

Sample Executive Summary from a Cisco Service-Oriented Network Architecture Workshop

This document is an example of a white paper executive summary from a Cisco® Service-Oriented Network Architecture (SONA) workshop. The workshop and white paper were delivered to a customer in December 2006. Each workshop – and the resulting solutions white paper – is customized to perform an in-depth study of the real-world problems faced by the customer and to expose Cisco solutions of near-term value in addressing those challenges. Although we have found that many customers are dealing with similar challenges – ranging from service-oriented architecture (SOA) adoption through lean data center consolidation – each SONA workshop is customized to address the unique challenges of each customer.

The main problem this customer asked Cisco to address was how to migrate several business-critical applications from one data center to another. The migration was necessitated by the consolidation of data centers following a merger and acquisition. Two factors further complicated the migration in addition to the usual difficulties of accomplishing a nondisruptive migration: (1) staff turnover meant that the customer had little or no information concerning who was using existing applications, which network resources the applications were using, or what interdependencies existed among the applications, and (2) the customer had limited access to one of the traditional data centers because management of the center was outsourced. The customer further challenged Cisco to provide rapid knowledge transfer of our proposed solutions to its personnel, helping them become more self-sufficient.

Executive Summary

Recently, [Customer] and Cisco collaborated in a SONA workshop. The [Customer] team was led by senior executives along with important contributors from their IT organization.

The Cisco team was led by a member of the Cisco SONA Program Office, along with representatives from the account and advisory services teams supported by subject matter experts in data center and storage virtualization, applications and infrastructure troubleshooting and modeling, and Cisco advanced applications networking technologies.

The SONA workshop focused on [Customer's] ongoing data center consolidation (DCC) and migration, with particular emphasis on how Cisco technologies could add near-term value in the context of the DCC. Cisco presented the SONA framework and introduced the Network Application Performance Analysis Solution (NAPAS) suite and applications-oriented networking (AON) solutions directly relevant to the data center migration effort.

The intent of the workshop was to:

- Provide Cisco with a clearer understanding of the customer challenges and objectives,
- Provide [Customer] with a clearer understanding of Cisco solutions of near-term utility in the DCC in the context of the SONA framework
- Jointly identify how these solutions could be applied in the near term to address top-of-mind [Customer] business challenges

The interactive format of the SONA workshop enabled an open discussion about a wide range of strategic issues and possible tactical approaches. Following are some questions illustrative of the issues covered:

- How can we minimize the disruptive effect of traditional application and server migrations? How can Cisco help [Customer] realize swift and trouble-free migrations?
- Can Cisco help provide a clearer understanding of the application dependencies that cause problems during migrations? How and with which tools?
- What is the Cisco SONA, and can this approach provide greater enterprise value?
- How does the Cisco SONA apply? Is it an appropriate reference architecture?
- What data center architectures and solutions does Cisco use, and can these be applied at [Customer]? What level of virtualization is appropriate?
- How can we apply solutions that utilize both network and applications engineering expertise?

Specific recommendations developed as a result of the SONA workshop include:

- Apply the NAPAS tools to:
 - Clarify application/server users, traffic, and interdependencies, resolving one of the major challenges of applications/server migrations by eliminating postmigration business disruption
 - Create an enterprise baseline model that enables predictive insight and effect analysis in advance of migration activities
- Use the insight gained through NAPAS tools and the baseline predictive model to effect postmigration applications optimization
- Use the AON zero-downtime application migration technology to reduce cost and risk in future application migration. Develop a certification model for piloting AON that includes both networking hardware and applications software. Start with AON in transparent mode and then move to more aggressive applications-traffic processing on a case-by-case basis.
- Assist [Customer] in facilitating the dialog between networking and applications engineering to better optimize development and fielding of enterprise business applications. This includes revisiting the SOA, SONA, and AON network services dialog with stronger representation from the Application Engineering group.

The SONA workshop attendees concluded that the interactive format and technical dialog were helpful in identifying approaches of immediate benefit to [Customer's] business challenges.

Next steps will be to meet in the next three weeks to review the recommendations and work out the details with respect to the scope, timing, and resource requirements to implement the recommendations.

Cisco sincerely appreciates the opportunity to collaborate and work more closely with [Customer] in analyzing challenges and initiatives and to offer our recommendations in addressing those challenges.

We look forward to working with you to successfully deliver on the value propositions outlined in this paper.



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