



**NUCLEUS  
RESEARCH**

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ROI ANALYSIS YOU CAN TRUST™

## Market Scorecard: Integration

### THE BOTTOM LINE

The increased options for choosing integration products and evaluating integration approaches provides organizations with greater options for choosing an integration strategy that will deliver initial and ongoing ROI in their environment.

**Average score: 4.2**

Many companies have found clear benefits from integrating enterprise applications, but in many cases the costs of integration have outweighed the returns. As the market of integration technology options has evolved, many more integration projects have become feasible from an ROI perspective. The introduction of standards and the move away from point-to-point messaging-based integration has reduced the time, cost, and risk associated with integration.

		Deployment	Adoption	Support	Business Impact	Vendor
Top tier (score>4)						
<b>Microsoft</b> BizTalk Server	4.8		●	●	●	●
<b>BEA</b> WebLogic Platform 8.1	4.2		●	●	●	●
<b>IBM</b> WebSphere 5	4.2		●	●	●	●
<b>Sonic</b> Business Integration Suite	4.0		●	●	●	●
<b>TIBCO</b> BusinessWorks	4.0		●	●	●	●
Middle tier						
<b>webMethods</b> Enterprise Services Platform	3.8		●	●	●	●

#### Guide to the ratings:

**Overall score** is a composite score indicating the solution's ability to deliver ROI based on the following factors: **Deployment** is how easily and quickly the solution can be deployed.

**Adoption** is based on usability and the potential scalability of adoption. **Support** is based on the ability of the solution to function with limited internal support costs. **Business impact** measures the potential of the solution to deliver returns through clear and repeatable benefits. **Vendor** is the vendor's track record and ability to help a customer maximize ROI.

**Scale** indicates from high 5= ●, 4= ●, 3= ● 2= ●, 1= ○ to low rating.

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## RELATED RESEARCH

- E103 Vendor ROI Score: Microsoft BizTalk Server
- E102 Vendor ROI Score: IBM WebSphere 5
- E101 Vendor ROI Score: webMethods Enterprise Services Platform
- E100 Vendor ROI Score: Sonic Business Integration Suite
- E98 Vendor ROI Score: TIBCO
- E49 Vendor ROI Score: BEA WebLogic 8.1
- E24 Using the Nucleus Research Vendor ROI Score

## ROI IMPACT OF INTEGRATION PLATFORMS

Any way you look at it, integration is an expensive proposition, but a critical one for just about any business. Beyond the cost of the initial licenses and infrastructure set-up, the personnel costs of maintaining existing integration projects and adding new ones can expand the cost of the initial investment over time. The market was once dominated by specialty integration vendors, such as TIBCO and webMethods, but has now been expanded by infrastructure vendors, such as IBM, BEA, and Microsoft. These vendors have incorporated integration capabilities into their application servers and development tools, providing organizations with an all-in-one approach to handle all aspects of application development, deployment, and integration.

The business impact of these approaches can vary greatly. Nucleus has found that certain cost and benefit factors have a strong impact on the ROI from an integration project. Companies should consider the following factors when considering an investment in an integration platform:

- Number of planned integrations and connections. This is essentially a question of breadth and repeatability; only companies that have a clear business need and a definite roadmap for exploiting integration software will achieve efficiencies and cost savings.
- Reuse. The reusable nature of integration solutions is what enables organizations to develop applications once and then leverage existing investments for other applications.
- Reduced cost of ownership. A unified integration platform approach can provide companies with cost savings on acquiring and maintaining their integration architecture. Companies can also lower administration costs by lessening the number of vendor licenses they have to track and maintain.
- IT Productivity. Lowering the amount of custom coding necessary for building integrations between different corporate systems and providing graphical tool sets to speed the development process increases the productivity of the development team.

## IN THIS MARKET SCORECARD

This market scorecard outlines Nucleus's evaluations of the leading integration products in terms of their ability to deliver an ROI to customers. Future iterations of the scorecard will also include results for SeeBeyond, Vitria, Oracle, Cape Clear Software, Sybase, and other vendors with strong and promising offerings in this area. These ROI scorecards will be released pending collection and analysis of sufficient customer data.

## CURRENT TRENDS

The current buzzword in the integration market is service-oriented architecture (SOA). Essentially, SOAs provide the framework for more easily combining data from different applications and assembling it based on the business need. An SOA delivers

integration services on a large scale and provides the potential of lowering integration costs by enabling a repeatable process for building integration applications.

The challenges with establishing an SOA pertain to both IT, which has to create and support the architecture, and business users, who need to identify the data sources that they want to combine, along with determining how the data will be presented and where it needs to be delivered. The objective is to enable an environment where business users have better access to information, and IT will have a structure that can deliver that data from wherever it resides within the organization.

The Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) has emerged as a new method to enable an SOA and drive down integration costs. It is essentially an integration hub that provides standards-based technology for connecting and exchanging data between systems. Using a publish and subscribe model, data can be fed to a variety of applications, and those applications are alerted to changes in the data that affect their operation. So in effect, the ESB serves as the communications hub for the SOA.

Sonic Software was one of the first vendors to offer an ESB product, and more vendors are planning on adding ESB products in the coming year. Built on the foundation of open standards, ESBs provide the following benefits:

- Ease of deployment. With a lower upfront software investment than an EAI infrastructure, ESBs can reduce the complexity of integration projects and the ongoing expense of supporting integration applications. It provides a "build as you go" infrastructure with accessible tools that typically do not require highly specialized training for developers to use.
- Shorter time to market. Faster development of integration applications enables companies to put the applications to use in their business quickly, driving new customer and partner initiatives that can deliver new revenue sources, or increase customer satisfaction levels.
- Non-proprietary integration approach. An ESB can serve as a complement to applications servers and integration servers already in use, and its vendor-neutral approach offers additional flexibility in building connections between data sources.

### **SO, IF THAT'S THE FUTURE, HOW DO I GET THERE?**

The good news is, you're probably heading down that path already. SOAs are not a new concept, and many companies are already executing them on a small scale through Web services. All of the vendors evaluated in this scorecard support Web services, and all are working toward a broader SOA approach through an ESB.

If you are looking for a new integration provider, first you need to assess your current technology environment and your business needs.

### **Technology environment**

If you are a Microsoft shop, BizTalk is probably the sensible choice. Its low overall cost and easy to use tools provide an easy ramp-up for your developers, and a fast deployment time for integration projects. If you are a Java shop, you can choose between the application server approaches of IBM and BEA, or consider the independent approach of Sonic, TIBCO, or webMethods. Companies that have considerable investments with IBM and BEA will probably choose to stick with them. And no, it's not time to cut and run from BEA. Even with the swirling acquisition rumors, BEA has solid technology and any company that acquires them is not going to abandon its user base. Why? Because now the point of acquisitions is to gain the valuable maintenance revenue stream. The only way to keep that coming is to make customers happy. There are too many competitors waiting to pounce if the vendor jeopardizes that relationship.

### **Application infrastructure**

What applications do you need to connect? What data do you need to extract? Where does this data need to go in your organization, or outside your organization to improve your business operations? Map out all the connection points you want the integration product to facilitate, and determine all the data delivery points required.

Once you've established your internal landscape, and projections for future business needs, you can start looking at costs. One key thing to keep in mind is the ongoing costs of supporting your integration strategy — your developers. Pick a solution that has tools your developers can use without a significant training ramp-up. Integration used to require high-priced development expertise. This is no longer the case as more attention has been paid to providing intuitive, graphical development tools.

### **CHOOSE YOUR FIREPOWER**

The increasing number of integration approaches available on the market now provides companies with increased options to weigh when determining how they should tackle integration challenges — making careful investigation of both initial and ongoing costs and benefits critical for maximizing the ROI from integration projects.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The Nucleus ROI Scores are based on Nucleus analysts' independent assessment of the vendor's ability to deliver positive ROI to potential customers and on data gathered from an individual vendor's customers as well as other users in the market sector. For more details on Nucleus ROI Scores, see research note E24, Using the Nucleus Research Vendor ROI Score. For further details on each of the vendors included in the scorecard, please refer to the individual vendor ROI scorecards listed in the related research section of this document.

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