

The time is now for the Middle East and Africa to seize the Hybrid Cloud opportunity

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Organizations across the Middle East, Africa and Turkey are embarking on cloud journeys as a priority in response to the game-changing effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on businesses. At IBM we've seen those customer journeys begin before the pandemic and of course, the changes the world has seen in the past year have acted as a further catalyst for digital transformation.

In fact, our recent IBM study on hybrid cloud conducted by IDC in the Middle East, Turkey and Africa, found that 85 per cent of C-suite executives surveyed are pursuing or looking to pursue a hybrid cloud strategy in their organization. Additionally, more than 55 per cent suggested the key reason to adopt a hybrid cloud was flexibility and significant cost savings.

The next evolution and top priority for businesses across the Middle East, Africa and Turkey is hybrid cloud. To truly embrace innovative technologies, revolutionize business models, and subsequently impact the bottom-line, organizations across sectors and industries are increasingly implementing Hybrid Cloud solutions. For example, with consumer demands on the increase and their preferences changing fast, **Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB)** - a leading bank in the UAE and the 4th largest Islamic bank in the world – is working with IBM to implement a hybrid cloud strategy. Collaborating with IBM, ADIB is now able to further modernize its operations, provide its customers with improved digital banking experiences and bring new services to market faster. The bank selected IBM Cloud Pak for Integration based on the Red Hat OpenShift platform and IBM Cloud Pak for Automation to facilitate and automate over 20 processes such as customer onboarding and loan origination.

And why is this shift-change important? In a word; flexibility. Agility has been a buzzword across the world throughout the pandemic but in truth that requires a framework that allows businesses to manage multiple clouds to meet present and future business requirements, data, and workloads securely. Hybrid cloud's flexible architecture can include the combination of one or more on-premise infrastructures, internally managed or outsourced private clouds, public clouds from multiple providers, and even the infrastructure for legacy and most modern IoT and edge systems—all running simultaneously to fuel the digitization and security needs of the enterprise.

And of course, security is paramount. Hybrid cloud environments ensure that on-premise systems integrate public cloud and as-a-service resources and treat them as one. Combining all elements holistically ensures that the gaps are filled and that potential for breaches are limited.

The aviation industry is seeing the benefits of hybrid cloud as part of ambitious digitization programs. **Etihad Airways**, the UAE's national carrier wanted to simplify their customers' experiences and provide more choice. By adopting a microservices architecture on an open, highly scalable hybrid cloud platform, the airline could assemble reusable components to accelerate the delivery of new applications – the first of which would be a new web check-in solution. As part of this partnership with IBM, the airline has deployed the solution on different cloud environments as required for compliance with local data protection regulations.

This kind of progress is important because these collaborations underscore the trust the banking and aviation sector place in IBM but also indicates a broader shift in these industries faith in the flexibility that hybrid cloud offers enterprises.

And it goes beyond those sectors. In the telecommunications sector, **Telecom Egypt** implemented a hybrid cloud solution, infusing AI for more flexibility and scalability of operations. Telecom Egypt can now manage and automate their networks, while identifying, isolating and resolving problems before they impact operations. All of which is powered by real-time, historical analytics which will also enable new digital services with ease. In the oil and gas sector, SOCAR Turkey is relying on IBM Cloud Pak for Automation and technology expertise from IBM to transform and redesign its internal processes such as contract and quality management – improving employee productivity and delivering faster and more efficient services to customers.

Meanwhile, **Anadolu Sigorta**, Turkey's first national health insurance provider, has worked with IBM to implement a hybrid cloud solution that allows a customer to be directly integrated into Anadolu Sigorta's system when entering a hospital. Additionally, Anadolu Sigorta's new application process can now take only 10-12 seconds.

IBM's collaboration with **appsNmobile Solutions**, one of Ghana's leading fintech companies, has seen the creation of a fast, stable infrastructure that builds in security for payment transactions in a challenging environment. Security has been vital to appsNMobile Solutions and the in-built security provided by IBM Cloud has led to a fast, stable infrastructure that protects each transaction.

Even at a governmental level, IBM's hybrid cloud solutions are having a transformative effect on essential services. **The Department of Digital Ajman** collaborated with IBM to accelerate its digital transformation and paperless strategy. The move was designed to simplify and enhance citizen experiences in Ajman through the integration of services across different government entities in the emirate. Using IBM Cloud Pak for Integration, Digital Ajman was able to create a centralized hub, based on a hybrid cloud environment, which supports integrations between various private and public entities and their data sources.

From government to aviation, hybrid cloud is changing the way enterprises can do business in a truly agile and flexible way. With hybrid cloud, enterprises can have new ways to transform their businesses. The ability to choose, build once and deploy anywhere will unlock the potential of hybrid cloud and ensure the agility, security, mobility, integration, and cost efficiencies that will play a key role in driving business success in the post-pandemic era.

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