

Matmut speeds up development cycles with Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus



French insurance provider Matmut is reducing its mainframe dependency and modernizing its environment so it can speed up release cycles and improve the developer experience.

The company wanted to adopt Kubernetes and decided to use Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus to orchestrate its containers. The self-managed solution has reduced delivery times by 3 months, improved staff satisfaction, and supports DevOps practices such as CI/CD pipelines.

Industry

Financial services

Headquarters

Normandy, France

Size

6,800 employees

"We chose Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus because it's a complete solution. If Kubernetes is the engine, Red Hat is the rest of the car. We knew it could get us where we wanted to go."

Jean-Jacques Mok

Cloud Program Manager
Matmut



Software and services

Red Hat® OpenShift® Platform Plus

Red Hat Advanced Cluster Management for Kubernetes

Red Hat Advanced Cluster Security for Kubernetes

Red Hat Enterprise Linux®

Benefits

- ▶ Modernized the environment without compromising on reliability
- ▶ Accelerated delivery of new releases
- ▶ Improved developer satisfaction

"Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus has helped to establish more consistency in how developers work."

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Reducing dependency on mainframe technology

Matmut has been providing insurance products to French citizens for more than 60 years. According to Jean-Jacques Mok, Cloud Program Manager at Matmut, what sets it apart from the competition is its emphasis on keeping things local. From giving graduates in Normandy a great place to work outside of Paris, to its hands-on approach to datacenter management, Matmut is "like the local farm of the insurance world", nourishing the community from the inside out.

Like many financial services companies, Matmut was built on mainframe technology, and some of its apps were approaching 40 years of age. When it moved front-office operations onto Windows and x86 technologies, its back end remained on mainframe until 2021.

"Old companies have monolithic applications, and delivering a new version might mean releasing 800 components at once. Development cycles were slow, taking around 12 months," said Mok. "To improve our agility and get new releases ready faster, we decided to adopt microservices, containers, and DevOps."

Matmut decided to look for a Kubernetes-native orchestration platform to make life easier for developers. It wanted to simplify cluster management and scaling while reducing release packages to around 100-200 components, with a view to supporting continuous delivery.

"We needed to empower developers with better ways of working if we were to achieve our goals," said Mok. "They used to work locally on their desktops, which caused issues when they wanted to move code onto a server. A standard platform with all the developer tools in one place would be much more efficient."

Matmut also wanted a platform that supports hybrid cloud so it could continue to self-host and manage on premise, with some workloads running on a sovereign cloud.

Simplifying container orchestration, security, and management

Matmut ran a successful proof of concept before rolling out the application and container orchestration platform, Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus, in its hybrid cloud environment. The platform is deployed on premise at 2 datacenters, and the company plans to expand it to its sovereign cloud to manage hybrid workload capacity and GPU-as-a-Service through its cloud service provider.

The platform is vendor agnostic, and with a growing number of virtual machines running the Red Hat Enterprise Linux operating system, Matmut knew first hand that Red Hat technologies are efficient, convenient, and popular with IT professionals.

"We chose Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus because it's a complete solution—if you think of Kubernetes as an engine, Red Hat is everything else that makes up your car," said Mok. "We knew it could get us where we wanted to go."

Mok explained that Red Hat Advanced Cluster Management for Kubernetes—a set of tools for building, deploying, and running cloud-native applications—and Red Hat Advanced Cluster Security for Kubernetes—which provides end-to-end visibility and management from a central control panel—were crucial components when deciding on Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus. These features help the team to apply security policies at scale, meet compliance regulations, and monitor live images running on each cluster, as well as managing the network.

"Red Hat Advanced Cluster Management for Kubernetes gives us 360-degree visibility of everything running Kubernetes in our datacenters," said Mok.

Managing change with support from the experts

To upskill its team, Matmut relied on Red Hat Training. With a whole new infrastructure and shift to modern methodology, Mok needed to gather and train a new team to run it. This team of around 30 included developers, operations staff, and the infrastructure team; together, they learned how to manage and use Red Hat OpenShift.

“It’s a big change going from a Windows environment to using containers. Red Hat Training helped us manage the transition,” said Mok.

Matmut worked with Red Hat Consulting for 12 months to implement the platform. In the following 6 months, the team got the environment production-ready and launched the first app on the platform—Matmut’s flagship, customer-facing insurance app. During the engagement, the team learned the best ways to set up the architecture, how to allocate workloads between the 2 datacenters, and put a backup plan in place.

“Red Hat Consulting helped with network management, and a Solutions Architect provided designs and helped with Day 2 automations,” said Mok. “When we were doing everything manually, it took around 3 days to set up a new cluster. With help from Red Hat, we learned how to use automation to reduce that to 1 day.”

Red Hat also provides ongoing support. In the 4 years since going live, Matmut has only experienced 1 major issue. Thankfully, Red Hat Support helped to resolve it quickly, before it caused too much disruption to customers.

“A production incident on a Red Hat OpenShift cluster caused our website and app to go down,” said Mok. “When we couldn’t fix it in a couple of hours, we opened an urgent case with Red Hat. The team was really responsive: they got on a call and found the root cause of the issue in no time.”

Adopting a scalable application platform fit for the future

Modernized environment without compromising on reliability

When the team moved Matmut’s flagship application onto Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus, it let out a collective sigh of relief. The application worked well, proving that the platform could handle intensive loads as thousands of customers used it to self-serve for one of Matmut’s most popular insurance products.

“Moving our first app onto Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus could have been stressful. It’s a high-profile app that our customers use regularly, so if anything went wrong it could impact our reputation and standing with executives,” said Mok. “Happily, it was fine. Thanks to the dashboard we could see that everything was under control and responding well. It was a proud moment.”

Accelerated delivery of new releases

Matmut has improved its speed of delivery in numerous ways—from automating cluster setup and saving 2 days to reducing development cycles by 3 months. With a platform that promotes productivity, it can achieve its ambitions of getting new applications released faster and with less effort.

“Faster release cycles are great. Another benefit of Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus compared to our old environment is that we can segregate each application for delivery,” said Mok. “Now we can easily deliver new apps without impacting any others, which is a big problem with monolithic environments.”

Improved developer satisfaction

The new platform and the shift to a continuous innovation/continuous delivery (CI/CD) approach have empowered developers to be more productive. They can build and deploy their own code in Red Hat OpenShift containers, instead of writing it on desktops and risking issues when moving into production.

"Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus has helped to establish more consistency in how developers work," said Mok. "One of their biggest concerns was how they would adapt to new ways of working, but they love that they can continuously deliver new features and achieve more using the platform. We're working together to make applications more efficient and to optimize CPU usage."

This isn't just good for Matmut's existing team: it's also great for attracting new talent. And as one of the company's goals is to support the local community, offering viable career paths to skilled graduates means that moving away from their families to the capital isn't the only option for career-minded developers. It's a win for families and a boost for the regional economy.

Continuing the optimization journey with every release

Matmut's modernization has left it better equipped to adapt to the rapidly changing market, and its partnership with Red Hat is inspiring continuous innovation.

"We're always asking how we can improve our business. Working with Red Hat gives us lots of ideas on how to achieve that," said Mok. "The Red Hat release cycle pushes us to keep progressing our environment as well. When we look back on the last four years of Red Hat OpenShift, we can clearly see the benefits around how we develop applications and manage our infrastructure."

The company is currently managing 3 Red Hat OpenShift clusters and working on providing Clusters-as-a-Service to ensure new independent software vendor (ISV) deployments won't impact application performance and that it can scale to handle demand. Next, it plans to use the Hosted Control Plane feature to create control planes as pods on a hosting cluster rather than hosting them on physical or virtual machines, which is faster, more efficient, and more cost-effective.

Matmut is also considering using Red Hat OpenShift AI in the future, when it finalizes its artificial intelligence road map.

About Matmut

Matmut is a French insurance provider on a mission to protect and support its customers both now and in the future. It offers products including car, home, health, travel, and life insurance, as well as wealth management, pension plans, and loans.

About Red Hat



Red Hat is the world's leading provider of enterprise open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to deliver reliable and high-performing Linux, hybrid cloud, container, and Kubernetes technologies. Red Hat helps customers develop cloud-native applications, integrate existing and new IT applications, and automate and manage complex environments. A trusted adviser to the Fortune 500, Red Hat provides award-winning support, training, and consulting services that bring the benefits of open innovation to any industry. Red Hat is a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and communities, helping organizations grow, transform, and prepare for the digital future.

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1888 REDHAT1 www.redhat.com	00800 7334 2835 europe@redhat.com	+65 6490 4200 apac@redhat.com	+54 11 4329 7300 info-latam@redhat.com
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