



GISA

DISCOVERING THE VALUE OF SOA

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Hans-Ludwig Reinecke, SAP Manager,
GISA GmbH

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: GISA GmbH
- Location: Halle (Saale), Germany
- Industry: Professional services
- Products and services: Data center and IT services, process consulting
- Revenue: Approximately €68 million
- Employees: 390, excluding subsidiaries
- Web site: www.gisa.de (German only)
- Implementation partner: SAP® Consulting

Challenges and Opportunities

- Lay the foundation for flexible, streamlined business processes by adopting service-oriented architecture (SOA)
- Provide effective training with a focus on the new architecture
- Test-drive new development tools, methodologies, and content

Objectives

- Introduce a dedicated evaluation and training environment for applications and processes created using the new architecture
- Ensure IT specialists have right skills for GISA's pilot SOA project (electronic bill payment and presentment)

SAP Solutions and Services

- SOA enabled by the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform
- SAP Discovery system and associated enablement workshop

Implementation Highlight

Tailored learning to GISA's needs through close collaboration with SAP Consulting

Why SAP

- Ideal training and evaluation resources
- Unparalleled knowledge of the latest SOA tools and technologies

Benefits

- Fast, effective knowledge transfer, providing developers with the skills necessary for pilot SOA project
- Valuable insight into many aspects of SOA
- Firm grasp of how to use tools for day-to-day tasks – thanks to hands-on training
- Resources for persuasively demonstrating SOA in action – to customers and own staff
- Greater in-house awareness of new architecture and its business value
- Basis for further development projects, demonstrations, and training
- Cost reductions of 12% to 15% thanks to new SOA-based billing solution

Existing Environment

- Latest release of the SAP ERP application
- SAP enhancement packages for SAP ERP

Third-Party Integration

- Database: SAP MaxDB™ database
- Hardware: Hewlett-Packard
- Operating system: Windows 2003 Server Edition



After deciding to implement service-oriented architecture (SOA), GISA GmbH – one of central Germany's leading IT service providers – was eager to start developing state-of-the-art applications. But first it had to bring its staff up to speed with the latest tools and technologies. What's more, GISA wanted to explore the business opportunities new solutions can offer. Enter the SAP® Discovery system: this preconfigured environment and a dedicated enablement workshop from SAP Consulting delivered precisely the knowledge and hands-on skills GISA's IT experts required – fast.

A Leader in IT Services

Founded in 1993, GISA provides a comprehensive portfolio of services, including business consulting, development and implementation of software solutions, and outsourcing. Headquartered in Halle (Saale), GISA has sites in Chemnitz, Markkleeberg, Cottbus, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, and Düsseldorf. In 2007 the company posted revenues of approximately €68 million and employed a workforce of 390. Together with its subsidiaries, ICS adminservice GmbH and SASKIA Informations-Systeme GmbH, the workforce totals around 480.

As an SAP hosting partner, GISA leverages cutting-edge technologies to help organizations master their real-world challenges. To keep abreast of the latest developments and shape up for the future, the company recently

teamed up with SAP Consulting on a pilot project to introduce SOA. The goal: to lay the foundation for creating innovative business processes. (For details of this project, see the SAP customer success story *Toward an Enterprise SOA with Web-Based Billing*.)

Paving the Way for Streamlined Processes and Cost Reductions

“Our pilot centered on a solution for user-friendly electronic bill payment and presentment via the Internet. The aim was to streamline billing processes and reduce costs – both in-house and for our customers in the utilities sector,” explains Hans-Ludwig Reinecke, manager of SAP applications at GISA. “With its unparalleled knowledge of the latest SOA tools and technologies, SAP Consulting was the ideal implementation partner for this important initiative.”

Before taking the first step toward SOA adoption, GISA needed two things: effective training for its staff and a sandbox environment for evaluating new processes and applications. To meet these needs, the IT service provider opted for the SAP Discovery system in conjunction with a dedicated enablement workshop delivered by SAP Consulting.

A Complete Environment for Discovery

The SAP Discovery system is a preconfigured and preinstalled SAP landscape comprising software, hardware, and content. It allows companies to quickly and cost-effectively assess the benefits of the latest SAP applications and technologies for their business. What's more, it incorporates effective learning tools, including demonstrations of specific scenarios that show the power of SOA in action.



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A Solid Foundation for Knowledge Transfer

From the outset, experienced consultants from SAP collaborated closely with GISA to ensure the enablement workshop and evaluation environment met the IT service provider’s specific requirements. “SAP Consulting worked hand in hand with us to make sure we would gain precisely the skills needed for our pilot project,” says Reinecke.

After installing and configuring the SAP Discovery system, the SAP Consulting experts held a workshop for 13 participants, including developers and non-specialist users. “We opted for a train-the-trainer approach,” says Reinecke. “The idea was to initially transfer skills to a relatively small group and then roll out this knowledge to others within the company.”

During the two-day event, GISA staff acquired a firm grasp of the new architecture and associated solutions. “SAP Consulting guided us through hands-on exercises that showed us how to build composite applications and enterprise-service scenarios,” states Reinecke.

“The enablement workshop for the SAP Discovery system certainly lived up to its name. It not only gave us details of the relevant tools, methodologies, and content, but we also learned how to use these in day-to-day tasks.”

Fast, Cost-Effective Training and Evaluation

The workshop largely comprised standard elements – with one exception. “Instead of deploying conventional training PCs, the consultants from SAP configured participants’ laptops so that our staff could do the hands-on exercises on their own familiar devices,” explains Reinecke. “Moreover, this allowed trainees to access our SAP Discovery system via their laptops after the training sessions – enabling them to continue working on exercises or to check out other resources.”

The SAP Discovery system saved GISA the considerable effort and expense of creating its own training and evaluation

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resources – and delivered the desired results. “The workshop rapidly transferred vital skills to our IT staff,” he says. “And the SAP Discovery system allowed them to gain hands-on experience and deepen their knowledge of the architecture.”

GISA and its customers are now both benefiting from the expertise acquired during the pilot. The first SOA-based solutions for electronic billing and presentment have gone live at the IT service provider and at two utilities companies – streamlining processes and reducing associated spending. “Our new SOA-based billing process has brought us cost reductions of between 12% and 15%,” says Reinecke. And this is just the beginning. “We’re currently leveraging the new architecture to create other innovative solutions to a variety of challenges,” says Reinecke. And SAP Consulting will again be on hand to provide expert advice and assistance.

Fit for the Future

The SAP Discovery system and the skills acquired during the enablement workshop will stand GISA in good stead going forward. “The SAP Discovery system is an invaluable asset for future projects of this kind,” states Reinecke. “By giving our staff insight into the

value of SOA, it has increased awareness and acceptance of the architecture throughout our organization. We now intend to deploy it to demonstrate solutions to our customers. And we plan to start using the training environment to provide skills to new staff.”

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