

Buyers' Guide for cloud billing platform

As cloud computing becomes more mainstream, more organizations are moving their workloads to the public clouds such as AWS, Azure, GCP, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure and more. Many of these organizations elect to go through intermediaries such as Managed Service Providers (MSPs) or cloud resellers to offload the management tasks. These intermediaries offer them value-added services and at times better prices.

MSPs strive to optimize their billing operations for their ever-increasing number of end-customers. Many of them work with many hundreds or even thousands of end-customers. Building their own billing systems may be too much for these MSPs, especially that they need to keep up with the ever-changing pricing infrastructure and resource consumption data. Many MSPs look for a billing system that would **improve their productivity and profitability**.

Looking for a good billing system for your cloud reselling business can be daunting. We have summarized the main considerations focusing on productivity and profitability for you to examine below:

Improve productivity

Considerations	Why important?
How does the billing system automate the billing process?	Automation is key in the billing process. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The end-customers' consumption data needs to be automatically ingested from the cloud vendor without having to resort to manually downloading a huge amount of data and uploading to the billing system.• Cloud vendor pricing information should be ingested and applied according to policy.
How does the billing system enable customized pricing?	A billing system should keep a product catalog with all the approved pricing. These approved pricing can contain a markup on certain resource types, a discount, a bundled deal, and more. MSPs should be able to apply any pricing strategy as they wish on such billing systems.
How does the billing system track any potential errors and notify the billing	Billing systems are supposed to minimize human involvement and avoid errors. Billing operators

operator?

should not have to always log on to the billing system to see if there are any errors, alerts or notifications. They should be notified via emails, error tickets and the like.

What integrations does the billing system provide with the rest of the billing ecosystem?

A billing system should integrate with the rest of the billing ecosystem. For example, MSPs may rely on ERP or invoicing systems for their final invoicing. With such integration, the billing system can enable an end-to-end billing solution for the MSPs.

How is the billing system deployed and maintained?

In this era, billing systems should be offered as a SaaS model with all data (at rest or in transit) encrypted. MSPs should not have to bear the costs of installation and maintenance.

Improve business viability and profitability

Considerations

Why important?

How does the billing system provide transparency and visibility to end customers?

End-customers would like to get access to their past and current itemized bills and the charges for each whenever they want. An end-customer self-service portal is crucial to raise customer satisfaction through transparency and visibility.

How does the billing system track important business KPIs such as margins, top customers, purchase order overage, etc.?

A billing system should enable the MSPs to track their profitability taking into account the margin, the distribution of cloud credits, and more. It should offer a business dashboard that shows the business trends, e.g. business revenue, number of customers, top customers, etc.

Does the billing system provide any feedback on how to widen the profit margin?

A billing system knows the cloud vendor pricing, available savings plans, and the end-customer consumptions. It should be able to discover opportunities for MSPs to take advantage of better pricing, e.g. buying more reserved instances.

Which public / private clouds are supported on the billing system?

The right billing system for you should support at least the cloud(s) that you are reselling. The more they support, the more flexibility you have in the future to expand your business.

A good billing system should be able to help you streamline and optimize your billing operations. Investment in such is worthwhile if you find the right solution. The aforementioned considerations are for your reference when you evaluate the billing systems in the market.

Aquila Clouds BillOps passes the considerations above with flying colors. We have worked with many MSPs and helped them improve both their teams' productivity and profitability. If you have any questions on your evaluation of billing systems, contact us at sales@aquilaclouds.com.

Aquila BillOps helps our customers

Reduce revenue leak

Our empirical data show **4% to 19%** revenue leak saved through BillOps.

Improve productivity

Weeks of work reduced to mins. **1000x improvement** in productivity.

Optimize staffing

10:1 optimization ratio of billing staff.



**“What we used to finish in weeks,
now we can finish in minutes”**

VP, Microsoft Practice Head, Nasdaq listed cloud managed service provider