CloudFabrix cfxDimensions:
The Unique Power of Outcome-Driven Analytics

Abstract

Advanced IT analytics (AIA), or AIOps, is an area of both innovation and confusion. Terms such as "big data," "AI," and "machine learning" are often hyped as generic technologies, supposedly solving many problems in and of themselves. The truth is that without creative innovation, a generic technology will solve very little of consequence. What counts are game-changing solutions that bring the power of core analytic technologies together in unique and valuable ways.

The CloudFabrix cfxDimensions platform stands out as a game-changer within the AIA universe for its compelling innovations and relevance to real IT and business needs. Founded in 2015, and serving both enterprises and MSPs, CloudFabrix is enjoying substantial growth for reasons that this report seeks to articulate and clarify.

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The CloudFabrix cfxDimensions Platform in Summary

cfxDimensions is an outcome-driven AI Ops platform that continuously discovers application and infrastructure interdependencies within the context of predetermined business objectives. This platform couples out-of-the-box data integrations with machine learning, analytics, and AI tuned for operations to deliver intelligent, cross-layer/cross-domain solutions that work alone or in concert. Its core components include:

- Hybrid IT monitoring (cfxPulse)
- Asset lifecycle management (cfxRealize)
- Automated workflows (cfxAutomate)
- Customized use cases with advanced AI (cfxHorizons)

cfxDimensions Components

CloudFabrix offers its customers flexibility and versatility by supplying the choice of adopting the entire cfxDimensions platform or investing in individual components first. Integration across components is fully native, so migration toward the entire platform can be done without disruption. However, full platform investment is often preferred, since each area of insight and automation can help to inform and enrich other cfxDimensions components.

Customers just starting out may choose to prioritize cfxPulse or cfxRealize, depending on their priorities. With each investment, cfxAutomate can come into play for premium packages.

- **cfxPulse:** Monitors traditional IT, cloud, and hybrid environments in real time to gain deep insights into the health, performance, and availability of IT systems. It leverages core platform strengths in predictive analytics, continuous discovery and dependency mapping, and integrated automation.

- **cfxRealize:** Provides continuous visibility and intelligence to optimize hardware and software assets across the IT application and infrastructure (not including endpoints) based on usage and spend. It also enables ongoing lifecycle IT asset insights that help promote faster and more successful adoption of new hardware and software. Finally, cfxRealize can capture IT portfolio costs for specific application services through cfxDimensions' real-time visibility into application-to-infrastructure interdependencies.

- **cfxAutomate**: Integrates with cfxPulse, cfxRealize, and all cfxDimensions platform components. Automate is distinctive because it can be created and delivered in real time based on analytically-defined outcomes. cfxAutomate is fast, secure, and highly scalable because of its native serverless and microservices architectural components. It provides a broad range of capabilities for workflow, alerting, and triggered automation routines (such as configuration changes) that can streamline operations efficiencies.

- **cfxHorizons for Outcome-Driven Advanced Analytics:** cfxHorizons can leverage insights from cfxPulse and cfxRealize, as well as the advanced analytics-driven automation capabilities of cfxAutomate. Its strengths and value are best understood in context with three critical use cases:
  - **Outcome-driven analytics for optimizing cloud**: Provides consistent IT controls across multiple disparate public clouds and hybrid (public/private) cloud, with continuous assessments for compliance, security, and capacity optimization.
  - **Outcome-driven analytics for application delivery and planning**: Enables more proactive application lifecycle planning and management through compelling analytics and app-to-infrastructure interdependency insights.
  - **Outcome-driven analytics for business use cases:** Governs and analyzes business health metrics while seeking opportunities for improvement and providing visibility into IT dependencies and risks.

CloudFabrix also offers unique packages for IoT, data governance, healthcare, and other verticals.

Core Benefits

After customer dialogues and careful industry evaluation, EMA identified the following core benefits available through use of the CloudFabrix cfxDimensions Platform.

- **Speed and Agility in Service Delivery**: Accelerating time to resolution through advanced analytics, with guides to auditing and improving war room efficiencies.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making**: Allowing enterprises to harness vast amounts of data from cross-silo data sources for superior insights and intelligence to make faster, more informed decisions.
- **Application-Infrastructure Asset Optimization**: Minimizing Capex and OpEx costs through lifecycle insights into application and infrastructure SW and HW usage, relevance, and value.
- **Hybrid Cloud Optimization:** Facilitating responsible hybrid cloud adoption by addressing the barriers of security, cost overruns, and shadow IT.
- **Improved IT Operational Efficiencies:** Enabling enterprises and MSPs to audit, measure, and improve operational performance through outcome-driven insights.
- **Modernization of IT:** Promoting more agile ways of working through unique support for cloud and new application architectures, including containers and microservices.
- **Unifying IT**: Bridging IT silos by providing full-stack hybrid IT monitoring and analytics capabilities to create a single pane of view and control, with consistent and proactive insights.
- **Improved Business-to-IT Alignment:** Providing a common ground for business and IT stakeholders to set objectives, while seeking key business success factors and underlying IT dependencies and risks.

Comments from a North American Managed Services Provider that grew substantially, in part thanks to its deployment of CloudFabrix cfxDimensions

"cfxDimensions lets us assimilate preexisting monitoring and other toolset investments so insights can be visualized more cohesively and dynamically.

"Another strength of cfxDimensions is in what we call 'e-bonding,' or integration with IT service management solutions like ServiceNow and Remedy.

"But above all, what we liked about cfxDimensions was the fact that it was outcomes-driven. Rather than just looking proactively at different data, which was itself of value, with cfxDimensions we were able to take that up a level and relate what was happening to business outcomes and business objectives. Our sites are scored for availability, performance, capacity compliance, and security needs—often using more than 20 to 30 outcomes to arrive at the final score."

Platform Architecture

cfxDimensions is instrumented across the data center, at remote locations, and across public and private cloud. Its versatility in data capture, discovery and dependency mapping, advanced heuristics, and visualization are all central to its customer appeal.

Cloud-Native Architecture: cfxDimensions is built using microservices and containers. As such, it can integrate natively with public cloud serverless functions, such as Amazon Lambda. The cloud-native architecture also makes cfxDimensions easier to deploy, with adaptability to run on virtually any public cloud.

Data Collection: Without third-party integrations, cfxDimensions can assimilate IT and business events, IT and business time series data, log files, transaction data in all its dimensions, business process impacts, and security data.

Heuristics: Heuristic breadth is a cornerstone of cfxDimensions, with if/then change impact analysis, correlation and comparators, anomaly detection, machine learning, predictive analytics, process and cognitive analytics, data mining and stream analytics, neural networks, prescriptive analytics, natural language search, and rule-based analytics.

Discovery and Dependency Mapping: cfxDimensions can support both agent-based and agentless discovery, with strong open-source access. Discovery and dependency mapping is continuous to support the need for dynamic currency across the full application and infrastructure stack, including end-to-end transaction discovery across hybrid cloud, public cloud, virtualized and traditional data centers, containers, and microservices.

Visualization: CloudFabrix gives a high degree of attention and care to its visualization capabilities, both for showing governance scores and for dynamically presenting common ground for performance and change management and capacity planning, as well as DevOps and application modernization initiatives.

EMA Perspective

The CloudFabrix cfxDimensions platform is an excellent fit for IT organizations seeking to modernize application delivery and optimize cloud, as well as those enterprises and MSPs wanting a more visible and dynamic alignment between IT and business performance.

For instance, EMA's recent research on the digital war room[1] underscores a growing need for versatile and proactive analytics in addressing more strategic requirements across IT, such as integrated DevOps and optimizing public and private cloud. CloudFabrix cfxDimensions is a perfect fit for IT organizations seeking a more proactive and strategic digital war room—one that can not only help to improve service performance, but one that has the potential to help transform operations as a whole.

In parallel, EMA's research on IT asset management[2] also highlights requirements that cry out for higher levels of automation, as well as more analytics-driven, ongoing intelligence and awareness. For instance, on average, respondents indicated they used 11 different tools and spent 15 hours per week reconciling discovery-related data from different sources. With CloudFabrix, these requirements can be addressed more cohesively and dynamically, with improved levels of accuracy and relevance.

By addressing these and other needs, the cfxDimensions platform is distinctive for its design, versatility, and multiple use cases. By focusing on outcomes across the full IT stack, as well as with business stakeholders, cfxDimensions can help align professionals across IT silos in operations, as well as those in ITSM and development. cfxDimensions can also support IT asset management teams and IT and enterprise procurement. Finally, with its ability to correlate business and IT metrics, cfxDimensions is proving itself to be of strong value in aligning the IT and business executive suites.

With its breadth of use and value, the CloudFabrix cfxDimensions platform should be at the top of the list for enterprises and MSPs seeking to step up to the opportunities and pressures of cloud, agile, and digital transformation. With cfxDimensions' outcome-driven capabilities, it can truly become possible to run IT as a business.

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[1] "Unifying IT Decision-Making for Digital War Rooms," EMA, April 2018.
[2] "Optimizing IT for Financial Performance," EMA, September 2016.

About EMA