

Use cases, dashboards flow from cloud management and operations provider fluidOps

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Cloud application management and operations vendor **fluid Operations** continues to broaden its technology and customers. The company is leveraging its eCloudManager software for license and resource management, green IT, and other datacenter management use cases, including private, public and hybrid clouds. While fluidOps is certainly not alone in flowing to the cloud management and operations opportunity, it is working to ensure the right balance of differentiation and integration with a growing list of systems integrators and other partners.

The 451 take

FluidOps continues to successfully shift from an SAP applications player to a broader cloud-enablement provider with its eCloudManager. This brings broader opportunity, but also the challenge of standing out. Still, fluidOps seems to be striking the right balance of expanding its own capabilities and features while partnering with and enabling other providers. The company is also wisely supporting and contributing to open source software with its FedEx federation feature, which shows that while most of its software is not necessarily open source, fluidOps understands the need for and benefits of open source and community in cloud computing, a theme we've seen continue to resonate in the market.

German cloud management and operations provider fluidOps continues to expand beyond its roots as an **SAP** applications manager to a cloud-enablement play focused on provisioning, reporting and semantic data for what it describes as cloud awareness. FluidOps still counts SAP applications as a big part of its business, but has also branched out with others, such as **NetApp** and **Cisco**. FluidOps continues to build its channel of primarily systems integrators (SIs), as well. Reporting about 20 paying customers in a variety of datacenter management use cases, fluidOps highlights government customers focused on open data and federating access as a good example of typical use. It expects to grow from about 30-40 employees this year.

FluidOps says it is still only seeing limited deployment of devops, where application development is crossing over with application deployment and IT operations. Still, fluidOps does have a couple of pilot projects that are examples of devops, and the company expects more as users expand beyond integrating their ticketing systems, green IT and other use cases to wider-scope projects. Just as we're hearing from some other vendors in the space, fluidOps says these deployments are not as much about programming or application workflows as they are about managing resources, which is what we describe as 'auto-ops' – the abstraction and automation of IT operations.

With its eCloudManager cloud management and operations software – described by fluidOps as the glue between infrastructure and applications – the company is focused on managing enterprise application lifecycles and the application 'landscape layer.' Its eCloudManager boasts a self-service portal and analytics dashboard, bolstering its capabilities and features, including assessment and datacenter due diligence, integration and linking of business data, on-demand dashboards for analysis, IT cost transparency and control, optimized hybrid cloud management, and an on-premises cloud interface for upselling. FluidOps launched eCloudManager 4.0 in June with two versions: Enterprise Edition for on-demand provisioning and monitoring of enterprise applications, and Intelligence Edition for end-to-end cloud operations management and a focus on collaboration and social management, which is similar to devops. FluidOps is also broadening the partners and technologies that it supports, such as **EMC Vplex** virtual storage, with additional such support and integration with other products to be rolled out soon. FluidOps also reports traction for its Xen customer base. In terms of use cases, for which fluidOps offers several standard dashboards, the key ones at this point are: license management (a common pain point we hear about among customers), resource management, green IT, managing technical specifications or documentation, and IT ticketing systems. FluidOps is also leading an open source federation project and feature in eCloudManager called FedX.

Competition

Like others in the space, fluidOps is in co-competition with **VMware**, cooperating with the virtualization giant on large SAP and other enterprise application deployments, but also growing its use and traction from the competing Xen hypervisor and, thus, competing. While we see legitimacy to fluidOps' contention that it can be an integral part of VMware's answer to rivals, we also believe VMware's own interest in its vSphere and Cloud Foundry PaaS may intensify its competition with fluidOps. Similar situations exist for fluidOps when it comes to Cisco, EMC and NetApp, although we see the company partnering more closely with them. **Citrix**, with its XenServer technology and business, its participation in **OpenStack**, and its acquisition of **Cloud.com**, is competitive with fluidOps.

There is also significant competition from entrenched systems management vendors **BMC**, **CA Technologies**, **Hewlett-Packard** and **IBM** – all of which have pieced together their own cloud application management and cloud operations stories with acquisitions, integrations and partnerships. Other vendors that cross over with fluidOps to some extent in systems management include **F5**, **Platform Computing** and **Symantec**. Open source systems management vendors **GroundWork Open Source** and **Zenoss** also aim at some of the same cloud integrations and partnerships as fluidOps.

Of course, fluidOps is not alone in its focus on cloud application management, cloud operations and devops. A growing list of somewhat similar rivals includes: **Abiquo**, **AccelOps**, **BitRock**, **Enomaly**, **Eucalyptus**, **Flexiant**, **Joyent**, **Nimbula**, **Nolio**, **OnApp**, **rPath**, **Virtustream** and **Zimory**. Some PaaS players that are on the auto-ops end of the devops movement, such as **CloudBees** and **Standing Cloud**, are also among competitors for fluidOps, given their self-service and cloud operations aspects.

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