processes that power their overall business. At that point, SOBAs become the application itself rather than simply some third-party technology that interconnects other applications, and SOBA providers like SEEC that offer out-of-the-box process functionality will emerge as the new power players in the business application marketplace. Today, many people perceive SOA as largely a technological phenomenon, but that view is already changing. After all, the broader concept of Service Orientation, where businesses leverage IT as an agile business resource, is a business phenomenon more so than a technology one. Vendors like SEEC are pioneering this shift in focus.



SEEC Enterprise Workspace Suite Features

SEEC Enterprise Workspace Suite

Overview:

The *SEEC Enterprise Workspace Suite* contains four customizable SOBAs that integrate data and business logic from business-critical systems and streamline key sales and service transactions across channels, products and lines of business. Carriers who are implementing SOA can deploy a custom-tailored Enterprise Workspace in three to four months.

SEEC's Enterprise Workspace Suite includes:

Features:

- **Producer/Agent Workspace** – Provides agents with real-time sales and service functionality, along with customer insight and product advice via an easy to use Web interface.
- **Agency Workspace** – Streamlines service operations for agency personnel by automating high-volume, repetitive policy services, including policy changes, billing and payments, and automobile ID issuance, enabling agencies to cut operating costs and improve service.
- **Policy Center Workspace** – Gives customer service staff an integrated, single-screen view of customer and household relationships as well as one-click policy and customer updates, improving handle time, call blockage and first call resolution metrics.
- **Customer Self-Service Workspace** – Enables carriers to quickly roll out a secure, 24 x 7 self-service portal to customers, integrating information and services from existing business-critical systems.

Value Proposition:

- SEEC's Enterprise Workspaces help carriers quickly deliver information, tools and services to their agents, agency staff, customer service personnel and customers through streamlined Web interfaces. The Workspaces empower producers and service staff to build customer relationships and win business.



Profile: SEEC	May 2006
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Related Research

- *SEEC ZapNote (ZTZN-1186)*
- *Webify Solutions: Enable Agile Business Ecosystems with SOBA ZapNote (ZTZN-1172)*
- *The Hartford UDDI Case Study ZapNote (ZTZN-1150)*



About ZapThink, LLC

ZapThink is an IT advisory and analysis firm that provides trusted advice and critical insight into the architectural and organizational changes brought about by the movement to XML, Web Services, and Service Orientation. We provide our three target audiences 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 helps its customers in three ways: by helping companies understand IT products and services in the context of Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) and the vision of Service Orientation, by providing guidance into emerging best practices for Web Services and SOA adoption, and by bringing together all our audiences into a network that provides business value and expertise to each member of the network.

ZapThink provides market intelligence to IT vendors and professional services firms that offer XML and Web Services-based products and services in order to help them understand their competitive landscape, plan their product roadmaps, and communicate their value proposition to their customers within the context of Service Orientation.

ZapThink provides guidance and expertise to professional services firms to help them grow and innovate their services as well as promote their capabilities to end-users and vendors looking to grow their businesses.

ZapThink also provides implementation intelligence to IT users who are seeking guidance and clarity into the best practices for planning and implementing SOA, including how to assemble the available products and services into a coherent plan.

ZapThink's senior analysts are widely regarded as the "go to analysts" for XML, Web Services, and SOA by vendors, end-users, and the press. Respected for their candid, insightful opinions, 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, and their recent book, *Service Orient or Be Doomed!*, is the leading book on the business concept of Service Orientation.

ZapThink was founded in October 2000 and is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. Its customers include Global 1000 firms and government organizations, as well as many emerging businesses. Its analysts have worked at such firms as IDC, marchFIRST, and ChannelWave, and have sat on the working group committees for standards bodies such as RosettaNet, UDDI, and ebXML.

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

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