

Foreword

When Guardian Life Insurance recently asked me to select someone who could provide an architectural overview to guide one of our most transformative reengineering projects, my response was instantaneous: Dr. Paul Brown. We needed someone who could relate high-level SOA concepts to down-to-earth, battle-trying experience, someone who could distinguish insight from hype. Paul did not disappoint: The principles Paul enumerated and practical solutions he offered continue to help direct our enterprise's evolution.

Now Paul brings his expertise to the broader public in this insightful and thought-provoking book. Like so many acronyms in public currency, SOA means many different things to different people. Paul deftly avoids getting caught in the trap of overstating the case for SOA. Instead, he brings the topic skillfully into focus, zeroing in on the concepts that must be understood in order to be effective. Paul's purpose, as I've found so often in his presentations and conversations, is to get to the core of real-world architectural issues that make the difference between success and failure. Paul doesn't sit in an ivory tower pontificating; he gets right down to the critical issues in order to develop effective real-life strategies.

From the days when I was coauthoring the canonical XML model for the human resources industry to more recent experiences such as leading Enterprise Architecture at 1800Flowers.com, I've faced innumerable challenges that Paul's work illuminates with acute clarity. Paul knows, as do any of us who've tried to make SOA work, that real environments aren't ideal realms where everything fits neatly and one size fits all. If they were, we wouldn't need Paul's insights into SOA as much as we do.

This spring I'm giving a keynote address on SOA at the *Transformation and Innovation Conference* in Washington, DC. Other keynoters are CIOs and CTOs of government agencies, including NASA and the Departments of Commerce and Defense, with budgets in excess of a billion

dollars. In the audience, there will be those at the other end of the spectrum—individuals charged with building a SOA from scratch with minimal resources. In preparing for my presentation, I couldn't think of a better source than Paul Brown. This book should be required reading for the loftiest executive—IT or business—down to the rawest newbie. Paul's clear and impartial analysis cuts through the jargon to the core of what needs to be understood about SOA to be successful.

Jonathan Mack
Senior Technical Architect
Guardian Life Insurance Company
March 2007