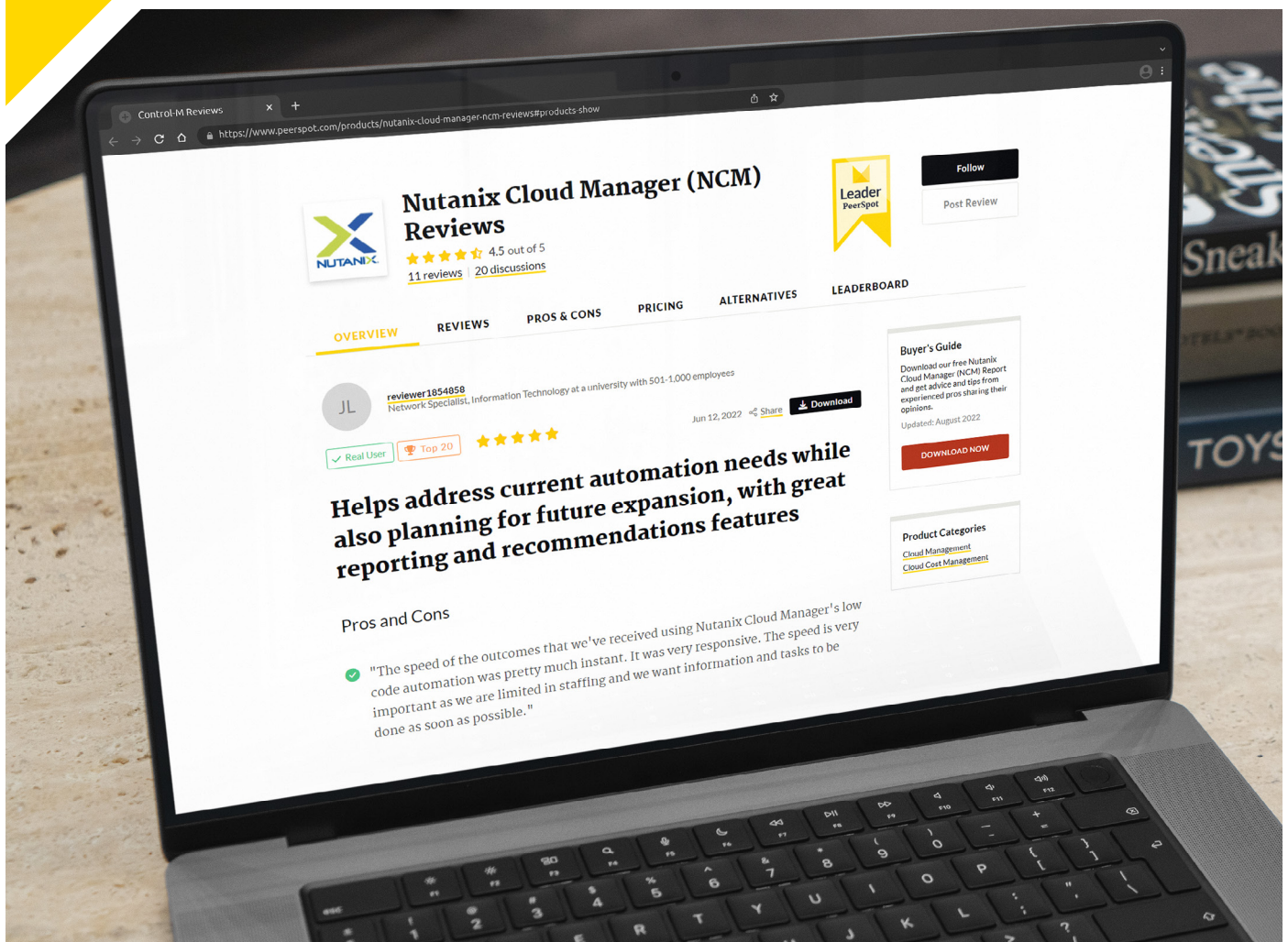


PeerPaper™ Report 2022

Based on Real User Reviews of Nutanix Cloud Manager

Best Practices for Choosing a Cloud Management Solution



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Introduction

Cloud management is a critical task for most IT departments. As organizations move more of their digital workloads and applications to the cloud, often on multiple platforms, the need to manage this varied infrastructure becomes all the more urgent. Cloud management solutions offer a way to stay on top of the work. What makes for an effective cloud management solution? As real users of Nutanix Cloud Manager (NCM) products, formerly known as Prism Pro/Ultimate, Calm, Beam and Security Central explain in reviews on PeerSpot, the best practices for choosing a solution include seeking capabilities for cost management, self-service and a single user interface, along with strong support. As these factors come together in a feature-rich, easy-to-use solution, teams that handle infrastructure and cloud gain efficiency in their cloud management operations.

An Overview of the Cloud Management Solution Selection Process

Each organization has its own distinct requirements for a cloud management solution. As PeerSpot members related how they selected their solution, a number of themes emerged. A Network Specialist who uses Nutanix Cloud Manager at a university with more than 500 employees evaluated Nutanix and Dell. In his view, Nutanix had an edge in terms of how it does learning and marketing. “It’s a lot more interactive, more engaging, and more designed for the end-user,” he said, “whereas Dell is very technical, and may not suit everybody. Nutanix is more of a one-size-fits-all.”

An energy/utilities company with over 1,000 employees looked at VMware VxRail because they were contemplating creating a Dell hyper-converged platform. “Nutanix Intelligent Ops [formerly Prism Pro] was more comfortable,” explained their IT Specialist. He added, “One of Nutanix’s best features is monitoring a cluster, which is useful. Anyone can manage it. Specifically, you don’t need to have someone with VMware or hypervisor background to do it. It is not rocket science.” For his team, Nutanix is easier to manage because it provides centralized administration of the entire environment, instead of having multiple vCenters. He said, “With this solution, you don’t need to log into multiple consoles.”

“Whereas Dell is very technical, and may not suit everybody, Nutanix is more of a one-size-fits-all.”

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“Nutanix built their product from the ground up...they were able to do some really innovative things to make sure that scaling and automation are taken care of.

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A Systems Engineer who uses Nutanix Cloud Manager at a software company with over 200 employees contrasted Nutanix Cloud Manager with VMware vSAN, saying, “Nutanix built their product from the ground up, and because of that, they were able to do some really innovative things to make sure that scaling and automation are taken care of. VMware wedged vSAN into its existing offerings and, because of that, it’s really clunky, difficult to set up, and it doesn’t perform as well.”

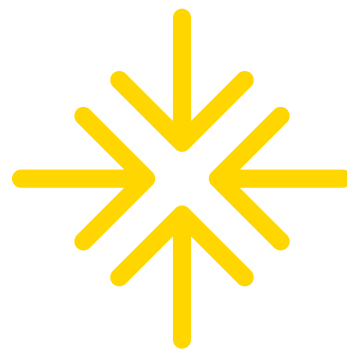
“We looked at Microsoft Hyper-V, Azure, and had VMware previously, but we disconnected from both those solutions,” said a Systems Engineer who uses Nutanix Cloud Manager at a hospitality company with over 10,000 employees. “Nutanix was the most economical solution and its functions were way above Hyper-V in terms of adding resources, monitoring VMs, reporting wise, and latency. Deduplication was the main thing that we looked at since file service plays a major role in our environment.”

Best Practices for Choosing a Cloud Management Solution

Selection criteria for cloud management solutions are varied and somewhat subjective. However, a set of best practices are emerging that can guide prospective buyers of this technology. According to PeerSpot members, the best practice is to look for a solution that's feature-rich and easy to use, with self-service capabilities. It should save time, enable infrastructure management and help with cost management and security, among other factors.

Enables Infrastructure Management

Cloud management often encompasses infrastructure management, so a good cloud management solution will function in this context. A Project Manager who uses NCM Self-Service (formerly Calm) at a healthcare company with more than 500 employees explained how this works. He said, "When you have applications that can run on more than one machine, you can easily use blueprints to scale out the infrastructure. You can start with two web front ends, a web service and then you say, 'Okay, I need a third one and a fourth one.' This is very easy." He also mentioned that one must script the process, but that self-service provides a framework to perform the task in a repeatable and consistent manner.



**Centralized
Administration
of the Entire
Environment**

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A T-shirt analogy is how a Cloud Architect at a tech services company with more than 500 employees described his use of NCM Self-Service. For his team, infrastructure components are either extra small, small, medium or large, in terms of the CPU count, memory and storage. He said, “We use that to catalog our resources. The beauty of that catalog that we’re building is that it is consumed against an infrastructure. By ‘T-shirting’ these consumption models, we’re able to maximize the available capacity of the environment that these workloads are sitting on.”

This user contrasted the T-shirt approach with his team’s previous practice of manually provisioning infrastructure. “That meant you were not consuming a platform linearly and that you were usually under-consuming something,” he said. “You would make an investment and not maximize the output of that investment. By standardizing our ‘T-shirts’ with Self-Service, we have also standardized the infrastructure that things are consumed against.”

“What Self-Service has done for us is it’s enabled the rigidity to be lifted,” said the tech services Cloud Architect. “It’s a transformative tool. If you embrace it and adopt it properly, it opens the door to developing a life cycle process and the tools to use around Self-Service in terms of a repository and pipelining.”

“After using this solution, we have clear-cut savings of more than 40%.”

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Helps Contain Cloud Costs

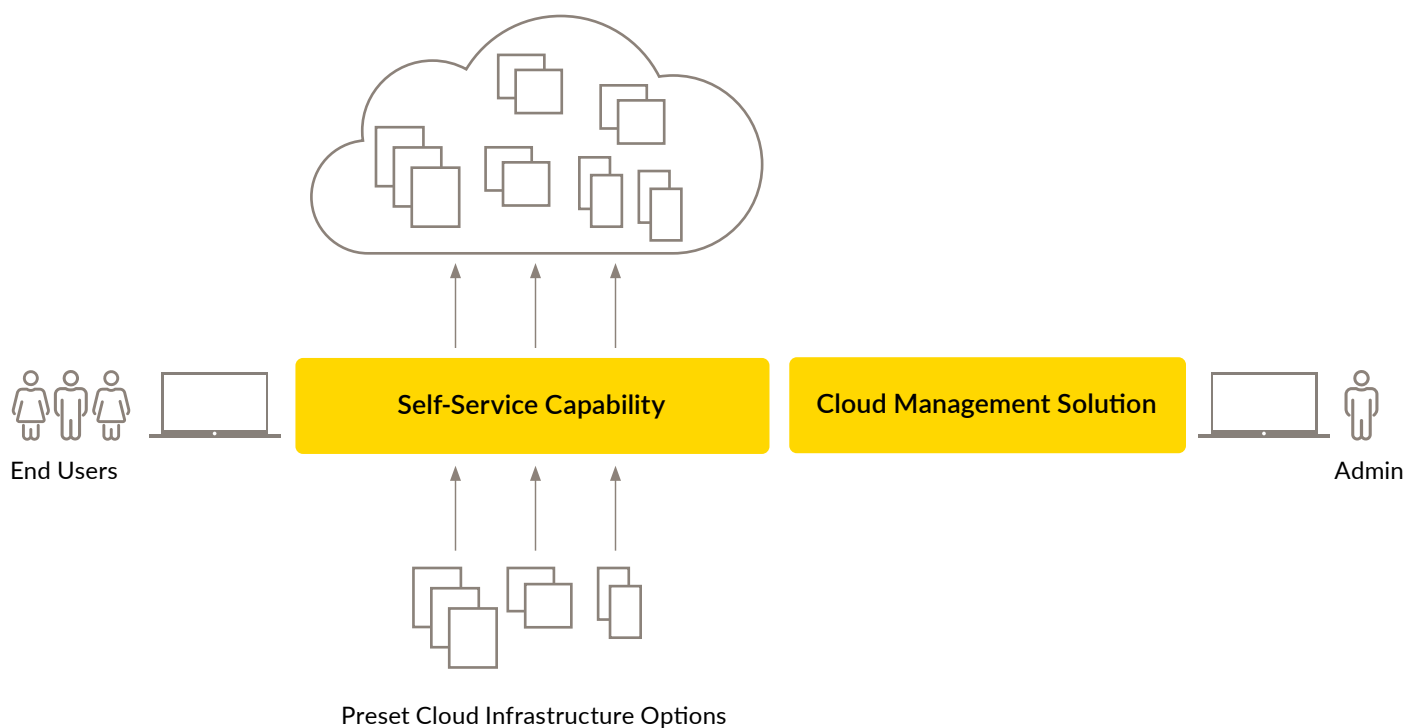
Cost management is part of cloud management, so a good practice is to look for cost management capabilities in a prospective solution. As an IT Operations staffer who uses Nutanix Cloud Manager at an energy/utilities company with more than 5,000 employees put it, “It is more cost-centric as compared to other solutions. It saves cost. After using this solution, we have clear-cut savings of more than 40%. It also saves time. We were able to see the results within 45 days from the time of its deployment.”

For an AVP/Technology & Consulting at a tech services company with over 200 employees, what matters is Nutanix Cloud Manager Cost Governance’s executive dashboard. He said, “It provides a complete sense of the whole infrastructure, right from a costing standpoint and a billing standpoint.” A Telecommunications expert who uses NCM Cost Governance at a computer software company with more than 5,000 employees concurred, saying, “You can configure NCM Cost Governance to automatically send out reports to the business units responsible for managing cloud costs, so you don’t need to log into the tool to get information.”

Makes Self-Service Possible

Reviewers felt self-service is a valuable feature in a cloud management solution. A Head of Operations at the University of Reading, which has over 1,000 employees, put it this way: “Nutanix Self-Service’s one-click self-service feature means that we don’t have to look after it. The end-users can, as I said, serve themselves so they can set the blueprint and spin up some resources. They don’t need to wait for IT, which means that we, in IT, can actually focus on adding value by making sure that the clusters are healthy and by looking to help them with some of their requirements.” Figure 1 depicts this capability.

Figure 1 - Cloud management self-service enables non-specialists to create cloud infrastructure without help from IT.



“The self-service for users is key to this solution because the creation is done solely on the users’ terms and time,” said an Administrator who uses NCM Self-Service at Neuberger Gebäuteautomation GmbH, a small retailer. “No waiting for IT or such.”

The tech services company is finding that NCM Self-Service’s one-click self-service feature is “really transforming the team’s efficiency,” as their Cloud Architect remarked. He elaborated, saying, “The teams are used to being reactive, which is typical of what you find in IT organizations and service providers. Customers run into problems and teams react. What we’re trying to do is reduce that slope and be more proactive in approach. The one-click ability is enabling us to take some of those activities and put them into operation, versus people manually responding.”

Vopak Terminals Singapore Pte Ltd., a logistics company with more than 5,000 employees, is using NCM Self-Service to create what their Tech Lead calls a “self-service shop,” where his team can select to deploy standardized workloads and choose a certain profile for a particular server for use by users.



**Saves Time
for Users**

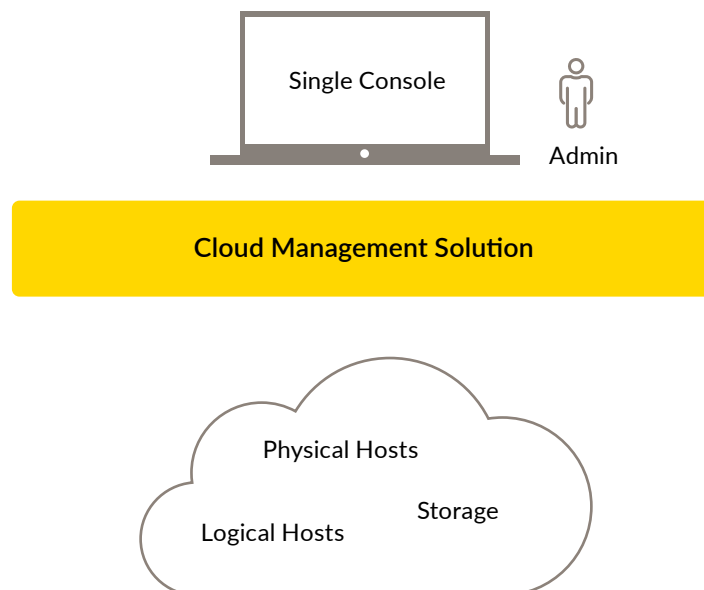
“With the help of Intelligent Ops, we are able to simplify our operations and administrative tasks.”

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Presents in a Single UI and Solution vs. Multiple Products

PeerSpot members stressed the value of a cloud management solution that offers a single user interface (UI) and solution, versus requiring the use of multiple products. As the utility’s IT Operations staffer explained, “It makes our life easy because with the help of the Intelligent Ops, we can manage the movement of virtual machines between clusters. We can validate and do complete health checks of physical hosts and logical hosts, as well as of the complete compute, storage and other components. All those are converged and are a part of a single solution. With the help of Intelligent Ops, we are able to simplify our operations and administrative tasks.” This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - A cloud management solution should provide a single UI for any logical hosts, physical hosts, storage and other components of cloud infrastructure.



“The main use case was to have a single console with all the alerts as well as viewing each cluster from a single pane of glass,” said the utility’s IT Specialist. He added, “That was one of the primary reasons for moving to this solution. It provides centralized upgrade simplicity as well as getting alerts and updates on a single pane of glass. That makes it very easy rather than missing any notifications or alerts.” The utility’s IT Operations staffer likewise remarked, “It simplifies operation by providing a single dashboard.”

“It provides centralized upgrade simplicity as well as getting alerts and updates on a single pane of glass.”

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Offers a Rich Feature Set

PeerSpot members emphasized the value of a broad feature set in a cloud management solution. “We looked at all the players in the market,” said the software company’s Systems Engineer. “We interviewed them and looked at their features and we felt that Nutanix had the best offering.”

For a Senior IT-Consultant who uses Nutanix Cloud Manager at BYGGMA ASA, a wholesaler/distributor with more than 500 employees, one of the most valuable features was the hardware and how it can be set up to be redundant. This illustrates the benefit of the HCI platform and an integrated management solution for the same. He said, “If something goes down, you can just swap it out and you’re back online. If a drive or even a whole node goes down, it’s pretty easy to get it back up and running.”

Reporting and the recommendations were seen as Nutanix Cloud Manager’s most valuable features by the university Network Specialist. Reporting also stood out to the utility’s IT Operations staffer. He shared, “We are using Intelligent Ops, and the features related to the reporting capabilities, health checks, and automated alerts to Nutanix call-home are very important.”

“The ease of use when building new applications and offering them in the marketplace is the most elegant feature of Self-Service.”

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Is Easy to Use

Ease of use matters for a cloud management solution. The workload is challenging enough without the added burden of a complicated solution. As the University of Reading's Head Of Operations explained, “The fact that these are non-technical people - they're experts in their fields but they're definitely not technical - and they can just log in to the portal and select the resource that they believe they need, and manage it themselves, speaks to the ease of use.”

Other notable comments about ease of use include:

- “It's easy to use, overall. I'm a Linux guy, so a lot of it is familiar to me. I feel comfortable when I use it. It's not really hard or complex.” - Project Manager who uses NCM Self-Service at a healthcare company with more than 500 employees
- “The blueprints and templates are very nice and easy to use. They are very valuable because we can configure the entirety of an environment as a template and reuse it multiple times.” - Leader of Environments and Automation who uses NCM Self-Service at a financial services firm with over 1,000 employees
- “The ease of use when building new applications and offering them in the marketplace is the most elegant feature of Self-Service.” - Manager Self-Service at Vopak Terminals

“Upgrade activity on servers, which was offloaded to the Nutanix platform, used to take hours on our legacy platform.”

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Helps Users Save Time

A good cloud management solution should save users time. The University of Reading’s Head Of Operations framed the issue like this: “It allows the research to happen a lot faster, for the researchers to do the work that they need to do and then tear it down. It certainly does support a much faster turnaround time.”

Vopak Terminals’ Tech Lead also felt that NCM Self-Service enables his team to react more quickly to the changing needs of the business by significantly decreasing machine delivery time. He said, “It really drives up our speed tremendously for getting workloads to the customer as soon as possible. Previously, it took a few weeks to get a virtual machine in place, including deploying the virtual machine and getting the administrative parts in order for it. That process takes a matter of minutes now, if the prerequisites are in place on the networking layer.”

“It saves time since it is a single pane of glass,” said the utility’s IT Specialist. “Our efficiency has increased because of that. We don’t have to log into multiple servers when we do upgrades. We can do it on one console. This saves us eight to 10 hours a month. Upgrade activity on servers, which was offloaded to the Nutanix platform, used to take hours on our legacy platform.”

“Nutanix support is outstanding. It does not matter which continent you reside.”

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Has Excellent Support

Support is also a critical selection factor for a cloud management solution. PeerSpot members praised Nutanix in this context, with Neuberger Gebäudeautomation's Administrator, for example, declaring, “Nutanix support is outstanding. It does not matter which continent you reside.”

The healthcare Project Manager similarly noted, “Nutanix technical support is great. It's very fast. In the beginning we had an issue and they were very quick. The support team from Nutanix, compared to others, is amazing. They provide help really quickly. Support is really one of Nutanix's strengths.”

“Nutanix technical support is a top-notch team,” said the tech services Cloud Architect. “It's really one of the best experiences we have had and that I've personally had. When we call into Nutanix, their SREs are just phenomenal. Their discipline is absolutely amazing. We can get through escalation if we need to and get to a team, whether that's Self-Service or any other team, in a very short period of time. And that extends, for us, into their product team, into their engineers, or their QA if we need to.”



**Outstanding
Support**

Conclusion

Cloud management does not have to be a burdensome workload. With the right cloud management solution, IT managers can save time and be efficient in the work of keeping a cloud functioning properly. When it comes to selecting a cloud management solution, PeerSpot members suggest looking for solutions that offer infrastructure management, cost management, self-service and a unified UI. Vendor support matters, too, as does ease of use. These factors will be present in the right solution. When put to work, it will provide a foundation for the business and technical advantages that come from operating in the cloud.

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