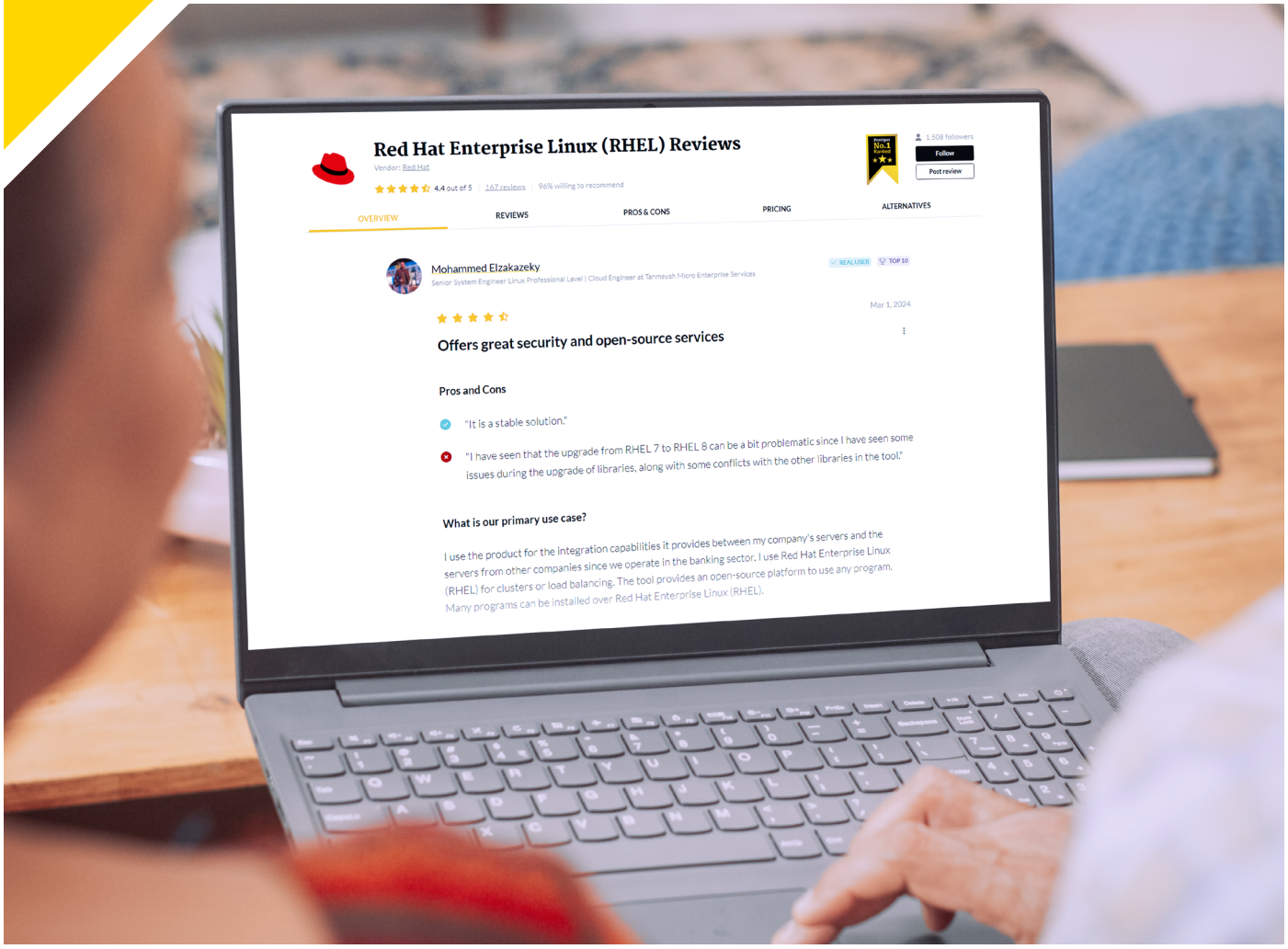
PeerPaper™ Report 2024

Based on Reviews From Real Users of Red Hat Enterprise Linux Environments

5 Key Success Factors for Standardizing and Managing Your Red Hat Enterprise Linux Environments



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Introduction

In today's complex world of hybrid cloud environments, system administrators are finding themselves under increasing pressure to keep up with an expanding set of tasks to manage their IT infrastructure. Many have chosen to standardize on Red Hat Enterprise Linux as their operating system to help simplify this work and take advantage of included features to help configure, deploy, and manage their systems across both private and public cloud environments.

In this paper, PeerSpot members highlight five success factors for achieving these goals by using features included in a Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscription to:

- **Analyze and manage their infrastructure with** Red Hat Lightspeed (formerly known as Insights).
- **Automate common tasks with** Red Hat Enterprise Linux system roles.
- **Create and deploy consistent system images across all environments with** image builder.
- **Streamline in-place upgrades with** Leapp.
- **Understand the health of their systems while accomplishing complex tasks with** Red Hat Enterprise Linux web console.

Except where noted, the companies described in this paper have over 10,000 employees.

Manage Infrastructure

Red Hat Enterprise Linux Use Cases and Management Challenges

PeerSpot members take advantage of their Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscriptions to solve a range of management challenges. For instance, a Senior Automation Architect at a healthcare company uses Red Hat Enterprise Linux to "lift and shift" hardware infrastructure involving 12,000 instances across four data centers and three clouds. In particular, he relies on Red Hat Enterprise Linux for standardization with other vendors.

A Developer Principal Engineer at a financial services firm with over 1,000 employees also uses Red Hat Enterprise Linux to standardize processes. "It has improved our organization," he said. "The upgrades are straightforward, which helps when you want to move a major version of an upgrade. It's done in a standard way."

A Senior Enterprise Solutions Engineer at Palpay, a small tech services company, has made Red Hat Enterprise Linux the foundation of his operational intelligence (OI) solution with Oracle databases and an FTB server on top of it. They support several thousand users with this setup.

Shabab A.
System Administrator at a healthcare company with 10,001+ employees

"We use Red Hat Enterprise Linux image builder. Our golden image is a real image. We harden it, and it's our golden server. When we need a new VM, we can just make a snapshot of that."

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System Administrator
at a government with
501-1,000 employees

"Red Hat does a really good job of keeping on top of vulnerabilities and making the patching process easy."

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An insurance company with more than 5,000 employees struggled with having a limited number of Linux administrators and specialists in Linux hardening and security. As a non-IT company, they wanted to restrict the use of open-source Linux and prevent their development community from obtaining their own images. Their Security Architect shared, "This is crucial for maintaining a secure supply chain and ensuring the lockdown of live Linux packages."

A System Administrator at a government agency with more than 500 employees likewise noted that Red Hat Enterprise Linux's built-in security features "are good when it comes to simplifying risk reduction and maintaining compliance." He added, "It is something that they do very well. It is one of the reasons why we like running it. It is rock solid in all areas. Red Hat does a really good job of keeping on top of vulnerabilities and making the patching process easy."

5 Key Success Factors for Standardizing and Managing Red Hat Enterprise Linux Environments

As Red Hat Enterprise Linux users and administrators work to standardize and simplify common management tasks, they continue to adopt and use key capabilities that are included in a Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscription. Read on to learn how you can get greater visibility into the health of your Red Hat Enterprise Linux environment and streamline the management of these systems across your hybrid IT infrastructure.

#1 – Become More Aware and Secure With Red Hat Lightspeed

Awareness of threats and operating conditions is essential for managing security, performance, and availability. Red Hat Lightspeed, the proactive, AI-powered management and advanced security capabilities woven into Red Hat Enterprise Linux, helps admins stay aware by continuously analyzing Red Hat Enterprise Linux systems and applications. Red Hat Lightspeed uses predictive analytics, driven by deep domain expertise, to speed up complex manual analysis and troubleshooting—reducing the process from hours to minutes. This includes identifying security and performance risks, reporting on subscriptions, and managing costs.

Predictive Analytics

Rich O.
Server Engineer at a retailer
with 10,001+ employees

"Helps us with tips and hints for fine-tuning applications like SAP and Oracle. We go by these recommendations and follow them to put the applications in place."

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Red Hat Enterprise Linux users spoke to the value of Red Hat Lightspeed, with a retailer's Server Engineer, for example, saying, "We use it to look for events our monitoring hasn't picked up. It also helps us with tips and hints for fine-tuning applications like SAP and Oracle. We go by these recommendations and follow them to put the applications in place."

Red Hat Lightspeed provides "a good, in-depth understanding of what's going on in the actual infrastructure" for an insurance company. As one of their Engineers put it, "It gave us good insights into the level at which we can run the containers and if you can scale the infrastructure vertically or horizontally and how to manage it better."

"It's a good tool, and it helps us keep the installation up to date and have a global view of what we have," said a System and Solutions Architect at a small software company. He also praised Red Hat Lightspeed for providing vulnerability alerts and targeted guidance, features he said that "have helped increase uptime." A Senior Enterprise Engineer at a transportation company similarly noted that Red Hat Lightspeed helps him tweak and configure the operating system for optimal use.

Log tracking is how a Technical Program Manager puts Red Hat Lightspeed to work at a university with more than 200 employees. He also uses Red Hat Lightspeed for monitoring data, along with processes that are happening across the Red Hat operating system. He said, "Using Red Hat Lightspeed, you can easily evaluate your system processes and data. It is a highly valuable feature. It provides you with vulnerability alerts and targeted guidance."

"Godsend" is the word a Principal Systems Engineer at Greenway Health, a tech services company with over 1,000 employees, chose to describe Red Hat Lightspeed and its role in their security operations. He said that Red Hat Lightpeed made it as if they had an extra person on staff. "Red Hat Lightspeed has a constantly updated database of CVEs [cyber vulnerabilities] and configuration best practices," he remarked.

"It checks everything in the environment to make sure that it is patched, up to date, configured properly, and using industry best practices," he added. Figure 1 shows this scenario. "When you look at the Red Hat Lightspeed control panel, you know either that everything is good or, if you have an issue, you know exactly where to look and how to fix it. Nine times out of ten, it even gives you an automation script to fix it automatically."

Preventing emergencies due to security issues, noncompliant settings, and unpatched systems is where Red Hat Lightspeed stood out to a Senior SRE at Linux Plus, a small tech services company. The tool enables his team "to be more proactive in detecting and avoiding errors before they occur." It provides them with vulnerability alerts and targeted guidance—working "perfectly because it utilizes machine learning, allowing us to monitor our logs and prevent unnecessary downtime."

Cloud Virtualization Owner
at a tech vendor with
10,001+ employees

"We have tried Red Hat Enterprise Linux system roles, and it is helpful for on-time delivery."

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Rich O.
Server Engineer at a retailer
with 10,001+ employees

"We use the Leapp tool to manage the upgrades. It works smoothly on our Oracle databases. Leapp is straightforward to use."

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The avoidance of emergencies in unpatched systems was also the main benefit of Red Hat Lightspeed mentioned by a Regional Project Manager at a comms service provider with over 1,000 employees. It helps by "identifying bugs so that we can fix them," he said. He elaborated, saying, "Red Hat Lightspeed provides us with vulnerability alerts and targeted guidance, which helps prevent downtime and increases our uptime to 99 percent."

An IT staffer at a small software company shared that Red Hat Lightspeed helps his team prevent emerging issues related to security or noncompliance settings. He said, "Red Hat Lightspeed provides vulnerability alerts and specific guidance. With each system, we can view the detected Common Platform Enumeration and receive advice on how to address it. These features have protected our systems from potential attacks, thereby increasing our uptime."

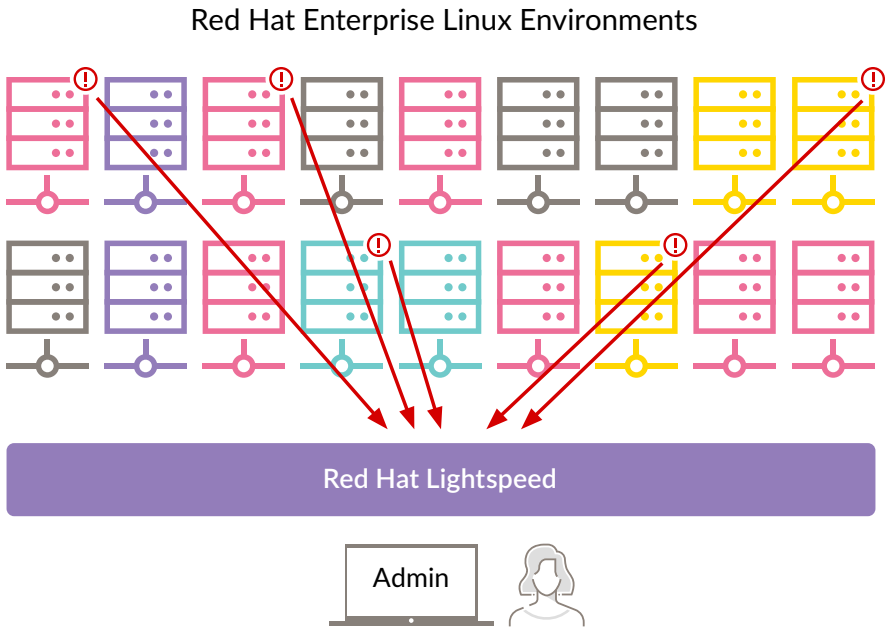

Figure 1 - Red Hat Lightspeed enables admins to spot vulnerabilities, unpatched systems, and other problems across diverse Red Hat Enterprise Linux environments.

#2 – Automate Complex Tasks With Red Hat Enterprise Linux System Roles

Automate Tasks

Managing complex IT infrastructures requires an increasing amount of Linux knowledge and manual effort to ensure success. This is precisely why IT administrators look to Red Hat Enterprise Linux system roles to help automate common security, configuration, and workload tasks.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux system roles are a set of Ansible content included in a Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscription to help provide consistent and repeatable operating system configurations while reducing technical burdens and streamlining administration.

For a System Administrator at a logistics company, the value of image builder and system roles was in its ability to build out the OS tree builds. She reflected, "I do not like to do that myself." A Cloud Virtualization Owner at a tech vendor also found the toolset valuable, saying, "We have tried Red Hat Enterprise Linux system roles, and it is helpful for on-time delivery."

Create OS Images

#3 – Ensure Consistent Provisioning with image builder for RHEL, powered by Red Hat Lightspeed

Creating OS images is a recurring task for Red Hat Enterprise Linux managers. With image builder, admins can create customizable OS images to ensure consistent provisioning and deployment across all environments. These include system images prepared for deployment on cloud platforms, as well as deployment-ready system images for installation disks, virtual machines, and more.

PeerSpot members were pleased with what image builder could do for them. A Senior Platform Engineer at a small tech services company simply said, "I really like it." He found image builder to be "tested and reliable," adding, "Having something they can work on, develop, and use daily is helpful to our customers."

A System Administrator at a healthcare company explained how it works. He said, "We use Red Hat Enterprise Linux image builder. Our golden image is a real image. We harden it, and it's our golden server. When we need a new VM, we can just make a snapshot of that."

#4 – Streamline Red Hat Enterprise Linux Upgrades with Leapp

It goes without saying that admins must perform routine upgrades in order to take full advantage of the latest capabilities that Red Hat Enterprise Linux has to offer, but upgrades can also be driven by important lifecycle dates like the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 end of maintenance on June 30, 2024. In either case, users can take advantage of an in-place upgrade tool called Leapp.

Streamlined Upgrades

Included in a Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscription, Leapp helps users perform in-place upgrades from one major version of RHEL to the next. Plus, it includes the ability to run a pre-upgrade assessment report and receive remediation advice to help prepare systems to be upgraded. Once all identified issues have been addressed, admins can perform an in-place upgrade in minutes while maintaining existing customizations, configurations, and preferences.

A Server Engineer at a retailer shared his experience with Leapp, saying, "We use the Leapp tool to manage the upgrades. It works smoothly on our Oracle databases. Leapp is straightforward to use."

"Since I'm more focused on migrating stuff, Leapp is awesome," proclaimed a Senior Engineer at Organon, a pharma/biotech company. He added, "We are able to do something that will work the way it's working. There are no issues or breaks."

Shabab A.
System Administrator at a healthcare company with 10,001+ employees

"I used Leapp for my upgrade from RHEL 7 to 8. It's an excellent utility tool. When I run the Leapp script, it tells me everything I need to take care of before I run a migration."

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Other notable comments about Leapp included:

- "I used Leapp for my upgrade from RHEL 7 to 8. It's an excellent utility tool. When I run the Leapp script, it tells me everything I need to take care of before I run a migration." - System Administrator at a healthcare company
- "I do the Red Hat Enterprise Linux upgrades. It's straightforward because I can just run Leapp to upgrade it." - System Administrator at a healthcare company
- "Red Hat Enterprise Linux Leapp was very helpful. It is very easy to use." - Data Platform Engineer at a manufacturing company

Intuitive Web Console

#5 – Simplify Daily Administration and Complex Tasks With Red Hat Enterprise Linux Web Console

Owners of Red Hat Enterprise Linux environments need an immediate understanding of the health and status of their systems. For this, system admins - even those new to Linux - rely on Red Hat Enterprise Linux web console's intuitive web interface to manage their local and remote environments while accomplishing complex tasks like storage administration, account management, network configuration, software updates, and network monitoring.

"The web console has been invaluable for us," explained a healthcare company's Systems Administrator. In particular, it helped his team when they were collaborating with application custodians "who may not be familiar with the command line interface."

Dashboards were what stood out for a Senior Manager at a financial services firm. He found the dashboards helpful because they "offered visibility" and "helped us see what was going on with our system." A Senior SIE at a financial services firm also praised the web console's intuitive interface. He uses web console to configure Red Hat products, remarking that it "gives you a better picture of what you're configuring." Figure 2 depicts the dashboard feature.

Shabab A.
System Administrator at a healthcare company with 10,001+ employees

"The web console has been invaluable for us."

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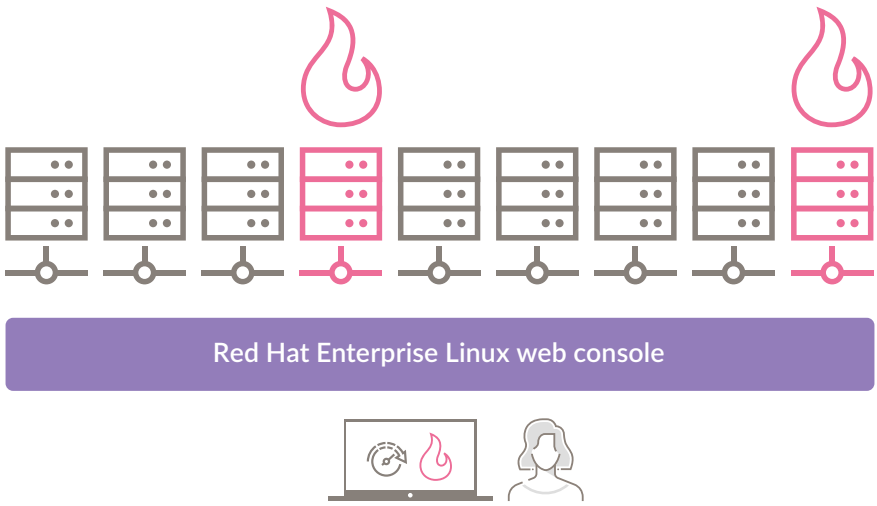

Figure 2 - Red Hat Enterprise Linux web console offers a dashboard that provides an efficient way for admins to see if systems are running hot, for example, or experiencing other functional problems that require attention.

Conclusion

IT system administrators are always seeking new ways to improve the standardization and management of their increasingly complex environments. They seek new ways to make their work simpler and more streamlined, while striving for greater security and efficiencies.

Many features and capabilities that are included in a Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscription, are used by PeerSpot members to help achieve these goals, including:

- Increase awareness and performance of Red Hat Enterprise Linux systems (Red Hat Lightspeed)
- Automate common administrative tasks (Red Hat Enterprise Linux system roles)
- Ensure consistent provisioning and deployment of new systems (image builder)
- Perform in-place upgrades (Leapp)
- Simplify daily administrative tasks (Red Hat Enterprise Linux web console)

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