# Release 12:  Are You Ready for Fusion?

## *A Practical Guide to What You Need to Know*

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### INTRODUCTION

The intent of this Paper is to cover the major points that decision-makers need to know about Oracle Fusion.  It will be done at such a level that it can be of value to business owners, technology owners and their staff.  For those who are seeking more in-depth technical knowledge about Fusion we encourage them to utilize the resources provided at Oracle's web site and on Oracle MetaLink.

Much like the Presentation that accompanies this Paper, this document covers five areas about Fusion.  These five areas of focus will help reduce confusion, identify areas of business value, highlight key components, review benefits and provide best practices for embracing Fusion.

Fusion, in its full breadth, will significantly influence architecture, middleware, applications, databases, business processes and even create new job roles in most organizations.  For that reason it is an important topic for anyone who is involved with Oracle's Enterprise business applications.

### UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY OF FUSION

The term "Fusion" has been widely used by Oracle during the last several years with the unexpected result of creating confusion.  In recent months Oracle has sought to clarify the use of Fusion sensing that the term is becoming counterproductive to their marketing efforts.

While many users understand that the announced Fusion Applications will arrive soon Oracle is also saying that many users are already using Fusion in ways they don't realize.  Some believe that Fusion is only about Applications while others tend to see it as referring to Middleware.

The challenge for Oracle and even for us is that Fusion is the name of at least four different things within Oracle.  Similar to many other words, how you use "Fusion" can influence its meaning.  So what are the four definitions for Fusion?  As others have noted, Oracle discusses Fusion in these terms.

| Fusion Type | Focus | When |
|---|---|---|
| **Vision** | **Oracle Product Strategy** | NOW |
| **Architecture** | **Design Approach**<br>**Business Processes**<br>**Configurability**<br>**Integrating Applications**<br>**Industry Standards**<br>**Service Oriented**<br>**Best Practices** | NOW |
| **Business Tools** | **Fusion Middleware** | NOW |
| **Applications** | **Fusion Applications 11g** | 2008+ |

At its broadest level, Fusion references Oracle's vision for creating best-of-bread business applications that tangibly improve the competitive advantage of organizations.

Fusion also refers to a software architecture that will guide Oracle's development of next-generation applications. This architecture will rely heavily on the Oracle 11*g* Database and the Oracle Application Server 10*g.*

Fusion also is used as the name of the large family of middleware products that will support the architecture and vision just noted.

And finally Fusion is the current name for a future suite of business applications that will be released initially in 2008 and more completely in 2009.

With these thoughts in mind, it's easy to see how confusion has arisen.  Depending on your role in the organization you might seize on one of these definitions and proceed to categorize everything you hear under that definition.

The good news, for now, is that regardless of which definition you prefer you will have the opportunity here to find out about the other three in more depth.  With that in mind, let's review how the Fusion Vision is guiding Oracle's future.

THE FUSION VISION

Oracle's stated vision for Fusion is to create "software that provides a sustainable competitive advantage achieved by the continuous blending of business insight and process execution."

This vision focuses on improving competitive capabilities by uniting business processes and business information in a continuous cycle of improvement.  To achieve this Oracle believes that future software must provide these four key benefits; it must adapt quickly and easily to business strategies; it must rely on industry standards; it must provided improved business intelligence; and it must offer a better ownership experience.

The Holy Grail for any business is having a business system that is so aligned to their business model that it creates full-scale synergy rather than a haphazard set of efficiencies and inefficiencies.

Given the reality that most organizations have multiple data silos or stove pipe data environments the need for better integration and alignment is critical to maintain business competitiveness.  However beyond integration, business software needs to adapt more closely and more quickly to business strategy given the rate of change we see today.

With current technologies, new software functionality takes 12-18 months from definition to deployment.  These long cycles are counterproductive when key business changes are occurring every six months.

The business needs of today demand that business software be more adaptable without the complexity and delays so common today.

Industry standards provide a level playing field for both producers and consumers.  They allow the producers to focus on quality and normally reduce costs for consumers.

In the world of technology, adhering to industry standards has become more acceptable than in the past.  The history of organizations who have tried to chart a course using their own proprietary standards is not pretty.  A common example is the use of Sony's Beta video standard.  Even though it was better in quality than VHS, it had more proprietary restrictions and VHS become the accepted format.

Similarly new industry standards allow software development to focus more on improved functionality and quality and rely less on custom technologies.

This term evokes for many the idea of a data warehouse that is inaccessible except for those who can invest the time to understand what information is stored there and how to get it out. But more broadly, business intelligence is about providing better information to make better decisions.

Historically, the focus of business intelligence has focused on complex analytics that yield trends in the marketplace. However, the greatest value of business intelligence lies in yielding real-time operational intelligence. This is the kind of information that provides key performance indicators in business real-time while also providing the ability to drill-down to understand "why".

Operational business intelligence will be a boon to most organizations as they attempt to improve their business agility and respond more quickly. Why? Because it delivers information faster and more accurately to every level of the organization.

It has not escaped Oracle's notice that many customers are frustrated with the experience of managing, upgrading and patching applications. The continuous cycle of projects to maintain their business applications and the associated environment is a significant cost to the bottom-line.

At the user level there has also been frustration with the interfaces they have had to endure as applications have moved from fat-client to browser-based. The complexity of the menu systems, difficulty of maintaining security and the struggle to smoothly transact business are the hidden friction that most of us have come to accept.

All of this is part of the owner experience and a major focus of Oracle in their vision. Every improvement they make here allows resources to be freed up for higher-level tasks.

### THE FUSION ARCHITECTURE

For next-generation business applications to offer the benefits of the Fusion Vision, Oracle is providing a revised architecture. While not completely different from prior architectures, Fusion Architecture continues to shift more of the work load to the middle Application tier.
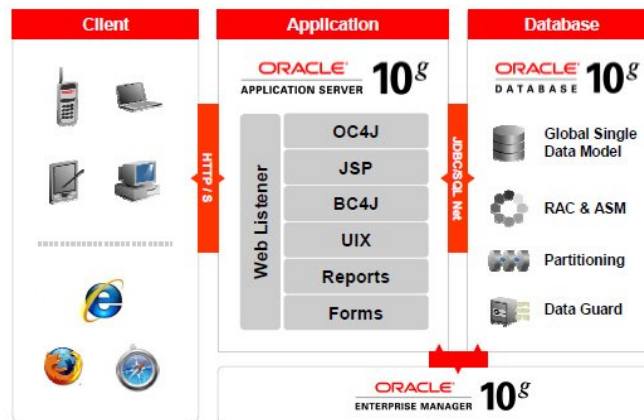


Today Oracle's E-Business Suite application relies on a physical client/presentation layer, middle-tier/application server layer and a database layer. There are both benefits and costs to implementing and maintaining this structure but it continues to be used for now.

What changes with Fusion Architecture is that more and more of the common functionality in business applications is shifting to the middleware/application area. Functionality for the areas of workflow,

event management, security and integration were once part of the application but in new releases these are being migrated outside of the application and made part of the middleware.

The value is that these functionality areas must work across all tiers of the application stack, not just one. Workflow is great within the E-Business Suite application but how much powerful would it be if it could also operate across applications?

Our view of the Fusion Architecture is based on the Grid Computing capabilities of the Oracle 10g and 11g versions of the Database. Offering high-availability, flexible scalability and simpler administration, these databases provide a standard platform for organizations of any size.
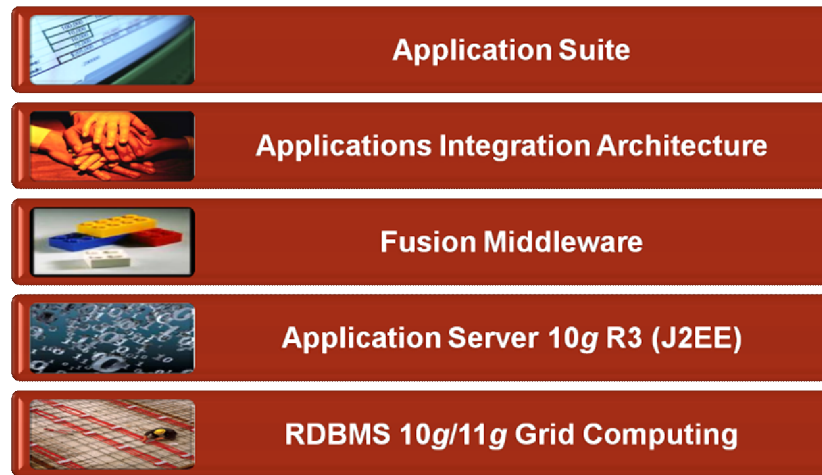


Above the database layer is the Application Server layer, which provides an Enterprise Java server in a form that is also highly available and scalable.

The Fusion Middleware Server layer provides the platform for the Fusion Middleware products that support Service Oriented Architecture, Business Intelligence, Content Management, Identity Management, and other key infrastructure components.

At the next layer up we find the Application Integration Architecture, a set of pre-defined integration tools.

The top layer, logically, consists of the business suites including Siebel, JD Edwards, PeopleSoft, Retek, iFlex and E-Business Suite.

The architecture of database, application server, middleware and applications are the basis for enabling the vision of Fusion.

FUSION MIDDLEWARE

With over 40 different products, Fusion Middleware (OFM) has a broad reach in functionality. To simplify them, we have grouped the products into these areas:
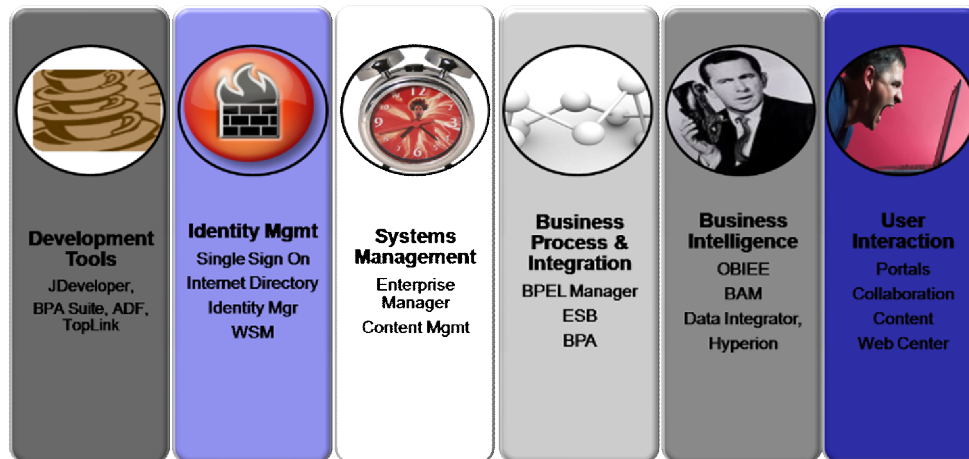
The OFM development tools include products like JDeveloper, which is used to develop functionality using Java. JDeveloper includes a number of plug-ins to simplify the development of complex applications and configure business process management. This area also includes tools like the Business Process Architect, which is used by business analysts to define business process models.

OFM includes several tools grouped in the Identity Management Suite. These include Single-Sign-On, Internet Directory, Identity Manager and the Web Services Manager. All of these are intended to strengthen data protection, simplify management and reduce risk.

Since its introduction over 10 years ago, the Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM) has continued to develop into a comprehensive management tool. Initially designed for just the database, today it can be used to monitor applications, Real Application Clusters, the Application Server and operating system performance. As part of OFM, OEM and products like Content Management provide simplified Systems Management functionality.

The Fusion Vision speaks of business process execution and it includes many new products to design, simulate, deploy, and monitor business processes. Business Process Management or BPM products include the BPEL Manager, Enterprise Service Bus and the Application Integration Architecture packs.

Within OFM, the products for providing better business intelligence include the Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition, Business Activity Monitor, Data Integrator, Warehouse Builder and Hyperion. Each of these products addresses a different area of business information need.

Just as important are the dozens of other products in OFM. Many of these support user interaction. These include the Oracle Enterprise Manager, Master Data Management, Collaboration Suite, Content Management Suite, and other specialized tools. These other products tend to be more niche-oriented and should be explored for that value.

FUSION APPLICATIONS

Oracle announced that beginning in late 2008 they will be releasing a new suite of business applications. The full-featured release is not expected until 2009 and is expected to incorporate about 80% of the functionality currently available in E-Business Suite. The influences of PeopleSoft, Siebel and the other product suites are expected to be seen as well in these new applications.

The Fusion Applications will have these characteristics.

- Focus more on automating common business cycles (Procure to Pay, Order to Cash)
- Integrate with existing Oracle Application suites

- Utilize the browser for all user interaction
- Be built on the new Fusion Middleware Architecture
- Will include embedded analytics for operational intelligence
- Will co-exist with the current Oracle Application suites
- Will be Incrementally released over several years
- Is designed to ensure that 80% of Oracle customers will want to adopt
- Announced Release 1 is Sales Force Automation – 1$^{st}$ half of 2008 (Siebel)
- Announced Release 2 is Integrated Suite – Planned for late 2008
- Includes an Automated Upgrade Process from EBS 11.5.10 and 12.X
- Has a User Interface based on Web 2.0 with a high degree of personalization

A common question from Oracle users is "Will I have to update to Fusion Applications and when?" The great news is that Oracle is providing a no-pressure approach to upgrading. They are demonstrating this with two commitments, "Applications Unlimited" and "Applications Lifetime Support".

The first commitment is called "Applications Unlimited". Applications Unlimited is Oracle's commitment to provide ongoing enhancements to the current Application Suites (E-Business Suite, PeopleSoft, Siebel, etc.) up to and even after the release of the Fusion Applications.

This commitment reduces the pressure for a forced upgrade in a limited period of time plus it allows Oracle to flesh out the needed functionality of the Fusion Applications over several years.
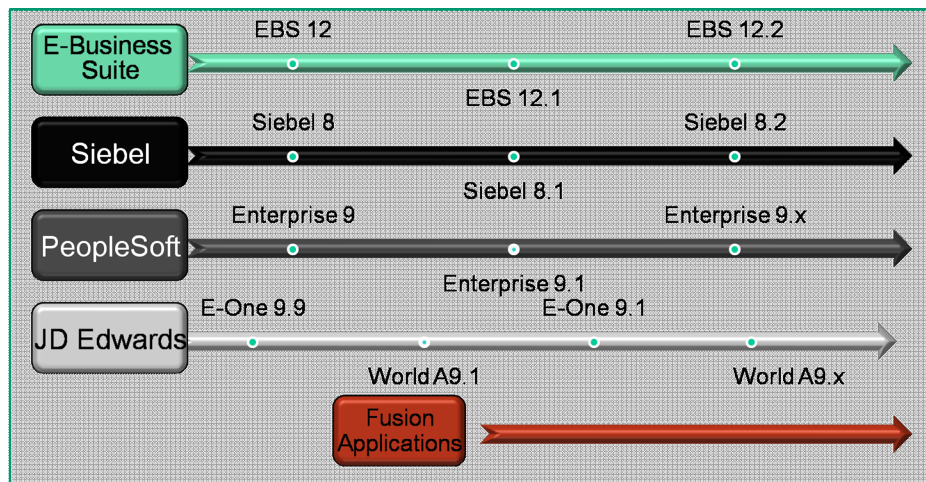


The second commitment is "Applications Lifetime Support". This is Oracles published information on support levels for all of their products including tools, databases, and application suites. Available in a pdf file on their website is a document showing by release when Premier, Extended and Sustaining support levels will end for all products. This is a very important document to review for planning purposes. The URL for exploring more about Lifetime Support is shown here.

See http://www.oracle.com/support/library/data-sheet/oracle-lifetime-support-policy-datasheet.pdf

Note that Sustaining Support doesn't include new updates, fixes, security alerts, and critical patch updates.

| Oracle E-Business Suite Releases | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Release | GA Date | Premier Support Ends | Extended Support Ends | Sustaining Support Ends |
| 11.0.3 | May 1999 | Feb 2007 | Not Offered | Jan 2009 |
| 11i1 | May 2000 | Jul 2006 | Not Offered | Jul 2007 |
| 11i2 | Oct 2000 | Jul 2006 | Not Offered | Jul 2007 |
| 11i3 | Jan 2001 | Jul 2006 | Not Offered | Jul 2007 |
| 11i4 | Jun 2001 | Jul 2006 | Not Offered | Jul 2007 |
| 11i5 | Sep 2001 | Jul 2006 | Not Offered | Jul 2007 |
| 11i6 | Jan 2002 | Jul 2006 | Not Offered | Jul 2007 |
| 11i7 | May 2002 | May 2007 | Not Offered | Indefinite |
| 11i8 | Nov 2002 | Nov 2007 | Not Offered | Indefinite |
| 11i9 | Jun 2003 | Jun 2008 | Not Offered | Indefinite |
| 11i10 | Nov 2004 | Nov 2009 | Nov 2012 | Indefinite |
| 12 | Jan 2007 | Jan 2012 | Jan 2015 | Indefinite |

## THE FUSION VALUE PROPOSITION

The most important question that organizations are asking is "what is the value of Fusion for me?" It sounds a lot like my favorite radio station, WIIFM or "what's in it for me?" And there is good reason for this question because resources are limited and a lack of focus is deadly to achieving results.

We see Fusion offering these six areas of value for organizations today.

- Business-Centric Processes

- Reliance on Industry Standards

- Compliance and Risk Mitigation

- Evolutionary and Adaptable

- Business Information

- Early Availability

As you delve into the products and methodologies associated with Fusion, you will find a distinct reliance on business models, created by business owners. Using this as the starting point, Fusion seeks to reduce the distance between the business and technology areas of the organization by simplifying how they collaborate. The value to be derived includes better applications design, better results, improved communication and better documentation. Given that less than 40% of all software products are completed on-time, on-budget and actually provide the benefits expected, Fusion has lots of opportunity to raise value here.

We've already noted that Fusion relies strongly on industry standards. The direct value derived is seen in more options, lower pricing and easier integration of products and functionality from multiple vendors. A simple example is that many of the middleware products will work with other application servers in addition to the Application Server 10g.

By migrating more and more of the security capabilities outside of the application, Fusion improves the controls, monitoring and reporting. When combined with many of the new features in the 10g/11g databases, such as

Database Vault and Virtual Private Databases, security is significantly more effective.  Given the myriad of legal frameworks that apply to business today, this is of great value in ensuring our organization is not being highlighted for negative reasons in the business pages.

One of the key components of Fusion is the inclusion of Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) components.  SOA, which we will cover in more detail, is designed to integrate existing applications in a real-time manner which allows a more evolutionary approach to replacing functionality.  It also has the ability to simplify the addition of new functionality without serious impact to other areas of the business system.  This provides the value of reuse, reduced testing, improved agility and better quality control.

As we've noted the Business Intelligence capabilities provided by Fusion extend the traditional data warehouse capabilities to provide more real-time operational intelligence.  In a following section we will highlight how Event Drive Architecture (EDA) enables Fusion's information reporting capabilities.

A key value to Fusion is that Oracle has released the core components in advance of the planned Fusion Applications.  This allows organizations to begin utilizing the same tools and technologies now.  Given the new technologies there is some amount of training and familiarization required and with Fusion there is 12-18 months for organizations to lay this groundwork.

## UNDERSTANDING FUSION VALUE

Three areas where organizations are typically finding value with Fusion are when integrating applications, supporting better business decisions and improving security management.

The complexity of integrating different systems and applications has been a major headache for Information Technology.  Legacy systems, limited resources, and acquisitions have combined to leave many organizations with multiple and overlapping systems.

The growing influence of Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) is seen as a solution to these problems but many organizations have little or no experience with SOA.  Oracle has filled this experience gap by providing an integrated set of products and tools.  These consist of JDeveloper, the SOA Suite and the Business Process Analysis Suite.  In addition, Oracle has introduced pre-fabricated SOA capabilities in the form of Application Integration Architecture (AIA).

AIA provides a Foundation Pack with basic SOA capabilities for error-handling and versioning.  It comes with over 30 pre-defined Business Objects and the necessary Business Services to operate on them.  Also bundled is a Business Service Repository with a graphical user interface (GUI).
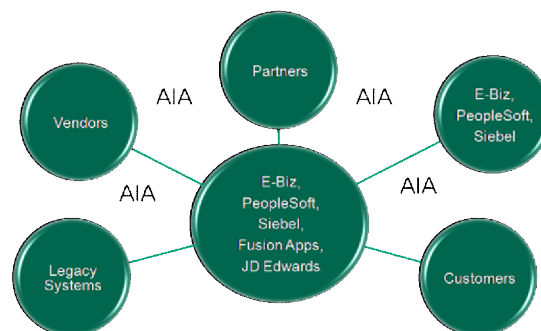


Built on top of the Foundation Pack are several AIA Process Integration Packs (PIP).  A PIP is a plug-and-play integration for a pre-defined environment.  A PIP can come in two flavors.  It can either be cross-application

integration packages or vertical integration packages. Vertical PIP's that are currently available include Telecommunications, Life Sciences and Trade Promotion Management. Cross-applications PIP's include the Siebel CRM On Demand Integration Pack for Oracle E-Business Suite and the Siebel CRM Integration Pack for Oracle E-Business Suite Order Management.



Another area of value that Fusion offers is in the area of Business Insight. Oracle provides several tools for improving your information about your organizational processing. The first is the traditional analytics relying on historical information in a data warehouse. This uses the Enterprise Edition of Oracle Business Intelligence.
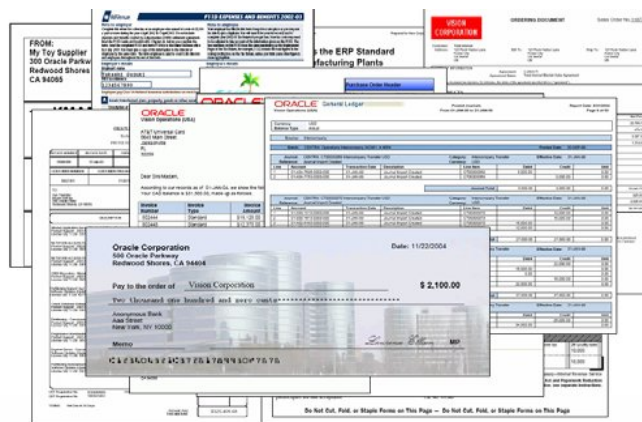


The second is a new focus on operational analytics which are real-time and reflect the current business processing. The Oracle Business Activity Monitor (BAM) provides targeted dashboards that are continuously updated by the underlying application logic.



The third and final solution addresses the need for forecasting and relies on Oracle's Enterprise Performance Management solution. Whether you are looking at historical information, monitoring current processing or looking to better forecast the future, the Fusion Middleware products can support these efforts.

The third area of value customers are leveraging in Fusion is in the area of Information Security. The implementation of new regulations has created a renewed focus on improving governance. A key area of governance is in providing information security. Managing access to information for employees, contractors, partners and even customers is critical. Traditionally security solutions have been built into applications but now the focus is on having an enterprise security solution that provides centralized oversight, distributed management

and is application-neutral.  The Identity Management Suite, a part of the Fusion Middleware, provides all of the key components needed while relying on industry standards.  A nice feature is that this suite is designed to interoperate with other standards-based security suites.
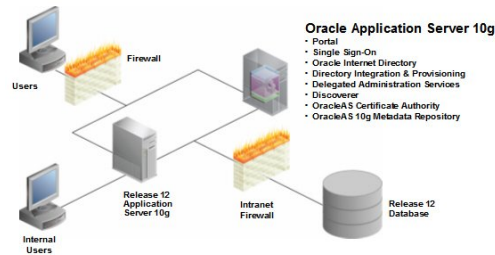


## FUSION COMPONENTS AND CONCEPTS

We will now focus on some of the key components and concepts that will help improve understanding of Fusion, particularly the Fusion Middleware.  Three important concepts we will be covering are Event Driven Architecture (EDA), Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and Business Process Management (BPM).
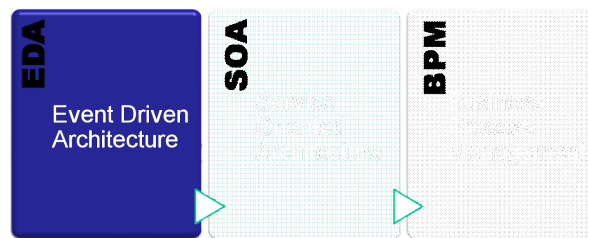


EDA has similarities to traditional Oracle Alerts within the E-Business Suite.  Oracle Alerts provides email updates when certain events occur.  There are significant differences though.  EDA is based in the middleware and executes in the Application Server, not the Application.  EDA can handle thousands of transactions per second and communicate in multiple message formats including Java Messaging Systems, Email, EDI, etc.  Additionally, multiple processes can subscribe or unsubscribe to the event notifications of their choosing.

EDA can be considered the "nervous system" of future business applications because it "senses" events and reports them from the application, database and even middleware areas.  EDA helps organizations monitor, analyze and respond to business events without complex coding or modifications to applications.  With its business real-time processing capabilities, EDA ensures that more events can be monitored and that feedback is provided back to both people and automated processes.  EDA provides important capabilities for Service-Oriented Architecture, so let's look at SOA.

SOA is a paradigm or approach for building scalable business systems using building blocks called "Services".  Springing from distributed computing and component-based architectures, SOA has been gaining critical mass for the last 10 years.   With the advent of needed standards and methodologies, SOA is less restricted by proprietary products, allowing more freedom for adoption.  Unlike the architecture of many legacy systems, SOA envisions complex systems consisting of Services each interacting according to published rules.  Adding new Services increases the functionality of the system while reducing the risk of breaking something.

Another feature of SOA is its agnostic nature. As long as something appears to be a Service, SOA does not care if it is functionality from a legacy or new system. This ability to offer legacy functionality in the SOA environment with limited coding provides the evolutionary path already mentioned.

SOA relies on using Markup Languages such as XML, BEPL, WSDL, WSIF, and SOAP. These languages offer standardized methods for transmitting and documenting transactions.

Another feature of SOA, particularly with Oracle's implementation, is the reliance on collaboration between the business and technology groups. SOA requires business process analysts to work closely with system architects and developers in designing and building applications. This collaboration is dependent on an accurate understanding of business processes.

Business Processes are the actions that an organization does to satisfy their customers and ensure a profit (or their survival). Typically business processes consist of transactions, automated operations, human interactions, business rules and a period of time. Automated operations are those provided by business systems and other technology tools. Human interactions consist of conversations, agreements, decisions, approvals and reviews of transactions. Business rules are the explicit and implicit guidelines applied to ensure uniqueness and efficiency.

A common business rule is the requirement that vacation be approved by a supervisor or manager. Another example would be that all orders over a certain amount are to be reviewed before being processed. The use of Business rules ensures that transactions are handled consistently, accurately, efficiently and thoroughly.

Business processes sometimes consist of a sequence of activities but usually involve more complexity where some steps can be done in parallel. Often there are points where the steps have diverged in the process and are now converging for an approval step. With Oracle SOA, organizations are able to have human workflow, Services, secure communications with partners, interactions with multiple databases and multiple notification points to keep everyone informed with the progress of the transaction. Using the power of Business Process Execution Language or BPEL, much of what you have seen in this example can be handled without coding.

The key then to improving your business processes is first understanding them and then having a method for continuously improving them. With SOA's emphasis on business processes this becomes an integral focus of both the business and technology groups.

Up to this point we have noted that Business Processes should drive SOA design. When done correctly there are five steps in the lifecycle of a business process. These steps are critical to driving the SOA maturity level of your organization. The five steps are done in a continuous loop that includes modeling and simulating the business processes, developing and/or mapping Services to the Business Process and orchestrating them with BPEL, deploying, executing and monitoring the Services using an intelligent feedback loop, monitoring the feedback with a visual tool like Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) and revising the Business Process for improvement based on the feedback.
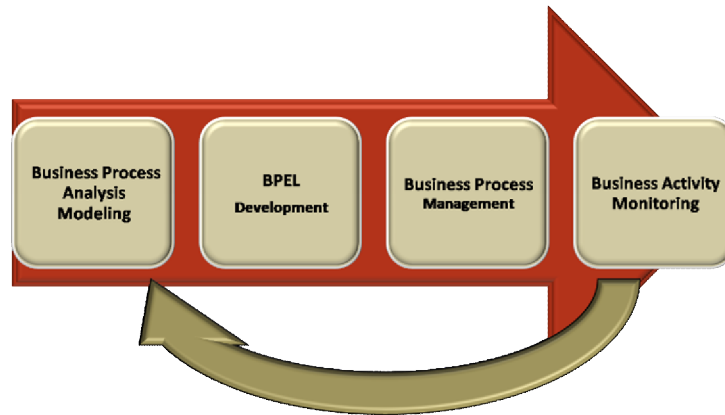
Oracle provides the following Fusion Middleware products to simplify this life cycle process.

| Fusion Middleware Product | Actions Supported | Typical User |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Business Process Architect and Publisher | Design and simulate business processes | Business Analyst |
| JDeveloper | Develop Services, Orchestrate the Services with BPEL and instrument the Services for feedback | Systems Architect and Developer |
| Business Process Manager | Execute the BPEL and Services | Systems Architect |
| BPEL Console | Monitor lower-level execution details | Systems Architect |
| Business Activity Monitoring | Provides a visual representation of feedback notification from the execution of the Services | Business Analyst |

## FUSION BENEFITS TODAY

Most organizations face challenges in one (or more) of five areas today.  These are all areas that Fusion can provide immediate benefit.  What are these five?

The first challenge is **better information** for better decisions.  Organizations are struggling to make better decisions with information that is incomplete, irrelevant or incorrect.

The second challenge is **better integration** among applications and systems.  Every organization has silos or stove pipes of information that need to be shared.  Through the process of mergers and acquisitions or non-strategic purchases, they have accumulated multiple business systems that don't share information.

The third challenge is **continuously improving their business processes**.  Improving a business process usually has direct impact on the costs of the organization but without a thorough understanding of the process it rarely gets done.

The fourth challenge is **reducing redundant information** to ensure a common database of record.  How does the organization keep information synched between partner systems, subsidiaries and even with newer and legacy systems?

The last challenge is **improving the information security framework** throughout their organization. How can they protect their information from insiders, competitors, hackers and the risks of just plain incompetence?

Using the Fusion Middleware products, business and technology groups can address these five challenges using Business Intelligence, SOA, Application Integration Architecture, Business Process Analysis, Master Data Management and Identity Management.

The power of these solutions is that they are a unified platform, rely on industry standards, support evolutionary change and provide high availability to support enterprise applications.

## PREPARING FOR FUSION

With all of this information plus that available from Oracle, the hardest step is the understanding how to get started with using Fusion. Here are 11 steps that will simplify that decision.

| | |
|---|---|
| Understand your Business Processes | Use BPA to analyze and understand them |
| Rethink your customization strategy | How can you introduce SOA constructs in your legacy applications starting today? |
| Clean and consolidate your critical data | Use Master Data Management (MDM) |
| Improve your business insight | Leverage OBIEE, BAM and Daily Business Intelligence |
| Adapt your enterprise reporting and publishing | Begin migrating all reports to BI Publisher to take advantage of high-fidelity XML-based publishing |
| Secure your global enterprise | Implement Identity Management capabilities |
| Ensure a high-availability foundation | Implement Oracle 10g/11g capabilities |
| Upgrade as needed to ensure Supportability | Understand Applications Unlimited and Lifetime Support. How will it impact your business? |
| Start building SOA maturity in your organization | Look for opportunistic and tactical areas where Fusion and SOA can improve your processing |
| Patch and then Patch again | Stay up-to-date on all of your patches to ensure that you have the best levels of Oracle support |
| Start Planning to Upgrade to Release 12 | Consider the costs/risks of staying on Release 11i |

Many organizations are asking the question, "Should we wait for Fusion Applications or should we move first to Release 12 and then later to the Fusion Applications?"

There is no perfect answer but for the vast majority of Oracle E-Business Suite users, the best plan is to plan for an upgrade to Release 12. The rare exception would be an organization that has all their needed customizations already created, enjoys static business processes, is willing to pay more for support and is can afford to delay new

functionality for several more years. Regardless of which decision one makes, Oracle has promised to provide an upgrade path to the Fusion Applications from the final version of Release 11i or Release 12.

For other organizations, here are several good reasons to consider upgrading to Release 12 first.

The primary issue with waiting for Fusion Applications is the unknowns of what will be released and when it will be released. Experience has shown that initial releases of new applications are to be avoided until real-world use has demonstrated stability and eliminated major bugs. For 2008, Oracle has announced Sales Management modules but nothing more. There is just not enough information yet for organizations to plan their upgrades. There is also the challenge of software stability. New releases will need time for bug fixes to be added. All of this complicates planning.

For many customers, Release 12 offers immediate benefits for managing complex organizations, improving user security and working in a global economy. The improved user interface provides new efficiency for users to help simplify their workload. The use of the BI Publisher requires custom reports to be migrated but the quality of report customizations are much better. Work done now to update reports to use BI Publisher will not have to be redone when upgrading to the Fusion Applications.

Release 12 has been released for over a year and has been a very stable version. Oracle is migrating to Release 12 rather than waiting for the Fusion Applications which says something about their view of the future. For planning, an upgrade to Release 12 is a good option. There is plenty of information available and a growing amount of expertise with the upgrade process.

Customers on Release 11i will begin incurring higher support costs in December of 2009 as this older release approaches retirement.

Release 12 relies on the new Fusion Middleware and provides an integrated module (iRep) to support integration with other applications. This capability will help organizations develop SOA expertise in advance of the Fusion Applications.

Release 12 offers a number of features to improve patch management, configuration, cloning and general management. These benefits can be introduced now rather than waiting several more years.

## A FINAL WORD

Oracle's vision for Fusion will offer significant benefits to organizations in reducing costs, improving their business processes, and adding more business agility. These changes will not occur overnight but the potential that this vision offers is significant.

Along with the vision, Oracle has also provided the architecture and a full suite of products in the Fusion Middleware to make the vision a reality. As is always the case, those that are cognizant of the trends and leverage them will accrue increased competitive advantage.

Lastly Oracle is releasing a completely re-architected set of Fusion Applications beginning this year with new functionality being added incrementally over the next several years. These Applications will eventually provide an amalgamation of features now found in Siebel, PeopleSoft and the E-Business Suite providing a best-of-breed solution for most organizations.

The important thing for Oracle customers to understand is that Fusion technologies are already being used today to add value. Whether a customer is upgrading to Release 12, using BI Publisher, working with SOA or implementing Identity Management it is all part of the impact that Fusion is having already.

Our hope is that your organization will invest in preparation steps for Fusion, leverage them for growth and enjoy the competitive value they offer.

## ABOUT THE TRIORA GROUP

The Triora Group ensures that Oracle E-Business Suite customers get the highest value from their investment in Oracle products.  Our staff has an average of over 10 years of Oracle Applications and Database experience.

We take a holistic view of the Oracle environment providing expertise with the Applications, Application Server, Middleware and Database.  We also assist customers with implementing Real Application Clusters, Security, Disaster Recovery solutions, Information Life Cycle Management, Application Integration Architecture and Service Oriented Architectures.

Rob McMillen is a principal with the Triora Group and likes to consider himself an "E-Business Suite Application Technologist".  His business background over the last 25+ years has included project management, system administration, database administration, applications management and software development.