

Infrastructure 2.0: Aligning the network with the business (and the rest of IT)



Lori MacVittie, 2008-10-11

When SOA was the hot topic of the day (not that long ago) everyone was pumped up about the ability finally align IT with the business. Reusability, agility, and risk mitigation were benefits that would enable the business itself to be more agile and react dynamically to the constant maelstrom that is "the market".

But only half of IT saw those benefits; the application half. Even though pundits tried to remind folks that the "A" in SOA stood for "architecture", and that it necessarily included more than just applications, still the primary beneficiary of SOA has been applications and through their newfound agility and reusability, the business.

The network has remained, for many, just as brittle and unchanging (and thus not agile) as it has ever been, mired in its own "hardwired" architectures, unable to flex or extend its abilities to support the applications it is tasked with delivering. And no one seemed to mind, really, because the benefits of SOA were being realized anyway, and no one could really quantify the benefits of also rearchitecting the network infrastructure to be as flexible and agile as the application infrastructure.



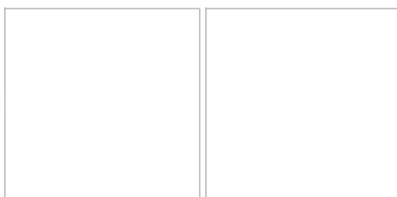
But along comes virtualization and cloud computing, and an epiphany was had by many: the network and application delivery infrastructure must be as agile and flexible as the application infrastructure in order to achieve the full measure of benefits from this newest technology. Without an application delivery infrastructure that is as able to adapt dynamically the infrastructure is the wall between a successful deployment and failure.

In order to [truly align the network with the business](#) - and the other half of IT - it becomes necessary to dig deeper into the network stack and really take a look at how you're delivering those agile applications and services. It's important to consider the ramifications of a static, brittle delivery infrastructure on the successful deployment and delivery of virtually hosted applications and services. It's necessary to look at the ability of your [delivery infrastructure](#) and evaluate its abilities in terms of reusability, scalability, and dynamism.

Analyst and research firm Gartner said is as succinctly as it can be said: [You Can't Do Cloud Computing Without the Right Cloud \(Network\)](#) and the same holds true for virtualization efforts. You can't efficiently [deliver virtualized applications without the right network infrastructure](#).

Until your network and application delivery infrastructure is as agile and reusable as your application infrastructure you won't be able to align *all* of IT with the business.

Until you have a completely agile architecture that spans all of IT, you're not truly aligned with the business.



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