m2Cloud as focal of Enterprise Transformation

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Executive Summary

Intense pressure is being placed on enterprise IT departments to develop an adaptive, simplified IT that can create an advantage for their businesses to compete. Transforming legacy IT assets to next-generation to gain an innovation edge while continuing to support their current business is no small order, but achievable and necessary. To achieve this IT transformation-on-the-go, enterprises realize most value when transformations are pursued in a systematic and iterative manner, incrementally learning and adapting to challenges that primarily arise from change management, and from the need to balance conflicting long term goals with short-term mandates. As enterprises undertake these continuum of transformation cycles, there is a recognized need to base these activities on a platform that serves as a centralized management medium to assess and measure the incremental benefits of each cycle and perform any necessary course correction.

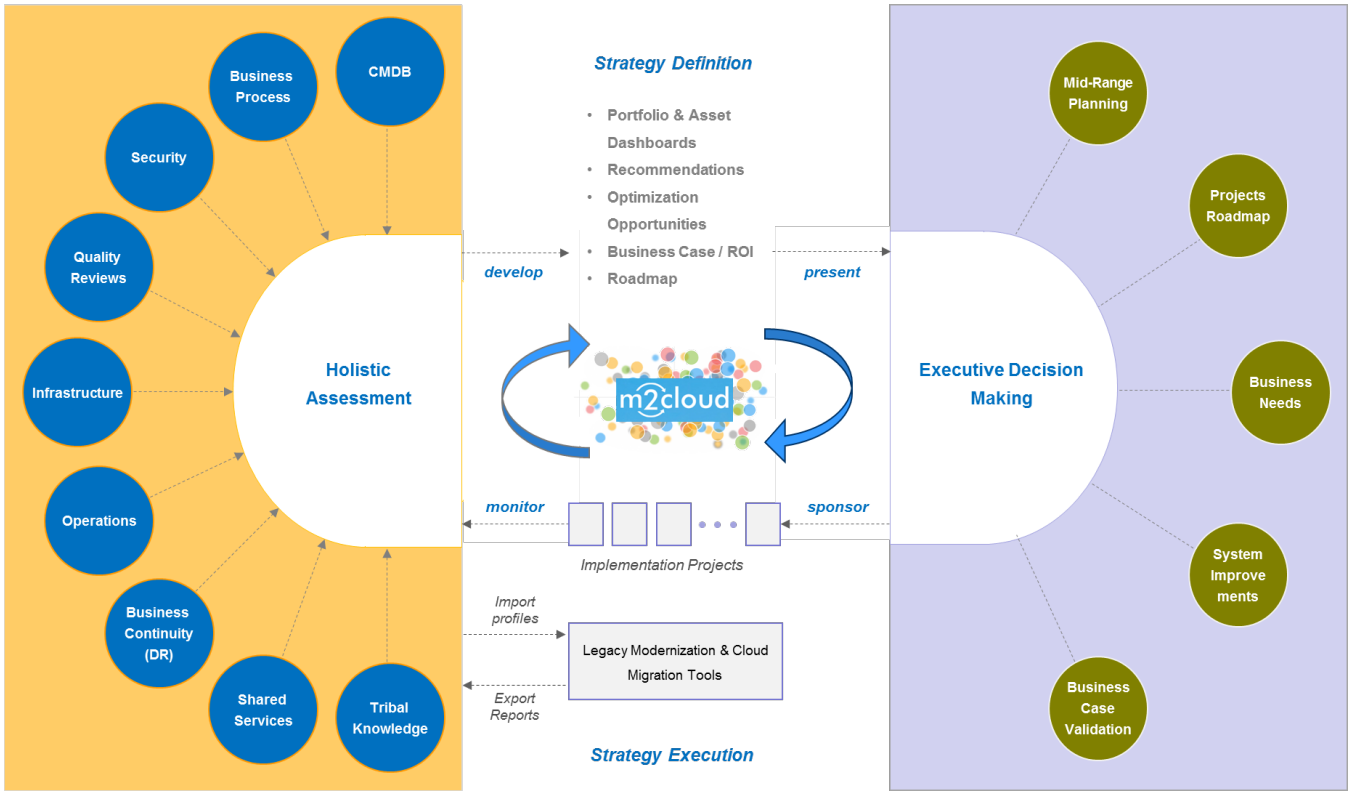
This paper proposes to position m2Cloud as the focal of enterprise transformation, and be that platform to drive and manage individual, iterative transformation cycles. Offering capabilities such as asset meta-data repository, a self-service tools with global accessibility, and intuitive dashboards, m2Cloud platform can provide the foundation for assessment process automation and to aid in decision making. Additionally, m2Cloud could allow sharing of its data with other 3rd party tools across enterprise to promote consistency, maximize efficiency, and unlock insight that can only be drawn from collective, integrated data.

On the technical front, a distinctive feature of m2Cloud is that it is cloud-native application built on multi-tiered architecture, enabling it to intrinsically support required scalability and multi-tenancy. In addition, m2Cloud's services can be offered as a service to clients, thus eliminating any need for upfront investment or IT footprint on the client side.

In general, leveraging appropriate tools such as m2Cloud, coupled with adoption of best practices and proper process governance, helps to accelerate activities, improve service efficiencies, and ensure that interim outcomes are cohesive with larger vision.

Incremental Transformation

It is now widely established that continual improvement is the most effective approach to achieve success in enterprise IT transformations. It involves a well-crafted strategic approach, outlined over multiple years, guiding the execution of several tactical initiative loops.



m2Cloud tool, that hosts assessment frameworks, can be employed as the platform to drive and manage such enterprise transformations. m2Cloud is purposefully built to collate comprehensive information about IT assets on various aspects, and perform powerful analytics on it to identify optimization opportunities, augmented by business case and ROI. The tool's output culminating in an intuitive strategic roadmap can be made available to executive leadership to prioritize and drive implementation projects.

Further, completion of tactical initiatives provides a reflection points where enterprise can use m2Cloud's dashboards to evaluate the progress. Establishing m2Cloud-centric transformation setup helps connect fragmented activities to attain better performance and advance overall maturity.

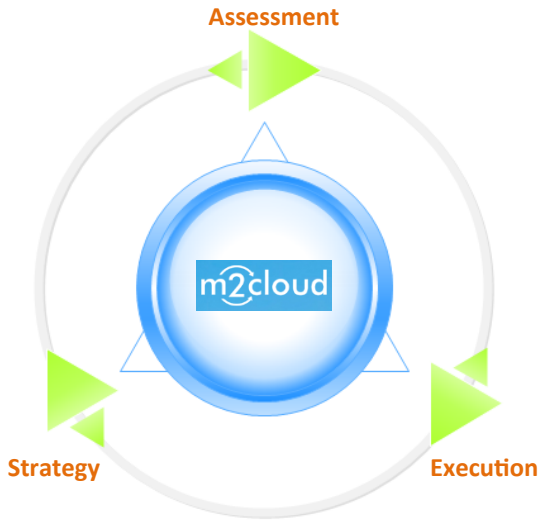
Let us briefly explore why m2Cloud is suitable platform to be the focal of all the efforts required during such transformation continuum*.

Run It Once, Run It Again

A significant portion of effort in such enterprise assessments go toward assets' data collection, analysis and validation, and comprehension of actionable insight. m2Cloud provides features addressing these through support for importing of asset data, minimizing manual input, performing initial synthesis and analytics, and auto-generating reports and dashboards. What m2Cloud platform enables is to decouple the laborious and time-consuming processes from the actual assessment.

This results in significant efficiencies that foster enterprises to repeat assessments as and when required, either periodically or based on some trigger condition. Further, for each subsequent assessment, since data already exists in m2Cloud, one can make incremental updates to observe any improvements.

Thus the efficiencies brought by m2Cloud, amplified by the ability to leverage past assessment data, leads to increased levels of automation. And automation in turn expedites and brings down the unit cost of each assessment iteration, reinforcing incremental and continuous IT portfolio optimization.



Automation creates Efficiency;
Efficiency enables Iterations

Subjective Plus Objective Data

The nature of data being sought could be objective data (properties of an asset) or subjective data (evaluation of an asset). For objective data, bulk import through files or integration with data stores is possible. Obtaining subjective data involves SME evaluation of assets, which is cumbersome and time consuming, warrants spending many hours of interviews and workshops.

m2Cloud provides a self- service, web- and mobile-based access for SMEs to independently provide their feedback. The assessment teams can then intervene on need basis - to review the output to either solidify the case by providing more contextual information, or override the auto-generated recommendation with proper justification and drivers, which could be not codified in the tool.

Comprehensive Data Collection

For a comprehensive assessment of an asset, various types of information nuggets about that asset are required, such as its business relevance or value, user groups, performance, usage characteristics, technology and infrastructure. In any enterprise, particularly larger ones, data about IT assets are managed by different teams, and as such maintained and stored at many places – some in CMDB (Configuration Management Database), Access data stores, Excel files, and some purpose-built custom software or products.

m2Cloud brings together all such key required, disparate together on a single pane of analysis, which when studied together can result in much more clear patterns.

Move the needle

Ultimate success of transformation exercises are in how the recommendations are introduced and changes implemented across the enterprise. The momentum of such exercises will be sustained when progress is measured and small wins are published to galvanize support for next set of initiatives. m2Cloud recognizes this intrinsic factor for success and supports this by utilizing scorecards and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) type of metrics to measure and report results.

These indicators provide the linkage between individual roadmap activities to overall IT strategy.

m2Cloud is built to natively support assessment frameworks that places emphasis on measuring indicators related to both tangible and intangible values. Tangible values are reasonably straight-forward as they are transactional oriented, say, related to performance, throughput,

or cost. While these are direct and intuitive, frameworks like Cloud Direct hosted on m2Cloud, also support measuring intangible, value-added aspects such as business alignment, user experience, and overall maturity.

On m2Cloud, repeat-assessments could be easily performed to gauge the progress and capture any performance improvements. m2Cloud can be the medium for executive leadership to appreciate the accrued value, demonstrated by appropriately moving the needle on the maturity scale based on critical success factors and categorized performance areas.

Before and After Snapshots

There are points in transformation lifecycle where the course of action gets scrutinized and next-steps are determined. This could be the reflection point after each iteration to assess the results attained and steer the course accordingly. Or it could be a point in the decision-making phase that requires option-analysis, grounded on heuristics, to choose the right implementation approach. A key feature necessary during such points is the ability to compare and contrast either the time-based results or the value-based options.

To address this need, m2Cloud can provide ability to take snapshots that represent a state of the enterprise transition at a point in time. Juxtaposing different time-based snapshots empower

analysis of commonalities and variances, and record the spread between pre- and post-implementation.

In addition, it can be treated as an effective way for mental simulation as one thinks through series of enterprise transitions to achieve the end state. m2Cloud could support building a sequence of snapshots to play out and observe to draw any inferences. These features can be truly powerful while dealing with such judgment and reasoning tasks as it helps in communicating, visualizing, and selling the expected outcomes, which otherwise is quite an unstructured exercise.

Trend Analysis

Consider a comment by a business executive of a client that he is paying considerably more for IT services in his enterprise than what he used to pay for similar services 5 years prior, assuming inflation adjustment. While there could be multitude of factors to cause this, two immediately come to mind – either the enterprise IT has become very complex over the time that similar tasks are consuming increasingly more time; or the enterprise is losing out on subject matter expertise, which translates to more time, due to retirement or in-house experts are replaced by vendors without proper transition.

What if the enterprise had put in place a discipline where by it periodically analyzes and records key metrics, such as *Architecture Maturity Index*, or *SME-System Ratio*, or *Average Tenure of SME With A System*. Availability of historic value of these metrics would be highly beneficial to perform causal analysis. In this case, to examine the cause of IT cost increases, and take corrective measures to either reduce architecture complexity or inject processes for better succession planning.

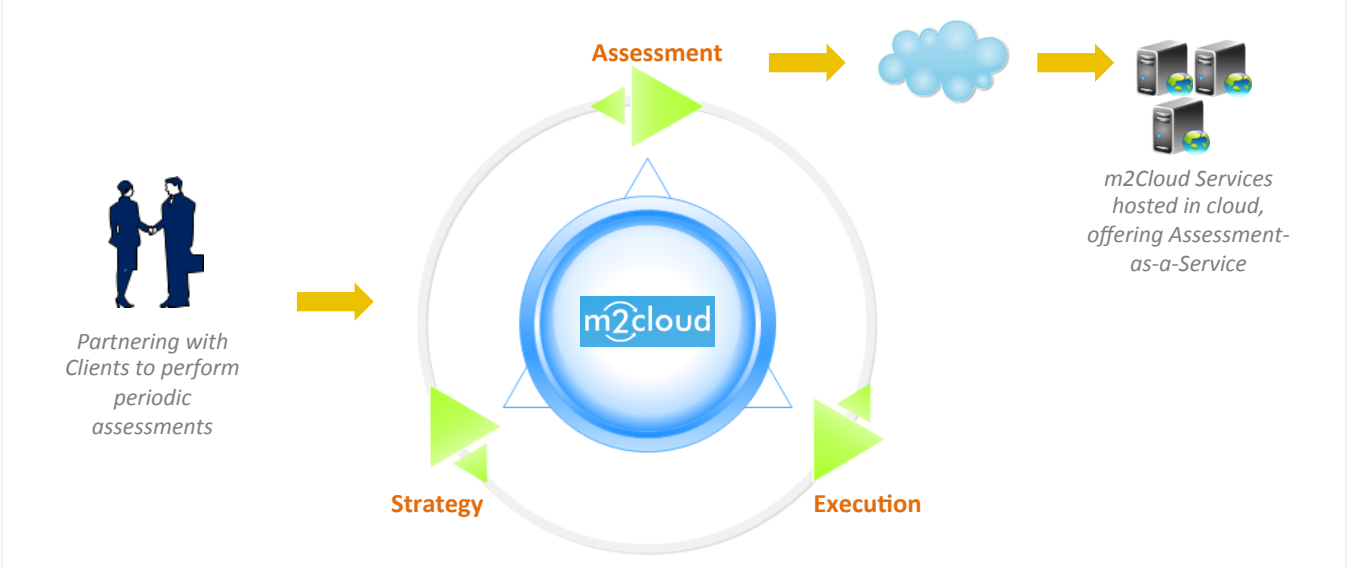
m2Cloud can provide enterprises a medium to embark such trend analysis. As frequent and periodic assessments are conducted, data and metrics are preserved over time, leading to emerging trends. The enterprise leadership can observe and exploit these trends to ensure overall IT improvements.

Trend Prediction

The above use cases of the trends are retrospective. The next progression would be predict what happens tomorrow based on what happened yesterday. The historic nature of the m2Cloud metrics data provides numerical data line that is amenable to statistical analysis and extrapolation. Through proper understanding of these trends, clear insights can be offered to allow enterprises to prepare for potential future behaviors. Other groups within the organization might be potentially building such prediction engines that could be considered and integrated into m2Cloud.

Assessment As A Service

Assessment-as-a-Service is a solution offering where m2Cloud services are made available to its clients by extending accessibility to m2Cloud hosted on cloud. Cloud being the prevalent delivery model, there are many benefits to this SaaS model, to both the organization and its clients: low barrier to entry, streamlined administration, global reach, automated patch and update management, and so on. While the details of pay-as-you-go subscription licensing model need to be worked out, which could vary from client to client, there is reduced need for client-side capital expenditure or technical footprint.



Continuous Optimization Cycles coupled with Assessment-as-a-Service

m2Cloud architecture's defining characteristic is that it is a cloud-native application which is specifically designed to support multitenancy – support many clients concurrently with a single m2Cloud instance, implying efficient usage of resources. Further scalability is provided by m2Cloud's multi-tiered architecture, making it capable to support load-balancing and meet capacity requirements dynamically.

Dynamic Exchange of Data With Downstream Projects

As touched upon earlier, the degree of success of strategic exercises is determined by how effectively the downstream tactical projects are executed. A key disconnect that can often occur in such scenarios is that the strategic and tactical efforts are conducted independently with very little, if any, exchange of information. This could be due to absence of any purposeful tools leveraged in strategy exercises, beyond MS Office based tools, which makes data exchange very static and cumbersome; or tools used across the spectrum were not thoughtfully integrated. This results in significant repeat effort as it forces to gather similar data multiple times during overall transformation lifecycle.

With m2Cloud as the platform for transformation, such collaboration and sharing of information is possible. The data elements collated and generated is not limited to its own assessment activities, but can be fed into other 3rd party tools to accelerate downstream tactical projects. These tools could be modernization or migration related tools. Subsequently, the data and results hosted on those tools can be imported back into m2Cloud, minimizing manual data entry. Additionally, when sharing is automated, the frequency of exchange could be increased to yield and maintain consistency in data across systems.

m2Cloud's architecture delivers features and functions for it to be the repository of asset information, with support for both tool-to-tool information exchange and bulk import/export of data through file exchange. m2Cloud could provide RESTful services to be invoked by other tools, and consume such services offered by other tools.

Conclusion

Enterprise IT transformation is a long-term and iterative undertaking comprising loops of activities around definition of strategic direction, followed by series of tactical initiatives. The success rate and delivery efficiency are amplified when this transformation process is supported by purposefully built tools and platform. This paper proposed m2Cloud to be that underpinning platform.

Hosting comprehensive information repository, m2Cloud could connect islands of effort by bringing together disparate activities in the transformation continuum. By enabling process automation and supporting decision-making capabilities such as snapshots and trend analysis, m2Cloud platform can offer to be an avenue for enterprise business and technical leaders to engage, monitor and manage the whole transformation process.