**Assignment 4 – Cloud Provider Comparison**

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For AEE’s Route 2 implementation I would personally recommend Google Cloud Anthos as the hybrid cloud provider platform. Though not as established as Microsoft Azure Stack or having the market share of AWS Outposts, it offers the most agile platform of the three major companies. Anthos is fairly unique among these three in that it can run applications on-premise, in Google Cloud, and also both AWS and Azure (Goel, 2020). This ability to provide open standards by which data and applications can be implemented avoids vendor lock-in to a particular cloud computing provider (Kale, 2019, p 267).

Outpost also launched in 2018 along with Google but took a different approach to its hybrid cloud deployment and services. It sells preconfigured racks, the same as you’d find in one of its datacenters, and can then run VMware Cloud on AWS or compute and storage on-premises using AWS APIs (Goel, 2020). While this strategy would work great if AEE were reinvesting in equipment as well or deploying from zero, for this scenario it would be at odds with the budgetary concerns.

Azure Stack is currently the solution of choice for hybrid deployments among the top three (Goel, 2020). Their strategy is to capture the market of those organizations that are hesitant to move to the cloud due to unfamiliarity with the technology, have latency sensitive technology, or because of regulatory concerns. From this foothold they would eventually integrate them fully into Azure. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with their approach for AEE, but Anthos provides a higher level of agility with their ability to deploy within their competitors environments, allowing the option to change their configuration should change or further thought make it a more advantageous direction.

Oracle’s solution comes with a three to four-year commitment, due to the fact that they customize and ship the onsite equipment of their clients with proprietary software. This could have an impact on agility and the bottom line and is too risky overall for my recommendation. IBM also offers a solution, but it is more of a semi-tech partner path in which there is a high level of design and custom building, out of the scope of the needs of AEE.

In considering these solutions, long term adaptability, and the particular factors AEE was facing in relation to initial costs, was the major driver in my decision making. Anthos’ flexibility was loosely related to cost, though not directly. Being able to switch your platform between providers can allow an organization to adapt quickly should the economic landscape of cloud computing change in the future, especially if it is a rapid change that requires a swift migration of services.

There are several pros to using Anthos over its competitors as I have stated, with it’s built in agility being the most valuable long term in my estimation. All of its documentation is open source and curated by a community for open and free use (Kempa, 2019). It also allows a free trial, starting bonuses, consulting, training and certifications. On the con side, it only works with Google Kubernetes Engine (GKE) (Curtis, 2020), which is an open source cluster management system, which provides the mechanisms for interactions with said clusters. This could cause some compatibility issues in theory but has not as of yet become an issue of concern to the cloud computing community in general.

References

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