

Automation delivers major workflow, cost, and quality improvements

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第一生命

 Dai-ichi Life Group

Industry

Insurance

Headquarters

Tokyo, Japan

Size

47,036 (as at end Mar. 2024)

"Red Hat is now an indispensable part of system development and operations for enterprise companies."

Eita Yoshidome

Fellow, IT Planning Department
The Dai-ichi Life
Insurance Co., Ltd

The Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company, Limited (Dai-ichi Life) has been streamlining to improve its server environment using server virtualization and hyper-converged infrastructure. In 2020, to meet the demand for high agility and efficiency in server infrastructure to promote digital transformation, it decided to implement automation by working with Dai-ichi Life Techno Cross Co., Ltd (DLTX), formerly Dai-ichi Life Information Systems. Dai-ichi Life and DLTX chose the Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform, which has cut server setup time by more than 90%, making it possible for a single engineer to set up 60 times more servers.



Software and services

Red Hat® Ansible®
Automation Platform

Benefits

- ▶ Simplified complex and time-consuming application processes
- ▶ Cut server setup times by 90%, with a single engineer now able to handle 60 times more work
- ▶ Assured quality of tools and reduced stress and pressure to improve employee experience

About Red Hat Innovators in the Open

Innovation is the core of open source. Red Hat customers use open source technologies to change not only their own organizations, but also entire industries and markets. Red Hat Innovators in the Open proudly showcases how our customers use enterprise open source solutions to solve their toughest business challenges. Want to share your story? [Learn more.](#)



Pictured, from left:

Dai-ichi Life Insurance:
Ms Kurihara, Mr. Yada,
Mr. Yoshidome

DLTX:
Mr. Yokoyama, Mr. Fujita,
Mr. Sutou

Advancing automation to optimize processes and address IT talent shortage

Demand for digital transformation (DX) is growing as businesses move faster to meet end users' increasingly diverse needs while also managing a chronic shortage of IT talent. If the speed and quality of its services decline, Dai-ichi Life risks missing key opportunities.

"We are promoting a hybrid cloud to meet diverse needs, and using multi-clouds to enhance DX and customer experience (CX), while keeping crucial contract information managed on-premises," said Eita Yoshidome, a Fellow in the IT Planning Department at Dai-ichi Life. "Automating our on-premise environments is a key initiative to further accelerate our business in the future."

With the push for DX, demands from end users and business units have also become more sophisticated. "As an IT department that supports the business, without increasing IT personnel, we need to provide higher-quality infrastructure with greater agility than before," said Mariko Kurihara, Manager of IT Operation Division of IT Planning Department. "Our automation initiatives are crucial and they are our mission."

DLTX, which supports the Dai-ichi Life Group IT strategy, proposed infrastructure automation during a major server-refresh project. "As Dai-ichi Life pushes for automation, we considered what would be best for automating the server construction with an eye on stability, naturally, but also future extensibility. Our proposed solution automates the server construction process so it is as agile as any cloud environment, even on-premise," said Kazuyoshi Yokoyama, Group Head of Infrastructure Systems Development Group No. 2, Infrastructure Technology Promotion Department, The Dai-ichi Life Techno Cross Co., Ltd.

Of the various options available, Dai-ichi Life and DLTX chose Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform as their automation configuration management tool.

Promoting efficient and stable automation

Shinsuke Sutou, a group team leader at DLTX, explained the reasons behind advocating for Ansible Automation Platform. "The first advantage is that it is agentless. With more than a thousand servers at Dai-ichi Life, it has become easier to install each server," said Sutou. "Moreover, Ansible Automation Platform allows us to write processes using a YAML playbook, which makes operations straightforward and is another big advantage. Its simplicity and speed make Ansible Automation Platform stand out."

Furthermore, the IT infrastructure needs the highest levels of stability and uniformity. "We have a lot of servers, and they are always being updated," said Yasuhisa Yada, Line Manager in the IT Operations Management Division of Dai-ichi Life's IT Planning Department. "Using Ansible Automation Platform to quickly build a stable, high-quality foundation for our infrastructure, translates to improved systems and customer service."

DLTX now has high hopes for future scalability with Ansible Automation Platform. "We can use it not only for the server setup tasks we initially tackled but also for automating operational tasks," said Yada. "Automation enables several units to be handled simultaneously, eliminates the need for manual intervention in operations, minimizing human errors and preventing oversights. Its ease of setup and versatility are also significant advantages."

“The stresses and pressures that IT staff faced have been greatly reduced by automation.”

Kazuyoshi Yokoyama

Group Head, Infrastructure Systems Development Group No. 2, Infrastructure Technology Promotion Dept, Infrastructure Technology Div., The Dai-ichi Life Techno Cross Co., Ltd.

Building quantitative and qualitative gains from automation**Simplified complex and time-consuming application processes**

The introduction of an automated server setup system using Ansible Automation Platform has significantly simplified the application process.

“Previously, anyone applying for a server setup had to get estimates and secure budgets six months in advance. They also had to request IP address allocations from the network management team, among other things, which was a lot of work. Now, everything is simplified and done within the automated setup process, which also includes budget applications. This is a substantial benefit,” said Tadashi Fujita, DLTX Team Head.

The automated server setup system has cut costs, allowing previously allocated setup budgets to be redirected to other IT investments. Automation also ensures high quality while allowing allocation of human resources in areas that require flexibility. “Automation has enabled us to view the future of IT infrastructure operations more positively,” said Yoshidome.

Cut server setup times by 90%, with a single engineer handling 60 times more

The automated server setup system has shown remarkable results. Delivering a server previously took about five weeks, but with the automated system, it now takes about three days. “Also, whereas we could previously set up around five servers a month, we can now set up around 10 each day,” said Fujita.

Furthermore, the flexibility of Ansible Automation Platform goes beyond automated server setup. Fujita explained that when he conducted a company-wide software refresh, using Ansible Automation Platform saved considerable amounts of labor.

“Using Ansible Automation Platform for routine patch management also enabled us to apply patches to a large number of servers simultaneously,” said Fujita. “Significant benefits have been achieved in terms of time, cost, and quality.”

Reduced stress and pressure to improve employee experience

Beyond quantitative results, automation has also positively impacted the infrastructure team members’ mental well-being and greatly eased multiple stresses and pressures faced by IT staff.

“For instance, when server setups and patch management were completed manually, double-checking was mandatory, requiring at least two people. With automation, now that is no longer necessary, the outcomes can be confirmed and assured within the system, and operators are freed from the stress of those manual tasks,” said Yokoyama.

The establishment of a system through automation has allowed teams to evolve the operating model and respond flexibly to unexpected situations. “Missions within limited timeframes come with pressure; however, by expanding the scope of areas that can be automated, we can determine how to handle even unplanned requests with flexibility and in a more relaxed way,” said Yokoyama. “Automation is indispensable for improving the IT environment and IT infrastructure employees’ experience, as well as advancing workstyle reform.”



About Dai-ichi Life Techno Cross Co., Ltd (DLTX)

DLTX drives the digital strategy of the Dai-ichi Life Group and co-creates digital transformation with clients both inside and outside the group. With a deep understanding of various business processes and a wealth of experience in system development and operation, it analyzes current operations, identifies real issues, and plans and implement optimal system responses that are in line with business processes.

Expanding automation to face future challenges

Automation has steadily expanded, and since its rollout in the latter half of 2022, it is now utilized by numerous employees across six departments. "This horizontal deployment of Ansible Automation Platform contributes to overall corporate efficiency," said Yoshidome.

Automation tools developed using Ansible Automation Platform are also being adapted for use across other systems, delivering greater horizontal deployment. "We hope to extend these benefits across to the entire Dai-ichi Life," said Yokoyama. "This automation initiative has sparked active discussions on improvements and proposals using Ansible Automation Platform within our infrastructure-related departments, which has had a positive effect on our organizational vitality."

"In terms of return on investment, Ansible Automation Platform has been amazing. As someone involved in IT, how to efficiently allocate limited investments and achieve results is always a major challenge. Ansible Automation Platform has been used not only for its initial purpose – automated server setups – but has also been applied in other situations, demonstrating its advanced versatility," said Kurihara.

Looking forward, Yoshidome expressed a desire to start deploying automation to the cloud environment. "We will continue to maintain a hybrid cloud environment but will expand the scope of automation to accelerate business support through infrastructure development.

"Red Hat is now an indispensable part of system development and operations for enterprise companies. I look forward to better solutions that encompass the entire system lifecycle, including automation and security measures," said Yoshidome.

Red Hat will continue to support the ever-developing automation innovation at the Dai-ichi Life Group.

About Dai-ichi Life

The Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company, Limited, founded in 1902, is one of Japan's leading life insurance companies. It converted from a mutual company to a stock company in 2010 and was listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Since its foundation, the company has continued to take on the challenge of change, focusing on the provision of life insurance, with 'customers first' as its basic management philosophy. It is also developing a new business model by promoting the integration of insurance and IT called InsTech.



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 develop cloud-native applications, integrate existing and new IT applications, and automate and manage complex environments. A trusted adviser to the Fortune 500, Red Hat provides award-winning support, training, and consulting services that bring the benefits of open innovation to any industry. Red Hat is a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and communities, helping organizations grow, transform, and prepare for the digital future.

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