AWS Cloud Adoption Framework

People Perspective

January 2016

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Abstract

The Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF)[1] provides best practices and prescriptive guidance to accelerate an organization's move to cloud computing. The CAF guidance is broken into a number of areas of focus that are relevant to implementing cloud-based IT systems. These focus areas are called *perspectives*. Each perspective is covered in a separate whitepaper. This whitepaper covers the People Perspective, which focuses on effectively planning for and monitoring the impact of a cloud adoption initiative on the culture and people in the organization.

Introduction

When most enterprises consider change initiatives they focus their planning, execution, and monitoring on three areas: people, process, and technology. Many leaders who look back on previous change initiatives reflect that process and technology were simple to change in comparison to changing the people part of the organization. Furthermore, the degree of success or failure of a change initiative is often attributed to how well or poorly the impact on people was planned, monitored, and executed.

For this reason, the guidance offered in the AWS CAF People Perspective is critical to cloud adoption success. Historically, as the IT environment shifted from mainframe to distributed compute capability new roles were created to support the changed environment. When the environment moves to the cloud, the enterprise can expect the same evolution of roles. With appropriate planning, monitoring, and management, changes that affect people can accelerate the value realization expected from cloud adoption. This whitepaper outlines six components (see Figure 1) for ensuring that the people in the organization can move

Figure 1: Components of the People Perspective

through the cloud adoption journey successfully while continuing to make sure that the enterprise delivers value throughout the journey.

For each component we apply the approach of learn, test, apply, and iterate. The components include organizational structures, training and readiness, skills and competencies, roles and job descriptions, management of staffing, and overall organizational change management. Organizations that focus on these areas have an opportunity to grow their personnel and ensure their readiness for cloud technology. The best approach is to start simple, test theories, and iterate from previous learnings, using the same processes used in agile development. This way you can avoid long planning cycles based on a large quantity of assumptions that may or may not prove to be true.

By managing the changes that people will need to make, an organization also can reduce the risk involved when changes are made that affect business process, culture, and technology.

Identifying and communicating the business drivers is a great place to start your cloud adoption change initiative. Many cloud adoption initiatives focus on a few key themes such as reducing operating cost, improving time to market for new products or services, or adopting new technology, such as big data or mobile service development. Communicating clearly articulated goals and expected outcomes increases the capability for the workforce to understand and buy in to the impetus for change.

Learn, Test, Apply, Iterate

When your organization decides to deliver business value faster through a new delivery model enabled by cloud technology, it is critical to communicate a change plan to the workforce. This way you can build awareness as you organize, plan, and execute changes.

Establish a Cloud Center of Excellence (CCOE) (sometimes called a cloud competency center) as a first step to *learn* about cloud technology. This simple first step has proven to have a high degree of success. The CCOE allows trusted advisors within the organization to obtain an in-depth understanding of cloud capabilities so they can help guide the organization's adoption decisions. Start an educational program that delivers education on the right topics for the right people at all levels in the organization. This will help create a common understanding of cloud technology and capabilities, plus it creates a common

language for discussing cloud concepts. This simple step will help reduce the dependency on vendors and partners for making critical strategy decisions. An enterprise that understands cloud technology and capabilities can build better working agreements with its vendors and managed service providers that are constructed around new working models.

As your organization rolls out the educational programs you need to begin the next major step, which is moving as quickly as possible through pilots and multiple proofs of concept (POC) that validate technology capability. This gives you a chance to oversee and shadow vendor personnel who have the largest impact on the POC success. During POCs you have an opportunity to learn from vendors and their key partners about roles and skills that drive success with cloud adoption. You should also use this opportunity to learn how automation capabilities drive cloud success, and how cloud architects are as tightly connected to the business as the technology itself. When trusted employees pick up this knowledge, they can help *test* with a hands-on understanding of where to grow organizational capability for the future.

Through training courses, workshops, a newly formed CCOE, and completing a few POC projects the organization will collect data it can *apply* to build a 12 to 18 month cloud adoption strategy. At this point, the enterprise will have a stronger understanding of the organization's IT portfolio and ideas for multi-modal support structures. The portfolio will typically require a mixture of operating modes—from traditional silos, to automation-enabled workloads, and all the way to development and operations (DevOps) or development, security, and operations (DevSecOps). Target DevOps or DevSecOps for the part of your IT portfolio that differentiates your organization from its competition. Establishing new modes of operation that leverage automation and infrastructure as code will take time and can be accomplished through an *iterative* approach.

Organizational Structures

The Organizational Structures component of the AWS CAF People perspective provides guidance for establishing an organizational model that is optimized for cloud adoption. This model can be used for the delivery and operation of cloud-based solutions. The structure of the IT organization will need to extend, contract, and modify its structure to use cloud technology to deliver business value in partnership with the rest of the business.

Most organizations establish a cloud center of excellence (CCOE). Carefully consider where you place and how you use the CCOE. You can establish the CCOE as a hands-on team that acts as a delivery accelerant that engages with project teams to drive cloud initiatives. Alternatively, you can establish the CCOE as an advisory committee that behaves more as a consultancy and policy board, giving advice to teams working with cloud technology and establishing policies and standards for cloud technology. Organizations that reach decisions slowly after long analysis are likely better suited for a hands-on CCOE. Organizations with lots of energy and multiple cloud driven efforts may be better suited for an advisory committee CCOE. No matter how you establish your CCOE, you should use it to gather and communicate learnings across initiatives; do not let it create a policy bottleneck.

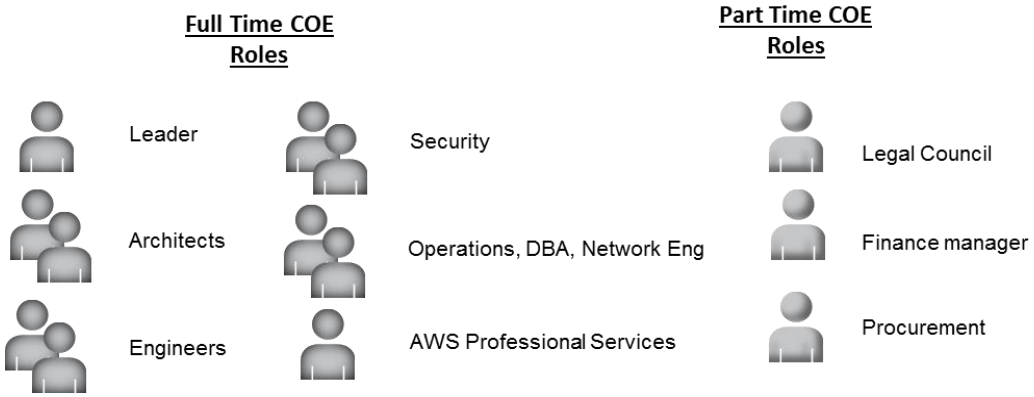

Figure 2: Example of a CCOE model deployed in the enterprise

Next determine the speed(s) of delivery needed for your IT capability, and balance this speed against the potential risk introduced with quick time to market capabilities. Determine if all initiatives should use the same process or if your organization should consider a bimodal or even multimodal IT model. Establish working models and terms of engagement with business units and application development teams. Consider using the most simplistic model possible; remember that large legacy workloads will not easily lend themselves to micro-service architectures. For example, enterprise resource planning (ERP) platforms may be better served by a more traditional support structure with well-defined responsibilities for infrastructure teams, application teams, and business unit or product development teams. This type of system has a much longer change curve, and the adoption of more modern architectures can be cost-prohibitive if not timed well with hardware refreshes and license renewal cycles.

A second delivery mode would be needed to support a simplified set of applications constructed as stateless micro-service architectures. These applications might have release patterns that are as frequent as monthly or quarterly. In this case, the application environment has opportunity to gain efficiency through infrastructure as code. Infrastructure and software deployment processes can be automated and tested independently.

To effectively manage traditional or automation-enabled environments in the cloud will require organizations to begin to tear down the siloes within traditional IT. Managing expectations in support of these changes will be critical to the team's success. In almost all new IT delivery models AWS professional services is seeing organizations break down the barriers between architecture, PMO, operations, networking, security, development, and service and support. Evidence suggests that reducing the number of silos removes red tape and expedites delivery while also reducing risk associated with too many siloed views of an overall delivery system.

The most efficient view of this optimized delivery structure is the development and operations (DevOps) or the development, security, and operations (DevSecOps) models used by highly innovative enterprises such as Netflix. In the DevOps or DevSecOps models, the goal of the organization is to accomplish a few simple things, as Figure 3 illustrates.

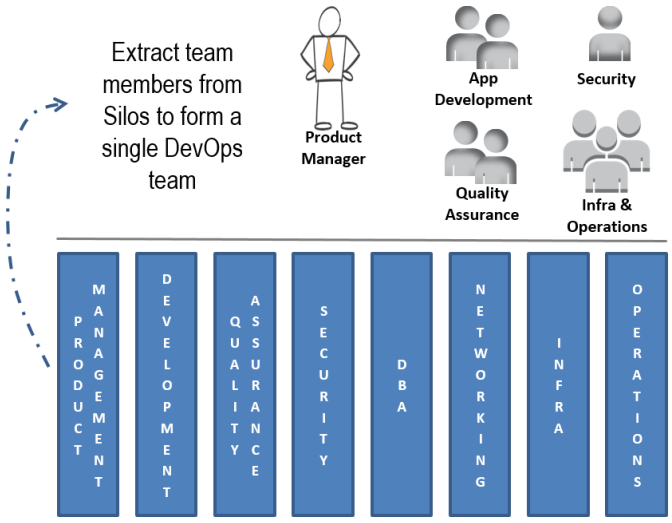

Figure 3: Example of a DevOps or DevSecOps delivery model

First, motivate the development community by having them in the same team as the product visionaries. Encourage members of the team to interact directly with customers. Help team members understand how their day-to-day work directly provides value to each customer and end user. This is called a *product-driven* development model.

Next, reduce the number of dependencies that the product delivery team has on other parts of the organization. Allow the product delivery team to prioritize all product enhancement work. This gives the team greater ability to react quickly to changes in the market or new opportunities by pivoting and changing the priorities of their product delivery.

Structuring your organization for a DevOps or DevSecOps model requires investment to reduce or eliminate technical architecture debt, investment in automation delivery tools, and the creation of delivery teams made up of experts from different parts of the organization. Because of this investment, the DevOps or DevSecOps model is usually implemented on the part of the IT portfolio that is seen as a differentiator; this innovative approach is designed to give an advantage over competitors.

Considerations

- **Do** create a CCOE that maps to your organization's culture.
- **Do** determine if more than one program/project model is needed to accelerate delivery of IT capability.
- **Do** have teams automate as many tasks as possible, such as test, deployment, and recovery.

- **Do** blend team profiles to include expertise from traditionally siloed job roles.
- **Do** encourage direct communications between development teams and customers.
- **Do not** give stakeholders who are external to the product development team project- or program-level approval authority. Give the product development teams the ability to pivot to stay aligned with constantly changing business needs.

Training and Readiness

The Training and Readiness component of the AWS CAF People perspective provides guidance on setting up plans for your workforce that will help them understand and embrace cloud adoption. Early in your cloud adoption cycle it is important to provide baseline training to create a common level of understanding and a consistent use of terminology across the organization. If communication challenges between leadership and technologists occur when you are further along in your cloud adoption cycle, consider revisiting the training plan.

Your training and education plan should map to all levels in the organization, from CEO, CIO, and CTO to network, compute, storage, and database administrators, and all levels in between. At the C-level, training needs to focus on business use cases, business benefits, new IT capabilities, and new ways of partnering with business units. At the intermediate levels, focus on how to measure and drive cloud adoption, common cloud standards, cloud cost management models, and partnering with new service providers. For tactical staff, focus on automation, infrastructure as code, continuous integration, and new delivery models.

The training for all levels in the organization should start with the "why," the "what," and the "wow." Even before this training, leadership will need a pre-training to articulate the investment strategy, the goals, and the excitement of a move to the cloud.

- The why: Why is the organization investing in the AWS cloud?
- The what: What are the goals for cloud adoption set by leadership?
- The wow: What are the modern capabilities that are enabled by the cloud that couldn't be accomplished before?

This training will help diffuse common cloud myths as well as illuminate the realm of the possible that is often overlooked when organizations move to the cloud.

Use the Cloud Center of Excellence (CCOE) and start with small projects to build tactical skills across the organization. This could include training/innovation labs and service catalogs to support delivery using available resources as a focal point for creating solutions. Consider grouping learners to represent a DevSecOps team and give them a real problem the business needs to solve. Have learners work together to deliver the solutions based on a business need.

Combine classroom and computer-based training with practical application in live environments and include support by mentors, so your learners can quickly gain experience. For instance, provide knowledge-based training, an internal service catalog, and mentor support to a learning team focused on delivering an internal training tool or human resources tool. Consider setting up a cloud certification program. Rewarding employees for cloud-based certifications can help increase interest in growing cloud skillsets.

Once sufficient cloud knowledge and experience exists organizationally, larger, higher risk programs and projects can be initiated as part of the shift to an AWS cloud-based, high-velocity solution delivery environment.

Considerations

- **Do** create training and readiness curriculums for all levels of employees.
- **Do** structure your training to cover why, what, and how for each audience.
- **Do** leverage the CCOE to provide applied skills.
- **Do not** train development teams and expect they will be ready. Consider setting up a mentoring structure to provide support during adoption.

Skills and Competencies

The Skills and Competencies component of the AWS CAF People perspective provides guidance for enhancing the cloud skills of your workforce. For example, by establishing the CCOE and completing training and education programs the organization will grow collectively more familiar with the unique skill and competency requirements necessary to drive successful cloud adoption. By building a few proof of concept (POC) workloads on AWS, people in your workforce will have an opportunity to get hands-on experience with the platform so that they can understand how critical these capabilities are.

POCs are typically completed with help from either AWS professional services, solution architects, or partner organizations. During the process of building a POC it's important for people in your organization to shadow these AWS experts. This way your organization can start to understand the skillsets that are necessary to successfully build highly optimized workloads on the cloud.

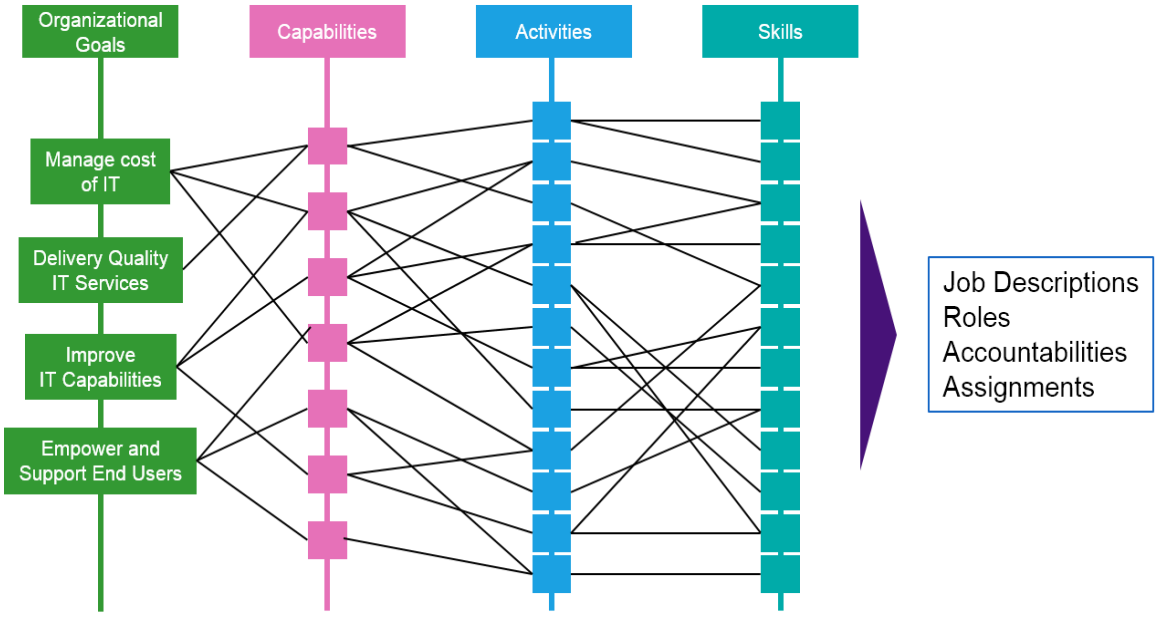

Figure 3: Skills Identification Matrix

Figure 4 shows an approach that you could use to determine the skills and competencies that are required in the organization. Start by listing the prioritized goals of cloud adoption, as shown in the left column. Next, identify the capabilities needed to meet the goal, activities that make up the capability, and finally the skills required to accomplish the activities.

For example, you might have a goal to achieve a high degree of cost management and cost transparency per workload in the organization. Capabilities to support the goal could include reporting on cost at the workload and resource level, monitoring cost versus value, monitoring spend versus utilization, and finally developing cost-efficient cloud architectures. Some activities could include developing reusable auto-scaling architectures, developing an automated tagging strategy, enforcing tagging standards, and automating cost and utilization reporting. To complete these activities you might need the skills of automation engineering, cloud architecture, auto scaling, cloud monitoring configuration, and cost management and billing. You might also need third-party cost management tool specialty competence.

You can use this model to ensure that you prioritize the new skillsets your organization needs to acquire through hiring, training, or contracting through a consulting vendor. For many organizations, two skillsets will be critical:

- Cloud architecture expertise—Cloud architects have professional certification in cloud technology from AWS.
- Automation engineering—Engineers with this skillset are responsible for driving the automation framework that powers the value delivery of cloud technology. They need to be skilled in the use of AWS Cloud Formation, Chef, Puppet, or other automation tools to ensure that the organization achieves business results through fault tolerant architectures.

Define and create atomic training (including mentoring) that covers all of the skills needed for cloud adoption and automation. As part of the training, consider providing a project an employee can complete across its entire lifecycle to reinforce the training. Find people who have expertise for each new skill and enlist them as mentors or support people for the specific training. Remember that technical capability may only be half the battle. A willingness to learn, lead change, and influence the peer network may be more valuable early in the adoption cycle than deep technical capability.

Measurement does not need to be based on number of courses completed. Consider measuring the delivery, quality, and velocity of cloud capability.

Considerations

- **Do** encourage knowledge transfer from vendors and external resources you engage.
- **Do** create trainings that are in line with organizational goals for cloud adoption.

- **Do** create a map of skills needed in your organization and create a plan to fill gaps.
- **Do** identify what training and certifications are available to grow expertise in your organization.

Roles and Job Descriptions

The Roles and Job Descriptions component of the AWS CAF People Perspective helps you understand the skillsets that drive the roles that define a successful cloud adoption, and it helps you create job descriptions that support effective cloud adoption. Your organization very likely will need people in two types of roles. The first type includes roles that are directly associated with cloud adoption as a program or project. Examples of these roles include program managers, CCOE members, cloud strategy executives, or other similar positions. The second type includes roles that focus on creating sustainable cloud competencies within the organization. Examples of these roles include cloud architects, automation engineers, and cloud operations specialists.

It is essential to identify business leaders who will drive cloud adoption; this is the first role you should consider. Cloud adoption projects risk failing when the effort becomes more about delivering technology than providing customer-based solutions. As part of the world's most customer obsessed company, no one understands this more than AWS professionals do. In your organization, an exceptional leader close to the internal and external customer base can provide the best insight on how to measure cloud adoption success. Develop a role and description that matches the importance of this position. For instance, create a position with the title of Cloud Director or something similar that is responsible for setting goals and metrics that describe success for the cloud adoption initiative. The goals may not be specific to technical accomplishments; rather they may be tied to customer value or impact to the organization's overall top line or bottom line results.

Automation is a clear driver of cloud adoption success that most often delivers to predetermined business goals. Therefore, job roles and responsibilities should focus on the skills needed to automate the IT environment while meeting the desired business outcomes. This will ensure that you have people on staff who can accelerate velocity and time to value through automation. For example, a systems and network engineer who understands scripting techniques can drive the automation of infrastructure management. Developers who can automate test scripts can drive the automation of testing to the quality levels required by your business objectives.

Since cloud-based environments are early in their IT maturation, finding people with the breadth of skills that represent all the expertise needed to deliver modern solutions will be challenging. As you create roles and their job

descriptions, you need to determine what skills are needed on a team to deliver and operate cloud-based solutions.

Rather than simply creating job descriptions for roles that have all of the needed cloud skills, consider spreading out the coverage of the newer cloud skills. Maintain current job descriptions, but distribute the responsibility to learn new cloud skills across the team. This ensures that the cumulative team develops the needed skills. Then set a team objective of knowledge transfer of skills between team members.

Considerations

- **Do** create roles that support the goal of automating the IT environment.
- **Do** empower technical leaders and teams to evangelize cloud adoption skills.
- **Do** create a safe environment for people to gain skills and grow into new job roles.
- **Do not** create job descriptions for people that are too specialized. Consider creating teams with composite skills rather than looking for people that have those skills.
- **Do** seed members of initial cloud adoption teams into other teams for viral knowledge transfer.

Manage Staffing

The Manage Staffing component of the AWS CAF People perspective is the culmination of the process that starts with skill and competency requirements, moves into roles and job descriptions, and ends with plans to manage the staff. Staffing plans should be based on needs: immediate (1 to 6 months), mid-term (6 to 12 months), and long-term (12 to 18 months). Next comes the challenge of finding the right staff to fill these needs amid a myriad of opportunities and challenges.

Your organization first needs to analyze the gaps between your present roles and the skills that you need for a transition to the cloud. When you understand which roles you require, you can survey the organization and determine which of your current skill sets could fill the required roles and job descriptions with the addition of light to moderate training and education. Then prioritize the long-term roles that the organization requires. Don't overlook the importance of managing staffing for operational practices that are critical for building sustainable cloud adoption.

We recommend that that you develop strong skillsets in your organization for understanding cloud architecture, cloud cost management, automation engineering, and, as appropriate, DevOps or DevSecOps. Whether or not the organization plans to insource or outsource most of this work in the long run, it is necessary to have a solid foundation internal to the organization. This internal knowledge will play a critical role in your ability to determine strategy, drive policy and standards, ensure appropriate risk management, and ensure the capability to hold vendors and partners accountable.

As part of an AWS cloud adoption strategy, you will need to determine how to staff in-flight and proposed projects while growing overall skills internally. For example, you can set a strategy that combines staffing internally, using managed service providers, outsourcing (right shoring), augmenting with third-party staff, and project-based sourcing. It's common for many organizations to use partners and managed services to fill short-term gaps in a staffing plan while also executing a training and education curriculum or hiring blitz to prepare for the long term.

If you outsource, ensure that the people you engage have experience in current cloud-based solution development that matches the principles you have set for your cloud adoption approach. The education, training, CCOE, and hands-on experience previously mentioned will prepare you for this. AWS also has an

extensive partner network that you can leverage to find the right partners to meet your needs.

Finding people who have all of the skills needed for automation and AWS cloud adoption can be quite challenging. The number of people with the skills, breadth, and depth that are ideal for cloud adoption is limited, but will grow over time. To mitigate this challenge, consider creating a strategy for segmenting skills and competencies into separate roles and growing additional skills in team members through knowledge transfer and experience.

Generate momentum by sponsoring hackathons focused on reinforcing recent learning to harness the flexibility and scalability of cloud-based solutions. Provide a sandbox to experiment in, and allot a percentage of weekly work time to grow skills and keep new learning fresh. As part of the learning structure, encourage the rigor associated with strong DevSecOps practices.

Considerations

- **Do** determine what gaps in skills exist in your organization.
- **Do** map current skills in your organization to new roles being introduced as part of cloud adoption.
- **Do** determine which skills your organization will grow internally and which will be outsourced.
- **Do** develop the cloud skills of those trusted to drive the business, so that the organization can make decisions that are right for it.
- **Do not** only use traditional training models. Consider hosting hackathons, creating a sandbox, and allotting time to practice applying skills.

Organizational Change Management

The Organizational Change Management component of the AWS CAF People perspective provides guidance on the people-related aspects of organizational change that need to be managed through communication and supported with sustainable incentives. For example, staff needs guidance on how to adjust to new business processes and new IT solutions. There are plenty of successful change management models to work from, and it is important to create a plan that maps specifically to changes your organization requires. Change management needs to be guided; it won't occur simply because there is high-priority work to be done.

AWS cloud adoption changes will not just affect the technology teams; they will have an impact on all facets of the organization. For example, the detailed billing information that is possible when you move to the cloud can provide the ability to improve the mapping of IT spend to business segments. In turn, as they reconsider IT capabilities, this could cause a shift in how business managers interact with IT.

To improve flexibility and the acceleration of capability to value, consider enabling your project management office (PMO) to make changes to the project process to enhance feature delivery and align quickly with changing business requirements. Operations and support functions can benefit from making delivery teams part of ongoing support. Consider enabling value by creating smaller development teams that include virtual members from business, procurement, and business operations who focus on deliverables with short timelines for delivery.

Quality teams can benefit from the use of value stream mapping and near real-time data to drive process improvement. By measuring against near real-time data your organization can shift to a more predictive approach to planning and management. For example, if a real code cost is exposed to the development team (such as operational costs going up by five percent because of a code change), the team can make changes based on that information.

The executive leadership team should take some time to think about how success within the organization is measured and rewarded. Many traditional metrics don't align well to innovative cultures that work in an environment based on learning, testing, applying, and then iterating rapidly. Most current measurement systems expect forecasting of long 12- to 24-month projects. An annual funding cycle, combined with success measurement systems that measure in terms of years, can often decrease an organization's ability to become more agile within their product development workstreams.

In all cases, it is important to listen to your workforce and understand how communications are likely to be consumed. Involving your teams in planning and developing the cloud strategy helps them take ownership of the outcomes that are expected. Change management must focus on a few key ideas that are important to success.

First, understand that communicating *why* something needs to be done is far more important than communicating *what* you want someone to do. A person's output is likely to be greater in quality and quantity if that person understands the benefits of the results. Second, understand that you need to communicate how the changes to process, culture, or technology are good not just for the company or community, but how they are also good for the employee. The employee will want to know "what's in it for me" (WIFM); explaining that lets employees know that you are considering them in the change. Finally, it is often overlooked but equally critical to ensure you are considering the losses that an employee might perceive as a result of the changes. Many people would prefer a known issue that they are comfortable with or trained to handle over a state of unknown expectations, results, or issues.

Work closely with human resources (HR) to determine whether the right skills are being identified and the right people are being interviewed for potential employment. Setting up a proactive feedback loop between managers and HR helps accelerate the process of getting the right people into the right positions, and helps to move the organization away from reactive hiring to more predictive hiring.

If you consider making a shift to a mission control style of management, you will need to communicate the business reasons to your workforce. They need to understand that the mission control style is more adaptive and pushes responsibility and accountability closer to where the work is done. For example, by giving development and delivery teams the flexibility to drive and manage project execution along with responsibility for business outcome fit, cost, quality, and time to value, the development teams are better able to make changes in near real time that can have an impact on quality, cost, reliability, and security.

Considerations

- **Do** make changes to process across the organization to enable the agility cloud computing offers.
- **Do** create smaller project teams that include members of the IT and development team as well as other disciplines such as business stakeholders, procurement, and business operations.
- **Do** define success metrics and create incentives aligned to those success metrics.
- **Do** plan for clear and transparent communications of success metrics and performance against goals.
- **Do** work closely with human resource teams to identify and interview for the right cloud skills.

Conclusion

Organizations realize that their people are their greatest asset, and people are paramount to success in any initiative. When you adopt cloud-based services for all or part of your IT portfolio, you will need to consider how processes will change and how you will organize and train your people as part of an adoption strategy.

Creating a CCOE should be a first step; the CCOE can collect information and grow expertise in cloud adoption effort. Examine various approaches and then determine which provides the best fit for your organization's culture. Decide if your organization should separate program and project processes into categories based on size, complexity, and risk. Determine initiatives, model processes, and governance to manage adoption and control of programs.

Consider how you can restructure teams to include all the skills needed to move from creating a cloud vision to operating a solution. Establish strong cross-team communications so you can avoid delays. Determine the skills you need and then create a strategy to ensure that you hire and train for these skills.

Determine how people in your organization will be recognized and given incentives to make the changes needed for efficient cloud adoption.

CAF Taxonomy and Terms

The Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF) is the framework AWS created to capture guidance and best practices from previous customer engagements. A CAF *perspective* represents an area of focus relevant to implementing cloud-based IT systems in organizations. For example, the People perspective takes in to account how the organization and skills of people will need to change to support leveraging cloud-based services from AWS.

Each CAF Perspective is made up of components and activities. A *component* is a sub-area of a perspective that represents a specific aspect that needs attention. This whitepaper explores the components of the People perspective. An *activity* provides prescriptive guidance for creating actionable plans that the organization uses to move to the cloud and to operate cloud-based solutions.

For example, *Skills and Competencies* is one component of the People perspective, and building a few proof of concept (POC) workloads on AWS may be an activity within the component.

When combined, the Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF) and the Cloud Adoption Methodology (CAM) can be used as guidance during your journey to the AWS cloud.

Notes

[1] https://do.awsstatic.com/whitepapers/aws_cloud_adoption_framework.pdf