

Service Level Assurance

A Category of Composite Applications by Cisco and SAP

Executive Summary

Service Level Assurance, a category of composite applications by Cisco and SAP, focuses on minimizing the financial risks associated with service-level agreement (SLA) violations and maximizing an enterprise's performance against internal business commitments. The solutions integrate events from customer service applications, IP phones, and historical support interactions, among others, and generate notifications to users and managers in real time, based on their location and information delivery capabilities. The composite applications accomplish this before a process fails to meet an SLA performance level, thereby giving the enterprise time to respond to the notification and eliminate the noncompliance. This results in both improved business performance and reduced financial risk because of SLA violations.

Background

Successful enterprises often have only seconds to respond to critical business events such as breaches of time-based business commitments, compromises of data privacy, or threats to security. These events—a missed deadline, hacked e-mails, stolen account numbers, violations of policy controls—can happen within the borders of the enterprise or in the extended enterprise with customers, partners, contractors, and vendors. Such events can have a severe negative impact on a company's profitability—or even its very viability. Now, Cisco® and SAP have collaborated to create the market's first instantly responsive enterprise risk-management environment that spans

SERVICE LEVEL ASSURANCE CUSTOMER CASE

- The customer service center of a high tech company receives thousands of calls and/or web inquiries a day.
- On one of those inquiries, a case is opened to address a service issue with their hardware.
- The customer is guaranteed response times as per their contractual agreement.
- The Cisco SONA technology notifies the SAP GRC applications at each stage of the service event.
- At one stage, the service call is exceeding the time for that service level and, as a result, the SONA technology is notifying the SAP GRC applications that this call and the cumulative response time for the month for this customer is approaching a threshold that will result in a fee.
- The customer service rep receives the notification and immediately initiates a plan of action to expedite the process.
- The expedited plan is put into action to improve the service levels and the penalty is avoided.

the extended enterprise. The solution—which combines Cisco Service-Oriented Network Architecture (SONA) and SAP governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) software—facilitates both real-time event capture across the extended enterprise and instantaneous contextual analysis and response. The results are reduced financial risks from missing SLA commitments and increased performance against internal commitments.

The Problem

An enterprise may have many service-level agreements in place both within its organization and with customers and partners in its ecosystem. SLA examples might include customer loan approvals, specific delivery times for products, product spoilage dates, or regulatory reporting deadlines. Missing an SLA commitment can negatively affect business performance and result in substantial financial penalties. It is crucial for an enterprise to get infrastructure visibility and early

warnings of likely SLA breaches so that it can take proactive steps to manage the risks. This may be a relatively easy task within the organization, but it is much more difficult to do in the extended enterprise.

The Solution

Service Level Assurance, a category of composite applications by Cisco and SAP, focuses on minimizing the financial risks associated with SLA violations and maximizing an enterprise's performance against internal business commitments. The solutions integrate events from customer service applications, IP phones, and historical support interactions, among others, and generate notifications to users and managers in real time, based on their location and information delivery capabilities. The composite applications do this before a process fails to meet an SLA performance level, thereby giving an enterprise time to respond to the notification and eliminate the noncompliance. The SLAs can be broadly defined, referring to any instance in which poor performance would cause the enterprise to incur a financial penalty. The Cisco and SAP solution comprises five key strategies (Figure 1):

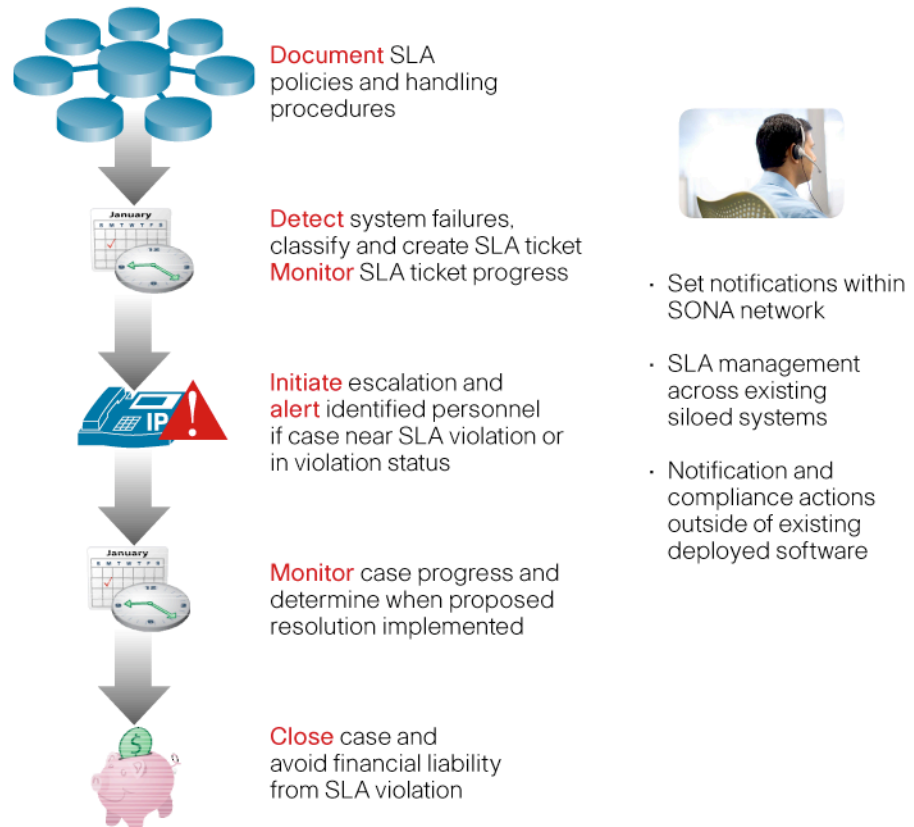
- The documentation of SLA policies and handling procedures
- The detection and classification of system failures, and the creation of an SLA ticket
- The monitoring of SLA ticket progress
- The initiation of escalation and the alerting of identified personnel if a case is near SLA violation or in violation status
- The monitoring of case progress and the determination of when the proposed resolution is implemented
- The closing of a case and the avoidance of financial liability from SLA violation

Business Benefits

Enterprises that deploy the complete solution reap immediate benefits including notifications within the Cisco SONA infrastructure, SLA management across existing isolated systems, and notification and compliance actions outside of existing deployed software, such as in the extended enterprise. These benefits directly improve business performance and reduce the financial penalties associated with missed SLA commitments.

Figure 1. Service Level Assurance

Challenge: Minimize Financial Risks Associated with SLA Violations



Why Cisco and SAP?

Given the market leadership that Cisco has in intelligent networking and the leadership position that SAP holds in enterprise software and GRC applications, it was logical that the two companies would join to provide their customers with a unique, combined solution. Here are three benefits that customers of this partnership can enjoy:

- **Increased visibility to all relevant business and IT events:** Network-aware composite applications capture, aggregate, and filter all relevant activities across the entire network within the business context appropriate to that enterprise. The Cisco SONA infrastructure monitors and controls all networked devices, sensors, systems, and users, allowing the system to provide real-time notification, escalation, and enforcement according to both business and IT rules. More important, the Cisco SONA infrastructure provides visibility into events long before these actions may be formally entered into a business application.
- **Increased operational flexibility:** Network-aware composite applications allow an enterprise to adapt much more quickly to changes in the business or regulatory environment. With its central repository and enforcement engines, which are built to operate loosely coupled to existing operations, the system allows an enterprise to begin adopting new GRC requirements or business goals even before the underlying systems are evolved. Better information put in the hands of decision makers can deliver better operating results.

- **Individualized** approach with holistic benefits: Network-aware composite applications are designed and built to work with existing systems, applications, and devices, and to easily accommodate your enterprise. As a tested architectural solution, network-aware composite applications can be applied today, and can be applied first to the business unit, location, or business process that best serves your strategic needs. The vast majority of the functionality is available without having to patch systems, rewrite applications, or re-architect to support a new GRC environment. The combination of SAP's GRC platform and the real-time visibility and control provided by the Cisco SONA infrastructure allows executives to gain the full benefits of a holistic approach to GRC as an incremental project.

For More Information

Go to the SONA GRC Website: <http://www.cisco.com/go/sonagrc>



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