Defining a Cloud Centre of Excellence

Part 1

A recent construct, the Cloud Centre of Excellence (CCOE), is gaining traction and interest. Why is this? It is partly due to the increase in the adoption of cloud and digital services. The CCOE is also expected to get a handle on managing cloud services throughout the organisation. Or is it?

Challenges

The biggest challenges faced when starting out with a CCOE initiative include;

— A lack of understanding of what a CCOE actually is

— A lack of impartial, clear and concise information on establishing a CCOE

— This is new territory, with a high learning curve required

— People don't know what they don't know

If you are looking to create a CCOE there is a very important first step to take. It is a simple first step to take yet may not be so simple in execution.

The first thing to do is to actually find out and understand what a CCOE actually is, and what it is not. Well isn't it always good to know what it is you are about to build before you begin building? But where can you find this information? Who has successfully implemented a CCOE? What is the schematic, design, plan which can be used?

In starting out with a CCOE, first have a look at the reference material available from the public cloud majors; Microsoft, Amazon, Google. Also have a look at the information Gartner provides. After that continue searching, but the results start to yield very similar content.

A brief summary of what a CCOE is according to Microsoft, AWS and Gartner is included below. Click the links to go to the source material.

According to Microsoft

Business and technical agility are core objectives of most IT organizations. A cloud centre of excellence (CCoE) is a function that creates a balance between speed and stability.

A CCoE model requires collaboration between each of the following:

— Cloud adoption (specifically solution architects)

— Cloud strategy (specifically the program and project managers)

— Cloud governance

— Cloud platform

— Cloud automation

When successful, a CCoE model will create a significant cultural shift in IT. The fundamental premise of a CCoE approach is that IT serves as a broker, partner, or representative to the business. This model is a paradigm shift away from the traditional view of IT as an operations unit or abstraction layer between the business and IT assets.

<u>According to AWS (Amazon)</u>

A CCoE is comprised of two functional groups: the Cloud Business Office (CBO) and Cloud Engineering. The functions of each group will help you determine who to include in each group and in the larger CCoE.

The CBO owns making sure that the cloud services meet the needs of your internal customer, business services. Business services, and the applications that support them, consume the cloud services provided by IT. IT should adopt a customer-centric model toward business application owners. This tenet represents a shift for most organizations.

The CBO owns functions such as organizational change management, stakeholder requirements, governance, and cost optimization. It develops user requirements and onboards new applications and users onto the cloud. It also handles vendor management, internal marketing, communications, and status updates to users.

You will select IT Leadership responsible for the cloud service vision, Organizational Change Management, Human Resources, financial

management, vendor management, and enterprise architecture. One individual may represent multiple functional areas, or multiple individuals may represent one functional area.

The Cloud Engineering group owns functions such as infrastructure automation, operational tools and processes, security tooling and controls, and migration landing zones. They optimize the speed at which a business unit can access cloud resources and optimize use patterns.

The Cloud Engineering group focuses on performance, availability, and security.

According to Gartner

A cloud centre of excellence is the best-practice approach to drive cloud-enabled transformation.

To ensure cloud adoption success, organizations must have the right skills and structure in place. The optimal way to achieve this is by setting up a centralized cloud centre of excellence (CCOE).

A CCOE is a centralized governance function for the organization and acts in a consultative role for central IT, business-unit IT and cloud service consumers in the business. A CCOE is key to driving cloud-enabled IT transformation.

The CCOE is an enterprise architecture function. Its responsibilities include setting cloud policy, guiding provider selection, and assisting with solution architecture and workload placement, with the goals of improving outcomes and managing risks.

The CCOE doesn't have day-to-day operational responsibilities, nor is it a project management organization. This function should not be outsourced. The CCOE should oversee the organization's cloud computing practices and actively solicit contributions from across the business.

So, there we have three definitions of what a CCOE is. These definitions differ somewhat in how they see a CCOE.

However, all three definitions agree on one thing. And it is a critical thing.

The CCOE is the centre of governance for all things cloud and digital.

This is important. The CCOE is a centre of governance. Not management. Not day to day tasks. Not business-as-usual (BAU). It is the centre for establishing and maintaining appropriate governance regarding cloud and digital services.

Therefore, the CCOE is the body which makes and develops the rules, guidelines and codes of practice for the organisation regarding cloud and digital assets and investments.

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