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Tata Communications GlobalRapide Simplifies UCaaS Migration Through Platform and Services

Siow Meng Soh | December 02, 2021

Summary

Issue

Tata Communications has introduced GlobalRapide, its new integrated managed services for the migration and end-to-end management of unified communications-as-a-service (UCaaS). By bringing together automation and orchestration capabilities onto a single platform, the company is able to help customer migrate UC to the cloud more efficiently. This is a timely move as many enterprises have adopted cloud-based solutions (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, and Zoom) during the pandemic to support remote working. Enterprises now need to consider their longer-term strategy, since there is a demand for hybrid working to improve productivity, employee well-being, and talent retention.

Network carriers have been major providers of communications solutions including unified communications and collaboration (UC&C). The challenge for carriers is to offer greater value to customers beyond reselling products from vendors. This is crucial particularly since vendors have been improving the ease of use and providing tools that can allow enterprises to manage the solutions. They need to develop differentiation since most players now support more or less the same set of vendor products. One way to stay relevant is through professional services and this is a key pillar behind Tata Communications' GlobalRapide. This report discusses how the company aims to shift the focus from the UC&C solutions to the services it can deliver to remove pain points for customers.

Key Takeaways

• With the widespread use of cloud-based collaboration solutions, enterprises now need to consider the roadmap of their UC&C solutions as they look to support hybrid working scenarios.

• In a crowded UC&C market, it is crucial for service providers to differentiate through professional services, managed services, and automation.

• Tata Communications attempts to offer greater value to customers through GlobalRapide which includes end-to-end management through a digital platform.

• GlobalRapide also helps customers through the entire journey from planning, migration of solutions to the cloud, adoption, management and measurement.

• Competing carriers also have the ability to help customers with the migration and Tata Communications needs to further differentiate through consulting and integration with other areas such as contact center, CPaaS and business applications.

Perspective

Current Perspective

Many enterprises have been able to continue to function during lockdowns, thanks to the availability of cloud-based collaboration platforms. These platforms have become more intuitive and user experience has improved dramatically in terms of performance and new features being added by vendors. As the pandemic lingers on, businesses need to ensure that they remain agile; switching back to virtual collaboration when a particular city goes into lockdown. Adjustments also need to be made to the physical workplace and more employers are looking at allowing employees to maintain hybrid working arrangements. This means enterprises need to consider their legacy communications platforms (e.g., whether to replace fixed desk phones with softphones), add new hardware (e.g., digital whiteboards with video capability), and have the visibility into the collaboration solutions (e.g., utilization and performance).

UC&C is a key area for Tata Communications and the company has existing partnerships with Cisco and Microsoft to deliver UCaaS solutions. GlobalRapide is a step further to help enterprises migrate more efficiently their legacy systems to the cloud, through the entire lifecycle, instead of a rip-and-replace. The company has adopted a platform-driven approach to simplify the process and cater to the requirements of different enterprises depending on their existing platforms and requirements. This is aligned to the company's ongoing strategy to leverage digital platforms to build differentiation on top of existing products and services.

GlobalRapide – The Migration Journey

Tata Communications' GlobalRapide aims to help customers through different stages of their migration of UC&C to the cloud. While the company has standardized UCaaS offerings, GlobalRapide extends the services to customers' legacy systems. It helps to consolidate multiple vendor solutions (including those that are not offered by Tata Communications) into one service management construct. Leveraging tools from partners as well as its in-house development, Tata Communications has put in place an all-in-one self-service platform that supports customers along the migration journey. Enterprise often encounter different challenges along each stage of the migration journey and Tata Communications attempts to articulate the value it can bring to customers in overcoming these challenges. While it sees these as the logical sequence in carrying out the migration, the company is also flexible in working with customers based on their current state and requirements:

Assess: Tata Communications operates as a trusted advisor to help customers review their current state, and plan their future state. This involves auditing the current state, helping

customers with requirement gathering and gap analyses, assessing existing network infrastructure (bandwidth capacity, hardware, access points, etc.), and determine risks and performance required for sensitive workloads. The audit and assessment is carried out remotely through Tata Communications' digital tool which enable the discovery process to be completed in a matter of hours. In this phase, the company is able to provide recommendation on the migration, and help customers with challenges such as integration requirements to avoid a rip and replace and overcome problems related to a multi-vendor environment.

Migrate: Tata Communications' value proposition is around removing operational challenges in the UCaaS implementation. The company will take care of the integration and management of multi-vendor solutions. Through automation and its experience in UCaaS implementation, Tata Communications is able to speed up deployment and reduce human errors.

Deploy: This involves ensuring interoperability and consistency across offices in different geographical locations, end-point devices room systems, and cloud-based video-conferencing providers. Tata Communications also helps to ensure network performance and regulatory compliance (e.g., ensure services have been approved for use in regulated emerging markets).

Adopt: Adoption of UC&C tools and features has always been a challenge and a key measure of success in the roll out of a new solution. Tata Communications helps to maximize service adoption and change management through a data-driven approach. It tracks progress on skills and outcomes and provides organizational analysis based on usage. The data help to drive the training needs to ensure high end-user adoption.

Manage: Through the single digital platform, Tata Communications is offering a single pane of glass for visibility into usage, performance, quality and troubleshooting. This also addresses the requirements around security, fraud, and compliance. The company will deliver end-to-end management including end-points, and third-party SIP services in countries where it does not provide domestic voice.

Measure: Tata Communications provides 24/7 support to ensure timely change incident and problem management. This stage involves monitoring of performance and service availability; and the avoidance of service disruption. Tata Communications provides initial triage support for third-party SIP providers in countries where it does not provide domestic voice services. It works with customers' local suppliers to drive the end-to-end closure of incidents on their behalf.

Positives and Concerns

Reselling of cloud collaboration solutions is not an attractive business and service providers offering these solutions need to offer greater value to customers as well as to differentiate in a crowded market. Telcos are able to deliver value through quality of service through their voice and data networks, and technical expertise. However, telcos also need to build stronger

professional services and managed services to win market share.

The past two years saw a flood of new products, like Zoom, alongside a rapid release and development cycle from incumbent suppliers (e.g., Microsoft Teams). Tata Communications' GlobalRapide closes an important gap in terms of its ability to help customers manage their legacy UC while adding new cloud-based collaboration solutions. For companies who are aggressive on cloud adoption, re-evaluating the role of the traditional office, managing legacy will be a moot point. The PBX extension might have moved to Microsoft Teams or Zoom 18 months ago. For companies that maintain a physical office presence, managing legacy is still important. Many MNCs go through mergers and acquisitions and may inherit legacy platforms or may have integration requirements. GlobalRapide offers the flexibility to help customers go through this process and gives Tata Communications a quick win. Through the platform approach, Tata Communications is able to more efficiently deliver the services end-to-end on a global scale. This can bring down the cost and improve customer experience.

GlobalRapide is already in motion and Tata Communications claims that it is being implemented for a few clients, (over 10,000 seats). Moreover, the company is looking at contact center (CC) and communications platform as-a-service (CPaaS) as part of the roadmap for GlobalRapide. The convergence of UCaaS, CCaaS, and CPaaS is enabling organizations to better engage customers across different touch points and not limited to call center agents. The addition of CCaaS and CPaaS will enable Tata Communications to work more closely with customers across different lines of businesses to automate workflows.

However, the company is more focused on delivering the technology and platform, and major carriers also have similar capabilities to support enterprises with the migration – since many of them have been offering premises-based solutions for years. Moreover, some competitors, particularly the system integrators are taking a more holistic approach in workplace and customer experience transformation. This means going beyond just UC and CC solutions, and it can include meeting the needs of HR, facilities managers, and customer acquisition and retention functions. While Tata Communications touts various benefits of GlobalRapide, it should also spell out the service levels being offered, and tangible business outcomes. This can be articulated through customer case studies which will also give credibility and raise interests with prospects.

Recommended Actions

Vendor Actions

• With the emphasis on hybrid working and safe return to work, competitors should engage enterprises in workplace transformation leveraging a range of data and AI driven solutions. For example, HCL can engage customers in digital workplace discussion and promote its Fluid Workplace Solution. HCL can also point to recent wins including Munich Re, BP, and Airbus.

• While Cisco and Microsoft are two leading cloud collaboration providers, there are others in the

market such as Zoom, Google, Citrix, RingCentral, Slack, and more. Tata Communications should also articulate how it can support other vendor solutions besides Cisco and Microsoft. The market is rapidly changing, especially with the growing emphasis on APIs for different communications channels. The recent Ericsson acquisition of Vonage signals more to come.

• Orange Business Services can counter Tata Communications with its comprehensive offering to help customers implement an 'Anywhere Workplace'. This encompasses consulting (business and technical), application integration, end-user device management, connectivity, and security. Orange can also highlight its focus on the needs of different personas (home-worker, transit, office, execs, etc.); business applications integration (e.g., SFDC, ServiceNow, and MSFT Dynamics 365); and continuous UX improvement. As another global carrier, they also have strong network coverage and presence in multiple regions around the world.

User Actions

• Enterprises looking for a technology partner to implement UCaaS and manage both the cloud-based solutions and legacy solutions can evaluate Tata Communications' GlobalRapide. The company is a leading provider of voice and network services; and it has strong expertise in deploying Cisco and Microsoft-based services. With GlobalRapide, Tata Communications is offering customers a more efficient way to migrate their legacy UC to the cloud, and overcome many challenges for global businesses that have operations in multiple counties (e.g., local regulations and support).

• Enterprises should note that GlobalRapide does not require customers to use Tata Communications' network or voice services. The company will have probes within the solution to provide end-to-end monitoring. Customers also do not have to go through the entire process of troubleshooting and isolating faults. Customers do report performance degradation on specific on-net site locations, but often lack the tools and visibility to understand why. End to end monitoring is important. Measuring end-user experience in real-time is the ideal.

• The workplace has undoubtedly changed. The future will be hybrid and moving IT and UC&C applications to the cloud ensures greater operational agility. Enterprises should also take the opportunity to reassess their future workplace, looking at the needs of different workstyles, roles, etc. Crucially, enterprises should also evaluate the network performance and security to support the future workplace arrangements. Cloud-based UC&C is becoming a lot easier to deploy and has been successful in helping customers rip and replace some legacy set-ups with minimal impact on customers.