Česká spořitelna accelerates development with Red Hat OpenShift

Česká spořitelna, part of Erste Group Bank AG, is the largest retail bank in the Czech Republic. To support its shift to focus on digital services, the bank sought to simplify development and eliminate task duplication. Working closely with Red Hat Consulting to learn best practices, the bank migrated to Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform. With a supported, innovative solution, the bank can use its IT resources more efficiently and reduce time to market for new services. These changes help Česká spořitelna stay competitive against fintech and third-party alternatives.

Software

Red Hat® OpenShift®
Container Platform

Red Hat Enterprise Linux®

Red Hat Satellite

Red Hat Consulting

Partner

ELOS

Prague, Czech Republic ●

Headquarters

Banking

10,000 employees

3 million customers

Benefits

- Standardized development environment for more efficient development and resource use

- Reduced time to market to stay competitive against fintech and third-party banking options

- Optimized strategic IT investment with hands-on guidance from Red Hat Consulting

"*Using Red Hat OpenShift, we can demonstrate automated DevOps for more agile product development.*"

Petr Lipka
Enterprise architect, Česká spořitelna

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Speeding and simplifying banking services development

Česká spořitelna (CSAS), part of Erste Group Bank AG, is the largest retail bank in the Czech Republic. Like other banks in the Czech market, CSAS is evolving to offer its services through new, customer-facing digital channels. For example, the bank's internet and mobile bank, George, has more than 1.5 million active users.

In 2016, CSAS developed a public cloud strategy to gain scale, flexibility, and cost advantages for its services. To support this technology approach, the bank sought to adopt more agile application development and production approaches and simplify its application environment.

"Digital transformation is more than an IT or technology issue. It requires a complete restructuring of how we operate and how we serve our customers," said Petr Lipka, Enterprise Architect at Česká spořitelna. "We have around 250 applications, with a great deal of duplication."

To speed and streamline its application creation approach, CSAS sought to create a centralized development platform based in a hybrid cloud environment that could provide reliable performance—whether in its datacenter or the public cloud. The bank also wanted an enterprise open source solution that would balance community innovation with the stability of business technology for this strategically critical project.

Adopting hybrid cloud with an enterprise open source leader

CSAS decided to create its hybrid cloud platform with technology from Red Hat, a trusted vendor. The bank has worked with ELOS, a local Red Hat Platinum Partner, to successfully use Red Hat Enterprise Linux since 2009.

"Cloud will be a critical part of our future strategy. We're already working with [Microsoft] Azure and considering AWS [Amazon Web Services] as a viable alternative," said Lipka. "We've enjoyed working with Red Hat, and we found that Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform will provide the critical cross-environment support we need to unify our work, whether on-premise or in the cloud."

Based on Kubernetes and Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform offers a single, centralized application platform across any cloud. Built-in upgrades and lifecycle management help CSAS's teams quickly and more reliably develop, deploy, and consistently manage container applications. Red Hat Satellite provides infrastructure management, including security patching and issue resolution, to help OpenShift remain effective and protected.

After working with ELOS on its initial on-premise deployment of OpenShift Container Platform, CSAS engaged Red Hat Consulting for at three-week workshop at its Prague head office to test and optimize the solution, as well as confirm its design and implementation plans for expanding to public cloud.

The bank's initial migration to OpenShift included several customer-facing digital banking applications, with plans to scale the migration as teams become more familiar with the new environment.

"We wanted insight from someone who had done this sort of implementation at an enterprise level," said Lipka. "This project was too important to us to leave to trial and error. Red Hat's experience in public cloud with global enterprises gives us the confidence we're heading in the right direction."

Competing in the evolving banking sector

Simplified application development

Standardizing on OpenShift Container Platform will help CSAS reduce the complexity of its application development by avoiding resource and process duplication. OpenShift's modular architecture lets development teams make smaller, more iterative changes and more easily reuse resources without affecting the entire development environment.

"Previously, smaller developer teams built their own automation for continuous integration and delivery [CI/CD], but on our journey to DevOps, we'll rely on a standardized, more automated approach," said Miroslav Cihlář, IT Architect at Česká spořitelna. "With Red Hat OpenShift, we can offer unified, enterprise-quality CI/CD automation tools for our development teams to use. OpenShift reinvigorates our development by letting teams focus on their innovative work, rather than creating tools and other maintenance tasks."

Reduced time to market for new, competitive services

As of September 2019, the European Union (EU) second Payment Services Directive (PSD2) lets banking customers allow third-party businesses like Amazon to retrieve account data from banks to complete purchases. Banks must adapt to improve their customer experiences to maintain their user bases by delivering innovative, competitive services faster.

"Using Red Hat OpenShift, we can demonstrate automated DevOps for more agile product development," said Lipka.

Using OpenShift Container Platform to streamline its development processes will also help the bank work more efficiently to stay competitive against new fintech market entrants who use agile, modern IT environments without hindrance from legacy technology or processes.

Optimized I.T. investment with expert guidance

Working closely with Red Hat Consulting has helped CSAS's IT teams learn best practices for successfully moving to OpenShift Container Platform and adopting public cloud. For example, the three-week consulting workshop helped the bank discover ways to achieve higher availability and avoid unnecessary data replication.

"OpenShift had a learning curve for us, but Red Hat's experts showed us how to improve our IT security, scalability, and costs. We knew we could not increase headcount for this project, but Red Hat showed us how to make the most of what we have," said Lipka.

Scaling enterprise open source success

The progress of CSAS's OpenShift adoption is being monitored closely by others in the Erste Group: "We're sharing details of the project's success with others in the group and looking to identify best practices and other elements that can be replicated elsewhere across the business," said Lipka.

CSAS plans to continue migrating applications to its OpenShift environment by the end of 2019, as well as increasing automation and integration to further improve its development efficiency.

"We're already starting to look at new features to integrate with Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform for more integration and better visibility of issues," said Lipka. "We see Red Hat as a long-term engagement, because we're seeing the risk we took with enterprise open source already paying off."

About Česká spořitelna

Česká spořitelna (CSAS) is the largest retail bank in the Czech Republic, with 3 million customers, 600 branches, and 10,000 employees. The bank has 1.5 million users of its internet banking service. It is part of the Austrian Erste Group. csas.cz

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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