Adaptivity's BlueprintforIT – BI for IT?

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With a focus on architecture, engineering and operations, **Adaptivity's** BlueprintforIT goes well beyond merely providing a design of functional IT elements, which is no longer acceptable for enterprises where IT is a critical function. IT must reflect and respond to business needs in a much more specific and dynamic way. The blueprints are used to architect and operate the IT infrastructure that fills the datacenter – the design methodology goes as far up the stack as the application. BlueprintforIT is the design engine – a governance engine is due in the fall.

The 451 take

We've taken a good look at BlueprintforIT and have come away impressed by the breadth and depth of the methodology, tooling and user experience. This is not a lightweight offering. Adaptivity believes that there simply isn't enough IT design expertise at large enterprises to create optimal blueprints, and that this can help. Its early users will have a chance to influence its direction, since customer demand plays a significant role in product development and enhancement. Its key use cases are application optimization and acceleration, datacenter consolidation, and cloud computing (public and private). It is often called in to solve a problem with a longtime poorly performing application, where simply adding additional capacity isn't the answer. On the cloud front, BlueprintforIT resembles the cloud assessment services that are growing in popularity, and could be a very useful tool for hosting providers to have in their cloud arsenal.

Adaptivity is now selling BlueprintforIT software for designing the IT that runs inside datacenters. It is effectively business intelligence for IT. It offers an AutoCAD-like design functionality at the front end, with stencils and templates, and can implement rules from a 283-strong set of capabilities, such as whether firmware-based data translation is required or what level of data virtualization can be applied.

The software accepts input from a variety of business, technical and financial variables and profiles a set of workloads that are then allocated to buckets that align to specific resources. The methodology itself has a tuning mechanism that provides different design paths for different business goals; for example – performance, cost, flexibility, quickest time to market, or a combination of these. It can determine when and where to run workloads, applications or classes of applications (.NET or Java, for example).

While Adaptivity delivers a report on system design, it doesn't – unless the customer asks for it – specify particular products. Adaptivity can, however, offer recommendations from its partner set, and can provide instrumentation to ingest data from tools such as Tideway. Adaptivity doesn't get involved in implementation or cut code. It provides blueprint drawings, a bill of materials (what parts are needed) and annotations (guidance on what needs to be done, as well as reports detailing rationale and justification).

Business model

Until the BlueprintforIT had been assembled, Adaptivity was focused principally on creating and selling the component libraries and models, which are the basis of the software, and consulting. Indeed, it has spent the past couple of years codifying the aggregated experience of its executive team members, associates and customers as an underpinning for BlueprintforIT.

Until now, Adaptivity has been running on a multimillion-dollar financial commitment made by its founders. It claims to have done $4m in revenue in 2008, and that its Q1 2010 bookings put it on course to be within striking distance of its goal of doing $10m in revenue in 2010. More than half its business is from software license sales, rather than consulting. Sales can start as low as $50,000, but typical engagements are $200,000 and above. Adaptivity is now seeking funding to take BlueprintforIT to market and develop the business.

Indirect channels will continue to be important for it, and it hopes to win channel partnerships with systems integrators. Although its public reference customers are **Unisys**, **Cisco** and **QUALCOMM** (the first two are also channel partners), Adaptivity has a significant footprint in the investment banking sector, from where its founders and senior team have come from; however, it also has users in other verticals.

The buyer, or at least decision maker, is not IT design or the enterprise architect function (which could see this as a threat), but the line-of-business head or CxO that needs to address a business problem. It's looking at the very biggest Fortune companies.

Competition

There don't appear to be any companies with a directly competing product, although all of the systems integrators offer IT design and system specification. **IBM Global Services** is probably the nearest rival; however, like other services shops, it will require that customers use a raft of different tools and models to accomplish what BlueprintforIT does. Moreover, its business goal is to provide system designs that its own IBM Global Services team would create and deploy. However, Adaptivity sees its tools as complementary in many ways, since in any engagement where it may be used for design instead of IBM, Big Blue is still likely to win the resulting business of implementing the designs.

It's outside of Adaptivity's purview, but a domain problem here is that it's often the case that the people who design a datacenter are not the same as the ones that have to fill it. The closest technology analog for BlueprintforIT is AutoCAD. If IT designers turned to BlueprintforIT as readily as 2-D and 3-D model designers turn to AutoCAD, it wouldn't be out raising money.