

Service Agility: Unleashing the Power of the Cloud

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Start

Five Key Questions to Ask When You're Looking for a Cloud Management Platform

The cloud is all about agility and innovation. It delivers resources on demand, simplifies application deployment, and dramatically reduces infrastructure costs. That's why more and more enterprises are moving their critical workloads and business services into public, private and hybrid clouds. It's the way of the future.

However, ask yourself this. Is your IT organization as agile as the cloud itself? If not, you're not going to unleash the power of the cloud—you'll still be stuck in the past.

It's a delicate balancing act. You want to be agile, but the cloud doesn't mean that you can ignore security or forget about governance. Your IT environment still needs to be managed consistently—that's a huge challenge, particularly when your business services span public and private clouds. There's no standard model across cloud vendors, so you end up with a fragmented operating environment. And, when end users have direct access to cloud resources, things spin out of control – it's the chaos of shadow IT all over again.



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Of Course, You Need the Same Visibility and Control You Have Today

And you want to use your current management tools. However, wrapping slow, inflexible processes around the cloud defeats its purpose. For example, users often wait days for their IT department to provision a single virtual machine—and that's just not acceptable. It's like hitching a thoroughbred horse to a 10-ton wagon.

So, what's the answer? Here are five key questions to ask when you're looking for an agile cloud management solution.



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Does It Leverage Your Existing IT Service Management Investment?

Your ITSM is where all of your service management processes live—it's your single system of record. To manage the cloud, you need configuration management, change management, incident management, problem management and more. The cloud doesn't change that.

That's why a cloud management solution should seamlessly extend your ITSM platform. If you choose a standalone cloud management solution, you'll spend huge amounts of time and money either duplicating your existing processes or integrating with your existing ITSM platform.

Ask your ITSM vendor whether they have a cloud management solution that runs directly on their ITSM platform. If they don't, then it may be time to replace your ITSM platform.

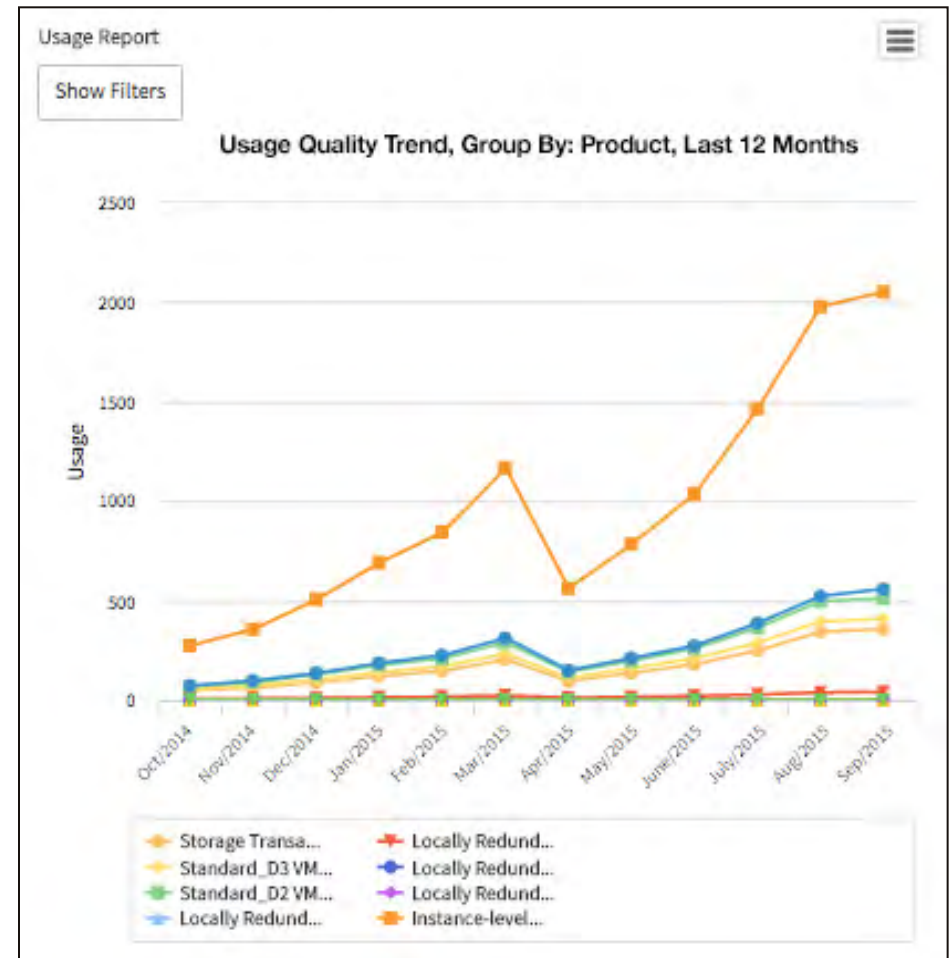


Does It Automatically Provision Cloud Resources?

With the cloud, provisioning new resources is incredibly easy. For example, with Amazon's AWS, you can spin up a complete virtual data center in just one step. However, the problem is this—when you use vendor provisioning tools directly, this bypasses all of your ITSM processes. Worse still, end users often create their own cloud accounts and provision their own resources—and you'll never know until you get the bill.

Look for a cloud management solution can automatically provision cloud services directly from your service catalog. For example, when a developer wants a new LAMP stack, they simply pick the service, fill in a few parameters—such as CPU count—and press the button. A few seconds later, and they've got their new machine.

With this approach, you'll have total visibility and control. It's just the same as using your service catalog today—you get role-based access, approvals, change management, audit trails and more. And, you'll have a complete record of all of your cloud services in your CMDB.

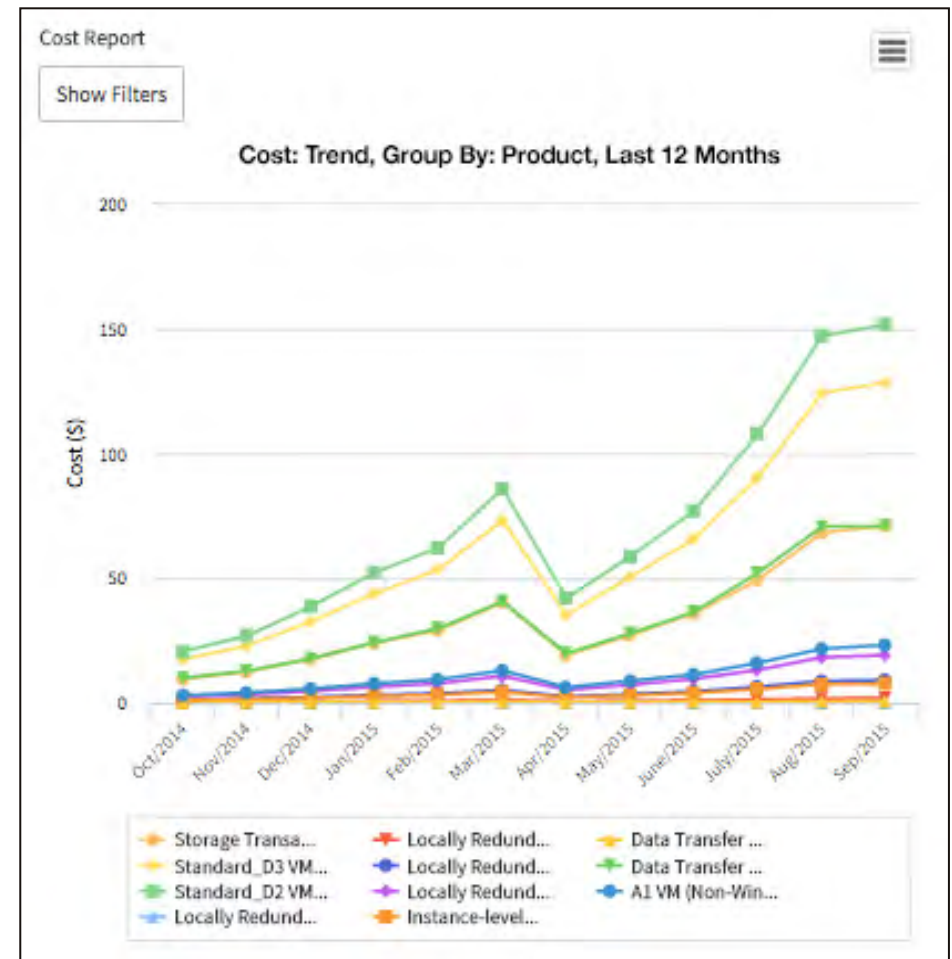


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Does It Help You to Manage Cloud Costs?

The cloud drives down costs, but these costs can still spiral out of control if you don't manage them. Cloud resources are easy to create—but they are also easy to forget. With public clouds, this means that you end up paying for resources that are underutilized or stranded. And, if you just rely on vendor billing information, you'll never know where to allocate these costs.

Choose a cloud management solution that helps you to keep these costs under control. It should be able to generate reports that break down cloud vendor billing and usage data by user, cost center, business service, application or project. This makes it easy to charge back, and also lets your end users identify and de-provision unused cloud resources. Also, look for lease management—this will ensure that cloud resources are automatically released when they're no longer needed.



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Can It Manage Complete Business Services—Not Just Cloud Infrastructure?

Just managing the cloud isn't enough. The cloud is where you run your business services—and those services need to be managed as well. In fact, the last thing you want is two management solutions—one for cloud infrastructure, and a separate one for the next layer up. Instead, you need a single solution that can manage everything. You need complete lifecycle management of all your cloud resources.

One key example is orchestration. In a cloud management context, this is what actually provisions cloud resources. However, orchestration must also be able to configure the applications, middleware and other IT components that run on these cloud resources—either directly, or by integrating with tools such as Puppet and Chef. You should also be able to leverage orchestration to automate other key activities, such as remediating incidents and configuring monitoring systems.



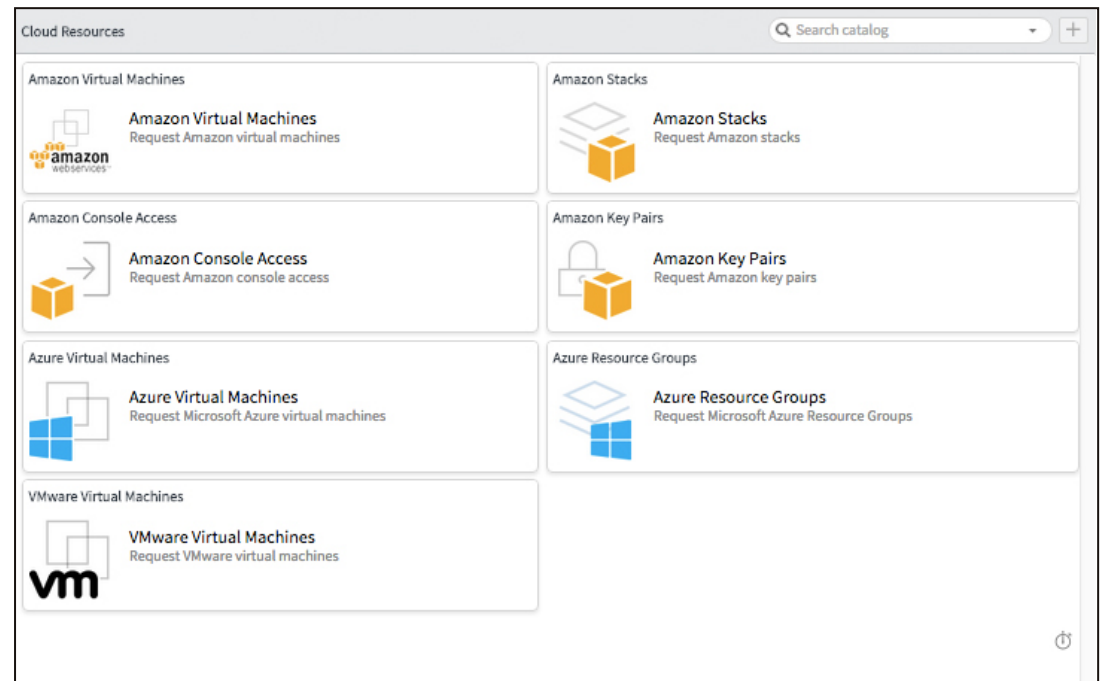
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Does It Support Multiple Cloud Vendors?

The cloud isn't a single thing. There are private clouds and public clouds from multiple vendors. You may only use one cloud today, but many businesses are rapidly evolving into hybrid cloud environments. And, each cloud is very different—there's no one common operating model.

However, IT needs a consistent operating model across all clouds. You don't want one system to provision AWS, another one for Microsoft Azure, and yet another one for VMware. That just leads to more cost and more operational silos. Instead, look for a cloud management solution that supports the leading cloud vendors—and make sure that it can be easily extended to other clouds.



Let's Recap

The cloud can transform your IT organization—but it can't be just another technology silo. To realize the cloud's potential, you need an agile cloud management platform that handles your entire IT environment—complete with business services, not just your cloud infrastructure. Look for a solution that:

- Leverages your existing ITSM tools and processes
- Provides complete lifecycle management of cloud resources with end-to-end automation
- Helps you to manage cloud costs
- Consistently manages clouds from multiple vendors

That's how to unleash the power of the cloud.

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Learn more

Learn how service visibility can help you quickly spot IT issues that threaten your business services:

Service Visibility: [Your green light to a clear road ahead](#)

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