A research report comparing vendors and service providers strengths, challenges and competitive differentiators
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Summary</strong></td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provider Positioning</strong></td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Report</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Classifications</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology &amp; Team</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author &amp; Editor Biographies</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Our Company &amp; Research</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mainframe Application Modernization Software** | 15 – 21 |
- Who Should Read This | 16 |
- Quadrant | 17 |
- Definition & Eligibility Criteria | 18 |
- Observations | 19 |
- Provider Profile | 21 |
Executive Summary

Enterprises are eager to unleash their mainframe data.

The mainframe service market continues to grow as per ISG’s expectations for both conventional mainframe outsourcing and consulting services to migrate mainframes to the cloud. With clients under pressure to reduce their mainframe costs, several service providers are addressing the increasing demand to free business data that resides in mainframe systems.

From a high-level perspective, all companies are moving their data from on-premises to the cloud for leveraging advanced analytics, AI, machine learning and data lakes. However, when their data sits on a mainframe, companies find that the need for data access drives modernization.

Data access, business agility and cost reduction are the main reasons for mainframe modernization. In a client case study, a company had critical business information on the mainframe, which was not accessible to cloud-based AI tools. It decided to migrate more than 150 terabytes of data to a new, globally accessible cloud platform. With the increase in cloud innovations, service providers that master mainframe migration had experienced more than 20 percent revenue growth for this service line as of 2021.

**Mainframe cost pressure:** Mainframe costs continue to rise, driven by independent software vendors (ISVs). After Broadcom acquired CA Technologies in 2018, it changed the product pricing strategy. Faced with elevated software maintenance fees, clients are now asking how to replace tools from CA Technologies. Mainframe license
optimization requires expert consulting that most study participants can provide. From a hardware perspective, IBM has been pushing clients to upgrade their mainframes to the IBM z15 system without much success. In its annual report, the company cited "an elongated z15 adoption cycle as a result of the challenging environment."

**Slow adoption of new mainframe tools:** Clients are skeptical about the benefits of investing to modernize COBOL. From a small survey sample representing nine providers and approximately 1,000 enterprise clients, only 7 percent use Java on z/OS, 12 percent have adopted mainframe DevOps, and 15 percent use COBOL APIs.

**Cloud providers showing increased interest in mainframes:** AWS is investing in partners’ training and acquired Blu Age in 2021. Google had acquired Cornerstone Technology in 2020. Both acquired vendors offer automated mainframe application modernization to reengineer and rewrite COBOL (and other legacy languages) to Java, .Net or C#, while automating the delivery of cloud-native applications. AWS established the AWS Competency Program to help customers identify AWS partners with deep industry experience and expertise. Microsoft also offers mainframe migration to Azure with partner companies.

**Slow growth of mainframe migration capacity:** This study identifies 26 companies that offer mainframe migration to the cloud and 17 vendors of mainframe migration tools. These services grew more than 20 percent in revenue last year, but they may not be adequate to cover mainframe MIPS growth. Each provider reports 15 to 30 projects per year, with average project length of more than

**Mainframe to cloud migrations will need 10 years to complete**
Executive Summary

18 months and large transformations taking five years. The market is slow in project execution and small in the number of projects. At the current pace, mainframe to cloud migrations will need 10 years to complete.

Competing modernization methods to continue to co-exist: Although the market refers to 7Rs (rehost, refactor, reengineer, rearchitect, rewrite, replace or retire), clients use three modernization methods to run their legacy mainframe applications in the cloud – rehost, compile and rewrite. Rehost platforms emulate mainframes in the cloud without any changes to application code, with the option to migrate mainframe data to other databases. Compile methods interpret the legacy code to generate runtime code to run the application in the cloud without application logic changes. In these two methods, clients can continue to develop and maintain COBOL applications. Rewriting applications involves reverse engineering to create specifications and write new applications with the same logic or with innovations. In these three methods, all processes are automated and involve several testing cycles to ensure equal functionality and performance. Some vendors mix these methods, but they all enable clients to decommission their mainframes.

Rehosting fits well for legacy applications that are stable, not requiring updates and changes. It is fast, secure and helps lower cost. Compiling can be more suitable for stable applications that can be decomposed into microservices to facilitate data access. In both methods, companies retain their COBOL expertise. Rewriting can fix applications that require constant bug fixes, improvements and support. Clients should evaluate the best mix of vendor technologies case by case.

Numerous partners for leading modernization providers: The top providers can migrate mainframes to the cloud partner with many tool vendors and can deliver consulting, planning and project management to ensure project success. They also partner with public cloud providers and can run proof of concepts (PoCs).

Scaling mainframes – not as fast as cloud: Many clients believe that their mainframes are scalable. However, most mainframes run at 90 percent CPU utilization and more than 70 percent of disk capacity. For rapid changes in demand, mainframes do not have available resources. This requires negotiating with IBM to release more computing power, which is called vertical scaling. The public cloud offers instant scaling by replicating the applications on more virtual machines, which is called horizontal scaling. In the cloud, scaling is automatic and infinite.

The modernization and transformation market is mature in terms of knowledge and capacity to deliver robust mainframe migrations. At the current pace, these migrations would need many years to impact mainframe hosting services. ISG expects that the number and size of migration projects will grow exponentially in the next three years, funded by AWS, Google and Microsoft – the most interested in migrating mainframes to the cloud.
The new trend is to include containers and Kubernetes to automate and accelerate horizontal scaling even further.

In 2020 and 2021 the limits of mainframes became evident for government agencies that were not able to scale and respond to citizens’ demand. The increase in mainframe utilization has caused small system disruptions in the U.S. and some European countries. These events also contributed to the growing interest in migrating mainframe applications to the cloud.
## Provider Positioning

### Mainframe Modernization Services

- **Accenture**: Not In
- **Adaptigent (GT Software)**: Not In
- **Advanced**: Not In
- **Astadia**: Not In
- **Asysco**: Not In
- **Atos**: Leader
- **AveriSource**: Not In
- **AWS (Blu Age)**: Not In
- **BMC**: Contender

### Mainframe Application Modernization and Transformation Services

- **Accenture**: Leader
- **Adaptigent (GT Software)**: Not In
- **Advanced**: Product Challenger
- **Astadia**: Not In
- **Asysco**: Product Challenger
- **Atos**: Leader
- **AveriSource**: Not In
- **AWS (Blu Age)**: Not In
- **BMC**: Not In

### Mainframe as a Service (MFaaS)

- **Accenture**: Not In
- **Adaptigent (GT Software)**: Not In
- **Advanced**: Not In
- **Astadia**: Not In
- **Asysco**: Not In
- **Atos**: Leader
- **AveriSource**: Not In
- **AWS (Blu Age)**: Not In
- **BMC**: Not In

### Mainframe Operations

- **Accenture**: Not In
- **Adaptigent (GT Software)**: Not In
- **Advanced**: Not In
- **Astadia**: Not In
- **Asysco**: Not In
- **Atos**: Leader
- **AveriSource**: Not In
- **AWS (Blu Age)**: Not In
- **BMC**: Not In

### Mainframe Application Modernization Software

- **Accenture**: Not In
- **Adaptigent (GT Software)**: Contender
- **Advanced**: Not In
- **Astadia**: Not In
- **Asysco**: Not In
- **Atos**: Leader
- **AveriSource**: Not In
- **AWS (Blu Age)**: Not In
- **BMC**: Not In
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## Provider Positioning

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Introduction

Enterprises across the globe are increasingly seeking digital business transformation to modernize their traditional IT environment and move applications to the cloud. Mainframe systems have been supporting business applications for approximately 60 years. Such resilient platforms leverage high-performance hardware and software tools for continuous modernization, enabling mainframe applications to integrate with new technologies and computing platforms. This study focuses on clients’ options to align mainframe applications to their digital business strategy.

Enterprises that focus on cloud-native applications are increasingly relying on automated tools to modernize their mainframes and transform legacy applications into new applications. Such solutions enable the standardization of application languages and databases, including open source, using advanced tools to successfully convert mainframe applications to run in the cloud.

Enterprises that prefer keeping legacy applications on mainframe platforms can introduce agile methods, DevOps, APIs and microservices to improve agility and integrate mainframes with private and public clouds. Service providers have added pay-as-you-go (PAYG) models to enable the mainframe-as-a-service (MFaaS) model.

This study assesses service providers that modernize applications to run on the cloud by using automation and advanced AI tools to ensure quality outcomes. It evaluates service providers that can modernize mainframe applications and offer mainframe outsourcing and MFaaS. Software vendors that offer automation tools for refactoring, rehosting, replatforming, rewriting and reengineering applications are also assessed in this study. Legacy platforms can include IBM Z®, AS/400, HP, Cray, Fujitsu and Unisys mainframes.
Introduction

Scope of the Report

In this ISG Provider Lens™ quadrant study, ISG includes five quadrants on Mainframe Application Modernization and Transformation, Mainframe as a Service (MFaaS), Mainframe Operations, and Mainframe Application and Modernization Software.

This ISG Provider Lens™ study offers IT-decision makers:

- Transparency on the strengths and weaknesses of relevant service providers and software vendors
- A differentiated positioning of providers by segments
- Focus on regional market

Our study serves as the basis for important decision-making in terms of positioning, key relationships and go-to-market considerations. ISG advisors and enterprise clients also use information from these reports to evaluate their existing vendor relationships and potential engagements.

Provider Classifications

The provider position reflects the suitability of IT providers and software vendors for a defined market segment (quadrant). Without further additions, the position always applies to all company sizes classes and industries. In case the IT service requirements from enterprise customers differ and the spectrum of IT providers operating in the local market is sufficiently wide, a further differentiation of the IT providers by performance is made according to the target group for products and services. In doing so, ISG either considers the industry requirements or the number of employees, as well as the corporate structures of customers and positions IT providers according to their focus area. As a result, ISG differentiates them, if necessary, into two client target groups that are defined as follows:

- **Midmarket**: Companies with 100 to 4,999 employees or revenues between $20 million and $999 million with central headquarters in the respective country, usually privately owned.
- **Large Accounts**: Multinational companies with more than 5,000 employees or revenue above $1 billion, with activities worldwide and globally distributed decision-making structures.

The ISG Provider Lens™ quadrants are created using an evaluation matrix containing four segments (Leader, Product Challenger, Market Challenger and Contender), and the providers are positioned accordingly. Each ISG Provider Lens quadrant may include a service provider(s) which ISG believes has strong potential to move into the Leader quadrant. This type of provider can be classified as a Rising Star.

Number of providers in each quadrant:

ISG rates and positions the most relevant providers according to the scope of the report for each quadrant and limits the maximum of providers per quadrant to 25 (exceptions are possible).
Introduction

Provider Classifications: Quadrant Key

**Product Challengers** offer a product and service portfolio that reflect excellent service and technology stacks. These providers and vendors deliver an unmatched broad and deep range of capabilities. They show evidence of investing to enhance their market presence and competitive strengths.

**Leaders** have a comprehensive product and service offering, a strong market presence and established competitive position. The product portfolios and competitive strategies of Leaders are strongly positioned to win business in the markets covered by the study. The Leaders also represent innovative strength and competitive stability.

**Contenders** offer services and products meeting the evaluation criteria that qualifies them to be included in the IPL quadrant. These promising service providers or vendors show evidence of rapidly investing in products/services and a follow sensible market approach with a goal of becoming a Product or Market Challenger within 12 to 18 months.

**Market Challengers** have a strong presence in the market and offer a significant edge over other vendors and providers based on competitive strength. Often, Market Challengers are the established and well-known vendors in the regions or vertical markets covered in the study.

**Rising Stars** have promising portfolios or the market experience to become a Leader, including the required roadmap and adequate focus on key market trends and customer requirements. Rising Stars also have excellent management and understanding of the local market in the studied region. These vendors and service providers give evidence of significant progress toward their goals in the last 12 months. ISG expects Rising Stars to reach the Leader quadrant within the next 12 to 24 months if they continue their delivery of above-average market impact and strength of innovation.

**Not in** means the service provider or vendor was not included in this quadrant. Among the possible reasons for this designation: ISG could not obtain enough information to position the company; the company does not provide the relevant service or solution as defined for each quadrant of a study; or the company did not meet the eligibility criteria for the study quadrant. Omission from the quadrant does not imply that the service provider or vendor does not offer or plan to offer this service or solution.
Mainframe Application Modernization Software
Who Should Read This

This report is relevant to enterprises in the U.S. for evaluating vendors of modernization application software within the mainframe ecosystem.

In this quadrant report, ISG assesses the current market positioning of vendors offering mainframe application modernization software to enterprises in the U.S., based on the depth of service offerings and market presence.

Enterprises that intend to modernize their applications are often challenged by a few market traits such as the short supply of legacy and next-generation technical skills, lack of a provider’s partnership ecosystem with modernization vendors, and limited availability of modernization tools and platforms. At the same time, ISG observes significantly increased adoption of modernization software services to modernize and transform applications that are less than 10,000 MIPS. Enterprises partner with providers that have better experience and a partner ecosystem of platform/solution providers.

Banking and finance leaders should read this report to understand how mainframes allow banks and other financial services providers to process data on a scale that commodity servers can’t handle.

IT and technology leaders should read this report to understand the strengths and weaknesses of providers offering mainframe services, including their offerings, capabilities, market presence, strengths, relationships with other mainframe service providers. They can also assess the way providers employ the latest technologies and capabilities to deliver reliable offerings in line with the enterprise business and market change.

Insurance leaders should read this report to understand the vast potential of insurers to differentiate by better meeting evolving customer demands, particularly in the mobile realm. As mobile transactional applications connect through mainframes, these systems play a key role in supporting cutting-edge innovation.
This quadrant assesses software vendors that specialize in migrating mainframe applications to the public or private clouds, enabling clients to decommission their mainframe infrastructures.

Pedro L Bicudo Maschio
Mainframe Application Modernization Software

Definition

This quadrant rates providers of software and toolsets that enable legacy application assessments and application conversion (replatform, rehost, refactor, rewrite or reengineer). Mainframe modernization software includes reverse engineering, business logic mapping, business rules extraction, code review and inspection, documentation, emulators, compilers, frameworks and application development tools that can accelerate code modernization and application modernization.

Enterprises and service providers require tools to perform their mainframe modernization and transformation. This quadrant covers vendors that supply the modernization toolset and eventually partner with global system integrators (GSIs) that deliver modernization services. Mainframe modernization software outcomes include logic flows, data architectures, automated code conversion, serverless functions, APIs and microservices that can accelerate the mainframe modernization program. Professional services and consulting expertise can improve the vendor rating but are not a requisite if they are offered through certified partners.

Eligibility Criteria

1. The software should be licensed or delivered as a service to enable client autonomy.
2. The vendor must have mainframe specialization and offer mainframe-specific tools.
3. The product must be available and in use by clients for more than one year.
4. The solution must have a robust support organization or service partner ecosystem to ensure enterprise-grade support.
5. Assessment tools and compilers are included. Generic code conversion tools or wide-scope server/cloud optimization tools are not covered. Vendors must have mainframe expertise.
Observations

The modernization tools assessed are based on four methods: OS emulators, compilers, code translation and application reengineering. Clients are invited to understand the different methods and their implications. For example, the first two enable clients to preserve their legacy language programmers and thus retain experienced talent. The other two require reskilling or new talent to support new applications.

Major criteria are code maintainability, innovation potential, documentation, code readability, code quality and security. All methods can deliver application performance, but the effort required varies by vendor solution.

From the 45 companies assessed for this study, 17 have qualified for this quadrant with seven being designated as Leaders and two Rising Stars.

Advanced

Advanced is a U.K.-based company with a strong partner ecosystem to cover client requirements in the U.S. It employs robust technology and methods to take mainframe workloads to the cloud. The company offers assessments, application reengineering and rehosting.

Astadia

Astadia has extensive experience in application modernization and managed IT services. In 2021, it acquired Belgium-based Anubex for its refactoring capabilities. Astadia offers clients a migration factory that leverages a comprehensive toolset, including coding and testing automation for reengineering and rehosting mainframe applications in the cloud.

AWS

AWS (Blu Age) offers a sophisticated application reengineering solution that includes portfolio assessments and automated code writing. AWS acquired Blu Age in 2021 to invest in its growth and make Blu Age technology accessible to all AWS clients.

Google

Google acquired Cornerstone Technology and its G4 platform in 2020. It offers a complete reengineering and replatforming toolset that has demonstrated solid results. Google has added resources to expand G4 availability in the U.S. and in the research and product development capacity to make it the best application modernization toolset in the market.

Heirloom Computing

Heirloom Computing was named a Rising Star in 2021 and is a Leader in 2022. The company continues to grow and improve its relationship with cloud providers and system integrators. It offers rapid mainframe migrations converting legacy programming languages into Java which can run on any cloud.

TmaxSoft

TmaxSoft OpenFrame is a complete mainframe modernization solution to rehost and refactor applications on any x86 platform, including all public cloud providers. It has a successful track record, and its toolset is used by many system integrators to offer mainframe rehosting services.
TSRI

TSRI has deep software engineering expertise to deliver sophisticated reengineering of legacy applications. It proposes a full redesign of the application landscape to introduce innovation. With its vast experience in software, the company covers more than 35 application languages and can deliver true object-oriented, cloud-native applications.

Asysco

Asysco is a Rising Star for its improved toolset functionality and increased recognition from service providers (partners). The company is expected to continue on its revenue and client growth trajectory to enter the Leader’s quadrant soon.

CloudFrame

CloudFrame is a Rising Star for its easy-to-understand and easy-to-use toolset for incremental COBOL to Java modernization. The company is building a robust partner ecosystem with system integrators and hyperscalers including AWS, Azure and Google Cloud.
Mainframe Application Modernization Software

**TmaxSoft**

**Overview**
TmaxSoft was founded in 1997 in Korea and now has more than 1,800 employees to support over 2,000 clients in 20 countries. OpenFrame from TmaxSoft is a complete solution for migrating legacy mainframe applications to the public cloud or any x86 platform, with no changes to the business logic. It offers a scalable rehosting platform and a microservices rearchitecting platform. The solution is widely available in the U.S. through direct sales and a robust partner network.

**Strengths**

- **Phased modernization capabilities:** TmaxSoft rapidly moves mainframe applications onto OpenFrame by compiling code, emulating functions and converting databases without changing application logic and behavior. In six to 12 months, clients get off their mainframe with significant cost savings. In a second wave, TmaxSoft rearchitects the applications to update the user interface and introduce microservices and APIs for a true application modernization.

- **Comprehensive set of languages and technologies:** Some of TmaxSoft’s capabilities include COBOL, PLI, Assembler, Easytrieve, JCL, CICS, BMS maps, IMS DC, IDMS DC, Natural, QuickJobs, DYL280, CSP, RPG, CoolGen, IDEAL, VSAM, DB2, IMS DB, IDMS DB and CA Datacom. Its transformation tool automates Java class identification to automate code writing and converts mainframe data to any relational database.

- **Rapid access to mainframe data:** TmaxSoft makes data portable by converting from the mainframe EBCDIC format to ASCII in the target platform. Its transformation tool automates the creation of APIs and microservices, integrating mainframe data with other data sources. OpenFrame is a powerful middleware that enables horizontal scaling in the cloud with equal or higher than mainframe performance.

**Caution**
TmaxSoft OpenFrame is a licensed platform, requiring clients to retain maintenance fees. In the long term, clients can migrate their converted applications off the platform. However, the company’s solution is based on retaining OpenFrame middleware.

---

"TmaxSoft offers low-risk rehosting and refactoring applications to run mainframe workloads in the cloud."

Pedro L Bicudo Maschio
Appendix
The study was divided into the following steps:

1. Definition of Mainframes – Services and Solutions market
2. Use of questionnaire-based surveys of service providers/vendor across all trend topics
3. Interactive discussions with service providers/vendors on capabilities & use cases
4. Leverage ISG’s internal databases & advisor knowledge & experience (wherever applicable)
5. Use of Star of Excellence CX-Data
6. Detailed analysis & evaluation of services & service documentation based on the facts & figures received from providers & other sources.
7. Use of the following key evaluation criteria:
   * Strategy & vision
   * Tech Innovation
   * Brand awareness and presence in the market
   * Sales and partner landscape
   * Breadth and depth of portfolio of services offered
   * CX and Recommendation

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The research and analysis presented in this report includes research from the ISG Provider Lens program, ongoing ISG Research programs, interviews with ISG advisors, briefings with services providers and analysis of publicly available market information from multiple sources. The data collected for this report represents information that ISG believes to be current as of April 2022, for providers who actively participated as well as for providers who did not. ISG recognizes that many mergers and acquisitions have taken place since that time, but those changes are not reflected in this report.

All revenue references are in U.S. dollars ($US) unless noted.
The study was divided into the following steps:

1. Definition of Enterprise Service Management – Services & Solutions market
2. Use of questionnaire-based surveys of service providers/vendor across all trend topics
3. Interactive discussions with service providers/vendors on capabilities & use cases
4. Leverage ISG’s internal databases & advisor knowledge & experience (wherever applicable)
5. Use of Star of Excellence CX-Data
6. Detailed analysis & evaluation of services & service documentation based on the facts & figures received from providers & other sources.
7. Use of the following key evaluation criteria:
   - Strategy & vision
   - Tech Innovation
   - Brand awareness and presence in the market
   - Sales and partner landscape
   - Breadth and depth of portfolio of services offered
   - CX and Recommendation

Sandya Kattimani is a senior research analyst at ISG and is responsible for supporting and co-authoring ISG Provider Lens™ studies on Contact Center, Life Sciences, Mainframes. Sandya has over 6 years of experience in the technology research industry and in her prior role, she carried out research delivery for both primary and secondary research capabilities. Her area of expertise lies in Competitive Intelligence, Customer Journey Analysis, Battle Cards, Market analysis and digital transformation. She is responsible for authoring the enterprise content and the global summary report, which includes market trends and insights.
Author & Editor Biographies

Srinivasan PN
Senior Research Analyst

Srinivasan PN is a senior research analyst at ISG and is responsible for supporting and co-authoring ISG Provider Lens™ studies on AWS Ecosystem, Insurance BPO, Mainframe and Cybersecurity studies. His area of expertise lies in the space of engineering services and digital transformation. Srinivasan has over 6 years of experience in the technology research industry and in his prior role, he carried out research delivery for both primary and secondary research capabilities. Srinivasan is responsible for developing content from an enterprise perspective and author the global summary report. Along with this, he supports the lead analysts in the research process and writes articles about recent market trends in the industry.

Jan Erik Aase
Partner and Global Head – The ISG Provider Lens™

Mr. Aase brings extensive experience in the implementation and research of service integration and management of both IT and business processes. With over 35 years of experience, he is highly skilled at analyzing vendor governance trends and methodologies, identifying inefficiencies in current processes, and advising the industry. Jan Erik has experience on all four sides of the sourcing and vendor governance lifecycle - as a client, an industry analyst, a service provider and an advisor. Now as a research director, principal analyst and global head of ISG Provider Lens™, he is very well positioned to assess and report on the state of the industry and make recommendations for both enterprises and service provider clients.

The study was divided into the following steps:

1. Definition of Enterprise Service Management – Services & Solutions market
2. Use of questionnaire-based surveys of service providers/vendor across all trend topics
3. Interactive discussions with service providers/vendors on capabilities & use cases
4. Leverage ISG’s internal databases & advisor knowledge & experience (wherever applicable)
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