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View Point

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Integration Competency Centers

Defining the Right Service Establishment Roadmap

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The Dilemma

Integration Competency Center (ICC) has emerged as an organizational model of choice to service the integration requirements of the enterprise. Different enterprises have evolved their view of the ICC, over a period of time, in line with the need of the hour and integration technology trends. The industries are maturing and Enterprises today are getting better at managing their IT portfolio. One of the most important shifts of the Enterprise evolution is the strategic positioning of the ICC from just being a knowledge and governance Center of Excellence (CoE) to a complete service delivery organization. CoEs are focused around creating the right knowledge, know-hows, tools and standards for the organization with governance authority. A Service Delivery Center brings end-to-end service for all the integration requirements including governance, development, consulting and production support.

Organizations that are looking to create a complete service delivery center, for integration, often find the magnitude of 'change' and associated risks very intimidating. To handle the change properly and de-risk such ICC establishment programs, organizations generally adopt a phased approach to design and deploy various service capabilities for integration, spread over a reasonable time frame. To create such a phased approach, a key concern is the prioritization of the capability deployment. The question of importance is – Between deploy development services, deploy support services and deploy consulting and governance services, which should be given priority? There is no one answer fit for all; it will depend on the scenario of the enterprise and their priorities. This Infosys view-point provides appreciation of what goes into the analysis and prioritization of the service capability deployment roadmap.

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The Starting Point – ICC service view

Throughout this paper, ICC is assumed to be the total service delivery center for integration, where integration is considered as an integral and critical portfolio of IT. To set the context for the discussion, provided below is a typical service map for the ICC:

1. Consulting Services – These are the services on which the ICC subject matter experts will engage with other business stakeholder and provide analysis, assessment, decision making, and enablement services. Key services in this category are:
    a. Product evaluation
    b. Input to strategy and architecture blueprint definition
    c. Proof-of-concepts
    d. Feasibility analysis
    e. Budgetary estimates for integration solution
2. Governance Services – These are the services on which the ICC subject matter experts will engage with other teams to provide governance of the integration requirements and solution. Key services in this category are:
    a. Solution architecture review
    b. Architecture/design troubleshooting
    c. Standards and guidelines definition
    d. Development of common platform components/ framework
    e. Governance of reuse
3. Solution Implementation Services – Theses services are offered by the ICC to engage with business initiatives for providing total integration solution life-cycle management. Key services in this category are:
    a. Integration program/project management
    b. Requirements definition and analysis
    c. Architecture and design definition
    d. Solution build
    e. All testing
    f. Production deployment
4. Support and Operations Services – Theses services are required to maintain the availability of the production integration environment and take care of various operational needs for on-going maintenance of the integration landscape. Key services in this category are:
    a. 24x7 monitoring and availability management
    b. Minor enhancements
    c. Problem and incident management
    d. Upgrades
    e. Capacity planning
    f. Release management
    g. Product vendor management
    h. Software license management
    i. Integration environment management

Key Aspects of the Service Deployment Roadmap

Let us inspect the key factors that play a vital role in defining the service deployment roadmap.

Aspects	Direction
Existing needs	• If the existing needs are to support the key business initiatives or transformation programs, in terms of resources and entire life-cycle management of delivery, then development services are important to be addressed first. • If the existing needs are to bring standardization, consistency and quality (while resourcing scalability and resource utilization is not that big a challenge in the current model), then organizations should address the governance and consulting services first. • If the existing need is to have the production stabilization and production team optimization to reduce cost, improve service levels and enhance better service quality, in that case, production support service should take priority.
Existing integration landscape	• If there isn't any integration infrastructure in place and the organization is starting afresh on integration, then the answer is simple - focus on consulting and development services first. • If the existing integration production solutions are already in place, then the stability of the production performance (in terms of SLA, costs, etc.) will be key to decide the preference for establishment of the production support services. If the production is not stable, then moving new solutions into the production portfolio will only aggravate the existing problems. • Multiplicity of technologies – if there are multiple technologies in the portfolio, organizations should focus on deploying the governance and consulting services first, and then consolidate the development services portfolio (assuming production support is in control).
Change readiness	• If an organization can commit to bandwidth from their Subject Matter Experts and leaders, services should be designed and kept in 'build to deploy' state so that, depending on the priority and pace of change that organizations can afford, various service capabilities are deployed one by one. • If an organization can't handle the fast change and has issues with its own bandwidth to spend on 'transformation', it needs to focus on the sub-services level capability deployment at a slow pace. For such organizations, starting with governance service is important to enable the effectiveness of subsequent changes.
Future initiatives	• If there are a significant number of initiatives lined up for which development integration services are required, organization should start with strengthening the governance services across all initiatives. Organizations can consider bringing couple of initiatives into the ICC development portfolio while rest can continue as they are being delivered traditionally. As these initiatives reach closer to production deployment stage, production support capability readiness should gain focus. • If there isn't much integration work anticipated, organization should establish the governance services and focus on production services deployment (assuming there is something in production already).

In summary, here is the how different services can be looked at for their priority:

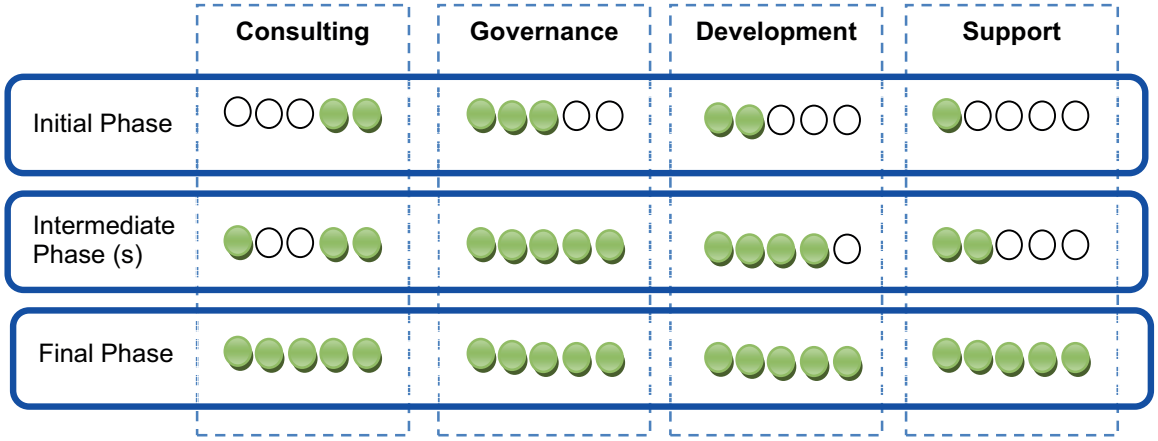
- Consulting – if the existing delivery capability at project level is fine, the production is in control. However, larger issues like integration strategy, high-level solution, technical decision making etc. are challenges that an organization must address with proper focus and quality.
- Governance – if the project delivery is not a threat, but solution quality - including standardization, consistency, compliance, etc. - is an issue that is resulting in production support complexity (but current production is in control).
- Development – if project delivery is a challenge including resources, cost, time to deliver, unit level conflicts, etc., but production is in control.
- Production support – if production is burning in terms of service levels, costs, availability, etc.

Multi-track approach when everything is important

In case an organization can't isolate one single capability area that is a clear candidate for taking up initial deployment, it should follow the multi-track approach to balance the needs. In the multi-track approach, all services (or multiple services) lie within the focus of the ICC establishment initiative at the same time. However, the scope of the services can be controlled, depending on the intensity of the needs of the individual services areas. So, for example, an organization in the beginning could choose to:

- completely focus on governance services in end-to-end capacity
- only the key services within development (say testing and deployment services) for immediate needs
- production support team restructuring taken up as immediate change while current processes are continued to be followed.

A Schematic representation of this approach is shown below.



Separating 'Services' from 'Functions' in the roadmap

This view-point paper has discussed the service view of the ICC, which is an external view for the rest of the organization. However, it is very important for ICC to have a range of capabilities (internal functions) to be able to support the services being offered in a scalable and structured manner. Such internal capabilities of the ICC must be considered to be ready from day 1 to support the services as per the roadmap of service capability establishment. Some of such key internal capabilities that must be established are:

- ICC organization structure, roles and responsibilities
- ICC engagement model
- ICC work order demand management
- ICC governance (internal)
- ICC funding model

Further to that, as different ICC services are being planned for deployment, organizations will have to consider the internal capabilities and shared services that are necessary for ICC services being deployed. For example, for development services, ICC will have to consider the following capabilities:

- Release management
- Deployment management
- Test management
- Configuration management
- Change management
- Solution gating process
- Etc.

In a nutshell, for meaningful deployment of ICC, the ICC roadmap should be driven by their choice of ICC service deployment priorities and needs to include and align various ICC capabilities or the internal functions

About the Author

Rakesh Mishra is a senior principal consultant with Infosys Limited with more than 11 years of experience in Integration. Rakesh specializes in Integration Strategies and Integration Competency Centers and has helped various fortune 500 companies to make right technology and architecture decisions to set up enterprise-wide integration strategies that deliver business value from integration.