Hong Kong Jockey Club uses automation to deliver competitive digital services faster

The Hong Kong Jockey Club
RIDING HIGH TOGETHER

Software and services

Red Hat® Ansible®
Automation Platform

Red Hat Consulting

Red Hat Training

Founded in 1884, The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) is a reputable racing club that acts continuously for the betterment of the community in Hong Kong. To stay competitive, the organization sought to deliver innovative digital services to customers faster. By automating provisioning and other routine development processes with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform, HKJC reduced service delivery times and improved team collaboration. It also established a reputation for innovative work with enterprise open source technology, helping attract and retain technology talent.

Hong Kong, China ●

Headquarters

Nonprofit

More than **20,000** employees

Benefits

▸ Reduced provisioning
  time from weeks to days
  to deliver new digital
  services faster

▸ Improved team insight into
  project strategy and status

▸ Improved talent
  attraction and retention

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Systems & DevOps Manager,
Hong Kong Jockey Club

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Neil Whiteing
Director of IT Operations,
Systems Assurance & Shenzhen
Technology Center,
Hong Kong Jockey Club

Creating competitive digital experiences to support community needs

The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) organizes and hosts premier horse racing events and operates the territory's licensed gambling and lottery, with profits supporting local charities. In 2020-2021, the Club returned a total of HK$29.4 billion to the community.

HKJC is increasingly focused on delivering digital services to extend its content and support its commercial divisions. Up to 60,000 fans may attend live race meetings, and many more engage the organization through retail outlets, its mobile application, and its website. To respond to growing digital competition, HKJC sought to develop and deploy new applications faster and shift resources from engineering and operations to service innovation.

"Because all of our profits go to charity, it's important to the community that we don't give customers a reason to spend their money elsewhere," said Ruby Li, Systems & DevOps Manager, Hong Kong Jockey Club. "The key to helping our teams move faster and deliver the experiences customers want is automating our infrastructure functions."

Automating infrastructure processes with Red Hat's user-friendly platform

After researching options, HKJC chose Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform to support its infrastructure automation journey. Ansible Automation Platform is an agentless solution that lets HKJC's teams create playbooks for automating routine infrastructure management and operations tasks.

"With its visual dashboard and library of certified content, Ansible Automation Platform offered the simplest, most intuitive option for our engineering team, compared to competing solutions," said Ruby. "Red Hat was seen as the only viable vendor to provide both the technology and services we needed. We tried the community version of Ansible, but we cannot spend too much time learning by ourselves. We need enterprise support."

HKJC worked closely with Red Hat Consulting for implementation guidance, identifying 280 new workflows that could be more standardized and documented better using automation—such as server, storage, or virtual machine (VM) provisioning, firewall configuration, and database patch management. The organization also engaged Red Hat Training for instructor-led courses to help its teams learn best practices for automation at scale.

"Digital transformation is a core initiative for us, and IT efficiency and enterprise-wide collaboration are key to moving forward in that journey," said Neil Whiteing, Director of IT Operations, Systems Assurance & Shenzhen Technology Center, Hong Kong Jockey Club. "Working with Red Hat has helped enhance and automate IT operations while improving cross-team communication, so we can focus on building an innovative customer experience."

Delivering innovative services at the pace business demands

Accelerated development processes for faster digital service creation

HKJC has used automation to speed development processes through more efficient provisioning, with plans to create a self-service portal for further improvements.

"In our tests, provisioning virtual environments for developers now takes less than three days. Previously, this task would have taken at least two weeks," said Ruby. "We used to have an engineer working full-time on each of these requests, but now that this routine work is automated, they can focus on valuable work like solving complex issues, streamlining processes, and new technology."

Additionally, the human-readable YAML language used by Ansible Automation Platform combined with a visual dashboard, analytics capabilities, and a library of certified content helps HKJC's developers work more efficiently.

"Users can centralize and control their infrastructure with the easy-to-use Ansible language, so we spend less time on deployment and more time on development," said Ruby.

As a result, HKJC can deliver the new, digital services that are key to reaching new customers—and creating a competitive advantage. For example, the new GoalX app allows users to watch live sports, make bets, and transfer funds via a biometric login.

Established strategy and best practices for automation success

HKJC uses automation playbooks created with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform to adopt and scale automation at its own pace, based on business priorities and technical capabilities.

"Automation helps us create more clear service level agreements," said Ruby. "Before, our teams did not necessarily understand what others were working on—or their role in the strategic reasons for projects. Now, for the first time, our teams have insight into the different stages of a project to form a better understanding of the collective responsibility. With that knowledge, we are more confident in our ability to deliver what the business needs, when they need it."

Enhanced culture of innovation to attract and retain talent

The beginnings of a long-term digital transformation at HKJC have established not only support for agile infrastructure but also greater individual flexibility by automating routine manual tasks. Additionally, Red Hat training courses on network automation and combining Linux® with Ansible Automation Platform have helped HKJC's in-house teams make the most of this new, more efficient work approach.

The opportunity to focus on more valuable, engaging, and innovative work—and take advantage of training opportunities—is already helping to position HKJC as a modern, progressive workplace where technology experts can grow and succeed.

"No one enjoys repetitive, low-value tasks. We want our engineers to become developers, to learn new skills, to lead the business forward and to get the most out of their careers," said Ruby. "Automating less complex, routine work with Ansible Automation Platform helps us support our teams and in turn attract new, highly skilled people to continue innovating."

Expanding automation success to new business opportunities

Diversification has been a key part of HKJC's business strategy, and the organization plans to extend the service improvements from automation to new or expanding business lines.

"The project with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform has brought structure to our automation plans," said Ruby. "Using this supported enterprise solution, we can move forward with innovation faster, but with less risk."

About Hong Kong Jockey Club

Founded in 1884, The Hong Kong Jockey Club is a world-class racing club that acts continuously for the betterment of community in Hong Kong. The Club has a unique integrated business model, comprising racing and racecourse entertainment, a membership club, responsible sports wagering and lottery, and charities and community contribution. Through this model, the Club generates economic and social value for the community and supports the Government in combatting illegal gambling. In 2020-2021, the Club returned a total of HK$29.4 billion to the community. The Club is Hong Kong's largest single taxpayer and one of the city's major employers. Its Charities Trust is also one of the world's top ten charity donors. The Club is always "riding high together for a better future" with the people of Hong Kong. https://www.hkjc.com/

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.

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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