



Today's innovation imperative: bring mission-critical to the cloud

Leadership in today's marketplace is no easy task. You have to outpace others in most areas to stay on top—from being client-centric and agile, to optimizing your IT infrastructure, and everything in-between. You can count on it that competitors, even the ones you're not aware of yet, are working to outperform and take your market share.

Now, take a deep breath and ask yourself: how are you leveraging technology to innovate? Staying ahead of the innovation curve is key to delivering better client experiences. But where do you begin?

No one doubts the importance of the cloud in an innovation strategy. At the same time mainframes are at the core of many business. But, as the world is moving to hybrid environments to get new offerings and services to market faster, this key question pops up on companies' radar: The key question for many companies is 'do mainframes and cloud mesh?'

I am convinced that the answer to this question is the key to reaching the next horizon. It ties directly to what I call the innovation imperative. Bringing 'mission-critical' to the cloud is about delivering higher resilience, greater efficiency, and essential security to your cloud. When mainframe is part of your cloud, it's a better cloud.

Connecting mainframe applications and data with those on the cloud or other platforms is by no means new: it has been a common practice for years. Nowadays, however, by virtue of API-enabling mainframe solutions, cloud and mainframes can work together more seamlessly. This enables new levels of integration and automation, which means your operations run better and faster and pave the way for new innovation opportunities.

Enhancing your cloud is realized in three primary ways:

1. Integrating Mainframe with the cloud using APIs.

Mainframe in your cloud environment opens up new possibilities provided those mainframe solutions are exposed via RESTful APIs. What you get is a mainframe integrated and managed in the cloud, without platform-specific differences.

For example, a large global services provider built a self-service dashboard using ServiceNow to speed up the provisioning of and access to mainframe resources, resembling the self-service portals which are common among cloud providers. One of the supported capabilities is for a developer to refresh test data before testing an application change.

This elegant example completely illustrates the need to involve a mainframe system administrator, providing the self-service experience one experts in a cloud environment. Furthermore, using a single, common call to the API ML for all mainframe services preserves the high level of security expected of the mainframe by ensuring that all connections to APIs are secure, audited, and authorized.

2. Including Mainframe in multi-platform CI/CD pipelines.

One may also prefer using the same tools cloud developers use. Thus, you can break down unnecessary silos and automate formerly manual co-ordinations, resulting in higher quality and faster time to market.

As an example, cloud developers at a global financial services firm are working with tools like Jenkins and Git to tie the mainframe into their existing CI/CD pipeline for their consumer-facing wealth management application. To do so, they leverage Zowe, the first open source framework for z/OS providing a Command Line Interface that allows for scripting like any other cloud tool, without any special skills required.

3. Unifying Mainframe and cloud talent pools.

Eliminating mainframe-specific skill requirements, as illustrated above, one can more easily bring the cloud and mainframe teams together and have them collaborate on projects. Such collaborations will undoubtedly make multi-platform innovation even more attainable.

For instance, a team of cloud developers within a large enterprise technology firm was tasked with updating a mainframe app using standard mainframe tools. They found it was possible to work with their tools of choice by simply leveraging the Zowe CLI to invoke REST APIs on the mainframe—starting with z/OSMF. So, they made their updates, delivering as required.

Zowe is now inspiring thousands of new developers worldwide to work more closely together because they can work with the mainframe using the tools they use for other platforms as well.

Making the right choices can make the difference between delivering industry-defining innovation and falling behind the competition. To move your cloud strategy forward, it's time to adopt an open framework that supports tools of choice, to leverage APIs that enable high degrees of integration and automation, and to foster collaboration among teams.

At Broadcom, we're partnering with customers to unleash new strategic value from their mainframes by embracing open standards and environments, exploiting APIs and treating the mainframe just like any other platform or cloud.

That ultimately leads to a tight integration between mainframe and cloud, allowing you to leverage the best of both worlds. Ultimately, when your mainframe is part of your cloud, it's a better cloud.

