

# Getting the Most from Your Cloud Investments

By Michael Asadoorian  
Acemby Co-Founder and CTO

If you're like most organizations, you're using cloud services for their economies of scale and pay-as-you-go cost savings. To reap the biggest possible return from those services, you need a modern way to manage your cloud assets and expenditures. Especially if you're using multiple providers.

By "modern," I mean a couple of things. First and foremost, you need visibility into your entire hybrid or multicloud environment. After all, you can't manage and cost-control what you can't see.

Second, it helps to have some analytics coupled with a bit of automation at your disposal. With these "smarts" at work in a cloud management tool, you can rapidly assess and reassess where your workloads will run the most economically as your requirements shift and providers' pricing and discounting models change. (And they do change often.)

## Maintaining Cross-Cloud Control

Applying analytics and automation to managing cloud resources has become essential because hybrid and multicloud adoption is exploding. Recent research by RightScale, a cloud management company, indicates that 96 percent of cross-industry organizations use the cloud, and of those, 81 percent are juggling an average of five cloud services.

What that means is that there are lots of applications, data, and workloads spread out across multiple infrastructures, many with different billing models and usage fees. You can quickly lose sight of your overall spend if you don't have a way to track what's running where, and under what plan. Once that happens, the payback on your cloud investments is likely to start falling of your expectations.

In fact, Rightscale estimates that cloud customers currently waste a hefty 35 to 45 percent of the cloud dollars they spend. What's causing all this waste?

## Complexity and Hidden Costs

First, there's the complexity of pricing and billing. Invoices can have millions of line items, especially when you're trying to track and analyze several months of bills. Pouring through all this data is not for the faint of heart. Similarly, providers might offer thousands of price points, making it difficult, if not impossible, to manually calculate the best deals. In these areas, automation can pay big dividends.

Consider cloud storage services from Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud Platform, and Microsoft Azure, for example. In addition to their complex pricing models, some of their services have hidden transaction fees. And then there are fees for egress; you pay monthly to store your data, and then you get to pay a surcharge for the privilege of retrieving it.

The retrieval surcharge is usually on top of network service fees for transporting the data when you access it. Now, it's only fair that someone has to pay the network operator for using its bandwidth. However, sometimes cloud customers simply aren't aware of those network charges. So they haven't accounted for them in their budgets and ROI calculations.

## Surprise Services

In addition to some nickel-and-diming on the part of cloud providers, organizations are falling victim to the cost creep that occurs when an individual or team directly procures a cloud service that hasn't been officially sanctioned by the organization. If more and more departments or teams engage in these "shadow IT" practices, the costs add up.

If you have visibility into those unsanctioned services and some analytics and automation to evaluate them, you can manage them properly. You can make sure they're running where it's most economical. Or you can shut them down if they're redundant to services you've already procured. And you can also discover any forgotten, unused resources running out there quietly racking up monthly charges.

## Optimum Service Balance

I cofounded Acembly to ease the burden of evaluating complex pricing and to help enterprises maintain the optimum balance of services. We want you to get the most out of the cloud, which offers tremendous benefits for scale and agility in the digital age. But you have to be smart about the services you use. And for you to be smart, you need a little help from a management application that's also smart.

Acembly provides that smart interface into all your assets. With it, you can see everything you have. You can run cost comparisons across multiple providers' services. You can

move your data to the “best” service based on business priority and budget. All from a single, simple dashboard.

You can have Acembly alert you when a service uses a certain number of terabytes or when the spend for a certain cloud service reaches its maximum. With this heads up that your organization has hit a limit, you can make a budget-friendly decision as to what action to take.

It’s time for a modern, smart approach to cloud management. Straightforward visibility into your resources and access to those resources, coupled with analytics and automation, will help you stanch the flow of wasted expenses so you can be sure you’re always getting the most from your cloud investments.