



Oracle SOA Suite

Review From A Customer



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Review by a Real User

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Enterprise Integration Architect at Capgemini

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WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

There are many facets to this product, but we have primarily been making use of SCA, BPEL, Mediators, and JMS, along with a number of extension products. We are expecting to make extensive use of several other aspects of the SOA (and its containing WebLogic server) in the near future, specifically OSB and Coherence.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

It has allowed us to build integrations using an enterprise-class platform. It has also meant that we have been able to purchase prebuilt integrations from Oracle for their products, meaning we have been able to focus largely on our own solutions. It should be noted, and we have proven with our own experience, that to really get good value out of the product you need to have some good development approaches, as well as knowledgeable people on the team because middleware is very easy to do badly, and then it becomes an impediment. As they say, with great power comes great responsibility. With the availability of Maven the adoption of Continuous Integration can be really driven forwards.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

Configuration of the product is a very complex and demands a lot of knowledge, but we do recognize this is the process to pay for a flexible platform. Nevertheless, providing simplified tools for common activities would be very helpful.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

My employer has been using Oracle SOA Suite for three to four years. I have been working as an architect for this amount of time as well.

WHAT WAS MY EXPERIENCE WITH DEPLOYMENT OF THE SOLUTION?

Deployments are complex.



WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

Once correctly configured, scaling and stability have not been an issue. When issues have occurred, we have traced the problems back to poor deployment configuration, particularly environment factors such as the network, etc.

HOW IS CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

Oracle official support channels can be a bit slow (although no worse than any other significant vendor, e.g. Red Hat). But there is a wealth of information in the Oracle community that can help, and it is possible to seek help through the community if you know how. Additionally, if you have appropriate contacts within Oracle, then you can reach out that way as well and typically see friendly, responsive engagement.

WHICH SOLUTIONS DID WE USE PREVIOUSLY?

We have in the past heavily used Red Hat's Fuse products. They're also good, but require a far greater level of investment in good development skills to exploit. The need for more basic development skills has meant the development of the ISO of on-site integration practices.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

It's complex for 11g, but in getting started with the new 12c platform, we have seen far greater development although production environment are still a fairly sophisticated task.

WHAT ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM?

The majority of the work we have had done with Oracle SOA Suite has been through a major systems integrator with a few internal individuals with some knowledge for basic operational support. Given the choice, use smaller specialist Oracle partners -- they may cost more per person, but they know how to get the most out of the platform and can deliver a lot more in the same time. The big SIs we have seen approach things with just training staff to use the tools and then assume that is good enough, rather than invest in the underlying principles and support the development of good skills through experience.

WHAT'S MY EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING, SETUP COST, AND LICENSING?

Do some upfront work to figure out what you're likely to want to do with the technology and get some meaningful volumetrics before you start negotiating on licensing. The Oracle PaaS platform offers an opportunity to try and see and understand the art of the possible before you start ramping up. Without this, you may find that you buy into license constraints to keep the cost down and then later regret the constraints. Understand how to get the most of the pre-sales engagement. Oracle can offer a lot here to help you bottom out the right solutions to make sure you get it.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

If you're starting from scratch with Oracle, seed your team with some resources who have knowledge and reputation. Invest in your own people to develop knowledge in the breadth of the tool. Even if you use SLS to deliver, having some knowledge of your own can help hold them to account. This is most critical if you've engaged them on a fixed-price model as they will want to keep the cost down, which might work to your best interests.