

Foundation for multi-cloud deployment

T-Systems develops state-of-the-art landing zone for a chemicals giant in an agile project



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Customer project manager

Diversity shapes the face of the multinational chemicals group. That doesn’t apply only to its employees and fields of business, but also to its IT strategy. The company currently uses more than 3,000 applications for over 300 business managers. Although the vast majority of them run on premise in internal data centers, some subsidiaries are already relying almost exclusively on the public cloud. Against this backdrop, the IT managers agreed on a multi/hybrid cloud strategy as the foundation for their pending digitalization. The company strives to become cloud-native within the next decade and has already established agile methods such as DevOps. As part of its multi-vendor strategy for cloud computing, representatives of the business units can draw on a wide range of cloud providers on their own accounts for their development projects. The central IT department defines the governance framework for this and provides an internal ordering and administration portal for the units as a tool for doing so.

At a glance

- Ensure cloud governance at a chemicals company
- Urgently needed modernization of the AWS landing zone
- Integration with internal services: central ordering portal and Active Directory
- Simplified AWS use
- Single sign-on
- End-to-end AWS provisioning process
- Enhanced user experience
- Basis for further digitalization

The reference in detail

The challenge

The chemicals group's central ordering portal for cloud services uses APIs (application programming interfaces) to access the administration tools of the different public cloud providers, such as AWS. The central IT department has configured a landing zone in AWS that is used to manage the company's accounts. The central ordering portal uses APIs to access AWS services to create accounts. The landing zone and the services used had been configured some time ago. Yet 2020 showed that it did not meet the company's demands for a positive user experience. Many activities had to be performed manually. Integration with the internal ordering portal was rudimentary at best. In short, the landing zone wasn't state of the art. Although the AWS technology had progressed, its potential couldn't be captured. All in all, it was a rather poor foundation for enabling the simple use of AWS resources, as well as for facilitating internal cloud governance. The chemicals group needed a partner with AWS expertise and the ability to integrate new AWS services with the existing services.

The solution

From October 2020 to March 2021, T-Systems supported the central IT department at the chemicals company with updating the AWS landing zone. Scrums were used as an agile procedure model for development. "The agile cooperative work in DevOps mode not only helped us make rapid progress on the project, but also gave us a level of transparency that we've never had before – in every phase of the project," summarized a customer representative. Tool support for the DevOps project came from AWS. The agile approach wasn't chosen by chance: the necessary interfaces to the AWS services weren't finalized and supplied by AWS until the project was well underway, making it necessary to integrate AWS CloudTrail, AWS Config, GuardDuty, and Security Hub virtually on the fly. The necessary coordination and regular status checks on the AWS end were managed through continuous contact between T-Systems and the Partner Solutions Architect (PSA) from AWS. As part of the landing zone relaunch, the project partners also implemented a connection with the customer's internal Azure Active Directory (AD). This means when an employee of the chemicals company orders AWS resources over the ordering portal, they are identified directly via the AD. The resources are charged directly to their cost center and they immediately enjoy single sign-on, thanks to synchronization with AWS SSO.

Customer benefits

The new AWS background automation and seamless integration with the customer's ordering portal gives employees an excellent user experience and simplifies the use of AWS resources at the company. This is particularly relevant in light of the customer's multi-vendor strategy, which pits AWS against the strong competition from other cloud providers. The customer now has an optimal foundation for its multi-cloud strategy, thanks to the central ordering and administration portal. It can implement centralized security rules and governance principles automatically, while continuing to pursue its cloud strategy. All of this sets the course for the cloud provider-independent digitalization of its IT landscape. The use of agile methods (scrums with short sprint cycles) enabled rapid execution of the project, particularly in light of the dynamic underlying conditions, and gave the customer full transparency over the project status at all times. As a result, any roadblocks that arose could be identified and eliminated at an early juncture.

Further advantages:

- The latest AWS insights from a T-Systems Partner Solution Architect
- Rapid realization thanks to agile methods
- Solid integration with the internal portal
- Governance support

Contact

T-Systems International GmbH
Hahnstraße 43d
60528 Frankfurt am Main
E-Mail: referenzen@t-systems.com
Internet: www.t-systems.com

Published by

T-Systems International GmbH
Marketing
Hahnstraße 43d
60528 Frankfurt am Main
Germany