

Groupama develops cloud-native applications with Red Hat OpenShift



Software and services

Red Hat® OpenShift®
Container Platform

Red Hat Enterprise Linux®

Red Hat Consulting

Groupama, a leading French insurance provider, wanted to shift to cloud-native application development to keep pace with shifting market demands and balance performance with costs. The company used Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform to create an agile, efficient development environment and processes that have improved service time to market and attracted top IT talent. Groupama has also established a stable foundation for future adoption of innovative hybrid cloud computing.



Insurance

32,000 employees

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Silvère Lallemand
Network and Middleware Infrastructure Manager,
Cloud Offer and Devops, Groupama

Benefits

- Decreased time to market with efficient application development
- Gained flexibility to support future hybrid cloud
- Adopted modern technology to help attract and retain top IT talent



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Digital demand transforms the insurance market

The insurance sector is changing as customers demand faster delivery of new, innovative services. For Groupama (Groupe des Assurances Mutuelles Agricoles), a leading mutual insurance company in France, a shift to digital business affects every area of its business, from sales to customer support.

One of Groupama’s strategic pillars is operational efficiency—achieved by offering optimal service quality to customers while controlling operating costs. To support digital innovation—from its Internet of Things (IoT) sensors to support tracking of farm machinery in its agricultural insurance department to smartphone video evidence of automotive crash damage—at the speed of business, Groupama sought to improve the speed and efficiency of application development.

“There is an expectation from the business that we have to be faster in everything we do. We have to have efficient processes, without a moment’s downtime,” said Silvère Lallemand, Network and Middleware Infrastructure Manager, Cloud Offer and DevOps, at Groupama. “We recognized that cloud-native development was our best option, but we needed to reduce any risks in that approach.”

Trusted platform provides cloud-native foundation for innovation

Groupama has used enterprise open source solutions from Red Hat since 2009, starting with Red Hat Enterprise Linux and continuing with Red Hat CloudForms to deploy a private cloud. “Red Hat focused on building a solution that was right for us and why we were making a change,” said Silvère Lallemand. “That support quality gave us the confidence to explore further Red Hat solutions.”

To create a foundation for cloud-native application development, Groupama decided to adopt Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform. With the robust foundation of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform offers a full-control application environment based on Kubernetes and other leading container technology to let Groupama build, run, and scale applications anywhere on a single platform.

“We had looked at Red Hat OpenShift before and we were confident it could help us address issues around development speed and efficiency,” said Silvère Lallemand. “We could see that OpenShift’s high availability would address the problem of downtime when updating an application.”

Working with Red Hat Consulting, Groupama developed and tested the platform over six months before deploying to production. There are now 15 applications running on the platform, including a critical sales tool. The company plans to standardize on Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform for all application creation and hosting by the end of 2019.

“We created the project and built the team ourselves, with some informal Red Hat support. We wanted to start slowly, but we’re now confident in the effectiveness of our OpenShift deployment to give us the performance improvements we need. We’ll triple capacity by the end of the year,” said Silvère Lallemand. “Last year, OpenShift was the exception, but this year, it will be the default.”

Cloud-native development improves performance—and brand image

Gained faster time to market

Previously, building an application environment in its datacenter took Groupama eight days of work across two months. With Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform, this work can be completed in less than a day. Changes that would have taken four hours over a weekend can now be made in minutes.

“We’re now able to develop applications with much greater agility, and any change will be in production in a very short time,” said Silvère Lallemand. “Before, application fix changes would have involved an official change management request, impact assessment, and so on. But in OpenShift, change is part of the design.”

Flexibility to support hybrid cloud

With Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform, Groupama can now support application development on-premise, in its private cloud, or in a hybrid cloud environment.

“Public cloud will be a big part of our global IT strategy,” said Silvère Lallemand. “We run two massive datacenters, one of which is dedicated to disaster recovery, but we’re paying for it to wait most of the time. Being able to shift these workloads into the public cloud as needed, and pay only for what we need, offers huge financial advantages.”

In addition to making application development faster with OpenShift, Groupama has also eliminated any downtime, mitigating any availability issues for end users.

Enhanced workplace culture and company image

Groupama’s initial cloud-native platform project involved IT employees in different roles within the IT team who now act as advocates for the wider adoption of OpenShift.

“We need to hire and retain the best people. Those people want to be working on the best technology,” said Silvère Lallemand. “We can see the positive impact OpenShift has on our workplace culture, such as the improvement in collaboration between our development and operations teams. Additionally, running critical business applications on Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform sends a strong message to the market that this is a modern, innovative place to work.”

The journey to hybrid cloud continues

Groupama is now working with Red Hat to explore using Red Hat Ansible® Automation to make infrastructure creation more efficient and reliable by eliminating manual effort. “By focusing on automation, we can reduce the time from request to delivery, and improve build quality,” said Silvère Lallemand. “We can free people from the burden of repetitive tasks and allow them to be more creative.”

The company also plans to continue on its hybrid cloud journey, including scaling its current public cloud workloads and evaluating running Red Hat OpenShift in the Amazon Web Services (AWS) public cloud.

“What’s exciting about the direction we’re heading is the opportunity to overcome technical challenges to build something new,” said Silvère Lallemand. “It’s all about how we manage, inspire and involve people.”

About Groupama

Group Groupama is a leading mutual insurance company in France. It is the #1 insurer in individual health, #1 insurer of farmers and local authorities, #2 in home insurance, and holds a strong leadership position benefiting from 3 complementary and attractive brands: Groupama, Gan and Amaguiz. Groupama is active in 11 countries, mostly in Europe, with growth drivers in Asia. The group comprises almost 50 companies operating in every field: insurance, services, as well as financial and banking businesses. As of 2017, the group has 13 million customers, 32,500 employees, and €13.7 billion in premium income.

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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