



HEDGESERV USES VMWARE INTEGRATED OPENSTACK TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

HEDGESERV

INDUSTRY

FINANCIAL SERVICES

LOCATION

NEW YORK CITY

KEY CHALLENGES

- Support rapid growth of SaaS-based business in the highly competitive financial services industry.
- Deliver new applications and features faster to maintain competitive differentiation.
- Avoid adding complexity while accelerating innovation and growing the IT environment.

SOLUTION

HedgeServ deployed VMware Integrated OpenStack to easily add capacity and performance to keep pace with its growth. The solution gives HedgeServ a scalable on-premises cloud that makes developers more productive and allows for more continuous delivery. The company also uses VMware vRealize Log Insight log management to monitor the platform.

HedgeServ, a company experiencing exponential growth, strives for success in the extremely competitive financial services industry, a market where time really is money. To deliver more value to customers, stand apart from its competition, increase the speed of application development, accelerate innovation, and easily and securely scale its IT environment, HedgeServ decided to implement an OpenStack open-source cloud framework. After two unsuccessful attempts at deployment with alternative OpenStack solutions, and with the clock running, HedgeServ found success with VMware® Integrated OpenStack. Deployed by HedgeServ's own IT team, the solution provides 100 percent API uptime, delivers value to clients faster, enables scalability to sustain growth, and has won the hearts of developers.

HedgeServ provides full-service, independent fund administration with a portfolio of software-as-a-service (SaaS) offerings for hedge fund managers across the globe. Powered by a real-time technology platform, HedgeServ sets the industry benchmark for client satisfaction by focusing on advanced technology and customer-centric service. The company employs more than 1,000 professionals who manage in excess of \$300 Billion USD of assets for more than 195 clients.

The Challenge

Founded in 2008, HedgeServ is running at breakneck speed, "growing exponentially over the last three years and adding clients at a faster pace than ever before," according to Isa Berisha, the company's senior director of platform and application infrastructure engineering. Success brings its own challenges, however. To sustain its explosive growth in an extremely competitive industry, the company needed to ensure its IT environment could easily and securely scale without jeopardizing platform stability and availability.

With technology at the forefront of HedgeServ's success, its leadership team is always looking for the next IT innovation, investment, or service introduction that will keep the company ahead of its competition. Faster application deployment is

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Scalable and flexible on-premises cloud supports rapid growth and accelerated innovation.
- Faster development and accelerated deployments deliver more value to customers.
- Simpler environment built on open standards provides flexibility that developers love.

one way to maintain that edge. “At the end of the day,” explains Berisha, “we can make our customers happier when we can get our code deployed faster. And this determines if a customer comes to us or goes to a competitor.”

Berisha wanted to streamline application delivery workflows and provide developers with a platform that is more conducive to agile development. Specifically, he wanted a cloud service that would allow HedgeServ’s developers to provision virtual machines (VM) and resources on demand, without waiting for the IT department to provision and deploy them.

Today there are over 18 applications under development; in two years, HedgeServ expects to develop twice as many. As Berisha plans for that future, he must accelerate HedgeServ’s application delivery without adding complexity.

The Solution

Keeping an eye on OpenStack open-standards technology, which delivers a private cloud within a data center, Berisha knew that OpenStack had reached maturity and critical mass in the market and that its interoperability and thriving ecosystem would provide HedgeServ with the flexibility to become more agile, accelerate development, and scale easily.

Berisha reviewed the big-name OpenStack vendors and engaged the professional services team of a leading provider. When this approach failed due to a lack of support, security concerns, a long timeline, and stability issues, Berisha considered managed service providers. But many of them were going out of business or getting acquired. This led Berisha to look for a vendor with financial stability, staying power, and a technical solution that met all his needs.

Berisha noticed that VMware had just launched its VMware Integrated OpenStack solution. HedgeServ was already a longtime VMware customer, so Berisha decided to give it a try. The HedgeServ IT team deployed VMware Integrated OpenStack on top of its existing VMware vSphere® virtualized infrastructure, completing the installation themselves. Due to its deep integration with familiar VMware management tools, HedgeServ didn’t have to hire new people, and IT staff didn’t have to take any classes or acquire any new certifications.

“We deployed it and an amazing thing happened: It just worked!” says Berisha. “VMware Integrated OpenStack was simpler to deploy than other implementations, and running VIO negated having to manage two platforms (one conducive to “legacy” workloads, and the other for cloud-ready horizontal scaling workloads),” saving money, time, and effort.

HedgeServ also uses VMware vRealize® Log Insight™ log management to monitor the platform. “We use Log Insight to pinpoint problems in the complex web of OpenStack module, in ongoing operations support.” says Berisha.

“Developers have come to see IT as an enabler rather than a roadblock to progress. It’s been a very good thing. We’re acting more like a software startup than a traditional financial firm. And this has helped us attract talent.”

ISA BERISHA
SR. DIRECTOR, PLATFORM & APPLICATION
INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEERING
HEDGESERV

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware Integrated OpenStack
- VMware vRealize Log Insight
- VMware vSphere®
- VMware ESX®

Business Benefits

HedgeServ can now easily add capacity and performance to keep pace with its growth. VMware Integrated OpenStack gives HedgeServ a scalable on-premises cloud that makes developers more productive and allows for more continuous delivery.

Setting up new VMs used to take the IT team more than a day. Now developers can use a self-service portal to provision as many as 100 “monster” VMs with 100TB in data generation in less than 30 minutes, even for complex configurations. HedgeServ uses Chef and PowerShell technologies to automate its quality assurance (QA) process and create easily repeatable workflows. QA cycles with more than 10,000 unit tests that used to take 18 to 19 hours are now completed in just 5 or 6 hours. These timesaving capabilities have enabled HedgeServ to replace its monthly software deployment cycles with weekly or daily deployments, delivering value to customers at a faster pace, without disruptions.

HedgeServ developers have eagerly adopted the VMware Integrated OpenStack solution. “Developers love it because it works,” explains Berisha. “They have come to see IT as an enabler rather than a roadblock to progress. It’s been a very good thing. We’re acting more like a software startup than a traditional financial firm. It also helps us attract talent.”

The solution allows HedgeServ developers to take advantage of vendor-neutral APIs, with 100 percent uptime, giving them a familiar and flexible coding environment for maximum productivity. “VMware Integrated OpenStack gives us tremendous flexibility and enables us to change as needed much quicker,” says Berisha. “We can choose any cloud management control tools, and we can leverage the same automation for all cloud platforms.”

Furthermore, HedgeServ CIO David Blodgett, says, “VIO expands the use case for private-cloud workloads beyond those that are cloud native or more generally cloud capable such as those that are horizontally scalable and stateless. The High Availability features intrinsic to VMware allow legacy workloads—workloads that would normally be relegated to manual corners of the datacenter—to be folded into the automation framework centered by OpenStack. This enables a single orchestration framework over having two separate management models—one for cloud-capable workloads, and another for legacy systems.” With a single point of contact for support at VMware, a team of two IT professionals at HedgeServ can efficiently manage the solution part time, without the need for outside consultants or expensive managed services.

Looking Ahead

Berisha is currently considering investing in Database-as-a-Service, continuing to focus on making HedgeServ’s platform more of an enabler rather than a speed bump, for faster development cycles. He’s also looking into containers and new microkernels as a possible next step in making it easier and faster for the company to manage and deploy code.

