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Sterling Commerce delivers new architecture to address Multi-Enterprise Collaboration requirements for visible business; Multi-Enterprise Services Architecture securely combines services for Business Integration, Business Intelligence, Business Process Management and Business Delivery capabilities

Business integration leader Sterling Commerce today announced a Multi-Enterprise Services Architecture (MESA) in support of its new Multi-Enterprise Collaboration strategy (see announcement "Sterling Commerce announces Multi-Enterprise Collaboration strategy"). MESA builds upon this strategy for growth by delivering, for the first time, a multi-enterprise, comprehensive architecture that goes beyond traditional business-to-business (B2B) integration, web services and Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) to extend the value of service-oriented architectures (SOAs) outside the enterprise, with unparalleled security, scalability and performance capabilities.

MESA is a standards-based, multi-enterprise service-oriented architecture that supports established business processes for unmatched visibility and control over business communities. This architecture is delivered in pre-packaged, on-demand or custom services suites.

MESA enables companies to bring together data, applications, people, processes and business communities securely through four key services: Business Integration Services, Business Intelligence Services, Business Process Management Services and Business Delivery Services.

Also, by partnering with Entrust, Inc. (see announcement "Sterling Commerce selects Entrust to broaden security capabilities for Multi-Enterprise Collaboration"), Sterling Commerce offers customers a Secure Commerce Foundation, built for the multi-enterprise environment that extends features such as identity management, encryption and authentication across these critical services.

Nolan Rosen, chief marketing officer, Sterling Commerce, said: "Sterling Commerce's architecture delivers to customers the modularity, flexibility and ease-of-use they have been looking for to engage efficiently and effectively in collaboration across the business ecosystem. This encompasses complex communications with suppliers, partners, customers and employees. We are giving customers the ability to choose the environment that best fits their needs, with the most comprehensive array of multi-enterprise services ever assembled into a single architecture."

MESA delivers both horizontal and vertical solutions. The horizontal solutions will consist of a Network and Exchange Services Layer enabled by Sterling Information Broker, and a Secure Commerce Foundation, enabled by the partnership with Entrust. Additional MESA services include:

Business Integration Services - MESA unifies heterogeneous applications and processes by spanning all B2B network and data transport protocols, connecting any enterprise application or data source, and supporting industry standard data formats as well as proprietary data
Business Process Management Services - MESA automates processes based on rules to support security requirements, business processes and user accessibility

- Business Intelligence Services- MESA delivers business reports and commerce visibility information to enable timely decision-making and community management

- Business Delivery Services- MESA is equipped with tools such as management dashboards, community portals and user interfaces that summarise information in a way that makes sense for the user, organisation or business community. In addition, it supports a federated environment by combining data from multiple, heterogeneous data sources in real time

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For vertical markets, Sterling Commerce will offer industry-specific suites combining these various components tailored to the business requirements of the retail, financial services, manufacturing and healthcare industries.

Rosen added: "There is a paradigm shift underway where CEOs and CIOs are recognising the importance of moving away from business initiatives that merely save costs to implementing those that deliver significant revenue growth. Our research indicates these growth initiatives are dependent upon effective communication with customers, suppliers, partners and employees and will require IT departments to become more dependent on Multi-Enterprise Collaboration to increase revenue."

For the past 30 years, Sterling Commerce has provided multi-enterprise solutions to 30,000 customers in various industries in the form of secure data movement (Connect), on-demand transaction services (Sterling Information BrokerSM) as well as business-to-business integration and translation services and advanced business process management integration (Sterling Integrator).

The heritage and market leadership that Sterling Commerce has with these solutions is brought together in MESA and wrapped with new services for enhanced security, federation and community management.

The core functionality in MESA is available today. Customised suites for vertical market deployments are expected in 2005.