Red Hat

Innovate with automation

A Red Hat customer success series

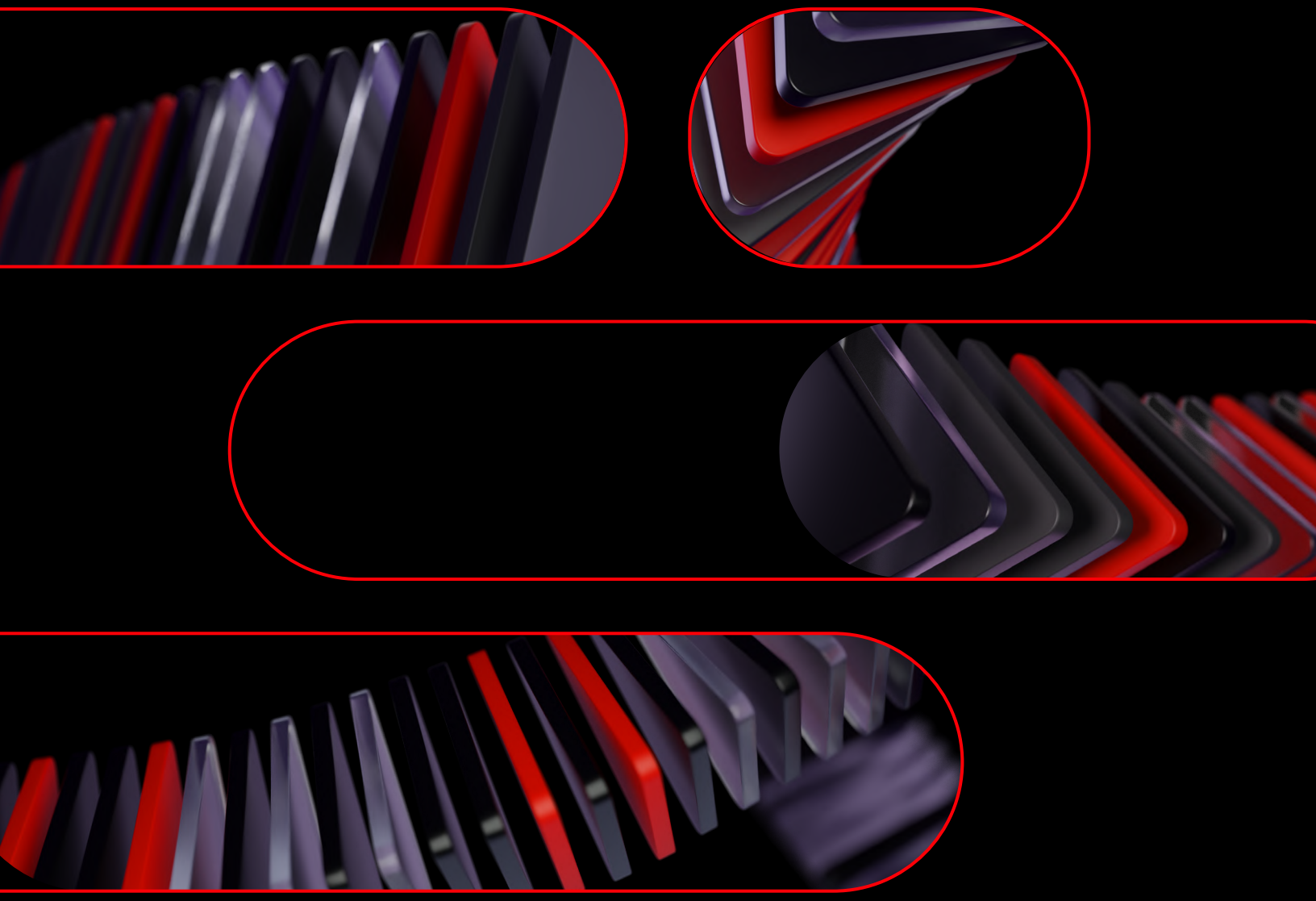


Table of contents

Introduction

Automation for the digital world

Automation has become a must-have technology to respond to rapid changes across every industry. For more than a decade, automation-driven innovation has been informed by Ansible® and the open source community has continually expanded the possibilities of automation software.

This collection of stories from real Red Hat® Ansible Automation Platform customers explores their challenges, approaches, and successes across 4 industries and how they used automation to address their needs. In the spirit of open source, these stories are meant to inform and expand what's possible for other organizations looking to advance innovation in their industry.

Ansible for automation

"Ansible" can refer to many things—including a project, community, or collection of applications—but all are dedicated to using a human-readable programming language, YAML, to create open source automation solutions. While Ansible is at the core of Ansible Automation Platform, there are many differences between the project and the product.

Ansible (the project) is free to use, download, and modify. The project benefits from the experience and intelligence of its thousands of contributors and is a good option for experimenting with automation components to discover what best suits your or your organization's needs.

Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform is a paid subscription that provides full enterprise lifecycle support for organizations looking to standardize, operationalize, and scale automation. Ansible Automation Platform is a hardened, tested, and trusted enterprise product that includes numerous upstream components, Red Hat Ansible Certified Content Collections from 60+ partners, and as-a-service return on investment (ROI) tools that take the guesswork out of installing, configuring, and supporting automation in your organization.

Organizations that need to unify their people, processes, and technology choose Ansible Automation Platform because it creates an end-to-end automation experience aimed at cross-functional teams while providing a plug-and-play experience between automation developers, engineers, and operations teams.

By using an automation platform across teams, IT organizations can achieve faster service delivery, more agility for the business, and end-to-end integrated process visibility that boosts scale, consistency, security, and transparency.[1]

Unify people, processes, and technology using Ansible Automation Platform

Organizations of all sizes are building automation practices that elevate automation beyond task-based, disconnected use cases to extend automation across their organization. The right platform can help run, control, and manage automation to help your organization get the greatest return on your investment.

Ansible Automation Platform is an enterprise IT automation solution that includes everything needed to build, deploy, and manage end-to-end automation at scale. Built on a powerful, agentless framework, Ansible Automation Platform is engineered to help organizations create, manage, and scale their automation workloads. It offers a flexible, stable, and security-focused foundation for deploying end-to-end automation solutions—from IT processes, to hybrid cloud, to edge locations.

More organizations are choosing Ansible Automation Platform to help their teams:

- Accelerate their automation strategy with a trusted and supported platform and certified content.
- Gain management capabilities that help them scale, control, and manage automation across multiple clusters in production environments.
- Boost innovation, lower risk, and increase resilience while reducing costs.

Red Hat Consulting helps organizations get started with a mentor-based, open practices approach, which empowers teams to collaborate and innovate on complex use cases. With best practices and guidance from the start, Red Hat's consultants provide organizations with a framework to help them automate across their enterprise.

The following customer stories demonstrate how organizations are using Ansible Automation Platform to put their holistic automation approach into action, and how a unified automation platform provides the necessary foundation on which to build.

1 IDC White Paper, sponsored by Red Hat. "The Business Value of Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform." Document #US47989320, March 2024.

Cepsa boosts efficiency with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

Global energy and chemical company Cepsa wanted to increase efficiency and stay compliant while reducing costs, risk, and downtime. To achieve this goal, the company turned to automation to find efficiencies in work hours, improve service response times, enhance IT security, and transform organizational culture.

Ready to upgrade to Ansible Automation Platform

Taking the initial steps on an automation journey to increase operational efficiency and establish consistent IT security, Cepsa began a digital transformation initiative in 2018. The company adopted the community version of Ansible. The automation tool demonstrated efficiency that Cepsa wanted to expand organization-wide.

In the beginning, we were using the Ansible community version to automate small services," said Francisco José Martín, Automation Manager, Department of Exploitation and Operation, Cepsa. "Then we had a complex SAP migration, from our on-premise SAP platform to SAP S/4HANA in the AWS cloud. We saw automation could help, but we needed an automation platform to achieve our goals."

After the success of its early automation projects and its long-standing relationship with Red Hat, Cepsa decided to extend Ansible across the business with Ansible Automation Platform. Using Ansible Automation Platform, Cepsa gained a supported foundation for building and operating automation services at scale, and a composable, collaborative, and trusted execution environment.

Cepsa adopted Ansible Automation Platform for its SAP migration. Ansible Automation Platform offers a visual dashboard and access control for automation functions and tools. These tools include analysis systems and reusable and certified content, so users can centralize and control their infrastructure.

Cepsa turned to Red Hat Consulting for guidance on how to maximize value from its automation platform. Through the Red Hat Navigate engagement, Cepsa and Red Hat Consulting worked together to identify knowledge gaps and the cultural changes required for successful implementation of automation initiatives. Red Hat is helping Cepsa establish an organizational model for automation by delivering online workshops designed to help teams understand automation and its possibilities. Working with Red Hat's experts, Cepsa completed its SAP migration in just a few months, and within a year, they have automated more than 400 IT operations processes.

Gaining a competitive advantage with a culture of automation

With Ansible Automation Platform, diverse teams at Cepsa have a centralized environment for automation. The company can share guides and workflows among these teams while maintaining separate applications or infrastructure when needed. "Red Hat helps us to manage group applications, and this management allows us to provide users with the autonomy they need," said Francisco José Martín, Automation Manager, Department of Exploitation and Operation, Cepsa.

By optimizing its automation approach, Cepsa has increased productivity by 35% compared with the previous year. The company has now freed more than 6,000 work hours, previously dedicated to repetitive IT administration tasks, for more strategic work.

> *A more productive business is a more competitive business. We have been able to dedicate the equivalent of 18 months of 1 employee's work to more rewarding, strategic projects within the IT department.*
>
> Francisco José Martín, Automation Manager, Department of Exploitation and Operation, Cepsa

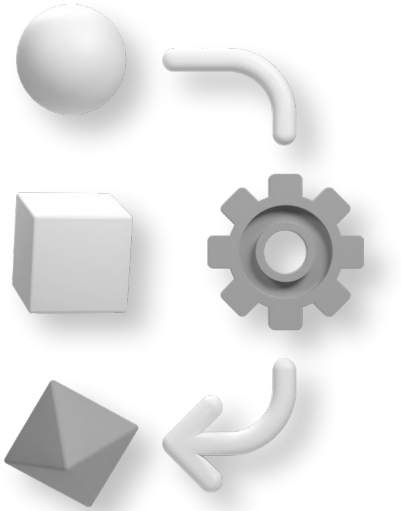
Better IT security with improved access controls

Standardizing processes has also helped Cepsa reduce the number of additional security administration permissions in its systems, mitigating risk. It now groups users by job role and department to ensure the correct permission levels are granted without overextending access.

"We created a catalog of actions that these groups can perform, like restarting servers, so a technician doesn't need to login to restart a service. Instead, this process is automated," said Martín. "The technician can access Ansible Automation Platform and can restart the service without credentials. And we know that it will always do it the same way because it is predetermined in the code."

Access to automation expertise

Red Hat Consulting helped Cepsa implement the changes needed to maximize the value of their new automation technology and approach. Working alongside the Cepsa team, Red Hat experts helped show the value of an agile work approach and continuous quality improvements through a continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD) approach.



> *Automation helped support a positive cultural shift, resulting in better collaboration between teams.*
>
> Francisco José Martín

Integrating automation across business opportunities

Cepsa plans to take advantage of more automation opportunities, such as extending Ansible Automation Platform to its ServiceNow ticketing system integration. "Integrating Ansible Automation Platform with ServiceNow is vital for us to better manage requests and workflows," Martín said.

Cepsa is also creating a hybrid application platform based on Kubernetes container orchestration technology to run applications both on-premise and in the cloud. "This new platform will help enhance our development flexibility with greater transparency and centralized operations," said Martín. "Red Hat has helped us make automation the center of our digital transformation efforts."

Download
Cepsa's success story

Southwest®

Southwest Airlines expands its automation use cases

Southwest Airlines runs more than 4,000 flights each day from 120 airports in 11 countries. Operations of that scale require robust and reliable network infrastructure that can keep pace. To support its IT network and mitigate outages, Southwest looked to implement an automation solution.

Applying automation to network engineering

Keeping the airline's network running smoothly is the central mission of Southwest's network engineers. They manage approximately 5,000 network devices across multiple vendors, including switches, Cisco routers, Palo Alto firewalls, and F5 LTM and GTM load balancers; each airport has between 25 and 100 devices. Ansible Automation Platform has helped Southwest tackle the complexity of a multivendor network infrastructure.

"Our airports need access to all their applications, so our staff can get gates ticketed and customers on the plane," said Carlos Tapia, Senior Systems Engineer at Southwest.

With so many devices at so many airports, avoiding network configuration drift became a challenge. Plus, engineers only had short windows of time between flights for maintenance. That meant they would often implement changes in the very early morning, followed by spending hours documenting the change.

Southwest began exploring how automation could help address the inefficiencies of its change processes. An automated change process could create a change ticket, schedule the change task, implement the change, and promptly close the ticket—all without the manual effort of network engineers.

The airline's initial automation use case focused on network access control (NAC), and safeguarding the network from unauthorized external devices obtaining an IP address and connecting to Southwest's network. The team used Ansible Automation Platform to build and test configurations for a variety of NAC use cases, and then deploy them to all switches.

More recently, Southwest used Ansible Automation Platform to help stand airport networks up at speed. Their network engineers created a standardized, preconfigured network setup that provides a foundation for 90% of what's required at each airport. An Ansible Playbook sets up the core functions of switches and routers, and then network engineers configure airport-specific requirements. Not only does this preconfiguration ensure that networks are consistent and therefore more reliable, it also saves significant time. Without automation, engineers would need at least 30 minutes (depending on the size of the airport) to configure a single device. With automation, the whole process takes about 20 minutes.

The playbooks are written using Ansible roles to organize tasks, templates, files, and variables. They follow the YAML approach for directory layout, leverage Jinja2 templating to format any text, and integrate with GitLab for a single source of truth. One of the biggest playbooks manages upgrades to Southwest's Cisco IOS networking software.

Because Southwest has at least 10 switch models, each with multiple firmware versions, upgrading these updates manually was complex and time-consuming. With automation, the playbook automatically determines which software version is required for each switch model, then downloads the firmware, performs validation, and completes the upgrade.

Saving time while boosting scalability

With Ansible Automation Platform, Southwest has been able to realize significant time savings. Looking at the NAC use case, network engineers would've needed between 8 and 12 months to build, test, and deploy configurations to all switches; with automation, they only needed 6 weeks.

Using Ansible Automation Platform would also deliver critical time savings if essential systems were to go down. A team of engineers wouldn't be able to perform manual checks of all devices, plus the firewall and DNS, quickly enough to avoid major downtime, but Ansible Automation Platform could launch 100 different playbooks concurrently to access all the information needed to identify if and where there is a problem in the network—thereby accelerating the time to resolution, and reducing downtime.

Enhanced speed goes hand-in-hand with efficiencies, which has helped Southwest's network engineers scale their operations. The Cisco IOS upgrades used to be a manual process, and engineers could typically only update 10 devices during an overnight maintenance window. With Ansible Automation Platform, those same upgrades could be completed on at least 100 devices in a night.

> *Using Ansible Automation Platform with golden configurations also mitigates human error. Automation never makes mistakes.*
>
> Carlos Tapia, Senior Systems Engineer, Southwest Airlines

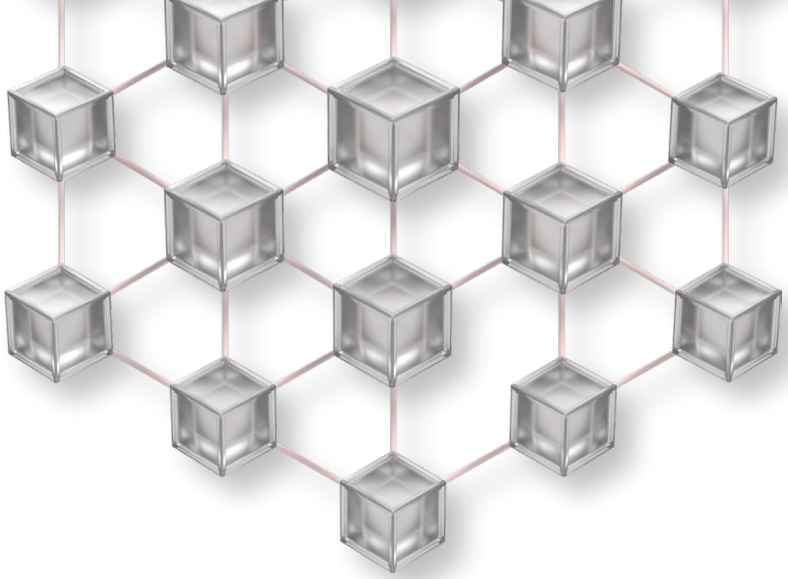
Standardizing to mitigate the risk of outages

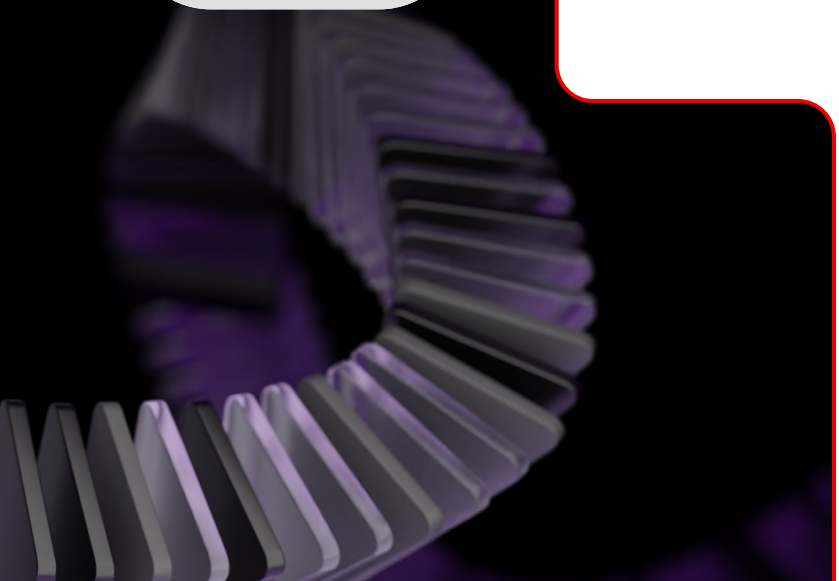
Ansible Automation Platform has also played a pivotal role in helping Southwest's network engineers avoid configuration drift when setting up new switches. Before automation, an engineer would rely on configuration documentation to set up the switch. But if another engineer had updated a switch of the same type without reflecting the updates in the documentation, configuration drift would occur.

Network engineers now use playbooks, accessed via a Southwest web portal, to configure new switches. The standardized configurations remove the potential for human error that can cause drift, which can result in network outages.

Freeing up engineers to innovate

With automation now running what used to be manual, time-consuming processes, Southwest's networking engineers can focus on larger, more complex projects (including improving Southwest's routing environment) and spend more time innovating.





Expanding use cases to maximize success

Southwest wants to build on its success using automation, and is considering other areas where Ansible Automation Platform can be used. Automating firewalls and a software-defined WAN are possible areas of focus, among others.

The end goal for Southwest is to implement an Infrastructure as Code (IaC) model, with GitLab serving as the source of truth. Southwest network engineers would make changes once in GitLab. Listeners would check where updates are needed, schedule the changes, and then implement and validate them within the maintenance window—a wholly 'hands-off' approach that Tapia would like to see working across all network devices, platforms, and environments. And with network engineers keen to use more automation, Red Hat Ansible Lightspeed may help them get started.

This solution is a generative artificial intelligence (gen AI) service designed to help automation teams create, adopt, and maintain Ansible content more efficiently. Connected to IBM watsonx Code Assistant, Red Hat Ansible Lightspeed helps Ansible creators turn their automation ideas into content based on natural language prompts.

"We want to get more of our engineers into the automation mindset," said Tapia. "Ansible Lightspeed can help them understand how to structure a playbook. I'm also planning to use it to onboard network devices from a new vendor or if we expand into the cloud. It would give me a framework for the new playbooks."

Download
Southwest Airlines' success story

DISCOVER

3

Discover's culture of extreme automation is saving 800K annual hours

Discover is a leading digital bank and payments company and operates in a highly regulated environment. Critical to its success is a significant level of operational rigor, given the vast number of processes across its operations. The company realized that the ability to create predictable and consistent processes is key to unlocking innovation and continued growth.

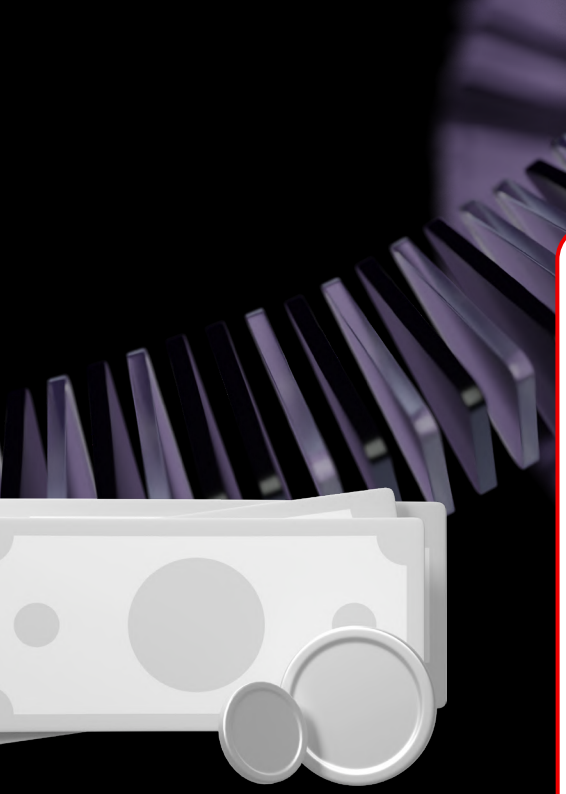
As part of a wider strategy to become a product-based organization, Discover focused on a mission to ensure manual processes were understood, optimized, automated or eliminated. Its primary aim was to extend automation to every possible process within the business.

> *When we use repeatable solutions, we can develop and deploy these in other areas of our business much faster and more frequently. It's a critical enabler for us and increases our ROI.*
>
> Joe Mills Director, Discover Financial Services

The right platform to build extreme automation

Launching a program called "Extreme Automation" across your business requires a software platform that's up to the task. Extreme Automation spanned 3 pillars: DevOps, process automation, and an automation community of practice, each with its own senior leader.

Ansible Automation Platform provided the ideal platform with a composable, collaborative, and trusted execution environment, facilitating the process of evaluating manual work and non-engineering tasks, and identifying automation solutions for each. This helped Discover to identify common problems with replicable solutions. The business also established a centralized automation guild, or community of practice, composed of automation experts, to take in problems and help identify which automation products can be used.



Getting extreme value in return

Instead of staff triaging, validating and processing data extraction requests, Discover automated this process, freeing up around 20,000 hours a year in this area alone. Processing time-off requests has also been automated; software now handles as many as 23,000 requests in a single weekend, eliminating 184,000 clicks and weeks of work.

Automating repetitive or repeatable tasks has also freed up staff time that can be put to better use elsewhere. Call center agents can now spend more time engaging and solving customer needs when on calls, while automated reconciliations help accounting personnel to focus on higher value tasks.

Discover: a single organizational mission

Discover intends to maintain its focus on automation and accelerate its application across their business. "With evolved technologies, I can see us using more of our data as it becomes more consumable and accessible across our organization. We used to do things in silos; now we're pushing Extreme Automation as a whole and driving toward the same mission. We're going to do some amazing things," said Mills.

Download
Discover's success story

MUTUAMADRILEÑA

Mutua Madrileña adopts automation as standard

4

Founded in 1930, Mutua Madrileña is Spain's leading insurance company. The company has grown through mergers and acquisitions, accumulating disparate technology platforms and integrations along the way, and the adoption of a digital transformation strategy in 2016 scaled its number of platforms from 28 to more than 60. Managing this complex environment was time-consuming and increased the risk of operational errors. To address this complexity and improve its processes, the company's middleware team set out to maximize use of automation.

Embracing intelligent automation and observability

Mutua Madrileña decided to embed automation into every project on its roadmap, analyzing where automation could improve existing manual processes and adding an automation stage early in its platform development lifecycle.

Automating previously manual processes helped to provision platforms, from the creation of business recovery plan environments—unique repositories containing platform configuration data vulnerabilities—to monitoring the platform, installing fixes, and supporting application lifecycle management during continuous integration and continuous deployment (CI/CD). The team also adopted GitOps to centralize provisioning, operation, and platform maintenance into a single source of truth.

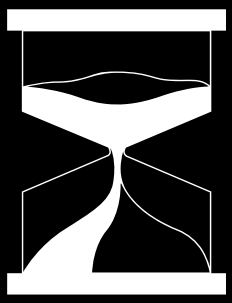
Mutua Madrileña also implemented Event-Driven Ansible to respond quickly to real-time events. And to increase visibility across its varied environments and proactively identify unusual patterns and issues before triggering Event-Driven Ansible, the IT team also integrated intelligent observability from Dynatrace. Intelligent observability combined with event-driven automation has improved resolution times and reduced downtime for the middleware team, which now has access to deeper insights into where they can focus for continuous improvement. "Combining observability with self-healing has improved resolution times and reduced service downtime. We saw a 50% reduction in service tickets," said Marta Ceciliano, Head of Middleware, Automation and Observability, Mutua Madrileña.

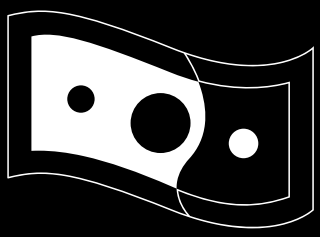
Standardized processes accelerate time to market and increase agility

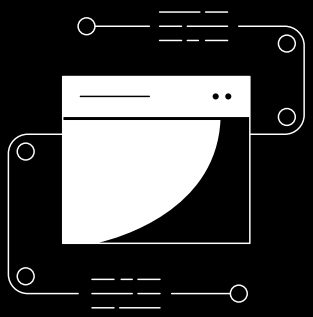
Thanks to its unified automation network and standardized development methodologies, Mutua Madrileña can provision new platforms in different environments quickly with the correct configuration automatically applied. These environments can then be customized without losing any functionality. This standardization helps the company accelerate the release of new developments, and ensures that its team is able to quickly build a new environment in response to a catastrophic event.

That ease of deployment is crucial for not only accelerating time to market, but for giving the company greater agility. The middleware team can offer development teams—which know their applications well—the ability to operate the platform in a controlled manner, which results in better response times.

> *Choosing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform was 1 of the best decisions we've ever made.*
>
> Marta Ceciliano, Head of Middleware, Automation and Observability, Mutua Madrileña







Reduced or eliminated platform downtime with self-healing

The Dynatrace intelligent engine uses AI to detect any unusual application activity or behavior and triggers an automated Event-Driven Ansible workflow to fix the issue. This has made it possible for Mutua Madrileña to eliminate or reduce the impact of known errors while applications are active, avoiding costly downtime.

Reduced operating costs and increased innovation

Repetitive tasks can monopolize the time of IT teams. By automating manual processes, Mutua Madrileña has been able to lower its operating costs and free up its highly qualified technicians to work on more strategic, innovative activities.

Making automation the standard

Having achieved such impressive results, Mutua Madrileña's middleware team is now focused on embedding automation into all of the company's systems and launching new services with both automation and observability as standard, so that other departments and platforms can also benefit from the experience of the middleware team. "Having Red Hat by our side gives us the confidence and peace of mind that we are on the right path," said Ceciliano.

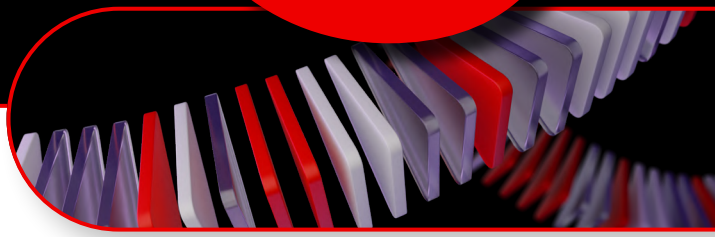
Download
Mutua Madrileña's success story

MAPFRE

MAPFRE takes automation from business experiment to business-critical

5

When MAPFRE, a global insurance company headquartered in Madrid, created its cloud strategy, the company quickly realized the need for automation to achieve its goals—getting to new markets faster, optimizing infrastructure costs, reducing its carbon footprint, and maintaining resilience and security. MAPFRE onboarded Ansible Automation Platform to apply automation to key processes.



Applying automation to key business pillars

MAPFRE decided to use Ansible Automation Platform to address 3 key areas of focus: cost and sustainability, time to market, and resilience and security.

Time to market

Prior to implementing automation, it took MAPFRE 6 months to deliver a new feature to market—including 15 days to create a cloud environment, and 3 weeks to onboard a developer. By adopting Ansible Automation Platform, MAPFRE was able to reduce lead time by 55%, save 4,700 developer hours, and reduce error rates by 85%.

Cost and sustainability

MAPFRE used Ansible Automation Platform to automate the shutdown of preproduction environments, closing non-used environments after 30 days and deleting orphaned resources. Using automation, rather than manual, time-consuming processes, to eradicate these environments helped MAPFRE reduce costs.

Resilience and security

To reduce error rates, the company applied automation to remediation processes and disaster recovery environments, and automated the disconnection of at-risk environments.

Taking automation further

MAPFRE now sees automation as critical to its success. It plans to use Event-Driven Ansible and Policy as Code (PaC) to further strengthen its focus on security and to continue reducing error rates to improve customer experience.

Read the press release
Watch the testimonial

ensono

Ensono streamlines global operations with Ansible Automation Platform

6

As a global managed service provider, Ensono offers a wide range of infrastructure solutions to enterprise clients, from IBM mainframes to public cloud. But with a sophisticated technology stack and growing client expectations, the company needed a more unified approach to automation.

Ensono had implemented various point solutions for automation but saw an opportunity to enhance coordination and strategic oversight. They wanted to find a solution that helped them centralize and scale automation across their hybrid cloud environment to meet their evolving customer demands.

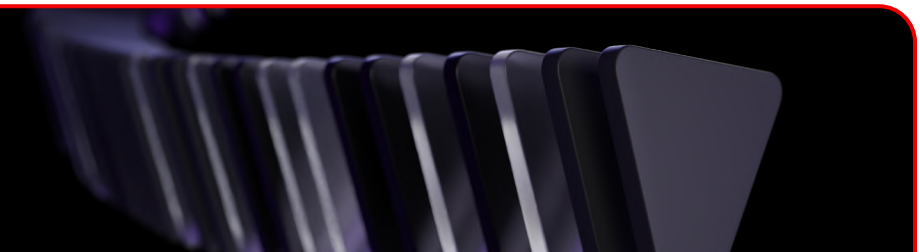
Before Red Hat, we were like many organizations—running pockets of automation in isolation.

Nathan Yelton, Infrastructure Lead, Ansible & Integration at Ensono

From isolated scripts to a strategic automation platform

To centralize and scale automation across its hybrid environment, Ensono adopted Ansible Automation Platform and deployed it on Red Hat OpenShift®, transforming how the company delivers services, supports clients, and empowers engineers.

The transition began with a move from multiple instances of the open source, community-supported project, AWX, to a centralized platform solution. Ensono partnered with Red Hat Professional Services to accelerate implementation, align to industry best practices, and execute a successful rollout. "Red Hat Consulting helped us consolidate decades of experience into a cohesive, production-ready deployment," said Yelton. "We were able to launch Ansible Automation Platform in just 4 and a half months."



Gaining consistency and confidence with Red Hat OpenShift

Ensono deployed Ansible Automation Platform on Red Hat OpenShift to take advantage of end-to-end support, streamlined lifecycle management, and GitOps-based deployments. Deploying on Red Hat OpenShift simplifies patching, security updates, and upgrades. "We can roll out changes with zero disruption to users and our clients never know we're updating in the background," said Yelton.

Accelerating adoption and collaboration across teams

To get the most out of their platform solution, Red Hat Consulting experts guided Ensono as they launched a company-wide automation community of practice to encourage cross-functional collaboration. Engineers from networking, mainframe, open systems, and hyperscale teams now work together on a shared platform.

By using Ansible Automation Platform, automation is no longer just a tool–it's a cultural shift within the organization. "We've created a safe space for engineers to learn, share, and develop automation that directly benefits our clients."

Ensono also embraced Red Hat Ansible Lightspeed and Event-Driven Ansible to support both new users and advanced use cases. "Lightspeed gives our engineers an AI-powered coding assistant, which is especially helpful for our people who don't write playbooks every day," said Yelton. In addition, Event-Driven Ansible has allowed the team to build proofs of concept and push them to production in a single day.

Seeing the value and scaling the results

In just 12 months, the company saved more than 210,000 engineering hours and executed more than 40 million automation tasks using Ansible Automation Platform. "My favorite moment was realizing our platform was running more than 1 automation action per second on average," said Yelton. That means it's consistently delivering real-time value at scale—helping clients operate more efficiently.

Being able to track and communicate these results to senior leadership has added to the positive mentality and adoption across the organization. "We didn't realize how powerful the data was until we saw it in action," said Yelton. "Now, our leadership uses it to guide decisions, forecast growth, and identify new opportunities."

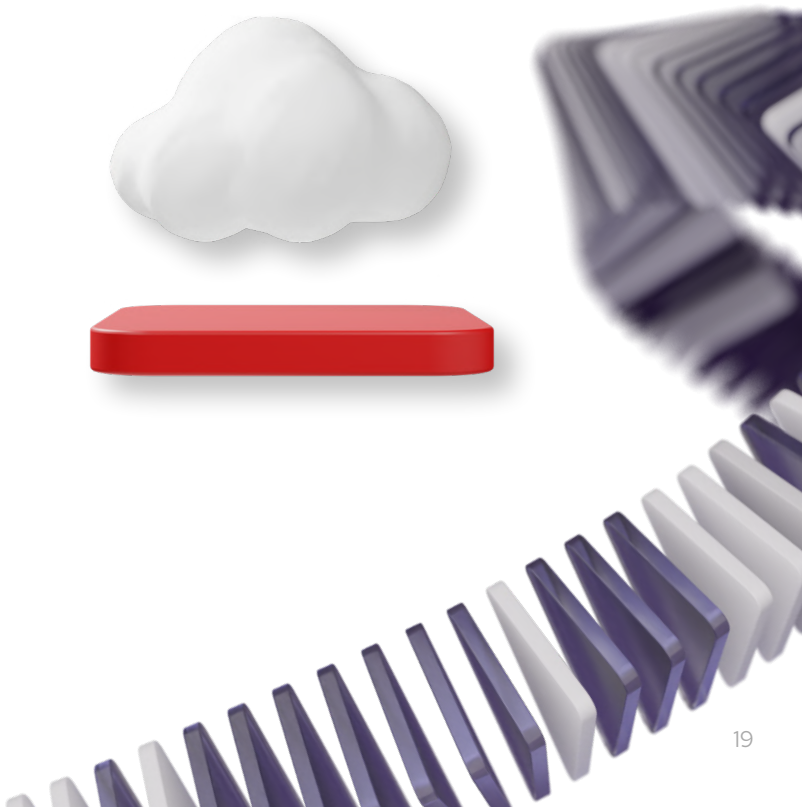
Automation has also improved service delivery for clients in visible and behind-the-scenes ways. From accelerating ticket resolution and enriching alerts to fully automated remediation. For example, using automation to restart mainframe jobs can dramatically increase operational efficiency and reduce downtime by allowing jobs to recover from failures quickly, minimizing manual intervention, and maintaining the availability of critical business services. For Ensono, this meant restarting a mainframe, which once took 30 minutes, now takes just 2 and a half minutes—with no human intervention.

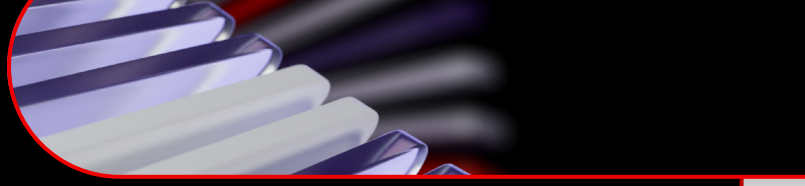
The future of automation at Ensono

Ensono continues to expand its automation footprint, exploring its use with Red Hat OpenShift Virtualization, a feature of Red Hat OpenShift that integrates virtual machines into a modern hybrid cloud infrastructure platform allowing for infrastructure management, and large-scale migrations.

Yelton and his team are exploring how AI and automation can work together to further reduce complexity and increase agility—not just for clients, but for the engineers behind the scenes. "Automation and AI are here to augment people, and we're just getting started," said Yelton. By eliminating repetitive tasks and helping engineers focus on higher-value work, Ensono is reinforcing its commitment to being a great place to work—where people feel empowered, supported, and able to make a meaningful impact every day.

Read the press release





Conclusion

Expand your automation possibilities with Ansible Automation Platform

Through these stories we aim to highlight how businesses that depend on automation can benefit from a hardened platform that integrates with the tools and technologies your teams are already using. Ansible Automation Platform frees your teams from managing multiple components and curating a library of content across each component's lifecycle.

If there is a customer story in this collection that applies to your use case, or is of particular interest, be sure to download the complete case study for more detail.

Learn how your teams can use automation to work more efficiently with the speed and agility that delivers business value. Discover Ansible Automation platform and how it can help teams run complex, multidomain automation projects at scale.

Explore more real-world use cases, testimonials, and insights from customers, partners, and analysts, and get inspired by what Ansible Automation Platform can offer your organization.
Read the success stories.

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