



Alight Removes Roadblocks for App Innovation with VMware Tanzu Spring

[Alight](#) is a leading cloud-based human capital and technology-enabled services provider for many of the world's largest organizations. Through the administration of employee benefits, Alight powers confident health, wealth, leaves and wellbeing decisions for 35 million people and dependents.

Industry

Business Services

VMware footprint

- VMware Tanzu® Spring Essentials

Alight needed to speed the delivery of new HR application features for its 4,300 corporate clients—and that meant shifting away from monolithic software architectures that slowed rollouts and updates. Adopting VMware Tanzu Spring Essentials, a leading Java framework with exclusive Spring features and enterprise support from Broadcom, Alight modernized its applications and development processes, gaining tools to quickly deliver innovative features to millions of end users. With dozens of new enhancements introduced in the past year, Alight is setting a higher standard for employer-employee benefits and experiences that support evolving workforce needs while boosting utilization and outcomes.

Providing a competitive advantage and improving employee experiences

Even for industry-leading businesses, successfully recruiting and retaining the best talent can be challenging. In a competitive environment, the caliber of employee experience can make the difference between employee satisfaction or attrition. Alight gives companies an edge on the competition, making it simpler for employees to navigate and access a full range of employer benefits—from healthcare and well-being services to personal leave and retirement savings management.

With the goal of providing an integrated benefits experience with personalized recommendations, Alight built an AI-powered cloud platform called Alight Worklife. This platform and other Alight services are trusted by many of the world's most prominent businesses. Around 70% of Fortune 100 companies and half of the Fortune 500 have partnered with Alight to attract top employees and maintain a healthy and financially secure workforce while controlling costs.

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Struggling to upgrade monolithic applications

Alight Worklife was designed to empower employees, letting them easily access and manage all their benefits through a single interface. Behind the scenes, the Alight team continuously enhances the platform, augmenting AI-powered personalization capabilities, simplifying healthcare payment processes and enabling employers to expand benefits information.

Unfortunately, routine maintenance work slowed the delivery of feature updates. Alight had a monolithic application that was quite difficult to maintain, explains Chris Roberts, vice president of enterprise architecture and IT solutions, Alight. Developers had struggled for some time to upgrade the application. “We needed a platform that could help us simplify upgrades so we could deliver enhancements that our customers—and their employees—really want,” says Roberts.

Cutting upgrade time by 70% and freeing developers to focus on innovation

To modernize the Worklife platform and other apps, the Alight team selected Spring, a Java framework that streamlines programming, and invested in the enterprise capabilities for VMware Tanzu Spring through VMware Tanzu Spring Essentials. Using VMware Tanzu Spring Essentials, the Alight team refactored their monolith into a microservices architecture, preparing them for faster upgrades. With VMware Tanzu Spring [Application Advisor](#),

Alight developers can automate various processes including Spring upgrades and testing, significantly reducing the time and resources required for application maintenance.

“Even after we had implemented Tanzu Spring and modernized our applications, the upgrade burden was still significant. It still took time to upgrade frameworks and retest components,” says Roberts. “Application Advisor shortened application development time to speed up the process.”

The team uses Spring Boot, a Spring framework extension, to further simplify development by providing pre-configured dependencies, autoconfiguration, monitoring and additional capabilities. “We had adopted wholesale platforms in the past and found they were difficult to maintain and to drive forward,” says Roberts. “We chose Spring because we saw that it would enable us to create a very compartmentalized and capable environment.”

Accelerating Spring application upgrades had a direct impact on innovation. “Since we started using Application Advisor, we’ve seen a 70% reduction in engineering time tied to upgrades,” says Roberts. “Now we can focus more of our time and resources on the delivery of new value-added features for our customers.”

Alight also relies on Spring experts from the Tanzu team at Broadcom to make the most of Spring. “The Tanzu team helped us scale our environment for serverless components and streamlined the implementation of Application Advisor,” says Roberts. Tanzu’s Spring experts also run biweekly office hour sessions and workshops for the development team, giving Alight’s developers greater confidence in using Spring for application delivery.

Roberts says, “With the Tanzu team, we’ve been able to achieve goals that would have been much more difficult to accomplish on our own.”

The work with Broadcom has led to measurable improvements in app maintenance, lengthening the cycles between upgrades because of the enterprise support included with VMware Tanzu Spring Essentials. “We were conducting upgrades every six months, but now we can do it every year or two,” says Roberts. “It’s another time-saving benefit that lets us work on new capabilities.”



Exploring more tools for delivering engaging features

Moving forward, the Alight team plans to dive deeper into the Spring ecosystem to further enhance the Alight Worklife platform and other important products and business applications. And because Worklife uses AI to provide personalized recommendations, the Alight team is eager to use Spring AI to integrate AI models, adding additional functionality to Java/Spring applications.

“We believe VMware Tanzu Spring will give us lots of new options for delivering engaging features that elevate employer and employee experiences,” says Roberts.

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