HPE simplifies hybrid cloud management with HCM suite to deliver 'right mix' of services

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The company's recently introduced Hybrid Cloud Management suite represents the evolution of its Helion Cloud Suite, bringing HPE's relevant IT operations management tools and cloud together to enable customers to provision and manage HPE and third-party services.

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Hewlett Packard Enterprise recently introduced Hybrid Cloud Management (HCM) suite, the evolution of its Helion Cloud Suite launched in 2016. It's a response to three key drivers. First is adapting to the business environment, specifically the upcoming spinoff to Micro Focus – HCM will go to Micro Focus later this year, along with the other software assets HPE is divesting to it. Second is customer feedback from the initial version of the Helion Cloud Suite introduced in 2016 – a simplified offering, driven by use cases and focused on reducing time to value (container-based delivery platform, guided tour for set up and use). Third is go-to-market alignment across the HPE IT operations management suites – HCM, Data Center Automation, Operations Bridge and IT Service Management.

THE 451 TAKE

Every enterprise will require its own 'right mix' of traditional IT, private, managed and public clouds. HCM brings HPE's relevant IT operations management tools and cloud together, to enable customers to provision and manage HPE and third-party services. It no longer requires HPE's Helion OpenStack, and has been re-architected to run in containers.

HCM

HCM is positioned as DevOps-ready hybrid and multi-cloud management. It provides three key functions: hybrid cloud orchestration, application release automation and broker-compliant services. It works across any platform (bare metal; virtual; containers; public, private and managed clouds; and traditional and modern applications) and provides end-to-end orchestration.

HCM includes a broker function, with new service-level compliance, enabling users to examine the entirety of business compliance – not just network or database compliance – and remediate where necessary. It can examine what effect service changes and edits across different components (databases, servers, applications, containers) may have on, for example, HIPPA, SOX, PCI or an organization's own compliance. Additionally, HCM offers ChatOps collaboration, automated stage gates for continuous delivery and service-level compliance. Services can be created with a new CloudSlang designer for flow authoring. Services are offered through a service portal with an attribute-based catalog that enables services with variations (such as OS, platform, hypervisor), with no incremental development needed to update. Administrators can change attributes and pricing.

Where the Helion Cloud Suite included 22 products (including two ITOM suites and two Helion products), HCM has been consolidated down to eight key capabilities: cloud broker; compliance; discovery; application release automation; DBaaS, PaaS and XaaS; cloud analytics and capacity; hybrid cloud management; and automation. While Helion Cloud Suite ran on HPE Helion OpenStack software, HCM no longer has that requirement, and is instead architected on containers, using Docker and Kubernetes. Customers will have the choice to install and run HCM on bare metal or VMs, or choose to deploy in the new container-based framework.

PACKAGING

HCM greatly simplifies the packaging of HCS (22 products and two suites down to eight products in one suite) and changes the positioning for enterprise use cases. HCM Express is for hybrid cloud management and includes service design; orchestration; out-of-band content and APIs for integration with any cloud, container or infrastructure; a unified self-service portal; analytics; and workload optimization. These include HPE Cloud Service Automation, HPE Operations Orchestrator, HPE IT Business Analytics, HPE UCMDB Configuration Manager and HPE Cloud Optimizer.

HCM Premium adds application release automation, automated stage gates for continuous delivery (Codar), and database and middleware as a service (DMA-P). HCM Ultimate adds broker-compliant services, catalog aggregation and brokering, existing service discovery, and service compliance and remediation across silos. These are from the HPE Propel ITSM catalog, IT Operations Compliance and Universal Discovery. Enterprise Maps has been taken out; however, HPE says HCM will be re-architected, with migration brought into a new version using the code base of Maps and built directly on Cloud Service Automation, not simply attached to it. Both Data Center Automation and Codar are included in the software spin-merge with Micro Focus. The Data Center Automation and OpsBridge suites were both removed from the HCS packaging to simplify the offering. All the IT Operations Management suites (HCM, DCA, OpsBridge and ITSM) are included in the spin-merge with Micro Focus. HPE is retaining the Helion and Stackato brands, but the underlying IP was sold to SUSE in December 2016 separately from the spin-merge. Helion OpenStack and Stackato were removed from the suite to simplify the offering.

A 10-license unit can run on 10 datacenter instances (VMware, physical servers), 50 containers (such as NodeJS), 50 public cloud instances (EC2 node), or 100 edge and IoT devices. Initially an on-premises only offering, there will ultimately be a SaaS offering that will be used by HPE Enterprise Services (DXC Technologies) and offered by partners such as Capgemini and Steria.

TARGET MARKET

HPE's target customers are the Global 2000 and service providers. It has created personas for central and line-of-business buyers (VP/director IT operations, VP/director cloud operations, VP/director LOB IT) and for users (central IT administrators, central IT operators, LOB developers and LOB QA and operations). The key goal for the line of business HPE is targeting is to release applications faster and get past the bottleneck of central IT to do so. Now LOBs have budget to go outside of central IT. The goal of central IT operations is to meet LOB requirements within company guidelines (security, compliance, cost). This becomes complicated when complex applications span multiple environments and disconnected automation in pockets still requires manual processes to push out new or updated applications and perform compliance and remediation. HPE believes HCM can support both of these needs.

COMPETITION

HPE's HCM competes most directly with VMware vRealize, Red Hat CloudForms and RightScale. HPE believes these offerings have limited functionality, compared with HCM in many areas, and don't offer such complete out-of-band capabilities. Other major supplier firms with multi-cloud and hybrid IT management capabilities include Accenture, Capgemini, Atos, Cognizant, IBM, Dell, Tata Communications, HCL, Wipro, Infosys, NTT/Dimension Data, BMC, CA and Microsoft.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS
With a view to the forthcoming spinoff of software assets to Micro Focus, HPE has simplified its cloud management suite and rebranded it Hybrid Cloud Manager. The design point is delivering cloud orchestration, application release automation and compliance with no need for third-party add-ons.

WEAKNESSES
HPE's competition will position the spinoff to Micro Focus as a massive disruption to the installed base, spread and exploit uncertainty and doubt, and question the long-term viability of the suite under its future owner.

OPPORTUNITIES
HCM's success will largely depend upon Micro Focus' ability to sell the suite into the HPE installed base and beyond, and to deliver a long-term plan of investment in the suite.

THREATS
Despite the hype, the transition from traditional IT architectures to a cloud-based future is a slow, organic process. The opportunity for cloud management suppliers will be to support net new application deployment, modernization of existing applications and wholesale migration/re-platforming of applications into the cloud.