

AIA Group delivers services faster with automated IT provisioning



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The AIA Group, Asia's largest insurance provider, sought to modernize its business approach by migrating 90% of its workloads to the cloud. To support this goal, AIA used Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform to eliminate manual provisioning and configuration processes while improving security and compliance. As a result, the company has reduced its service time to market by cutting provisioning times from more than 90 days to close to 1 hour. Now, its IT teams can take advantage of self service to create development environments and contribute to the creation of new, innovative services.



Financial services

More than **23,000** employees
in **18** markets

Benefits

- ▶ Improved service time to market by reducing provisioning time from 90 days to 1 hour
- ▶ Improved development security and compliance while sourcing new ideas
- ▶ Migrated 50% of IT infrastructure to the cloud in just 18 months

“Instead of a proprietary language, Red Hat uses a standard, easy-to-read scripting language that would make it easier for current and new staff to align for better consistency.”

Vikas Bhandari

Director, Group Engineering and Delivery,
Cloud & Infrastructure, AIA

“It is essentially a provision-on-demand model, which is quick, simple, and removes the angst people had associated with the previous manual processes. That enables us to get infrastructure out of the way so users can kick off new projects without delay.”

Vikas Bhandari

Director, Group Engineering and Delivery,
Cloud & Infrastructure, AIA

Supporting a cloud-first business strategy

AIA Group Limited is the largest independent, publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group, with a range of products and services including life insurance, accident and health insurance, and savings plans.

With the company’s on-premise IT infrastructure, provisioning a new service environment required up to 6 months of lead time and manual completion of complicated spreadsheets. To speed development and delivery, AIA decided to initiate a cloud-first IT strategy, with a goal of migrating 90% of workloads to the cloud within 3 years.

“We set our focus on three distinct pillars: technology, digital services, and analytics,” said Marcel Malan, head of Group IT Operations, AIA. “We saw cloud as not just nice to have, but essential to scale our business in the face of new demands, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.”

After reducing provisioning time to 40 days with its new cloud-first approach, AIA next started evaluating how to modernize the manual steps involved with automation. “Development still required significant time spent on completing forms manually,” said Vikas Bhandari, Director, Group Engineering and Delivery, Cloud & Infrastructure, AIA. “Even with a lot of guidance, we saw a lot of errors in those forms as well. So we began looking at how we could automate the entire process, to make it faster and easier for our developers to request, receive, and start using environments to build and enhance our services.”

Building human-readable, self-service automation capabilities with Red Hat

After evaluating several automation solutions, AIA decided to standardize on Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform.

“We run Red Hat Enterprise Linux on Microsoft Azure as part of our cloud infrastructure, so we had experience working with Red Hat technology and their teams,” said Vikas. “Ansible Automation Platform met our technical specifications and benchmarking requirements and offered local support. Additionally, instead of a proprietary language, Red Hat uses a standard, easy-to-read scripting language that would make it easier for current and new staff to align for better consistency.”

Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform is an enterprise open source solution for easy-to-use automation at scale and across environments. The agentless Ansible technology is ideal for complex deployments and repetitive tasks. Its simple, human-readable language, in the form of Ansible Playbooks, lets teams across an organization share, vet, and manage automation content.

AIA worked closely with Red Hat Consulting over 7 months to implement the automation platform, including setting up integration with its ServiceNow request tool and building several self-service catalogs. With 5,100 managed nodes, AIA’s deployment is now the largest Ansible Automation Platform site in Hong Kong.

“The implementation was complex, but support from Red Hat, ServiceNow, and our security vendor helped us ensure everything was successfully integrated across 18 countries and many various entities in just 2 months,” said Vikas.

Delivering innovative services to customers faster

Reduced service time to market with faster, self-service provisioning

By using Ansible Automation Platform to automate the manual, spreadsheet-based provisioning process, AIA's international business group can more easily create new environments in its Azure cloud to develop, test, and deliver services to market faster. The entire provisioning process now takes just 1 hour, compared to more than 3 months with the previous approach. As a result, AIA's teams can now focus on higher-value, more strategic tasks.

"We now have an on-demand model with Red Hat and ServiceNow, where people no longer need to worry about the underlying infrastructure and can instead begin work on new, innovative projects without delay," said Vikas. "Ultimately, that means AIA's customer get a more responsive, tailored experience."

Improved development security and compliance while sourcing new ideas

Instead of allowing various teams to use shadow IT solutions without appropriate visibility, standardizing on a single, easy-to-manage automation technology has helped AIA improve the security and compliance of its development infrastructure and environments. Ansible Automation Platform helps AIA align with corporate governance and compliance measures to reduce risk from human error and other threats.

The group has now opened its sandbox environments to more non-IT employees to explore potential new projects and services. "We have seen a lot more innovation without risking our production applications or creating security vulnerabilities from inexperienced technology users," said Vikas. "That means we can find and incorporate innovation from unexpected sources to get a fresh perspective on how we can build more compelling, competitive services."

Achieved cloud migration of 50% of infrastructure in just 18 months

AIA is already making significant progress towards its goal to ultimately migrate all of its legacy on-premise infrastructure to its new cloud environment. In just 18 months, the company has expanded its cloud footprint from fewer than 800 workloads to more than 4,000 workloads, deployed across 3 public clouds.

"With our Cloud-First Programme, we've rapidly modernized our applications by shifting them to the cloud to support more responsive business growth and innovation," said Vikas. "In turn, we've been able to learn from Red Hat's experts to expand our organizational knowledge and skills as we increase this work."

Expanding automation to support cloud-first strategy at scale

"As we focus on the three pillars as part of our cloud-first strategy, our ultimate aim is to completely replace and modernize our legacy infrastructure," said Marcel. "That work requires not just dedication across the business, but also ongoing support from Red Hat to continue optimizing our automation approach as we evolve and grow."

About AIA

Founded in 1919, AIA Group comprises the largest independent, publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group, with a presence in 18 markets. It is a market leader in Asia (ex-Japan) based on life insurance premiums and holds leading positions across the majority of its markets. It had total assets of US\$330 billion as of June 30, 2021. AIA meets the long-term savings and protection needs of individuals by offering a range of products and services including life insurance, accident and health insurance and savings plans. <https://www.aia.com/en/index.html>



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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.

f facebook.com/redhatinc
t @RedHat
in linkedin.com/company/red-hat

North America
1 888 REDHAT1
www.redhat.com

**Europe, Middle East,
and Africa**
00800 7334 2835
europe@redhat.com

Asia Pacific
+65 6490 4200
apac@redhat.com

Latin America
+54 11 4329 7300
info-latam@redhat.com