Hybrid cloud aids in the design and deployment of innovative business applications

Cloud brokerage solutions narrow the production gap between IT and development

Highlights

Cloud brokerage solutions help organizations develop and deploy the type of innovative applications that fuel business. These solutions:

- Provide an automated, end-to-end model for designing, provisioning, scaling, testing and deploying new applications

- Automate and integrate delivery processes to meet the speed requirements of DevOps and the technological and governance concerns of ITOps

- Provide standardized solution blueprints to work across cloud vendors, easing deployment and helping organizations avoid vendor lock-in

New applications fuel business and disrupt industries. Just consider how ride-sharing apps impact the taxi industry; how home sharing programs cut into hotel profits; and how banking applications lure new customers through photo-deposit capabilities that free many people from ever having to visit a branch.

No wonder, then, that developing and deploying innovative applications is top-of-mind for both IT leaders and developers. While developers typically use public cloud capabilities to quickly design new apps, these programs often don't make it to market as speedily as they could.

Why? Too often, organizational divides separate development and ITOps. Developers can easily purchase public cloud capabilities to design new apps, but time-to-market is slowed by manual IT processes for governance, testing and preparing the app for production. These processes often cause a series of bottlenecks as applications move from development to testing to production, because a translation of infrastructure requirements, application code and change management is required at each step. These bottlenecks can grow significantly worse during large-scale deployments.

To speed things up, IT needs an automated, end-to-end model for designing, provisioning, scaling, testing and deploying new applications. IBM® Cloud Brokerage Solutions can help.

Bridging the divide between IT and development

IBM Cloud Brokerage Solutions automates and integrates delivery processes to meet the speed requirements of DevOps and the technological and governance concerns of ITOps. The solution allows organizations to model once, then—employing a standard process for continuous delivery—integrate, deploy and operate on a variety of cloud platforms. Solution blueprints help development teams to deploy apps quickly, reliably and continuously in alignment with a sophisticated but non-intrusive governance structure. Orchestration capabilities allow organizations to deploy, manage and scale numerous apps on a variety of platforms. This orchestration is especially important in large-scale deployments, where the manual processes are particularly time consuming.

Environmental services company works with IBM to reduce cloud procurement times

An environmental services company was taking too long to procure requested IT services, resulting in a request backlog. Working with IBM Cloud Brokerage Solutions, the company was more easily able to compare cloud offerings, then quickly deploy environments for application development, testing and production. In fact, resource procurement time dropped 92 percent, from 60 days to 5. As a result of working with IBM, the company was also able to improve cloud reliability. It realized savings through scalability: infrastructure costs dropped 72 percent, from USD59,000 to USD16,999. In addition, the company reduced management complexity and improved user support with IBM Cloud Brokerage Services 24x7 customer service.

The IBM Cloud Brokerage Solution platform offers a pre-seeded catalog of cloud offerings—including those from IBM BlueMix® Infrastructure, VMware, Amazon and Microsoft—which can be augmented with cloud choices of the organization's choosing. The platform provides an "apples to apples" view of cloud offerings—including information on capabilities, security and cost—that can help IT more quickly determine which cloud mix is appropriate for its business.

The platform then helps IT easily define solution blueprints. These are virtual containers housing infrastructure specifications for certain categories of applications. These containers are code-based and standardized to work across cloud vendors. Such standardization eases deployment and helps organizations avoid vendor lock-in.

When it comes time to design a new application, developers access the IBM Cloud Brokerage platform's service store. There, developers choose an app-specific blueprint for the type of application they wish to design. While these blueprints have been defined by IT, they are customizable according to different development needs, and can be used in conjunction with existing design tools. Choice of blueprint automatically triggers provisioning of infrastructure and middleware.

Upon completion of app design, the development team saves its blueprint, and quality assurance teams are notified that the app is ready for testing. Quality assurance can then access the saved blueprint, provision a cloud environment and begin testing. Once testing is complete, IT is notified. IT can then provision a production environment and deploy the app. Blueprints also help IT track versioning and configuration changes.

IBM Cloud Brokerage Solutions typically provide organizations with:

- Automation of the application lifecycle
- Faster and less costly application deployment
- Improved ease of large-scale deployments
- Reduction or elimination of deployment bottlenecks

Improving the management of cloud environments

Applications only run as well as the clouds underpinning them. But managing a hybrid cloud environment environment—one that merges on-premises IT and private clouds with an array of purpose-bought public clouds—can be challenging. Here, too, IBM Cloud Brokerage Solutions can help.

The solution helps organizations plan, buy and manage services across cloud models, regardless of provider, while providing IT divisions with significantly improved visibility and governance. This solution's single, holistic view of cloud offerings from numerous purveyors helps IT professionals more easily vet and manage services (see Figure 1). The solution also helps establish a unified system for managing applications across environments. Additional capabilities provide for cost tracking and cost control.

The IBM Cloud Brokerage platform's cloud comparison capability can help IT more easily determine the right cloud for the right application. The tool normalizes costs and capabilities for side-by-side comparisons. This capability can save organizations the significant amount of time required to compare clouds manually. An accompanying visual design tool includes synchronization capabilities to consolidate computing assets into a single architectural view. This helps organizations better design hybrid cloud environments.
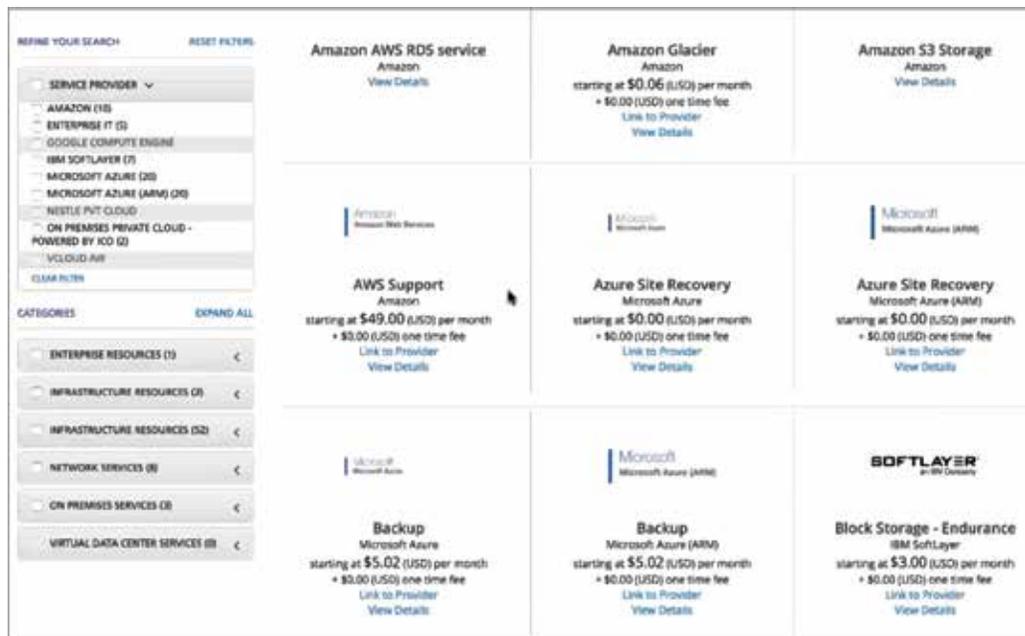

Figure 1. IBM Cloud Brokerage Solutions provides a single view of cloud offerings from a number of different vendors.

The IBM Cloud Brokerage platform offers significant automation capabilities. But no cloud solution is completely automated, and many organizations would prefer to spend their time focusing on technological innovation rather than on performing necessary cloud management tasks. That's why the services component of IBM Cloud Brokerage Solutions is so important. These can start with IBM cloud architects working with internal IT teams to build custom cloud deployment strategies. IBM operations managers can also work with internal IT to track, monitor and manage infrastructure and applications across different clouds and traditional IT systems. These services, coupled with the automation capabilities of the IBM Cloud Brokerage platform, can help narrow the operations gap between IT and development, and speed to market the types of applications that propel business.

For more information

Talk to an IBM expert in detail about your hybrid journey, or contact an IBM sales advisor at 1-877-426-3287. For more information, visit the following website:
ibm.biz/brokerageservices