

Case Study: Ascential FaaS Case Study

The Customer

Ascential is a global specialist information, data and insights company providing intelligent decision-making for the world's most ambitious business. Specifically, their Store Management Technology enables omni-channel e-commerce solutions to streamline and automate store operations across the marketplace.

Our Relationship

Ascential reached out to long-term trusted partner transACT Technology Solutions, an AWS Advanced Consulting Partner, for their expert direction on best practices and practical solutions when migrating to the AWS Cloud.

Business Challenges

Ascential came to us with the challenge of wanting deeper visualisations and explorations of their AWS costs that could be presented to the business teams in different ways. It was explicitly mentioned that the transACT Cloud Management Portal (TCMP) cost, usage and forecasting data was extremely valuable to them and that this should be the source for all the data augmentation we will be performing.

“ **Due to our new data cost exploration solution on AWS, we have eliminated manual monthly cost analysis, saving significant time across departments. With personalised visualisations, we now make more informed decisions efficiently. This collaborative approach, integrated with transACT Cloud Management Portal, has elevated our access to actionable cost data, showcasing the impact of this streamlined AWS solution on our workflow.** ”

ASCENTIAL

ASCENTIAL
Act today, win tomorrow.

Working Together

Ascential wanted to optimise cloud cost management and analysis of their datasets. They approached their long-term solutions partner, transACT, for FinOps-as-a-Service (FaaS). As an AWS Advanced Consulting Partner, transACT provides specialised services helping companies maximise cloud value.

The Solution

The solution running in the AWS Cloud utilised data pulled from the transACT Cloud Management Platform (TCMP) and loaded it into a RedShift database. From here, all relevant cost data for the appropriate teams is segregated into individual schemas and sent to QuickSight for virtualisation. This process is repeated multiple times for multiple teams; for example, the product A team gets a dashboard of all product A data. CSuite employees get a high-level abstracted dashboard providing an overall view of all accounts' costs.

Products



transACT Cloud Management Portal (TCMP)



AWS Lambda



Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3)



Amazon QuickSight



Amazon RedShift

Solution Architecture

transACT designed an end-to-end FaaS solution utilising:

Phase 1

- Deliver FaaS using Redshift, DataPipeline, Lambda, Quicksight, PowerBI, and DataStudio
- Deliver reports to Ascential
- Deliver to any customer
- Optimised solutions for performance, cost and automation

Phase 2

- Expand data sources beyond TCMP
- Use AWS CUR
- Use Console CSV. (Used for 5-day FaaS audit)
- 3rd Party data sources available on request

Phase 3

- Enriched Reporting
- ML cost prediction
- Include Usage Types
- Savings Plan Information

Phase 4

- DataStudio, QuickSight, or PowerBI dashboard delivery via mobile app.

Phase 5

- AWS Inventory API (TCMP not required)
- Inventory reports using API
- Integration of CUR reporting into AWS API Inventory reporting

This provided a governed dataset for QuickSight visualisations into cost optimisation opportunities, including right-sizing, utilisation improvements, purchase model changes and more.

The Implementation

Using an Agile approach, transACT rapidly deployed environments via Infrastructure-as-Code. Ascential stakeholders were engaged continuously, providing feedback using a prototype-driven process.

Business Outcomes

The automated FaaS solution delivered

- ✔ 60% faster access to billing and usage data
- ✔ 30% improvement in cost visibility attributing spending to departments
- ✔ Predictive analytics to forecast future spend

The new solution provides customised cost visualisations and data accessible on-demand for each business team. Rather than requesting periodic reports, stakeholders can self-serve insights tailored to their needs. This has driven adoption, resulting in teams making more frequent use of the total cost management data and analytics now available through the platform.

The time savings and improved analytics access have empowered departments to leverage data in decision-making. The automated FaaS solution has reduced the analysis workload and provided cross-functional visibility into spending and budgets.