



The Mainstream

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Four essential best practices that drive return on SOA investment

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There's plenty to learn from those who have been through SOA business process modeling.

Here are a few best practices that have led to successful implementations:

- *Use skilled industry resources* – Hire experts who know your industry, the process and the technology. Small- and medium-size companies may balk at the expense, but the price tag for a major IT undertaking gone haywire can cost far more.
- *Train in-house resources* – Some companies rely on existing staff who may be highly competent but probably don't know much about SOA modeling. This is worsened when existing staff means existing skills. If you decide to use in-house resources only, invest in their skills with comprehensive training that's based on an industry-standard set of best practices.
- *Implement and evaluate* – SOA applications are unique in their technical breadth and in the value they bring to corporations. They're definitely not "one size fits all." That's why after implementation you should review what worked and what didn't, and build your own library of best practices. Capture your best practices in architecture, data management, performance management, application language, runtime and more. This library will guide future development efforts and will be invaluable in improving future SOA deliverables.
- *Don't skip simulation* – One of the most common mistakes is skipping preproduction simulation, often based on the assumption that it's not necessary because everything is working well. Business process modeling formalizes tightly integrated human and the IT processes, and the hand-offs that drive them. This complex and ongoing communication between IT and human processes is part of why simulation is so important. Catching errors as early as possible saves you money in the long-term. Don't settle too quickly on a certain KPI as the right measurement. It's critical to thoroughly examine business processes at a granular level. Because it involves humans, there is going to be error.



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