

A purple banner with a white, jagged, mountain-like shape on its left side. The words "HOT TECH" are written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the right side of the banner.

HFS Services-as-Software™ Hot Tech: Aokah

HFS Hot Tech is an exclusive group of emerging players, each with a differentiated value proposition for the HFS OneOffice or HFS Services-as-Software (SaS). This Hot Tech has been selected for its alignment with HFS Services-as-Software.

HFS analysts regularly speak with numerous exciting startups and emerging players. We designate a select few as HFS Hot Tech based on their offerings' distinctiveness, ecosystem robustness, client impact, financial position, and, in this case, their impact on Services-as-Software.

HFS Hot Tech companies may not have the scale and size of more established rivals, but they have the vision and strategy to impact and disrupt the market. In the rapidly changing AI-led operations space, enterprises realize they can't be everything to everyone.

Authors:

Paras Chugh, Associate Practice Leader
Achyuta Ghosh, Executive Research Leader

Hot Tech Program Lead:

David Cushman, Hot Tech Editor-in-Chief, Executive Research Leader

Bringing services-as-software to the world of GCC services



The global demand for global capability centers (GCCs) has grown rapidly, with more than 1,800 GCCs in India alone and additional growth in LATAM, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia. Yet GBS leaders still set up GCCs through bespoke, weeks-long consulting engagements, resulting in enterprise demand outrunning consulting capacity. More than 72% of new GCC builds experience material delays or cost overruns within their first 24 months. Aokah is one of the first vendors to address this bottleneck by leveraging generative AI (GenAI) and agentic

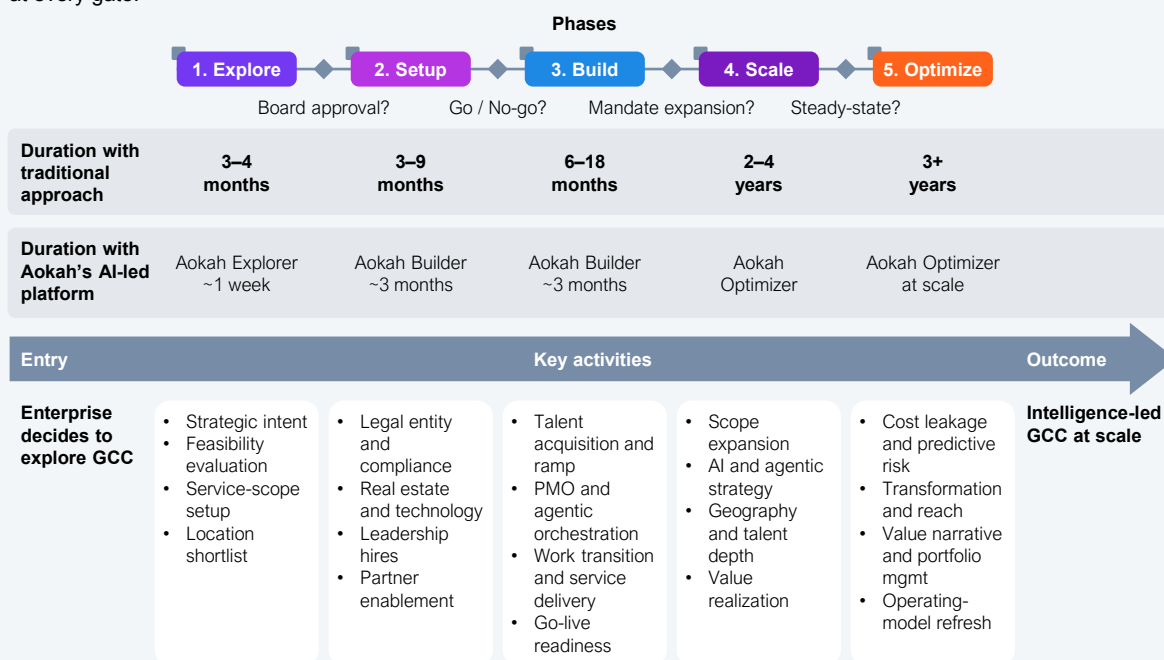
AI to build a Services-as-Software model through a software-led servitization approach (see Exhibit 1).

Aokah's model is built on proprietary data and proven methodology to deliver CXO-ready decisions. Aokah started its Services-as-Software journey with an AI-enabled recommendations engine and plans to expand into agentic workflows across the GCC lifecycle. This AI-native approach to GCC services makes Aokah worthy of the HFS Hot Tech vendor designation.

Exhibit 1: Aokah's explore-build-optimize footprint replaces consulting hours with platform output

Aokah compresses five phases of GCC setup with AI-led intelligence

Aokah's platform compresses every phase and drives continuous improvement, with a human-in-the-loop deciding at every gate.



Source: HFS Research, 2026

Aokah follows a simple "explore-build-optimize" approach to conceptualize its data-centric offerings for GBS organizations

Location assessment has been a manual, context-driven process for consultants, taking 6–12 weeks to develop actionable recommendations. Aokah is disrupting this layer with its data-rich offering, providing instant, AI-enabled recommendations based on the parameters and weightings provided. Additionally, Aokah has launched its Explorer and Builder offerings and is developing the Optimizer element to address the entire value chain. It has mapped the user journey for setting up GCCs to its offerings, making it reusable whenever GBS leaders want to repeat the process to open new function lines or geographies.

Under the hood: a proprietary location and talent dataset, a configurable scoring engine, and an AI layer for recommendations

The platform is based on five knowledge foundations or "Wisdoms" (program, geo, talent, ecosystem, and delivery), providing a unified system of decision support, execution governance, and real-time risk management across the five phases of the GCC lifecycle, shown in Exhibit 1. The Explorer offering is anchored by Aokah's location intelligence module (geo "wisdom"), which covers cost, talent depth, infrastructure, risk, ESG, and ecosystem signals across 500+ global cities. Users set their own parameter weights, such as for AI/ML talent density, operating cost, and geopolitical risk, and the platform returns a ranked shortlist with supporting evidence, replacing the slide decks consultants typically hand-build.

The Builder offering, now generally available as of April 2026, covers GCC setup playbooks for entity structuring, role architecture, hiring plans, and vendor selection, powered by agentic workflows that draft artifacts for a program manager to edit rather than authoring them from scratch. Builder serves as an independent orchestration and governance layer across every workstream, including legal entity formation, talent acquisition, vendor onboarding, facilities, IT, and compliance, regardless of whether the enterprise is building independently, through a build-operate-transfer partner, assisted build, or hybrid model. The Optimizer offering will launch soon to target running GCCs: productivity benchmarking, span-of-control analysis, and process-automation candidates surfaced from operational data.

A Fortune 500 firm compressed 10 weeks of site selection into less than a week using Aokah Explorer

At one Fortune 500 chemical manufacturer, the head of GBS used Aokah Explorer during site selection to stress-test locations and weightings in real time, clearing the CFO's scrutiny on costs and choices. He compressed initial location shortlisting from 10 weeks of consultant output to less than a week using real-time information. This exercise helped him reconcile anecdotal consultant preferences (including known traps like high-attrition markets) with objective data. Such use cases have made the Aokah Explorer the most impactful offering in Aokah's suite today.

In addition to this successful implementation, three global enterprises in consumer goods, diversified manufacturing, and logistics are already using Aokah Explorer and Aokah Builder in live programs, providing early validation across multiple verticals.

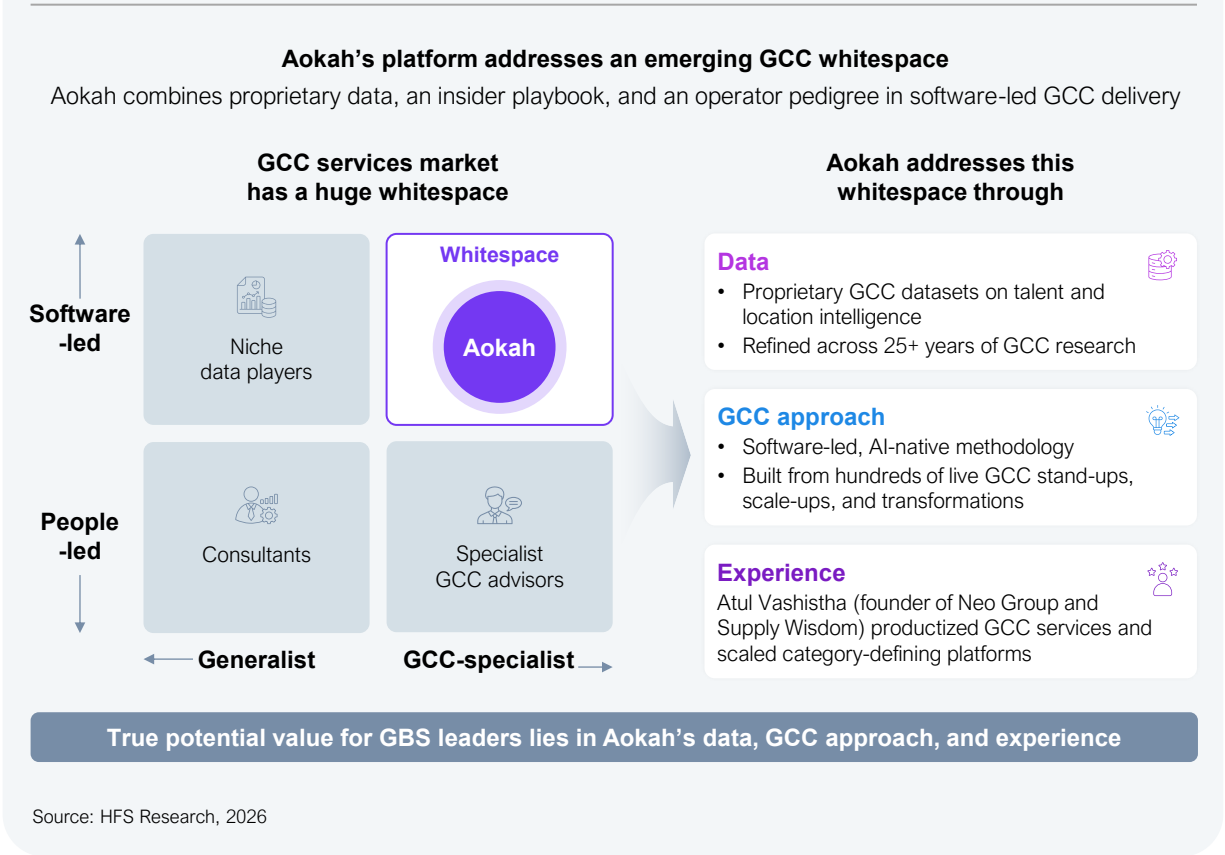
Aokah's success is built on three key differentiators: data, GCC approach, and experience

Aokah Founder Atul Vashistha has spent more than 25 years in the GCC services industry, building Neo Group and Supply Wisdom, and has received several leadership accolades as a result. That experience gives the team an early read on where AI-led services can compress the value chain and provides a deep well of data and codified methodology from 300+ enterprise GCC programs. Competitors may build similar tooling, but Aokah's data, approach, and experience will be difficult to match.

Enterprise options span advisory incumbents, GCC specialists, and adjacent data players, but no one is yet a pure-play GCC services-as-software vendor

Adjacent data players overlap on inputs but don't assemble a GCC-specific decision product. Aokah's bet is that owning the GCC decision workflow end-to-end is more defensible than competing on any single data point.

Exhibit 2: Aokah is one of the first players to combine GCC focus with services-as-software; Aokah's job now is to turn that approach into a defensible differentiator



While advisory incumbents and GCC specialists maintain the right relationships for CXO decision advisory, their delivery relies on a people-intensive approach. The ideal option for GBS leaders is an advisory incumbent that productizes its GCC data-rich assets or a horizontal AI consulting platform that extends into AI-native GCC use cases. Aokah is following this approach, but it needs to lock in proprietary data feedback loops and partner channel relationships to build a sustainable lead in this whitespace.

What enterprises should expect from Aokah's engagement model

As data-heavy services are productized into software, enterprises should expect Aokah to sit in the middle ground between them. CXOs still require relationship-building and trust-led advisory after data-led evaluations to make monumental decisions.

Enterprises will see Aokah through a mix of service partnerships and direct engagements. Through consulting partners, client-specific data feeds into recommendations more quickly. Engaging directly, the platform lets the enterprise stress-test any hypothesis and gain reassurance when making final calls.

Aokah is also being white-labeled by consulting and research firms, meaning GBS leaders may be using the platform without realizing it is the underlying engine. If your consulting partner is delivering location intelligence or building playbooks under their own brand, it is worth asking which platform underlies it to evaluate the underlying data quality and avoid paying a markup for the same engine you could license directly.

Additionally, Aokah has also begun executing on geographic expansion. In January 2026, it launched UK operations to support EMEA enterprises designing new GCC strategies and scaling performance with governance and measurable outcomes.

GBS leaders should evaluate and mitigate these five risks before engaging Aokah

- 1. Data durability and trust:** The underlying location and talent data are compiled from public, licensed, and proprietary sources. GBS leaders should look for proof of authenticity and accuracy across those sources and for a high-frequency refresh cadence on cost, talent, and risk signals, which can shift weekly. Aokah targets a near-real-time dataset, which is far harder to replicate than a snapshot.
- 2. Channel conflict:** Aokah sells directly to enterprises while partnering with consulting firms, creating inherent tension. GBS leaders should seek clear definitions of pricing, IP ownership, and attribution, while working with consulting partners to embed the platform into their engagements.
- 3. Pricing model:** Services-as-Software has been hard to price consistently. Aokah adds another layer of difficulty by creating a new category of Services-as-Software for GCCs, leaving no clear competitors to benchmark its pricing against. GBS leaders should push for outcome-based contracts rather than seat or subscription fees to arrive at the optimal pricing model for Services-as-Software.

4. Buyer adoption: CXOs anchor location and organizational-design decisions to advisor relationships, not tools. GBS leaders should expect Aokah to need to clear a credibility bar for building a relationship that software-only vendors typically struggle with, which is why founder pedigree and consulting partnerships matter more here than in most categories.

5. Category timing: “Services-as-Software” is a thesis many vendors pitch across functions. GBS leaders should evaluate Aokah’s agentic workflows as the differentiator that separates it from the broader noise.

HFS' take

The market for GCC setup advisory is shifting from a consulting-led, weeks-long decision cycle to a data- and AI-led, hours-long one. Aokah is the early leader in this shift. The Explorer offering has already compressed a 10-week consulting deliverable into less than a week for a Fortune 500 buyer, a rare proof point in a category where most vendors are still pitching roadmaps.

With Aokah Builder now live and the Optimizer offering's agentic-first design on the roadmap,

Aokah is evolving from a point solution into the agentic system of record for GCC decisions. Buyers who engage Aokah early will compress decision cycles, de-risk location and org-design choices with evidence, and free internal teams and consulting partners to move up the stack into advisory and change management.

The vendor that owns this transition will set the reference architecture for the next decade of capability centers.

Vendor fact sheet

Founded: 2024

Headquarters: New York, USA

Key executives: Atul Vashistha, Founder, Chairman & CEO; Hemant Puthli, Co-founder & Chief Evangelist; Pankaj Sharma, Head of Operations; Robert Weltevreden, Board member; Steve Rudderham, Chair of Strategic Advisory Board

Number of employees: 30+

Funding source: Founders and Mphasis Corporation, 26% preferred equity stake (July 2025)

Number of clients: 4+

Key clients: Fortune 500 consumer packaged goods company, diversified global manufacturer, global logistics and medical enterprise, Fortune 500 chemical manufacturer

Domain: AI-powered execution intelligence and orchestration for global capability centers (GCCs), global business services (GBS), and global operations

Solutions portfolio:

- AI-enabled GCC location intelligence and business case (Explorer)
- Execution governance and milestone orchestration (Builder)
- Continuous performance optimization and scale (Optimizer, roadmap)
- 5 Wisdom Engines: Program, Geography, Talent, Ecosystem, Delivery
- Agentic workflows for entity setup, talent, vendor, and IT provisioning
- Independent governance layer for Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and hybrid models

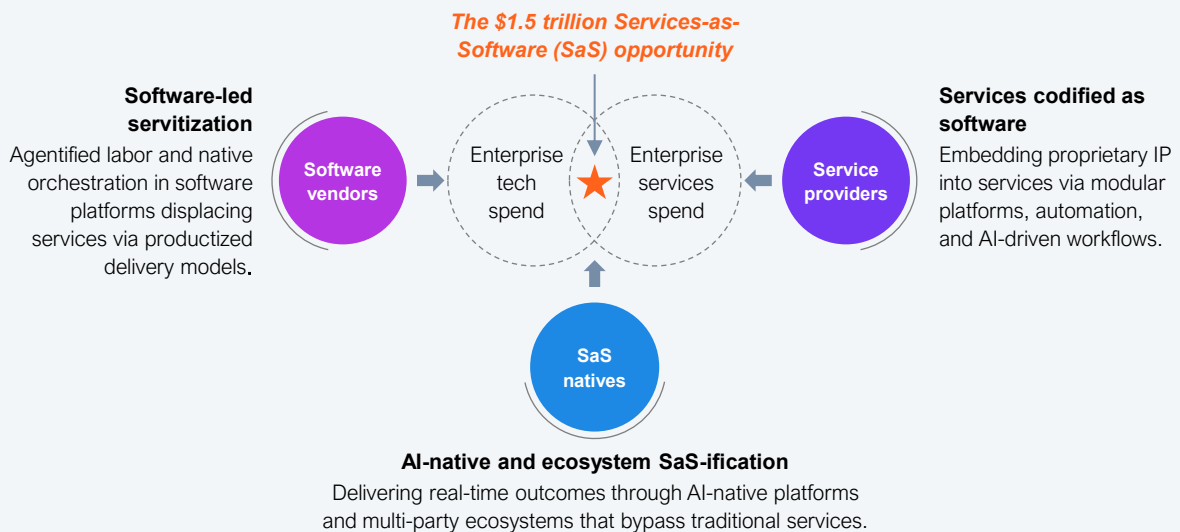
Industry application: Consumer packaged goods, diversified manufacturing, logistics and medical, chemicals, banking and financial services, energy and utilities, IT and ITeS (industry-agnostic platform)

The HFS Hot Tech designation and Services-as-Software

HFS Hot Tech organizations display truly differentiated offerings and out-of-the-box thinking that can be inspiring and useful. This report profiles one of the HFS Hot Techs selected through our rigorous five-step assessment. The HFS Hot Tech designation remains in place for one calendar year. Every Hot Tech joining our program remains listed on our exclusive and [searchable database](#).

HFS Research coined “Services-as-Software” (Exhibit 3) to encapsulate a concept reshaping how the world will consume technology services and software. This emerging category will disrupt traditional services and software models, absorbing significant revenue from both, and create a new total addressable market worth \$1.5 trillion.

Exhibit 3: HFS Hot Techs offer a range of approaches toward Services-as-Software

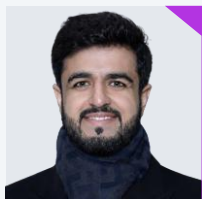


Source: HFS Research, 2026

Enterprises consuming third-party services, service providers, and technology providers need a smart ecosystem to succeed and survive in the future. HFS Hot Techs are service and technology providers handpicked by our analysts to help you flesh out your ecosystem with offerings that solve today’s complex business problems and exploit market opportunities.

The HFS Hot Tech report team

Authors



Paras Chugh
Associate Practice Leader

Paras Chugh is an Associate Practice Leader at HFS Research, with nearly a decade of experience in market research and strategy consulting. He focuses on emerging technologies and digital capabilities that drive impactful, sustainable business outcomes across industries, helping enterprises and service providers navigate adoption, transformation, and market shifts.



Achyuta Ghosh
Executive Research Leader

Achyuta Ghosh is a strategist, researcher, and industry voice for enterprises navigating the defining shifts of our time. As an Executive Research Leader at HFS Research, he partners with CXOs and transformation leaders across the world's largest organizations to develop global capability center (GCC) strategies that maximize value, talent, and innovation outcomes.

Hot Tech Program Lead



David Cushman
Hot Tech Editor-in-Chief,
Executive Research Leader

David is an Executive Research Leader at HFS and Editor-in-Chief of the HFS Hot Tech program. He also leads our OneOffice Emerging Technology Practice, is our strategic lead on Generative AI, Web3, and metaverse, and covers automation and employee experience. He is a published author (*The 10 Principles of Open Business*, Palgrave-Macmillan), a former tier-1 consulting director, and a digital strategy and innovation expert with leadership experience in start-up, scale-up, and enterprise digital transformation.

About HFS

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- **INTREPID**
- **BOLD**

HFS Research is a leading global research and advisory firm helping Fortune 500 companies through IT and business transformation with bold insights and actionable strategies.

With an unmatched platform to reach, advise, and influence Global 2000 executives, we empower organizations to make decisive technology and service choices. Backed by fearless research and an impartial outside perspective, our insights give you the edge to stay ahead.



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