Vodacom and Novell Are Changing the Rules

by Eric Harper

We’ve all heard the adage, “you can have it fast, good or cheap–pick two.” Cloud computing may be the one thing that turns that adage on its head with promises of all three. And no one is making that case better than Vodacom Hosted Services in South Africa using Novell technology.

First of all, let’s define what we’re talking about when we use the term Cloud Computing, because it can mean different things to different people. We use expressions like Software as a Service (SaaS), Storage as a Service (StaaS), Hardware as a Service (HaaS), etc. You can describe just about any IT characteristic this way. So maybe the best way to look at Cloud Computing is to take our mind out of the idea of buying things to run IT and into the concept of buying the ability to do things.

With this approach, businesses can focus on getting the services they need without the worry of vendor lockdown and typical technology constraints. And Cloud Computing isn’t an all-or-nothing scenario for most companies. Most organizations that implement some sort of Cloud use a hybrid approach where workloads are split between the data center, a private Cloud and a public Cloud.

That is the type of infrastructure that Vodacom (part of the Vodafone family) set out to create when they launched Vodacom Business Services in 2008. And since the organization is so new, they didn’t have to worry about the shackles of a legacy infrastructure, hacked and patched together over the years. Now they are the only service provider in Africa to provide such an extended set of services.

> Fast

Richard Vester, executive head of hosted services at Vodacom Business Services said, “Customers in corporate South Africa want to know how they can address the challenges of the future. Vodacom Business Services addresses this today through Cloud Manager.” In fact, for the NOW-ology seminar at the Vodacom World event in South Africa last September. Vester, assisted by Markus J. Krauss, VP of service providers for Novell EMEA, added virtual servers on a live system operating in the Vodacom data center.

They configured the servers with the required operating systems, databases, and applications. In addition, they set the access rights, security levels, and compliance rules—all of that in less than ten minutes. In the physical world, such a feat would take at least eight hours. Not to mention the time required to procure the hardware and get it shipped to your location.

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> Good
Clearly, working in the cloud is fast, but how does it perform once it’s set up? According to Vester, “Most global service providers sell virtual machines. Very few sell flexible workloads. Cloud Manager translates technology into business sense. It is changing the way that you have the ability to onboard more resources in a completely automated way.”

Cloud Manager lets customers take advantage of a wide range of business services. Using Workload IQ solutions from Novell, Vodacom supports their business customers IT environments through workload migration, virtual and physical data replication and protection to achieve a scalable Cloud, managed and controlled with Novell Cloud Manager. It’s a highly efficient way to do business.

With state-of-the-art data centers in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, Vodacom customers have complete flexibility in workload deployment. Risk is mitigated, as customers can spread the risk across multiple locations to ensure an appropriate disaster recovery solution.

Cloud Manager also extends the service level agreements (SLAs), allowing customers to choose whatever levels—gold or platinum—they require.

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> And Cheap
So Vodacom and Novell provide services that save you time. And they’re full of features you can’t find anywhere else. But do these benefits come at a cost that only the very rich can afford? On the contrary. With Cloud Computing, you can actually save money over the traditional in-house data center. The flexibility it provides is the key.

Many customers today require greater infrastructure resources at different times of the month or year. Typically, an in-house data center must be built to handle those peaks, even if the extra resources stand idle during the valleys. With the shared resources provided in the Cloud, customers can increase service capabilities only when they need it. And, just as important, reduce them again when they don’t.

Remember, customers are buying the service—the capabilities—not the underlying technology. With these solutions provided by Vodacom and Novell, even SMB customers can take advantage of economies of scale. Running a modern data center is increasingly costly, as you most surely know. It makes a lot more sense to leverage shared resources in an external cloud.
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“Cloud computing means significant cost reductions when it comes to high availability and redundancy,” Vester said. Novell’s Krauss agrees, “The partnership between Novell and Vodacom is helping business customers achieve a more secure, scalable and cost-effective computing environment.”

> **Conclusion**

So, the adage, “Fast, good or cheap—pick two” may still apply to auto repair and home construction, but it doesn’t need to be that way for your IT infrastructure. Vodacom and Novell have proven that point. In South Africa, these two companies have worked together to give businesses significant cost savings through highly-efficient and flexible Cloud Computing services. It’s time CIOs start thinking in terms of these services so they can take advantage of a different strategy for 21st century computing.