



Eddy Pauwels, Product Marketing Director, Serena Software, discusses with **S Meera** the need of Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) in managing the development process with greater visibility

? What are some of the challenges today for ALM? Why have ALM focus?

Since the dotcom bubble burst, compliances have become mandatory to protect business. Many organizations have started to run and evaluate their IT departments again more financially, which implies that the actual costs and activities need to be traced and justified. As most IT organizations were run without much formal process or controls, obtaining the right information as well as making the right decisions is not easy to do.

An ALM suite provides a solution for this. An ALM suite first needs to seamlessly interface with the tools that are used during the development process. These can be Word documents (for requirements), modelling tools, development tools (like Eclipse or Visual Studio), building tools (like ANT, MAKE), testing tools (like Test Director), etc., seamlessly because the resources working with these tools do not want to be disturbed in doing their job as it side tracks them. As they need to collaborate and exchange working elements with each other, in a time where more pieces of the work are done in different locations, an ALM suite needs to have ways to integrate and share information between the different tools in the process. Finally, as management wants to optimise efficiency, insight and controls need to be in place to monitor the overall process. To achieve that, an ALM solution needs to capture the necessary meta data to enable this level of business management. For them, the ALM suite is their decision support system for application development. As mergers and acquisitions are more the rule than the exception these days, an

“ India is ahead in terms of process maturity

Q&A Eddy Pauwels

ALM solution needs to be an agnostic platform and used methodology in order to be agile when the business context changes.

We do see however that in many organizations, pieces of the ALM puzzle have already been filled, for example people might have a requirements management solution, or a change management solution. When people are happy with these solutions, they typically don't want to see it replaced by another solution, just for the sake of having an ALM suite. This results in a headache for many organizations as integration needs to be built and maintained between the existing and new technologies.

Serena recognized this issue and, to help resolve this costly problem, has proposed and created an open source project within the Eclipse community called ALF (application lifecycle framework). The ALF framework is an open source framework to help ALM related tools to interoperate with each other, avoiding the many potential point-to-point integrations. Using ALF tool only needs to have one single integration (based on Web services) and this is with the ALF framework.

What is the roadmap for ALM?

The trend today is to evolve from managing single project execution over to the management of the portfolio of projects. Companies start to realize that current ALM solutions can support the optimal execution of a project, making it on time and on budget, but as the original demand has changed, no longer on target.

For addressing this, Serena has acquired a PPM solution and will shortly announce a tool as part of the suite.

We will extend our ALM offering with this new technology to be able to quantify and analyze the overall contribution to the bottom line of the business of IT development, given the limited resources it has available. We will do this by optimizing the execution as well as optimize the portfolio support within IT. All this with traceability and audit ability in mind.

What about the trends and needs on SOA?

SOA can help reduce development costs through service reuse. When implemented well, SOA can dramatically boost the productivity of development organizations.

Not all SOA initiatives are implemented well, however. Projects fail when IT organizations focus on technical rather than business reasons for moving to SOA. SOA can be expensive to implement, and without sound business reasons, the prom-

ised RoI never materializes.

SOA governance brings a disciplined approach to SOA-based development projects. However, if you ask organizations what SOA governance means, you get a different definition from each of them. Many (driven by the tool vendors) approach SOA governance from an operational perspective. This is needed, as in an SOA application, services are not always under the control of the application developer. Performance, availability and SLAs need to be monitored. In SOA governance, we believe however that it should be taken back to the initial business requirement for the application and have control over the development process as well, the application as well as the service component that might need to be built. The latter is closely linked to ALM, and clearly an area we as Serena are focusing on as well.

What are the prospects in India?

India is ahead in terms of process maturity, as is evident from the number of companies that are at CMM Level 5. Even in Europe, many are still at level 2. However, what Indian companies do lack is a management tool, and we believe we have huge opportunity in this area.

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The strategy for India includes enhancing marketing and support. Till now, we were marketing directly. Now, we will be tying up with ISVs and channel partners. We installed a toll free line for customer support. We also added an office in Delhi, in addition to the one in Bangalore, started in 2004. Indirect selling is our focus this year. We are also having a product launch in June this year, and there will be several technology events to promote branding and awareness. Financial services and defense are the main target industries this year, especially since compliance and regulations play a big role in both these industries. ●

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