

IBM Podcast

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MATHENY: Welcome to this IBM podcast, What's it all about? An introduction to the Rational Collaborative Lifecycle Management Solution. I'm Angelique Matheny with IBM.

Joining me today are Robyn Gold, Rational Marketing Manager, Jazz and Collaborative Lifecycle Management and Pam Induni, Rational Go to Market Manager, Collaborative Lifecycle Management. They'll provide insight on the Rational Collaborative Lifecycle Management Solution and what makes it a game changer. Hi Robyn and Pam, welcome to the podcast. Thanks for joining us today.

GOLD: Hi Angelique.

INDUNI: Hi, Angelique, thanks for having us here today.

MATHENY: Pam, why don't I let you kick this off.

INDUNI: Sounds great, thank you.

So Robyn, we're hearing a lot of talk about application lifecycle management, and most of us think we know what it is; however, just to level set everyone, can you just give us a quick summation of how you define ALM?

GOLD: Sure, Pam. I actually like the Wikipedia definition, which is, application lifecycle management is the marriage of business management to software engineering made possible by tools that facilitate and integrate requirements management, architecture, coding, testing, tracking and release management. So that's Wikipedia's definition.

And the key here is that ALM focuses not on disciplines like change management and testing but on the flow of people, process and artifacts across those disciplines. So it's entirely possible when you think about it that analysts who expertly manage requirements, developers who develop excellent code, and testers who find defects, and despite all of that still fail at the project overall if these individual activities are disconnected from each other. So, ALM focuses not on those disciplines but on connecting the boxes.

Now, we also have collaborative lifecycle management and that is Rational's uniquely collaborative, full team approach to ALM. It's basically our unique way of delivering development intelligence across both software and systems lifecycle.

GOLD: That's really interesting, collaborative lifecycle management. So Robyn, what are some of the things

that teams should look for in, I guess it's called now CLM solution, then?

INDUNI: So in our work with customers and analysts, we've determined that there are five key criteria of a CLM solution, what every organization needs in order to be successful.

The first of these is real-time planning. Teams should look for planning capabilities that are directly linked to execution. And without this, if you maintain your project plan, for example in a Microsoft Project file or in spreadsheets that are outside of the ALM environment, your plans will inevitably become stale and inaccurate. So, look for real-time planning that is directly linked to execution.

The second of these CLM imperatives is traceability, and by that we mean, the ability to gain an end-to-end view across your project lifecycle. When your software is delivered to your customer, you should be able to say, this software includes this specific requirement, included in this software build, validated by that test case with this test result. Anything less, and you really don't know what you're delivering, and you don't know whether what you're delivering is going to meet your quality requirement.

So the third of these imperatives is continuous process

improvement. So every organization has a process, whether it's formal or informal, agile or iterative. And the key to success is in some way to be able to figure out whether your process is making things better or worse.

If you change your process in some way, did that change make things better? Well, in order to answer that question, you need to be able to define your process, have your team adhere to that process and the ability to measure its effectiveness. So, look for that constellation of abilities to support that continuous process improvement.

The fourth imperative is development intelligence. And here, your environment should really be able to do two things: it needs to capture metrics automatically; and, it needs to be able to surface those metrics in real time and at the right level of detail.

And without that development intelligence, you'll find most managers spend most of their time asking for information and correlating that information. With development intelligence, those managers can kind of rise above that grunt work and really be a hero, a manager who is able to positively influence the success and direction of their project.

And last but not least, is agile collaboration. And by that

we mean the ability to collaborate in real time on projects in the context of work being done. So here, you want to look for a solution that integrates chat and discussion threads with your actual work streams and tasks. So, in a nutshell, those are the five key CLM imperatives.

INDUNI: So Robyn, if I can sum up what the five imperatives, what you just said, I think what you're saying is that when searching for an end-to-end lifecycle management solution, a customer is typically hoping to gain control and insight over that entire end-to-end software lifecycle.

Now, from the research I've done though I've found that often the biggest problem being faced is due to all the different tools currently being used. So the very thing that a specific team once acquired to solve a specific problem, a tool for X capability multiplied by dozens of teams and dozens of tools, really ends up causing a much bigger problem. Why do companies get themselves into this mess?

GOLD: Great question. And it is something that we see again and again, and here's why. Typically we see customers supporting multiple teams or teams of teams that develop software. And each team will typically source its development tools locally. One team can use one tool,

another team a different tool, you know, sometimes we see this as a result of acquisitions within the company. Sometimes we see company-wide standards on some areas of the organization but not others.

For example, many companies have standardized a single configuration management solution such as Rational ClearCase, but they allowed teams to use any requirements management solution they want. So the governance really varies and every situation is different, but the problems are common.

As a result, the company has to manage a bunch of products.

Some of these are homegrown, some commercial, some open source. And these products can't communicate and they can't easily share information or work flows. And this causes a lot of other problems, such as lack of ability to move people around, so skilled developers who work in one toolset can't easily switch to another toolset.

And in addition, project managers are basically in the dark, they don't have the information they need to understand where their projects are as a group because they lack that end-to-end visibility, that end-to-end traceability.

Finally, what we see is that administration costs become very high since the company can't get the benefit of

economies of scale from a common administration model. And security is also often compromised because without common administration, it's more difficult to control access across all of the different toolsets, projects and teams as employees come and go. So, this is often what we call the mess of many, and that's why companies get themselves into it.

INDUNI: So Robyn, what are some of the possible answers to this? Do these platform level solutions really exist?

GOLD: So one potential answer to the problem is, well, just buy all your tools from a single vendor. That way, all the tools will work together, problem solved. And that is pretty much the answer you'll get from most of our competitors.

But as much as we at IBM would like all of our customers' business, we are not naive enough to think that this is a reality. We know that our customers will continue to buy products from a range of vendors, and that they will continue to source their solutions from a mix of open source, commercial and homegrown solutions.

INDUNI: And that sounds like the exact reason why the Rational solution is so attractive, right?

GOLD: Exactly. That is why the Rational Jazz platform is so attractive to our customers. Unlike competitive offerings, our platform is designed to be interoperable not only with our own tools but with third party partner and even competitor products.

So we've designed our CLM solution based on Jazz to be a common glue, that common integration hub, that can integrate a broad range of tools, including tools from open source, homegrown and competitive vendors.

INDUNI: Robyn, as a key takeaway -- I know we're almost at the end of our podcast here -- can you sum up in three bullets what makes the IBM Rational Collaborative Lifecycle Management solution unique? I know you've talked a little bit to this, but if you could sum it up in three bullets for somebody to just take away with them, what would those be?

GOLD: Sure. First of all, our solution is uniquely open and extensible, and the way we do this is through our support of the open services for lifecycle collaboration initiative. That's a multi-vendor initiative to help tools work together across the CLM lifecycle. And what this delivers to customers, a very practical benefit, is that it gives customers the freedom to create their own ideal ALM environment choosing their preferred tools and vendors.

Second, our solution is developed by and for agile teams with deep built-in support for agile practices and also has the flexibility to support any software delivery process.

And I think the third thing that makes our solution unique is that it is developed right out on the open on Jazz.net. We give our customers unprecedented access to beta code, direct access to engineering teams. Jazz.net is kind of our living software delivery environment that is right there, out in the open, and we encourage you to stop by.

INDUNI: Excellent. Thank you. Hey, this has been a great discussion. I'd be remiss if I didn't ask you to leave us with a few next steps here.

GOLD: Sure. So there are a few resources to consider. Recently, our vice president of offering strategy and development, Mike O'Rourke, recorded a Webcast. The name of that Webcast is called Jazz Up Your Collaborative Lifecycle Management, and in it he delved much further into the five imperatives for successful CLM and asked the questions that you should be asking of IBM or of any other vendor as you're assembling your ideal solution.

If you want to see our solution in action, I recommend a Flash demo called Jazz Revolution, and that is a demo that shows our solution from the perspective of different roles

on the team including a project manager, an analyst, a developer and tester all working together.

If you would like to have an analyst perspective, a fantastic overview is available from agile luminary, [Luc Barnett]. She wrote a white paper called the IBM Rational Jazz Strategy for Collaborative Application Lifecycle Management that's available.

And finally, I encourage everyone to head over to Jazz.net.

This is our transparent, online development laboratory. You can see our own engineering teams at work using our own tools, and you can download trials and betas, ask questions, et cetera.

So on Jazz.net, there's a couple of other resources. One of them is a Rational Team Concert sandbox, and the great thing about a sandbox is that with, you know, no uptime, within seconds, you can experience for yourself a lean CLM solution, Rational Team Concert. So, that's a great way to kind of get started and see how the tools work in action.

We also have a great demo that showcases traceability across our broader CLM solution. The name of that demo is the Collaborative Lifecycle Management Demo. So those are five different resources that can help you get started.

INDUNI: Excellent. Thank you. Robyn, thank you so much for all your insights today. This has been a great, just laying the groundwork for ALM and the Rational CLM solution. And I thank you very much, and Angelique, back to you.

MATHENY: Pam and Robyn, thank you so much for sharing your time today. That was wonderful insight, Pam, you're definitely right about that. We really appreciate you guys showing up today.

That was Rational's Robyn Gold and Pam Induni discussing What's it All About, an Intro to Rational Collaborative Lifecycle Management Solution. To share this podcast with your colleagues, or if you're interested in more podcasts like this one, check out the Rational Talks to You Podcast Page at www.ibm.com/rational/podcasts.

We'll post the link that Robyn mentioned to that Jazz Up Your Collaborative Lifecycle Management Webcast featuring Mike O'Rourke. Check it out today. This has been an IBM podcast. I'm Angelique Metheny. Thanks for listening. Keep tuning in as Rational Talks To You.

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