MATHENY: Welcome to this IBM podcast, deploying Communication Services with and Without the Cloud. I'm Angelique Matheny with IBM. Communication Service Providers -- or, CSPs -- continue to be focused on operational efficiency by shifting the financial burden from capital to operating expenses through new collaborative business models.

Moving to the cloud offers great incentives through software license savings, hardware savings, lower labor and IT support costs. By taking an enterprise approach, communication services providers can plan and manage their internal transformations to cloud-based solutions while prioritizing what internal development and test environments make the most sense for the cloud while still being able to deploy compelling services to end users without the cloud.

In today's podcast, we are going to speak with Scott Niemann, Telecommunications Market Manager for IBM Rational about deploying communication services without and without the cloud and how a communication service provider can decide whether a cloud approach is right for their service creation process. Hi, Scott. Welcome to the podcast.
Thanks for joining us.

NIEMANN:  Thanks Angelique. Nice to be here.

MATHENY:  Before we get into deploying service with the cloud, how does IBM Rational deal in general terms with service creation?

NIEMANN:  When we speak of service creation, we really talk about a lifecycle approach from concept to the service deployment. And in each phase there may be a different set of tooling that someone uses for a different functional group that all integrate with one another.

In conjunction with that, there is a collaboration platform which the service development platform sits on top of. Really what this allows is for an agile approach to development, to allow all stakeholders to access plans, requirements, different development activities, testing activities, et cetera.

So really what this has all management to really allow communication between the different teams across the service development lifecycle. The actual service creation is done with a platform called Rational Services Creation platform which consists of five different phases.
And the first is what we call service, concept and definition. And here we're gathering input from our users, we're getting planning information from enterprise architecture, and we're using this information to really create a market-driven point of view.

Now that information flows into the next phase, which is what we call service definition. And this is where we take some of the process flows that were defined within or enterprise architecture and start defining the actual system architecture; how different components within our business process are going to communicate, where the applications are going to reside.

And the next phase, this blueprint, so to speak, will feed into the actual service development. At this point we actually have to implement something: we have to write the code, we have to create the surface.

And then of course, once we've written some, we've created it, we have to test it. Right? So we get into the notion of testing the service. But when we talk about testing in our service creation platform, it's the entire network because these services can be quite complex and there could be a lot of network activity that has to occur for the service to be successful. So we have to test the entire infrastructure, total end-to-end testing.
And another important thing is security. Right? If we're creating an accounts payable, for example Portal app for a customer to go in to access their information, to upgrade their services, to change the plans, we have to make sure that this is a secure app.

And finally, there is the actual deployment, which can also be deployed directly to a cloud environment or cloud-based services, or deployed in a more traditional environment.

MATHENY: So Scott, what are the primary differences in deploying services with the cloud as opposed to without the cloud?

NIEMANN: Well, from a service creation perspective there really isn't much difference, in terms of how the services are created. It comes down to more of a tooling approach when you get to the deployment phase.

So when a communication service provider is considering moving to the cloud that can really mean many different things. So as you said, CSPs are moving to the cloud for their own internal operations and for many other reasons, such as reducing capital expenditures, you know, improving operational efficiencies.
In this case, of course, we're talking about the actual creation of the services and deploying them. And when we talk about this in terms of cloud, there's really three different approaches here: there's capabilities that leverage the cloud; there's capabilities that exist and we use them on the cloud; and then, there's capabilities that we can create to target the cloud.

So let me go into each one of those. Before I get into that, in all three they have a common element to them concerning Rational Solution and that's the Rational Services Creation platform.

So if we just focus in on the capabilities that leverage the cloud, a primary use case for a CSP leveraging the cloud is really a platform for infrastructure testing for their services. So using the cloud for testing the service that they're creating can be very advantageous because as I said before, when you're testing a service you really need to have a network and test it in more of a real-life scenario.

So you may want to, for example, test the service in several thousand different service requests. And doing this could ultimately consume many physical resources. And this is costly. So again, along the theme are reducing operational and reducing capital expenses, it's more cost effective to use these resources in an on-demand way through the cloud.
So the testing resources are only needed when you're actually testing and can scale. Instead of testing thousands of different transactions, if you want to test tens of thousands of different transactions you have this ability to scale by using the cloud.

In either case our platform for testing the elements, such as in our actual solution, a solution called Rational Performance Tester may also run on the cloud or it may run standalone on a machine. Basically this is a decision of the CSP.

If they wanted to just run the testing performance environment through more of a SAS model, an on demand, or if they owned it the testing of the service would be the same regardless. As you know, testing may not be a continual activity; we may just do it at the end of a particular build or lifecycle.

So on the cloud simply means running the different components of the Rational Services Creation Platform on the cloud. So in doing that Rational provides a few components for this, and one is the Smart Cloud Enterprise, which is just a public cloud which offers that collaboration platform I mentioned that sits beneath our service certain platform, which allows the different teams to collaborate through
requirements management, through project planning, so on and so forth.

And other components, such as the service development component are those with a much richer graphic intensive interface, can be accessed in a similar way through IBM desktop cloud. But from a CSP's point of view, it's really the same solution. It operates different when installed locally and you get the same performance; it just comes down to the business model.

So the third way the CSP has to think about and how they can utilize the cloud's services are services targeting the cloud -- meaning, they want to develop some service and actually deploy it to the cloud.

So we do that through our creation platform with integration to other cloud-based solutions, such as IBM WebSphere Cloud Burst that can directly take Rational developed service applications and deploy it to the cloud directly. And this is where when I was mentioning it's really just a difference in tooling.

The different dimension that comes into play here is that we have integrations with different cloud deployment tools, integrations to our own service creation platform, Rational Services Creation platform.
MATHENY: How does the service provider decide whether a cloud-based strategy for service creation is the right thing for their organization?

NIEMANN: Yes, good question. So in general when a company starts considering whether to use a cloud or not or whether it's right for the business, they must identify how the cloud could fit into their business strategy. So they need to determine what workloads would be better in a cloud environment rather than a local environment.

And they have to ensure, if they're going to go through a cloud transformation, that, you know, what they're doing is actually going to improve operations rather than causing unforeseen disruptions, which can happen if planning isn't done right.

So based upon what communication services providers need, they might want to elevate environment such as service creations to the cloud. So to figure out how to get there, where you want to be in the future, you have to understand really where your business is at. And this is where you leverage the notion of enterprise architecture. Right?

So with our Enterprise Architecture solution which is part of our creation platform, you can utilize, for example, one
of the things that service providers out there are either using today or leaning to is the T informed frameworks, which is part of our solution. So they can use the business process framework from this solution for planning and strategizing to really establish this actionable architecture.

So Enterprise Architecture really provides context for the integration of a CSP strategy, for the different systems, for the different people in the organizations and processes. It really helps them visualize relationships between them, perform analysis through the actionable architecture, and report on status to really build a governance model for the organization as they transform themselves to a cloud-based strategy.

So, in summary, enterprise architecture, through using a standard implementation through T informed frameworks really allows alignment of business and IT objectives for a CSP so they can really get a view of where they are today, what parts of the organization -- be it service creation, be it something else -- makes sense for them to migrate to the cloud depending on their business needs.

MATHENY: So Scott, my last question for today. If a service provider moves to cloud-based deployment model, how can they streamline their process of deploying services to
the cloud between different teams involved in the service creation lifecycle?

NIEMANN: That is very important because today...up until this point, essentially what I've been talking about is service certain platform. We can basically, through a lifecycle, you can define what the service is. You can build it and you can deploy it. However, that deploying part may not be so simple. Right?

If you have developments and tests and operations, they could each deploy the same application at different phases in the services development lifecycle that I spoke of two different environments. And this can happen quite often, surely with a CSP organization.

And the issue with this is that it can be...usually, it's manual. If you have something that manual, usually, at times, it can be error prone because there's no automation. And really it's error prone because there's little shared understanding of the deployment across these different groups.

There's no shared automation between the groups. There's no reuse between the groups of deployments through the actual cloud. And this creates configuration errors. So in our platform, the Rational Service Creation platform, we have an...
extension that allows organizations to plan for just this.

And it's called the Deployment Planning and Automation Solution. And really this is a new approach we've development for service deployment that leverages the cloud-based infrastructure to help CSPs address those issues I was talking about.

It allows them to plan service deployment using discovered resources on the cloud or to reuse standard configurations to create templates so that different groups can use these templates and easily provision and deploy apps to the cloud in reduction of time and reduction of errors.

So it really allows us the planning aspect when we get to the point where we test something in the lifecycle and need to deploy it, we've created this architecture, this plan already with the planning and deployment extension we created for our creation platform.

And really what this is doing is really creating a governance model for how one not only builds the application, but how they deploy them to the cloud so that it's automated, it's error-free and it's quick and effective.

MATHENY: Excellent Scott. Thank you so much for sharing
your time today. We really appreciate it.

NIEMANN: You're welcome.

MATHENY: That was Rational's Scott Niemann talking about deploying communication services with and without the cloud. 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.

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