To Put the Finishing Touches on the House of SOA, IBM Buys Webify

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It is wonderful to see a structure rise on its foundations, the roof take shape, the siding go up and the windows go in. And, then, often, there comes a pause. Sometimes it is a long pause. This, of course, is when all the plumbing, wiring, wallboard, and finish carpentry that make a building usable take place. It is where decisions can waver. It is where there are suddenly hundreds more things that can go wrong.

Many companies have been building the foundations of service-oriented architectures as the new structures that will let their businesses grow, change – and thrive. The rising hulks of ambitious projects are everywhere. But, as with a home or commercial business, a rough finish of the job is not enough. Detail work is needed to make the architecture truly useful – the personalization, if you will, to reflect the company's structure and business model.

This is not the matter of applications but of the fine carpentry tools to model, measure and put them together well. Webify, a company bought recently by IBM, is such a finish carpenter. It has, and will continue to work with, a number of systems integrators and open source companies to build the industry specific details for SOA environments in particular industries including Insurance and Health Care. As a part of IBM, Webify will be able to expand the industries it now addresses more quickly. As a long-term (by SOA terms) partner of IBM, Webify has already worked with IBM software and IBM Global Services on many accounts, and its software, built to open standards, has been well integrated into *WebSphere*'s SOA components.

This is good news for IBM, Webify, and their customers. It is good news for all the SOA players, for it signals not just a healthy, expanding market, but that the build-out of SOA implementations is getting to the magic stage, where the details of how companies use SOA becomes evident. Many companies have focused from the start on processes that needed improvement and other organizational remodeling. Now we can start to anticipate what kind of smorgasbord of market leveraging and differentiation these SOA implementations will display. It should be an interesting autumn.

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