Spark New Zealand supports new agile approach with Red Hat software and services

Spark New Zealand, the country's largest telecommunications company, needed to support its new agile and DevOps approaches with a responsive, modular IT architecture. Working with a Red Hat Technical Account Manager (TAM), the service provider replaced its proprietary integration platform with Red Hat Fuse and Red Hat AMQ, running on Red Hat OpenShift. Now, with guidance and training from its Red Hat TAM, Spark has simplified development and reduced downtime with an iterative, self-service approach.

Software and services

Red Hat® Fuse

Red Hat OpenShift®

Red Hat AMQ

Red Hat Technical Account Management

Red Hat Training

Auckland, New Zealand ●

Headquarters

Telecommunications

5,000 employees
More than **NZD$3.5 million** annual revenue

Benefits

- Reduced development time and service downtime with iterative, self-service approach

- Simplified integration of customer-facing services and back-end capabilities

- Improved support for new agile and DevOps approach with expert guidance and hands-on training

"*With a user-friendly platform like Red Hat OpenShift, our developers can more easily develop connected solutions in the environment they choose, without having to worry about accommodating the infrastructure underneath.*"

Nilay Rathod
Domain Chapter Lead, Spark New Zealand

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Legacy integration platform slows agile business transformation

Spark New Zealand is the country's largest telecommunications and digital services company. It provides nationwide mobile and broadband services to consumers, small businesses, corporations, and government agencies. Spark is also a leading information and communications technology (ICT) service provider for New Zealand businesses.

After recently reengineering its core business systems, Spark was the first company in New Zealand to adopt an agile model across its entire organization. However, to support its shift from a centralized, hierarchical approach to an agile approach with cross-functional, self-managing teams, Spark needed an equally adaptable, responsive IT architecture.

The service provider required downtime for its services every time a change was made to its integration platform, which connects its internal systems and applications as well as third-party services and applications. As demand for faster and more frequent changes increased, Spark sought to replace this legacy integration platform with a modern, responsive solution that would support its new pace of development.

"Our previous, monolithic platform was reaching the end of its lifecycle. We needed to ensure legacy applications still ran, so we wanted to replace applications in a way that kept specifications and integrations the same," said Nilay Rathod, Domain Chapter Lead, Spark New Zealand. "We also needed a solution that came with effective guidance for our teams."

Supported container and integration solutions support new ways of working

After evaluating options and completing a proof of concept (POC), Spark New Zealand decided to replace its legacy integration platform with Red Hat Fuse and introduce Red Hat OpenShift and Red Hat AMQ. The service provider chose to work with Red Hat to adopt a DevOps-ready integration solution and microservices-based architecture, supported by automation—and expert support for not only new technology, but a new way of working.

Red Hat Fuse is a distributed integration platform that connects everything from legacy systems to applications programming interfaces (APIs) and more, with connectors for hundreds of leading enterprise vendors, like SAP and Google. To support these capabilities, Spark also deployed Red Hat AMQ, a lightweight messaging platform for real-time integration based on Apache ActiveMQ and Apache Kafka. The service provider runs these solutions on Red Hat OpenShift, an enterprise Kubernetes container platform that helps improve developer productivity with robust automation capabilities and support for microservices.

To help its teams succeed with these new integration technologies, Spark worked closely with a Red Hat solution architect, Red Hat Customer Success Manager, and a Red Hat Technical Account Manager (TAM). With help from Red Hat's experts, Spark designed and deployed its new integration platform within weeks. Two issues during testing were easily fixed, and the service provider migrated its first five services to the production deployment.

After the success of this initial deployment, Spark has now migrated about 230 services to the new platform.

"We made another good decision when we decided to train everyone through the impressive Red Hat training modules. Feedback from the teams on the quality of the course material was excellent."

Nilay Rathod
Domain Chapter Lead, Spark New Zealand

More effective, efficient integration helps Spark meet service demands

Created foundation for faster, more iterative development

Spark's developers can now independently create, deploy, and scale microservices faster by deploying containerized services with Red Hat OpenShift, connected by Red Hat Fuse and Red Hat AMQ. This self-service, automated approach helps the service provider take advantage of its new, fast-paced, iterative agile and DevOps approaches.

"With a user-friendly platform like Red Hat OpenShift, our developers can more easily develop connected solutions in the environment they choose, without having to worry about accommodating the infrastructure underneath," said Rathod. "We can quickly create, test, and deploy apps to the cloud."

Additionally, Spark can scale the platform and complete service updates as needed, with less risk of downtime compared to its legacy architecture and traditional, waterfall development approach.

"When we faced four critical issues during our first Red Hat Fuse deployment, we could stop and resolve those issues without rollback or making alternate plans," said Rathod. "The impact of issues is limited to the container, rather than affecting the entire app. That's why containers are so useful."

Simplified integration of complex IT environment

Spark manages more than 230 integration services for internal and customer-facing services. With Red Hat Fuse, Spark can provide consistent integration and specifications across its customer-facing services, including billing services, real-time mobile data and voice service use information for customers, and more. As a result, the service provider can provide responsive, personalized services to its customers.

Internally, Spark uses Red Hat Fuse to orchestrate integration between its distributed IT applications and third-party services, such as Netflix and Spotify, and to define the activation application programming interface (API) used by field engineers to active fiber voice service.

Improved knowledge and support with expert guidance from Red Hat Technical Account Management

Spark not only improved its initial implementation of Red Hat solutions but also helped its teams build new skills and knowledge by working with a Red Hat Technical Account Manager (TAM) and a Red Hat OpenShift solution architect.

Before deployment, the TAM helped Red Hat's engineers gain a thorough understanding of Spark's IT environment to ensure minimal downtime during production implementation of new technology. "We have nothing but praise for the TAM engagement and the assistance they gave our infrastructure team," said Rathod. "This deployment was our first with Kubernetes, and Red Hat helped make it a success."

The service provider also engaged Red Hat Training to deliver four on-site training sessions: two on Red Hat Fuse and two on containers, Kubernetes, and Red Hat OpenShift administration. These sessions helped Spark's development and engineering teams build related skills with hands-on experience.

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Established architecture creates new digital service and integration opportunities

After the success of its initial partnership with Red Hat, Spark is looking at further opportunities with Red Hat. The service provider plans to expand its integration with Microsoft Dynamics enterprise resource planning (ERP) and payroll software, as well as Apache Spark analytics engine and Apache Camel messaging.

The service provider also plans to continue the journey with open source and cloud-native development by expanding its use of Red Hat OpenShift to support new workloads and applications.

"We're going to be focusing on containerizing our applications to run on cloud-native architecture, and we plan to migrate our online services and order management solution to Red Hat OpenShift," said Rathod. "We're really looking to get the most out of our Red Hat platform and integration technology."

About Spark New Zealand

Spark New Zealand Limited (Spark) is a New Zealand telecommunications and digital services company providing mobile, broadband, and ICT services to consumers and businesses across New Zealand.

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 integrate new and existing IT applications, develop cloud-native applications, standardize on our industry-leading operating system, and automate, secure, and manage complex environments. Award-winning support, training, and consulting services make Red Hat a trusted adviser to the Fortune 500. As a strategic partner to cloud providers, system integrators, application vendors, customers, and open source communities, Red Hat can help organizations prepare for the digital future.

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