



IBM's cloudMatrix makes selecting the right Cloud service provider easier!

Choosing the best among competing options is a daily task. One that can be as easy as deciding what to have for lunch, or, as complex and stressful as buying a home or choosing a Cloud service provider. For home or investment purchases, one option is to use a professional consultant or broker with specialized product knowledge and process expertise to aid decision-making.

CIOs and IT staffs face similar challenges when selecting the right hybrid Cloud option and/or service provider. The pace of technological change, technical and business requirements, policy variation, changes and options make it frustratingly difficult. Finding the right combination of services, let alone identifying all relevant evaluation metrics is neither easy nor obvious. It involves not only technical requirements, but also business considerations, such as costs, expected benefits, risks, compliance, etc. With those requirements, using an IT broker or consultant can be an attractive option.

Partially because of the difficulty in defining and quantifying business metrics, IT traditionally focused on technical analysis, less on business/financial analysis. Today, CIO's cannot afford to ignore business' aspects. Tight links between IT and the customer mandate a process that integrates business, technical, implementation and operations issues. Determining the service that satisfies all requirements while yielding the best benefits, cost-savings, and payback opportunities is no easy task. Providing such information in a consumable manner to non-experts at an affordable price was practically inconceivable.

Today, IBM's new cloud service, cloudMatrix¹ solves many of the CIO's problems. It provides a comprehensive, affordable way to aid clients in evaluating hybrid Cloud alternatives. It helps determine: a) how to provide developers and non-IT buyers multiple cloud service options within the constraints of enterprise policies, and b) how to manage service implementation and delivery with visibility into costs, usage and performance.

With IBM cloudMatrix services, enterprises can plan, buy, and manage (e.g. broker) software and cloud services from multiple suppliers across hybrid clouds from a single screen. In contrast, solutions focused mainly on the technical aspects of potential cloud workloads tend to be too complex and difficult to understand for non-technical buyers. Here's what IBM offers.

IBM cloudMatrix

The interesting differentiation in cloudMatrix is its process-based approach guiding customers through exploration and adoption of cloud services. Customers proceed systematically through an IT supply-chain process of Plan, Buy, and Manage. The result is an easier, more accurate way to choose the right hybrid Cloud. Full brokerage services in the shared and dedicated models include all three functions, whereas the Planning offering only provides planning capabilities.

So, IBM Cloud offers:

- IBM cloudMatrix Planning

¹ IBM's cloudMatrix service came from its acquisition of Gravitant in late 2015.



- IBM cloudMatrix Full Broker Shared
- IBM cloudMatrix Full Broker Dedicated

IBM cloudMatrix Planning enables enterprise to assess an existing application's benefit from and readiness for the Cloud with its analytics-based workload characterization, automated cloud service brokerage capabilities and cloud management. Workload characterization with sophisticated analytics defines the potential workload using an interactive, research-based questionnaire. The customer chooses what to assess, e.g. application readiness, comparison of cloud providers or a custom designed solution or blueprint. Using additional analytics and user priorities, it makes recommendations on where the workload best fits from among cloud provider and in-house options. Out-of-box comparisons cover AWS, Azure, SoftLayer, Google Compute, VMware vCloud Director 5.1 and 5.5. It delivers information for essential purchasing decisions, such as estimated costs and operational requirements.

Both **Full Broker packages** add the ability to **buy** services from the cloudMatrix catalog. Users purchasing **Full Broker Dedicated** services can customize user roles and access levels via integration with existing identity management systems. The **management** function allows IT operators to deliver orders using ITSM workflows and/or automated DevOps and CloudOps technologies. IT administrators can track, manage, and report financials – including charge-back to the departments consuming cloud services. Note that only those with the **Dedicated** offering have the ability to customize services, including planning and catalog.

IBM Cloud offers all three offerings as Software as a Service, plus implementation services to quick start your implementation and configuration along with three training sessions on how to use the platform.

Global Technology Services (GTS) offers managed services wrapped around all three of the cloudMatrix SaaS offerings for clients who want to purchase cloudMatrix as a managed solution.

Global Business Services (GBS) offers include “how to use” cloudMatrix consulting services for tasks as broad as business transformation to as small to better assess the cloud-readiness of workloads and applications.

Conclusion:

IBM cloudMatrix's process-based approach to evaluating, purchasing and managing cloud services makes buying cloud services more approachable for both business and IT. The self-service model allows non-technical and IT buyers to more easily make well-informed cloud service decisions.

By facilitating an easier process to evaluate and buy cloud services for non-technical staff, IT becomes the enabler in the cloud service purchasing process, rather than the group from which to hide such purchases. In turn, this enables IT to manage all cloud services, not just those it knows about.

IBM cloudMatrix is a potential game changer. Just as consumer tax preparation software changed the market with its user process-oriented approach, cloudMatrix has the potential to change companies' cloud service purchasing processes and thus increases the value that IT delivers to business buyers. Well done IBM.