

# THECUBE INTERVIEW AWS RE:INVENT 2022: VODAFONE GERMANY - SAFE AGILE JOURNEY TO AWS CLOUD

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Speakers:

- Christoph Scholtheis, Head of DevOps & Infrastructure, Vodafone Germany**
- Emanuele Baldassarre, Accenture AWS Business Group Europe Delivery Lead**
- Philip Schmökel, Senior Manager – Accenture Technology**

>> Hi everyone, welcome to theCUBE's coverage of AWS Reinvent 2022. This is a part of our AWS Executive Summit at AWS Reinvent, sponsored by Accenture. I'm your host, Lisa Martin. I've got three guests here with me, Christoff Scholtheis, head of DevOps and infrastructure at Vodafone Germany joins us, as well as Ema Baldassarre, the Accenture AWS Business Group Europe Delivery lead at Accenture, and Philip Schmokei, senior manager at Accenture Technology. We're going to be talking about what Vodafone Germany is doing in terms of its agile transformation of business and IT. Gentlemen, it's great to have you on theCUBE, welcome to the program.

>> Thank you, thanks for having us.

>> My pleasure. Christoff, let's go ahead and start with you. Talk to us about what Vodafone Germany is doing in its transformation project with Accenture and with AWS.

>> Certainly Lisa, but let me first start with explaining what Vodafone does in general. So Vodafone is one of the leading telecom and technology service providers in Germany. Half of all German citizens are Vodafone customers using Vodafone technology to access the internet, make calls, and watch TV. In the economic sector, we provide connectivity for office farms and factories. So this is Vodafone's largest business and IT transformation, and we are happy to have several partners on this journey. With more than a thousand people working in scaled agile framework, with eight agile release trains, and one of the largest safe implementations in Europe. Why are we doing this transformation? Well, not only since the recent uncertainties, the telecom market is highly volatile, and there are few changes that Vodafone was facing in the last years. As there are market changes caused by disruptions from technological advances in competitors, or changing customer customized with (indistinct) who, for example, use more over the top services like Netflix or Amazon Prime Video. What is coming up in the next wave is unknown, so technologies evolve, continual disruption from non telcos is to be expected, and being able to innovate fast is the key focus for



everyone in order to be able to react to that. We need to cope with that, and do so in different aspects to become the leading digital technology company. Therefore, Vodafone Germany is highly simplifying its products, as well as processes, for example, introducing free product upgrades for our customers. We're driving the change from the business perspective, and modernize the IT landscape, which we call the technology transformation. So simply business led, but IT-driven. For that, Accenture is our integration partner, and AWS provides the services for our platforms.

>> Got it. Thank you for the background on Vodafone, the impact that it's making. You mentioned the volatility in the telecom market and also setting the context for what Vodafone Germany is doing with Accenture and AWS. Ema, I want to bring you into the conversation now. Talk to us about the partnership between Accenture, and Vodafone, and AWS. And how is it set up to provide maximum value for customers?

>> Yeah, that's a great question, actually. Well, I mean, working in partnership allows, obviously, to bring in transparency and trust. And these are key starting points for a program of this magnitude. And the program like this comes out of strong willingness to change the game, both internally and on the market. So as you can imagine, particular attention is required, that top level alignment. In general, when you implement a program like this, you also need to couple the long term vision of how you want to manage your customers, what are the new products that you want to bring to the market with the long term technology roadmap?

Because the thing that you don't want to happen is that you invest many years and a lot of effort, and then when it comes the end of the journey, you figure out that you have to restart a new journey, and then you enter in an never ending loop. So obviously, all these things must come together. And they come together in what we call the power of three. And it consists in AWS, Vodafone, and Accenture having a strategic vision alignment and constant updates, and most importantly, the best of breed in terms of

technology and also people.

So what we do in practice is we bring together market understanding, business vision, technical expertise, agile collaboration. And what is even more important, we work as a unique team. Everybody succeeds here, and this is a true win-win partnership. More specifically, Vodafone leads the strategic direction, obviously. They understand the market, they're close to their customers. AWS provides all the expertise around the cloud infrastructure, insights on the roadmap, and this is a key element, elasticity, both technical but also financial. And then Accenture comes with its ability to deliver with strong industry expertise, flexibility. And when you combine all these ingredients together, obviously, you understand it's easy to succeed together.

>> The power of three, it sounds quite compelling. It sounds like a very strong partnership that has a lot of flexibility, elasticity, as you mentioned. And obviously, the customer, at the end of the day, benefits tremendously from that. Christoff, I'd like to bring you back into the conversation. Talk to us about the unified platform approach. How is, walk us through how Vodafone is implementing it with AWS and with Accenture.

>> So the applications that formed the basis for the transformation program, we were originally pursuing all kinds of approaches for deployment and use of AWS services in order to support faster adoption and optimize the usage that I mentioned before. And we have provided the Vodafone cloud framework that has been the trusted platform for several projects within the IT in Germany. As a side effect, the framework facilitates the compliance with Vodafone security requirements and the unified approach also has the benefit that someone who is moving from one team to another will find a structure that looks familiar. The best follow of the framer though is the operative rights deployment process that helps us reducing the timeframe, implementing for example, a new stage from a few weeks to meet ours, and that together with improvements of the CICD pipeline greatly helped us reducing the time to spin off



something and deploy the software on it in order to reach our target KPIs.

The unified platform provides all kinds of setups like AWS, EKS, and the ecosystem that is commonly used with compound interest like service manage monitoring, logging and tracing, but it can also be used for non (indistinct) applications that we have and provide the integration with security monitoring and other tools. At the moment, we are in contact with other markets of Vodafone, to globally share our experience in our code, which makes introducing a similar system into other markets straight forward. We are also continuously proving our approach, and the completely new version of the framework is currently being introduced into the program.

>> I can imagine that what Vodafone Germany is doing is really kind of setting the stage, as you mentioned, Christoff, for other parts of the business to want to learn from. So that's a great thing there that what you're building is really going to spread throughout the organization and make a positive impact. Philip, let's bring you into the conversation now. Let's talk about how you're using AWS specifically to build the new Vodafone cloud integration platform. Talk to us about that as part of this overall transformation program.

>> Sure, and let's make it even more specific, let's talk API management. So looking at the program, and from a technology point of view, what it really is, it is a bold step for Vodafone. It's rebuilding huge parts of the infrastructure of the business IT infrastructure on AWS. It's greenfield, it's new, it's a bold step, I would say. And then if you put the perspective of API management or integration architecture, what I call it, it's a unique opportunity at the same time. So what it gives you is the the opportunity to build the API management layer on API platform with standardized APIs right from the get go. So from the beginning, you can build the API platform on top, which is in contrast what we see throughout the industry, where we see huge programs at our clients and other engagements that try to build these layers as well, but they're building them on legacy.

So that really makes it unique here for Vodafone and unique opportunity to have this API first

platform built as part of the transformation program. So what we have been built is exactly this platform, and as of today, there is more than 50 standardized APIs throughout the application landscape already available. To give you a few examples, there is an API where I can change customer data. For instance, I can change the payment method of a customer straight from an API. Or I can reboot a customer equipment right from an API to fix a network issue. Other than that, of course, I can submit an order to order one of Vodafone's gigabit internet offerings. So on top of the platform, there's a developer portal, which gives me the option to explore all of the APIs in a convenient way in the portal.

And that's developer experience, meaning I can log into this portal, look through the APIs, understand what I need, and just try it out directly from the portal. I see the response of an API live in the portal, and it is really in contrast to what we see before where you would have a long word document, a cumbersome spreadsheet, a long lasting process to get your hands on, and this really gives you the opportunity to just go in, try out an API, and see how it works. So it's really developer experience and a big step forward here. Then yeah, how have we built this platform? Of course, it's running on AWS, it's cloud native, it's using EKS, but what I want to point out here is three principles that we applied, where the first one is of course, a cloud native principle.

Meaning we are using EKS, we are using containers, we have infrastructure to scales, so we aim for every component being cloud native being meant to be run in the cloud. So our infrastructure will sleep at night to save Vodafone cost, and it will wake up for the Christmas business, where Vodafone intends to do the biggest business and scale up its platform. Second, there is the aim for open API specifications. What we aim for is non-vendor specific APIs, so it should not matter whether there's an MDOC backend, there's a net cracker backend, or an SAP behind these APIs. It is really meant to decouple the different business systems of Vodafone by these APIs that can be applied by a new custom front end or by a new business to business application to integrate these APIs.



Last but not least, there's the automate everything. So there's infrastructure as code all around our platform, where I would say the biggest magic of cloud is if we were to lose our production environment, lose all APIs today, it will take us just a few minutes to get everything back. And with everything, I mean, redeploy the platform, redeploy all APIs, all services, do the configuration again, and it will be back in a few minutes.

>> That's impressive as downtime is so costly for so many different reasons. How are we going to know when the vision of this transformation project, when it's been achieved? How are you going to know that?

>> Okay, so it's kind of flipping the perspective a bit. Maybe when I joined Vodafone in late 2019, I would say the vision for Vodafone was already set. And it was really well put out there, it was lift in the organization. It was for Vodafone to become a digital company. To become a digital service provider. To get the engineering culture into the company. And I would say this vision has not changed until today. Maybe now call it a North Star, and maybe pointing out two big milestones that have been achieved with this transformation program. So we've talked about the safe framework already. So with this program, we rolled out one of the biggest save implementations in the industry, which is a big step for Vodafone in its agile journey.

As of today, there's the safe framework supporting more than 1000 FTE, or 1000 colleagues working and providing value in the transformation program. Second example or second big milestone was the first go live of the program. So moving stuff to production, really proving it works, showcasing to the business that it is actually working. There is actually value provided or constant value provided with a platform. And then of course, you are asking for next steps, right? Talking next steps, there is a renewed focus on value. And a renewed focus on value between Accenture and Vodafone means focus on what really provides the most value to Vodafone. And I would like to point out two things here. The first being migrate more

customers.

Scale the platform, really prove the cloud native platform by migrating more customers to it, and then second, it enables you to decommission the legacy stacks. Decommissioning legacy stacks is why we are doing it, right? So it's migrating to the new, migrating to the new platform. So last but not least, maybe you can hear it. We will continue this journey together with Vodafone to become a digital company, or to say that in their own words, from telco to telco.

>> I love that from telco to technical. Gentlemen, thank you so much for joining us on theCUBE today, talking about the power of three Accenture, AWS, Vodafone. How you're really enabling Vodafone to transform into that digital technology company that consumers at the end of the day, the demanding consumers want. We appreciate your insights and your time. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you for having us.

>> My pleasure. For my guests, I'm Lisa Martin. You're watching theCUBE's coverage of the AWS Executive Summit at AWS Reinvent, sponsored by Accenture. Thanks for watching.

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