



Accelerating cloud innovation in financial services

Accenture delivers hybrid and multicloud blueprints for financial enterprises

by Rob Spencer
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The financial industry is catching up, fast. In recent years, as other industries rapidly evolved through the adoption of cloud technology, the financial sector lagged as its heavy layers of regulations took time to align to the new technology landscape.

But IT leaders in the industry saw the innovations elsewhere and were eager to adapt them to finance and banking. When the global pandemic made faster cloud adoption imperative, it also forced regulatory innovations. The flood gates opened. Now, financial enterprises are aggressively developing cloud strategies. But they still need to minimize risk.

That's why Accenture created the Accenture Cloud Innovation Center (ACIC) for Financial Services, an open hybrid and multicloud, enterprise-ready reference environment based on recommendations from the Swiss financial market supervisory authority (FINMA). The ACIC for Financial Services is both a technology platform and a workshop program that allows financial enterprises to work with Accenture to design effective solutions or discuss challenges for their organizations— independently from customers' existing technology and data.

The ACIC for Financial Services brings together an ecosystem of public cloud, hybrid cloud, security and automation resources, including [IBM Cloud Pak®](#) solutions and the [Red Hat® OpenShift®](#) container platform.

Providing flexibility to innovate, risk-free

Although demand for cloud in the financial sector is massive and urgent, the companies, of course, are still risk averse. Data security and compliance with evolving regulations remain top priorities.

Accenture recognized the critical need for financial organizations to gain experience in cloud and work toward ideal solutions in a risk-free manner.

“In the financial industry, it will always be about minimizing risk, maximizing gains,” says Guido Greber, Accenture’s ACIC for Financial Services Lead. “These companies couldn’t simply leap to a cloud. They needed to tactically develop the right cloud environment for their business.”

Rather than having customers design solutions on a blank slate, the ACIC taps the skills and expertise of the Accenture Cloud First business unit to create

enterprise-ready, compliance-ready “blueprints” for common, high-value use cases in the industry (e.g., Compostable Enterprise, App Containerization and more). Based on open-source technology and developed in a decoupled style, the blueprints are highly flexible, so when customers engage the ACIC, Accenture advisors help them to understand the applicable blueprints and adapt them to the customers’ needs.

But to provide each customer with a private space where it could apply its own particular requirements to the blueprints—and call on the right mix of public and hybrid cloud and on-premises resources to do so—Accenture needed a way to provide a hybrid and multicloud container platform, on demand, for any customer.

As Greber puts it: “The cloud environment should be accessible to every authorized



person, at any time and from any place, no matter whether it is on premises for regulatory compliance or hosted in a public cloud by IBM, Azure, Google or AWS.”

The ACIC for Financial Services has served

~ 30

Fortune 100 financial enterprises

For these clients, it has conducted

> 45

discovery workshops, driving industry innovation



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Provisioning and managing hybrid/multiclouds

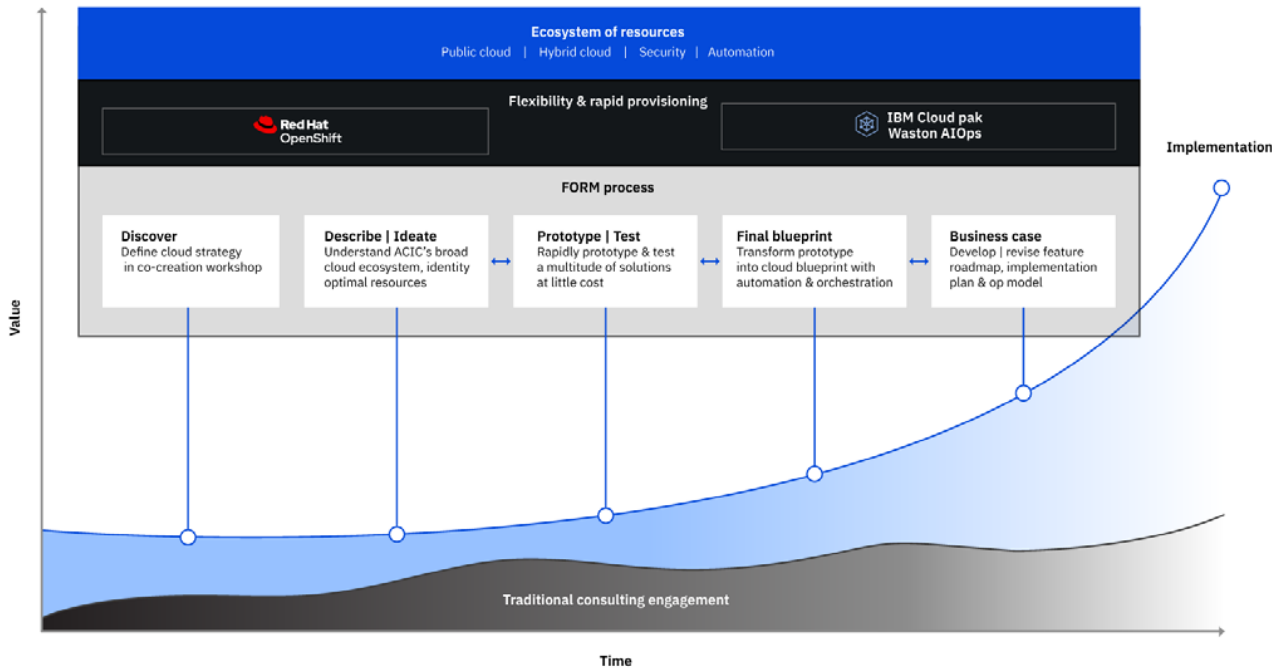
The key to flexibly provisioning the blueprints and adjusting them to unique customer requirements is containerization, and Accenture uses Red Hat OpenShift as the primary container platform for the ACIC. Additional Kubernetes services are also available in the customer environments, but the ACIC's back end is containerized with OpenShift, enabling Accenture to mix and match cloud platforms and tools as needed.

While containerization provides flexibility, being able to rapidly meet customers' needs depends on two key capabilities: automated provisioning and unified management across the ACIC technology stack. For those, Accenture uses the multicloud management tools from IBM Cloud Pak for Watson AIOps. From a single, centralized set of controls, Accenture can provision any environment, any combination of resources from its open ecosystem of cloud platforms and tools.



Accelerating operational readiness in the ACIC for Financial Services

Accenture's FORM Process quickly, flexibly builds a stable foundation for innovation



Accenture uses these capabilities to build new use cases—new blueprints—all the time, prioritized based on market relevance and classified by four categories:

- Industry use cases
- Event-driven architecture
- Compliance and security
- Operations

The focus is on developing the most pragmatic, useful use cases that will drive the greatest value for customers. Greber says that rather than following the popular “MVP” paradigm—the minimum viable product—the ACIC instead focuses on the “MIP”: the meaningful impact product. “If you create impact and people like it,” he says, “then you can build on that.” He likens the process to a restaurant. “We closed the kitchen, we developed a basic menu of things we knew our customers would want, and now we work on improving, expanding and innovating.”

The value of hands-on experience

Since its soft launch in 2018, the ACIC for Financial Services has served almost 30 Fortune 100 financial enterprises, conducting more than 45 discovery workshops. The customers have seen immediate value in being able to use the ACIC blueprints to accelerate their operational readiness and to gain hands-on hybrid- and multicloud experience. It's not just architecture diagrams on slides, which IT personnel from all companies are so used to. According to Greber: "A client said to me, 'It's nice that you create all these nice slides, but you really can build and operate it.' That makes such a difference. That's why we started this."

Today, the ACIC for Financial Services primarily serves European enterprises but is globally accessible through all Accenture employees. Moving forward, Accenture looks to bring more customers on board from other regions. And the company



will continually add top cloud and hybrid technologies to the ACIC for Financial Services portfolio, including IBM Cloud for Financial Services. In fact, it is already

exploring how to use other capabilities from IBM Cloud Pak for Watson AIOps, as well as Turbonomic software, to help automate ops management.



About Accenture

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Solution components

- IBM Cloud Pak® for Watson AIOps
- Red Hat® OpenShift®

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