Transitioning an Enterprise to SOA

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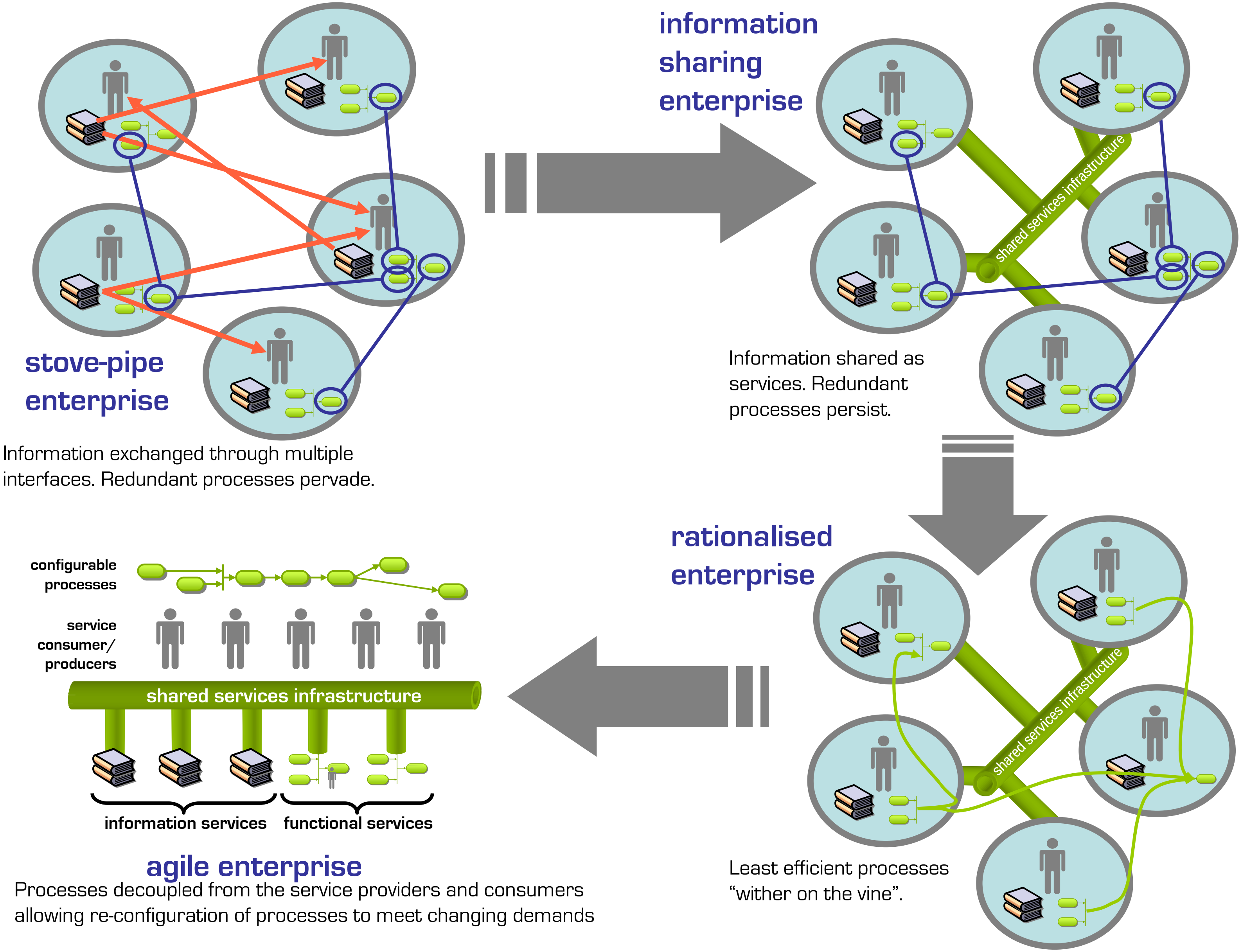

Key: common processes | stovepipe / cylinder of excellence | need to share information | service orchestration

Notes & Explanations

Explaining SOA in a single picture is rather difficult, so some additional notes may be required…

Purpose:
The key message is that simply implementing services will not improve a business – in fact the increased cost to IT could mean overall efficiency is reduced. SOA only starts to deliver benefits when services can be re-used across the enterprise, which means there must be commonality of service definition – i.e. governance.

The Four Stages:
The first stage is “stovepipe”. Most large businesses are in this state. Functionality is repeated across the enterprise in different depts.

The second stage is simply where an organisation has begun to implement services. This is where it can all go wrong, or right, depending on the governance in place. If each department is free to develop its own services, there won’t be re-use because of incompatibility. If the services are designed and governed top-down, then there is opportunity for re-use.

The third stage only really happens if the services have been designed in such a way that they can be re-used across the enterprise. With good design, common service providers expose common service interfaces, allowing the consumer to choose their service. Over time, with such a level playing field, the less efficient services begin to decline and are eventually shut down.

The fourth stage shows an enterprise devoid of any traditional structure which is simply a market of service producers and consumers. The enterprise can be structured in an ad-hoc fashion by orchestrating services to meet a given need.