



Delivering Business-Critical Solutions with SharePoint 2010

White Paper
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Who Should Read This White Paper?

Decision makers at **every level of your organization** should have access to business data and be connected to processes that enable them to support efficient operations. However, critical business data often is stored in disparate systems and ad hoc processes block efficiencies.

This white paper is intended for executives and business-line managers who want to enable business-critical scenarios across the organization by extending the reach of important business data and improving business processes and thus increasing the return on investment (ROI) of line-of-business (LOB) systems. This can be accomplished by connecting LOB applications to Microsoft® SharePoint® 2010 to organize and facilitate broad access to previously siloed information.

This white paper explains how to:

- Increase access to critical business data by surfacing it in SharePoint 2010.
- Boost the effectiveness of business processes by building on SharePoint 2010 and its platform capabilities.
- Deliver fast ROI by enabling broad visibility into business operations and lowering risk.

Challenge: Siloed Information and Processes Limit Business Performance

Your organization probably has experience with systems like PeopleSoft, JDEdwards, Oracle Financials, or SAP—systems that are built for and deployed within vertical business functions. These applications support structured decision making and processes within their business functions and across the enterprise; nevertheless, silos exist between the applications themselves and the decisions and processes they support. This environment can make it difficult for business users to drive collaborative decision making that crosses business units and spans multiple business functions (Figure 1).

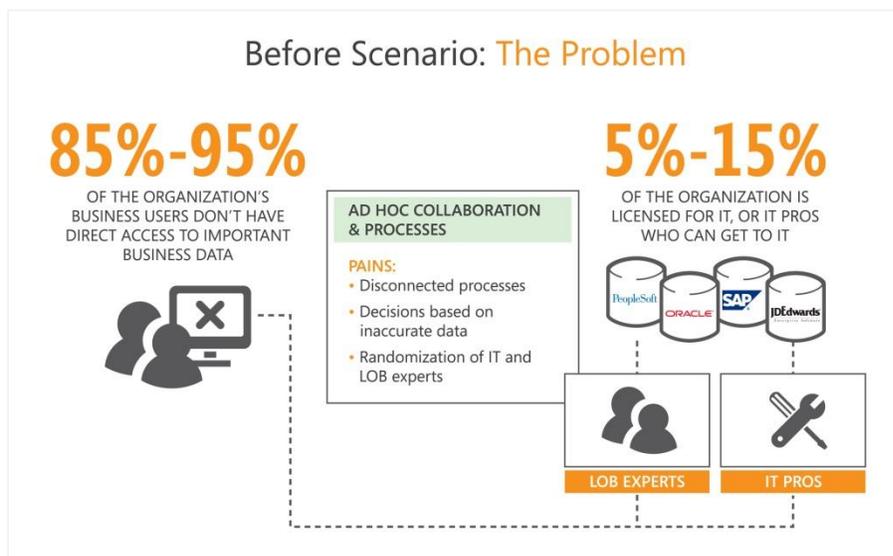


Figure 1: Siloed information, leading to ad hoc collaboration and processes

The people and processes in your organization need to interact effectively to increase the organization’s competitive advantage. That is, the better your organization is at connecting information workers to your business-critical processes, the more successful it can become. One way to do this is by connecting your people to the business critical data that drives their processes.

With the breadth and flexibility of SharePoint 2010, your organization can create, implement, and improve the processes that impact business performance. SharePoint 2010 can connect a broad audience of users to business data that currently resides in siloed systems and is only accessible to specialized users and IT professionals. SharePoint 2010 also empowers every user—from information workers to power users and professional developers—to use and build solutions based on this business data to streamline processes, which can result in better, faster decisions for the organization (Figure 2).

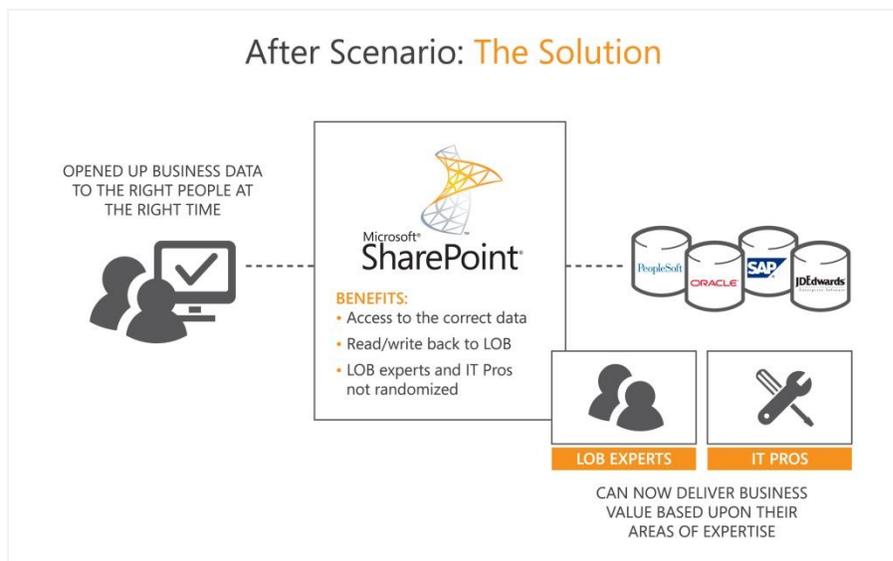


Figure 2: SharePoint 2010 solution, leading to positive impact on business performance

Surface Business Data in SharePoint 2010

The first step in using SharePoint 2010 to enable business-critical solutions across your enterprise is surfacing important LOB data in SharePoint.

In the past, it was more difficult for organizations to surface business data to a wider organizational audience. The solution typically involved expensive IT initiatives with complex customized solutions to extract the data, and then perhaps even additional custom development to organize the data and deliver it to each intended user.

With SharePoint 2010, this is not the case. SharePoint enables your organization to connect to LOB applications in several ways to simplify and speed the time-to-market of such solutions. Business Connectivity Services and Web Services are just a few of the technologies that allow you to use SharePoint to read and write back LOB data. SharePoint also has built-in controls and rights management to maintain the integrity of your information and better secure the infrastructure.

Connecting SharePoint to your LOB systems lets end users interact with enterprise data within the familiar Microsoft Office and SharePoint user interfaces. It also reduces IT complexity by unifying data into a single platform. With the relevant business data available in a single platform, you can determine how best to provide access to it and allow people to drive efficiencies.

It is essential to decide what business data to surface and who needs it, as this determines the extent to which the data is used and, in turn, the degree of positive impact it has on your business-critical processes.

Example: In a typical manufacturing research and development organization, designers and engineers work deeply within their LOB applications, such as computer-aided design (CAD), product data management (PDM), and product lifecycle management (PLM) applications. They use these specialized tools for design, simulation, analysis, and testing. However, design and engineering data needs to be shared with a broad, cross-functional set of stakeholders across the organization, including the Manufacturing Operations, Supply Chain, Sales, and Service departments.

For example, Marketing wants to stay updated on the latest features, models, and launch plans to run its campaigns; Manufacturing Operations needs to validate production, tooling, and quality processes; Procurement needs to ensure supply and cost of components from vendors; and Service needs to develop repair and maintenance procedures.

Most people in these functions are not experts in the LOB tools, nor are they licensed to use them. Therefore, they resort to unstructured and ad hoc processes through email, phone, Microsoft Excel[®] spreadsheets, and other tools, which often results in process bottlenecks, out-of-date information, and lengthy decision and rework cycles. For these users, connecting SharePoint to LOB applications is the key first step to putting the information they need within reach.

Implement, Extend, and Improve Business Processes by Building Solutions on SharePoint 2010

In deploying SharePoint 2010 to enable business-critical solutions across your organization, you should examine your current operations and identify where business processes can be improved or streamlined. Business processes are specific to your organization down to the departmental and even end user level, so your solutions will be unique. However, time and cost efficiencies can be gained by using out-of-the-box solutions native to SharePoint, as well as vertical and horizontal solutions by independent software vendors (ISVs) and systems integrators (SIs). For example, ISVs provide extensions—such as enterprise social networking applications for sales and service functions—atop the native social media, blogging, and people-search capabilities of SharePoint. These applications add industry-specific and function-specific capabilities and features, ranging from dealership networks in an automotive environment to maintenance and field service applications for asset lifecycle management.

Leverage the Right Enterprise Solutions for Your Business

SharePoint provides many options for building solutions to meet specific business requirements. This can reduce or even eliminate the need for organizations to develop internally. The typical application development lifecycle is a time-consuming and costly endeavor. Each application needs its own security model, workflow engine, repository for storing information, and more. SharePoint provides all of these capabilities out of the box. By building applications on top of SharePoint, your organization can get started faster and deliver value to the business more quickly.

In addition to streamlining the traditionally complex process of solution building, SharePoint 2010 offers a variety of solutions that can be classified by builder, and, with SharePoint, the person building solutions can range from IT professional to power user to information worker.

Information workers can build workflows, lists, and templates quickly and effectively with the help of a wizard. These are relatively small, easy-to-implement initiatives, but they are important to the users who need them to simplify their business processes. These inexpensive and flexible incremental solutions can empower users to satisfy their own requirements on an ongoing basis, so IT can focus on applications that have more strategic value. They also are reportable and traceable for compliance purposes.

We'll use the powerful reporting and collaboration tools in SharePoint Server 2010 to maintain an agile system that supports our efforts to quickly bring new services to market.

- Bill Pieser
Chief Technology Officer, Applied Discovery

Power users can build more complex solutions, such as custom workflows using tools like SharePoint Designer or Microsoft Visio®. While the solution will depend on your business and end-user needs, The SharePoint platform empowers your business with options, and your IT organization can offer the guidance and structure to enable power users to build solutions to suit their needs.

Example: Without IT intervention, business users can use SharePoint to create a workflow to get essential notifications around product and process data surfaced from LOB applications. Time-to-market, quality, and cost are all critical considerations for manufacturing organizations, so they need the

ability to quickly engage stakeholders as soon as a problem is detected. With SharePoint serving as the business platform that extends across LOB applications in manufacturing operations, supply chain, and product design, business users can implement workflows so that any issue arising at these execution points can be quickly surfaced and exposed to engage the broader process stakeholders. This engagement, together with relevant data and information, can enable swifter and better resolution.

With SharePoint, your organization can also take advantage of a large ecosystem of ISVs and SIs, providing a wide range of industry and functional solutions that can be used to rapidly deliver results without having to develop or maintain code in-house.

Access and Visualize Your Business Data

Your organization can use SharePoint 2010 as a unified presentation layer for business data surfaced from LOB applications. SharePoint provides interactive dashboards and scorecards that can help people define and measure success: Key metrics can be matched to specific strategies and then shared, tracked, and

discussed. Users can create meaningful visualizations that convey the right information the first time, aggregating data from multiple sources and displaying it in either the Office Client or a web browser. Likewise, rich interactivity allows users to analyze up-to-the-minute information and work with the data quickly and easily to identify key opportunities and trends.

Example: A manufacturing organization's marketing department needs order, inventory and contact information from a variety of LOB systems to generate a campaign scorecard requested by management. SharePoint 2010 is already connected to these systems and the information is already available within the SharePoint platform. A marketing manager searches for the data in SharePoint 2010 and aggregates it to build a dashboard that displays in a web browser and is available to all of the users who need to access it across the enterprise.

As a collaboration platform, SharePoint can help your entire workforce to be better connected and equipped to make informed decisions, all while working in a highly secure, well-managed, and flexible IT infrastructure. In addition, SharePoint gives users the ability to visualize their data from nearly anywhere on a variety of devices, helping to further increase productivity.

Deliver Fast Return on Investment and Decrease Business Risk

Using SharePoint 2010 to surface business data from your LOB systems and build solutions can increase ROI, speed process improvements, and enable better decision making to increase business cycles, all within a highly secure and flexible environment. When you surface all of your relevant data to the people who need it when they need it, you are enabling them to make better decisions faster. This reduces mistakes that can result from misinformation and decreases your organization's business risk.

Business units can reduce training costs because SharePoint 2010 offers the familiar Microsoft Office experience that enables people to quickly and easily adopt SharePoint, as opposed to training users on a variety of more complex LOB applications.

SharePoint can speed time-to-market of otherwise time-consuming and resource-intensive solutions to streamline business-critical processes. In addition, end user solutions and powerful search capabilities provide self-service functionality, which boosts productivity, reduces costs, and increases user satisfaction.

Finally, SharePoint can help to increase compliance—by enhancing security, privacy, and reporting through a flexible authentication model. This authentication model can help your organization to maximize its SharePoint 2010 deployment while maintaining highly secure control over corporate assets to increase compliance.

All employees have the responsibility to make the best decisions possible, based upon the data available to them at any time. If their ability to analyze this data and transform it into useful information is improved, the overall quality of their decisions can be improved as well.

- Michael Schiff

Founder and Principal Analyst, MAS Strategies

Conclusion

This white paper has discussed extending the reach of your business-critical data across departmental and organizational boundaries to deliver business-critical solutions. It also has shown the benefits of surfacing and visualizing this data in SharePoint 2010:

- **Surface Business Data in SharePoint 2010:** Identify business-critical data and the users who need it, and extend the reach of your data by connecting SharePoint to your LOB applications. SharePoint 2010 provides many ways to achieve this state, faster and easier than in previous versions and without complex, expensive custom development.
- **Implement, Extend, and Improve Business Processes:** Find and visualize the information you need in SharePoint 2010. Take advantage of out-of-the-box platform capabilities like collaboration and social computing, search and content management to enable the right people to access the right information at the right time. Users can build their own templates and workflows to streamline processes and remove the burden of building incremental solutions from IT. They can also create dashboards to visualize critical data in real time.
- **Deliver Fast ROI and Decrease Risk:** Connecting SharePoint 2010 to your LOB applications can increase the ROI of these systems and decrease business risk by surfacing important data across the organization to users who need it, when they need it. Plus, out-of-the-box capabilities in SharePoint can speed the time-to-market of previously labor-intensive solutions. SharePoint also can reduce IT administrator and end-user training costs by enabling users to access information through a single familiar interface.

Next Steps

This white paper has shown how SharePoint 2010 can connect people and systems to enable business-critical processes across your organization. As next steps, you can:

- Share this white paper with other business decisions makers in your organization.
- Direct technical decision makers to the companion Delivering Business-Critical Solutions with SharePoint 2010 technical white paper for information on high-level technical capabilities in SharePoint 2010.
- Learn more about the [Total Economic Impact of SharePoint 2010](#) (white paper).
- Visit the [SharePoint Partner Finder](#) page to learn about ISVs and SIs in your area and vertical who can help you to architect and deploy your SharePoint solution.

Additional resources:

- Learn more about manufacturing industry solutions with the [DIRA framework](#) guide.
- Learn more about JDE Edwards: [Creating a competitive edge with JD Edwards and SharePoint 2010](#).
- Explore migration to SharePoint: [Benefits of migrating to SharePoint 2010](#).