Bayport Financial Services simplifies and accelerates growth with Red Hat Virtualization

BAYPORT
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Software
Red Hat® Virtualization

Bayport Financial Services is a financial services provider with operations across Africa and Latin America. To move faster and compete with global banking leaders, the company sought to streamline and speed its virtual machine (VM) environment. By migrating from VMware to Red Hat Virtualization, Bayport can now take advantage of security and performance reporting across its hybrid IT environment while providing self-service tools to developers. As a result, it can operate more consistently and strategically across its locations. Working closely with a leading enterprise open source vendor has also helped the company attract and retain skilled talent.

Johannesburg, South Africa ●

Headquarters

Financial services

2,700 employees

Benefits

• Simplified development and management with unified, self-service capabilities and comprehensive monitoring

• Reduced virtualization costs by around 47% with simpler pricing and hardware reallocation

• Gained expert guidance to support strategic global vision with emerging and enterprise open source technology

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Haaike Van Der Merwe
Manager, Project Delivery & DevOps,
Bayport Financial Services

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Responding faster to global opportunities

After beginning as a microlending institution in Zambia, Bayport Financial Services has grown to offer at-source credit throughout Africa and Latin America, with a goal to become listed on the London Stock Exchange. As the financial services market becomes increasingly focused on digital customer experiences, Bayport sought to take advantage of this shift to create new products and compete in new market segments.

"We don't have the legacy infrastructure or process burden of traditional banks," said Haaike Van Der Merwe, Project Delivery & DevOps Manager at Bayport Financial Services. "We can make loan approval decisions faster to get our customers access to funds as soon as possible. We want to be able to react to customer loan opportunities and scale quickly to outpace our competition."

To achieve this agility, Bayport sought to reduce the cost and complexity of its virtualized environment. With many pricing tiers and a lack of effective local support, its existing VMware solution was expensive to maintain and difficult to operate. Additionally, competing with the global financial services sector, it is a challenge for Bayport to recruit and retain developer talent.

"We have a small team, and there are times when we struggle to maintain the IT performance we need. When our software environment is complex, it's harder to make commitments to the business," said Van Der Merwe. "With our global footprint expanding, we need supported, simple technology we can trust."

Creating a stable foundation for a containerized future

Bayport's internal department for in-country operational and functional support promoted seeking an open source solution for greater flexibility without additional, unexpected costs.

After a successful proof of concept in South Africa, Bayport decided to migrate from VMware to Red Hat Virtualization. "During the proof of concept, we were immediately impressed by Red Hat's level of engagement, as well as the improved performance we observed," said Van Der Merwe.

Based on Red Hat Enterprise Linux® and Kernel-based Virtual Machine (KVM) technology, this platform provides robust management tools for virtualizing resources, processes, and applications, including Linux and Microsoft Windows workloads. With this environment, Bayport can not only support existing workloads, but also establish a stable, integrated foundation for future adoption of container technology—backed by enterprise support through a single point of contact.

Bayport has now migrated 75% of its workloads across 8 countries to its new Red Hat virtualized environment. "Deployment has been straightforward," said Van Der Merwe. "A simple tool in Red Hat Virtualization lets us connect to each virtual machine and choose exactly which items we want to migrate."

Simplifying business operations

Simplified resource and environment management

By consolidating virtual machine (VM) reporting and monitoring across its on-premise and private cloud environments, Bayport has significantly simplified management.

Additionally, self-service provisioning and management let the company's developers access standardized resources on demand while ensuring compliance, speeding the development process.

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"We need to have security-focused technology that our team is comfortable working with as the basis of future container deployments," said Van Der Merwe. "We've built a single dashboard that has changed our culture by giving teams better visibility and as a result made it easier to collaborate across projects and teams. Complexity makes it harder to deliver on commitments to the business. Red Hat Virtualization gives us more clarity around the status and contents of our virtualized environment to support better decision making."

Reduced virtualization costs with flexibility and hardware optimization

Previously, Bayport had to choose between 3 costly licensing options and often had to vary its selection based on regional needs. With Red Hat's single annual subscription model, the company can more effectively predict budget across its global operations. Additionally, Red Hat product subscriptions include access to a knowledgebase of documentation and tools, as well as access to support engineers for guidance and troubleshooting.

Choosing enterprise open source software from Red Hat also means Bayport can reduce its reliance on a single vendor and adapt its IT environment to meet future needs, such as adopting container technology, without costly multiyear licensing agreements.

This flexibility extends to its hardware environment. Previously, licensing would have cost the company more than the server itself. By migrating to Red Hat Virtualization, Bayport can take full advantage of its existing hardware investment by reallocating its server resources where needed and improving workload density.

As a result of these changes, Bayport has reduced its virtualization costs by around 47%.

"We get all the functionality we need with one price, and the ease of using our Red Hat Virtualization entitlements has been key to strategically making the most of our budget," said Van Der Merwe. "For instance, we can reallocate an aging server to use it for disaster recovery backup."

Improved staff engagement with collaborative partnership

For Bayport's small IT team, a key benefit of adopting Red Hat software is hands-on engagement and support. Through routine on-site visits and monthly reports, Red Hat's experts work closely with Bayport's developers and operations staff to troubleshoot issues and share related technology knowledge.

"It's getting harder to find people with the right skills. And once you recruit great talent, you can't then work them beyond capacity. We want our staff focused on high-value projects, not mundane day-to-day tasks," said Van Der Merwe. "The engagement we've gotten from Red Hat has been great since day one. Working with Red Hat and, through them, with the open source community, we can learn from others. We're part of something bigger."

Exploring automation to keep pace with change

With a stable yet adaptable foundation for a containerized future, Bayport is now looking at ways to add automation to its VM environment to eliminate routine work and improve integration. To achieve these improvements, the company is evaluating adopting Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform and Red Hat Satellite.

"The key reason for digitization is to automate workloads," said Van Der Merwe. "For a business with our ambitions, automation and simplicity are the only way we can keep up with the technology and the workloads we need to grow and reach new market segments. Red Hat's software and support can help."

About Bayport Financial Services

Bayport Financial Services is a global leader in at-source credit extension in emerging markets. It works with government departments and companies to give civil servants and employed individuals access to credit and other financial solutions. The business was formed in South Africa in 2001, and today operates in 8 countries across Africa, as well as Mexico and Colombia. bayportfinance.com

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.