

SOA and SID

Benefit for the telecommunication industry

Whitepaper
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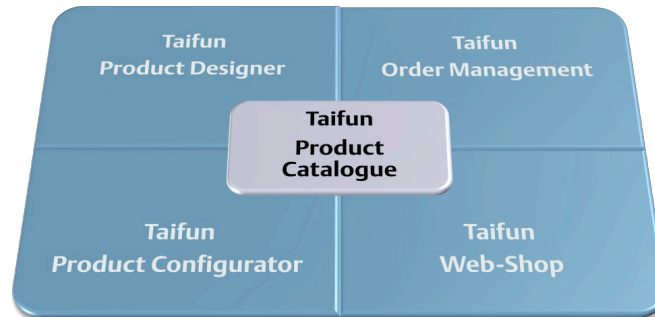
Since telecom deregulation over 10 years ago there is hardly any other market that has seen such fast development and such competitive pressure as the telecommunication industry. The key challenge for telecom service providers is to offer new products and services as quickly and cheaply as possible. Ever larger bandwidths with new convergent and innovative services on-top, as well as the latest multimedia content are regarded as a matter of course for private customers. Business customers are increasingly looking for tailor-made products and solutions with guaranteed service quality. To cater for both aspects, a telecom service provider must rely on a flexible IT landscape designed to quickly respond to market changes in a cost-efficient manner. The combination of **service-oriented architecture (SOA)** and established **standards** gives the telecom service provider a decisive advantage over the competition when vying for custom.

This defines some key requirements such telecommunications companies demand from their operations support system (OSS) and business support system (BSS) solutions:

- High level of process automation (end-to-end)
- High level of business flexibility
- Short time-to-market rate
- Low operating costs
- Incorporation of customers in the value chain (through Self Care and Self Administration)

SOA provides close interoperability between OSS/BSS components, even extending beyond corporate boundaries. Complex individual components are packaged in the form of services and encapsulated behind standardised interfaces. By means of composition and coordination ("orchestration") of reusable basic services advanced solutions can be created and made available to customers or organisational units. The telecommunication industry, spearheaded by the TeleManagement Forum (TMForum), has been striving to bundle forces for some time now and drive forward standardisation of the central components. The results achieved by the TMForum include the enhanced Telecom Operations Map (eTOM) and the **Shared Information and Data Model (SID)**. SID (also known as the Information Framework) encompasses a generic information and data reference model as well as common terminology for the implementation of business processes. SID describes so-called business entities, their properties in the form of associated attributes and their relationships. The benefits of SID for the telecommunication industry result from the use of a widely supported and accepted reference model. Besides the associated reduction in risk and costs for the integration of OSS/BSS solutions, one important advantage is the availability of a common language between IT and business, for both internal and external partners.

Ergon Informatik AG, an established supplier and integrator of service fulfillment and service billing solutions for the telecommunication industry, is committed to the key benefit of SID when developing the next generation of BSS solutions: the accelerated time-to-market rate for new telecommunications products. The most important entities from the SID domains "Product", "Customer", "Service" and "Common Business" have been consistently implemented in the new **Taifun 5 Suite**.



Taifun 5 components available Q3/2011

The central **product catalogue** includes all product specifications, market offerings and MAC business cases (MAC = Move/Add/Change). A market offering represents both tangible and intangible goods and services which are made available to the market in the form of a catalogue for a group of customers at a certain price. A business case specifies all order items for the MAC business, including configuration data and the roles required for implementation.

The **Product Designer** is a GUI-supported tool for the design and maintenance of product specifications and specific product catalogues. The **Product Configurator** is a runtime environment for the creation of validated product configurations. The configurator takes product specifications and market offerings from the product catalogue and takes account of restrictions in such offerings due to technical and commercial availability. The resulting order structures are passed to the downstream order management process. The Product Configurator is one component of the fully integrated **web portal** for end customers allowing them to pick any offering by a service provider autonomously ("Self Care") and to configure, order and subsequently manage them ("Self Administration") on a long-term basis.

Behind all this is a key concept: **configuration instead of coding!** The Product Designer enables the relevant organisational units (Marketing, Order Management and Production) to create new market offerings and product specifications without complex and costly extension of the business support system. In addition, the consistent application of reusable components makes it possible to decouple tasks. For Marketing, as an example, it is possible to launch a new market offering completely independent of Order Management and Production as long as a properly defined set of existing product modules is used. The configurative integration in the web portal as one sales channel of a market offering is also carried out here. The product catalogue specifies all necessary input values and order steps for user guidance on the web. These specifications are translated into interactive GUI elements (e.g. simple input fields or specialised selectors) in the web portal, enabling the entry of valid customer orders, which are then implemented by a production process.

Conclusion

The use of SOA and SID offers telecom service providers clear benefits, not only in economic terms but also when system integration is concerned:

- Services can be developed and brought to market more quickly.
- System components can be integrated quicker, easier and cheaper as they are based on standards.

About the author



Dominik Moser, VP Telecom Solutions joined Ergon in 1999, initially as a software engineer, and then as a project and program manager in the telecom area. In 2005 he was appointed to the Management Team, with responsibility for the Telecom Solutions department. His work mainly involves service fulfillment and service billing. Dominik Moser has detailed knowledge of the ICT in the telecom/internet sectors as well as in the cable network operators sector.

About Ergon

Ergon stands for highly qualified IT specialists with a clear focus on customer benefit. The company leads the field when it comes to developing custom applications, and it is an established supplier of specific solutions in the telecommunications sector. Solutions from Ergon give customers a real competitive edge.

The Telecom Solutions department focuses on delivering solutions for service providers. The two products Taifun and TelcoBill control end-to-end- business processes, from the customer enquiry through the quotation, order, production and the activation of services up to billing and invoicing. Ergon's service fulfillment and billing specialists offer customers support with continuous automation of these processes.

Taifun and TelcoBill are used by national and international providers of telecommunication products and services aimed at residential consumers as well as the expanding business-to-business sector (B2B).

In 2010 turnover at Ergon was CHF 27.1 million, and at 31 December 2010 the company employed a staff of 139. It also won the 2008 SwissICT Award in the Champion category.

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