

The Bank Blueprint: How a Fortune 500 Financial Institution is Migrating & Optimizing 2k+ Applications to Gain 20-30% in Cost Savings

Introduction

A global leader in financial services is on a mission to migrate all remaining on-premises applications to the public cloud and gain millions or billions in cost savings. To achieve this transformation, the bank is partnering with Cloud Academy to develop skill-based, lab-heavy learning paths to reskill their people and migrate their remaining 2000+ applications to the public cloud.

Challenges

The bank's top priority is AWS migration enablement through talent transformation. However, the challenge is skill readiness: how to get their staff ready to migrate over 2,000 applications without significant problems and keeping costs in check. In addition, some of these applications receive over 198M visits per month, in which customers are completing complex financial transactions. Also, the organization has 2,000+ applications to migrate and then optimize for cloud efficiency and security, making a repeatable and reliable blueprint a must.

Why Cloud Academy Was Chosen

The bank chose Cloud Academy for its deep content expertise and robust platform, which can accelerate certification at scale. The hands-on labs, including lab customization, were critical because the bank was hyper-focused on getting people ready for the particular AWS services they use.

Cloud Academy's hands-on labs and lab challenges validate whether each mission is completed successfully or that a practitioner needs to review material before becoming skill-ready. In addition, Cloud Academy has a hand-in-glove partnership with AWS, making it the ideal partner for talent enablement and migration & optimization blueprints.



2,000+ apps must be migrated to the public cloud



Bank creates "**SOP**" that becomes the "company way" of moving apps to the cloud



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Solution

In partnership with Cloud Academy and AWS, the global financial leader is building mission-critical readiness to "migrate and optimize" apps – first by trial, and then at scale to repeat these blueprints with more staff and more applications.

Part 1: A blueprint to migrate 2,000+ apps to the public cloud

The migrate phase involves training on industry-standard and organization-specific cloud requirements. These trainings need participation, enthusiasm, and accountability. How to achieve this? Through in-person, timeboxed hackathon-type events and migration parties where staff with skill readiness work together to migrate the apps.

Application

The bank creates a vetted standard operating procedure (SOP) that becomes the "company way" of moving applications to the cloud. As they move 2,000+ applications at scale, this repeatable SOP ensures security and performance during the migration phase for headliner applications handling millions or billions of transactions per day.

Labs and Sandboxes

With these revenue-generating applications – used by customers every minute of every day – failed cutover is not an option. Thus, teams are required to demonstrate readiness before they join the application migration "party."

Actual fieldwork is completed through hands-on labs on Cloud Academy that first teach, and then test skills on the particular AWS services used during and after the migration. These hands-on cloud labs, coding labs, and hybrid cloud-coding labs produce scores that leadership can see through analytic dashboards – thus displaying who is migration-ready, and who is not.

Risk Identification

While building the blueprint to migration, the bank identifies risks. These can then be targeted for mitigation. For example, the bank discovered that Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were not properly allocated with the right roles and responsibilities to support migration efforts at scale. By re-prioritizing the workload of the SMEs in partnership between their business unit and Learning & Development, the bank paved a clearer path to migration at scale.

Making big plans a reality with smaller, concrete goals

Even though the end goal is to migrate 2,000+ apps, this can't be done at once from the start. So what is a good starting point?

As we'll learn in the next section, the bank will migrate and optimize, starting small at first. They've identified a certain number of small teams that will undergo training first and become champions.

These teams will move their apps to the cloud within the first few months, with metrics gathered along the way. The data gathered and the success of this will guide a process that can then scale org-wide. Some of the best practice points to record from this stage for anyone who is trying this type of transformation are:

- Determine a starting number of apps moved to start – choose a number that is small but meaningful enough to produce insights.
- Choose a timeframe, such as three months. At the end of the time frame, determine why or why not the migrations happened within the allotted period,
- Record all lessons learned and mistakes made. This is the time for key insights.
- Share and disseminate the lessons learned with the larger teams, champions, and transformation leads.

Part 2: A blueprint to optimize 2,000+ financial services applications in the public cloud

Once the bank has successfully migrated its applications to the public cloud, the optimize phase begins. This phase is crucial to keeping the hard work of migration afloat. Efficiency is attained when the optimal infrastructure aligns with real-time considerations of workload performance, compliance, and cost, ensuring a consistent and accurate balance.

Standard Operating Procedure for the Public Cloud

The bank is developing a standard operating procedure for the public cloud to ensure that all applications are configured and managed consistently, and best practices are followed. This SOP will cover areas such as security, cost optimization, and performance monitoring.

Leaning on Cloud Academy and AWS expertise, the bank is developing this SOP along with supporting training programs to certify staff. The staff certification program will include both courses and hands-on labs, to validate that each practitioner has the demonstrated skills for optimization.

The SOP will touch on several components that –when nurtured thoughtfully and with a deliberate plan – will be effective to enact a repeatable process that scales across the whole organization.

The SOP will cover key themes:

- **FinOps Best Practices:** FinOps (Financial Operations) is a set of practices that help organizations manage their cloud costs effectively. So many companies that are new to cloud let costs spiral out of control, wasting over 30% of monthly spend. By implementing FinOps best practices – including certification of teams, building communities of practice, having the necessary governance policies in place, and automating everything possible – the bank will maximize its cost savings while maintaining performance and availability.
- **Continuous Optimization:** Just as the name says, optimization is a process that never ends. The bank needs to monitor and improve its applications in the cloud for performance, identifying cost-saving opportunities and implementing changes to improve efficiency. Cloud Academy can help the bank develop a continuous optimization plan and provide training to the relevant teams so they can be fluent in actionable best practices.

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- **Cloud Security:** Security is a top concern for any organization operating in the cloud. The bank will ensure that its applications are secure and comply with industry and regulatory standards. Cloud Academy can provide training on cloud security best practices – both within the cloud and across the management plane – while also helping the bank develop a security framework to ensure that all applications meet the necessary security requirements.

All of these factors will contribute to a successful optimization blueprint that anticipates key problems that frequently slow down and undermine teams that operate in the cloud. From faster response times and reduced latency to fault tolerance mechanisms, automated scaling, and disaster recovery strategies – having this plan in place will ensure the bank is ready for the new paradigm they intend to thrive in.

Expectations

The bank expects to see a significant improvement in its Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) in the Cloud through effective cloud transformation. What makes this so effective is **training for cloud readiness**: blueprints to ensure staff are demonstrably qualified and proficient in the required AWS services to migrate and optimize applications. By adopting these blueprints, the bank expects to achieve cost savings of 20-30% in areas such as hardware, software, operations labor, and total infrastructure.

With these savings, the bank will be better positioned to invest in future growth initiatives and enhance its customer offerings. The bank's digital transformation journey has set the stage for continued success, as it positions itself to thrive in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

Conclusion

The bank's digital transformation journey has been marked by a commitment to building a world-class tech training program, while leveraging Cloud Academy and AWS as expert partners. The bank has already achieved significant results through its cloud transformation efforts. By going beyond mere cloud certification to customized, hands-on learning on specific cloud services – and building repeatable blueprints for success at scale – they expect to see further cost savings in the future.

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