# COX AUTOMOTIVE DRIVES ON-TIME DELIVERY OF I.T. RESOURCES WITH RED HAT

Cox Automotive needed to continue quickly provisioning IT resources to internal customers across its 25+ companies, and retain its competitive edge. Red Hat is the engine that keeps this innovative company moving.

SOFTWARE AND SERVICES

Red Hat® CloudForms

Red Hat Enterprise Linux®

Red Hat Gluster Storage

Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization

● Atlanta, Georgia

HEADQUARTERS
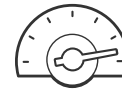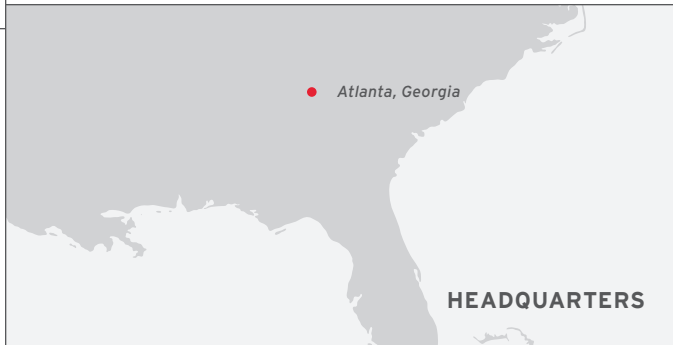
AUTOMOTIVE

30,000 EMPLOYEES

BENEFITS

• Product development agility

• IT security

• Customer satisfaction

"*We analyzed the numbers and realized with Red Hat we saved almost 10 years of time and almost $5 million in soft savings.*"

JASON CORNELL
MANAGER OF CLOUD AND INFRASTRUCTURE AUTOMATION,
COX AUTOMOTIVE

CHALLENGE: SELF-SERVE STATION TO SPEED DELIVERY OF I.T. RESOURCES

Car sales have come a long way from showrooms and classified ads to the digital channels that now connect buyers and sellers. Cox Automotive has been at the forefront of this transformation. By developing new digital solutions and taking existing companies online — including Autotrader and Kelley Blue Book — Cox Automotive has made it easier to buy or sell a car. More than two-thirds of U.S. car buyers have used a Cox Automotive company.

Maintaining this market position requires constant innovation, and Cox Automotive companies are continuously developing new products that give buyers and sellers what they want, faster. But the increasing requests for technology help were straining Cox Automotive's system and slowing development. Cox Automotive operates 25+ companies, all creating new products and competing for technology resources.

"Our internal customers would contact our help desk and submit a request, then maybe three weeks later — depending on what was happening with other projects — they would get their service delivered," said Jason Cornell, Cox Automotive's manager of cloud and infrastructure automation. "We wanted a self-serve portal that allowed the end user to request what they need and get it in 15 minutes."

SOLUTION: INFRASTRUCTURE-AS-A-SERVICE WITH RED HAT CLOUDFORMS

Cox Automotive chose Red Hat CloudForms to manage its infrastructure in the cloud and deliver self-service access. The decision was based on Red Hat's demonstrated innovation and their long relationship with Cox.

Using Red Hat CloudForms, a management platform for cloud infrastructures, Cox Automotive employees can now view the entire technology environment on one dashboard. The easy-access self-service portal allows any employee — including developers, enterprise architects, and QA specialists — to provision his or her technology resources and develop new products for customers. For instance, the QA team can quickly spin up 100 systems to test a new browser. The platform also provides push-button Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), which Cox Automotive has already implemented across a number of business units.

"CloudForms is a Swiss Army knife," said Cornell. "You can do many different things in the IT environment with it. It provides insight and gathers intelligence across our infrastructure." For example, the CloudForms dashboard provides granular metrics across all systems, reporting on factors including CPU and RAM usage and server capacity.

SOLUTION: A BIG DATA INITIATIVE TO MERGE MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES

Cox Automotive is currently partnering with Red Hat to combine several sources of data and mine information not otherwise visible. This will help Cox Automotive serve customers with information that is most relevant to them.

"One of the benefits of a big data infrastructure is the ability to view interactions between our websites and customers, so we learn more about what they're looking for," Jeff Ward, senior manager at Cox Automotive, explains. "Having all of this data in one location gives us the ability to enable data discovery and rapid analysis in ways that were not possible before."

Cox Automotive built an Apache Hadoop infrastructure on a Red Hat Enterprise Linux platform that uses data from multiple Cox companies. Red Hat Gluster Storage, an open software-defined file storage system for big data, and Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization, a server and desktop solution, are other components utilized as part of the Hadoop strategy.

"Combining these products from Red Hat is essential for the success we have experienced with our big data infrastructure."

BENEFITS: SPEED, SECURITY, SATISFACTION

DEVELOPMENT AGILITY

Red Hat CloudForms helps the Cox Automotive business units develop products faster. Where these units previously waited up to three weeks before getting the technology resources they needed, individual employees now get them in 15 to 20 minutes. That saves time, enhances productivity, and puts new tools quickly into the hands of consumers.

CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION

With the ability to develop more products in less time came the need to manage this influx of provisioning activity. For example, allowing more workers to provision their own resources on demand increases the possibility of making mistakes in the process, which could result in capacity support issues. To prevent this, Red Hat CloudForms delivers role-based access control that puts workflows and guardrails in place and requires a second or third set of eyes before approval is granted to prevent overprovisioning.

HAPPY CUSTOMERS

"As consumers want things faster, we have to ensure that we're operating faster, but also that the quality of service is much greater," said Gus Bengochea, senior director of enterprise services at Cox Automotive. "If our site is not behaving correctly, those consumers are going to go somewhere else." Red Hat CloudForms provides both speed of delivery and product integrity. "Teams that are building our sites can rapidly deploy new features and make sure the quality of those features is extremely high," said Bengochea.

RESULTS: TIME AND COST SAVINGS

Time is money, and Red Hat has helped Cox Automotive achieve significant savings.

"We analyzed the numbers to see what resources we deployed and how much time it took, and we realized we saved almost 10 years of time spent waiting for resources to be delivered and almost $5 million in soft savings," Cornell says.

Red Hat CloudForms frees Cox Automotive technology workers to pursue strategic initiatives rather than mundane tasks. And it delivers a better customer experience by allowing Cox Automotive companies nationwide to combine the components of the car-buying process – from online research to comparison shopping and buying.

"It's important to have a company like Red Hat that's working toward the same goals we are, understands our business and what we're trying to accomplish, and understands our infrastructure," Cornell says. "As the market continues to change and new technologies are released, we'll continue to change as well, and Red Hat will be an important partner with us on that journey."

ABOUT COX AUTOMOTIVE

Cox Automotive is a leader in vehicle remarketing services, digital marketing and software solutions for car dealers and consumers. The Atlanta-based company includes subsidiaries Manheim, Autotrader, Kelley Blue Book, vAuto, as well as other global businesses and brands. Cox partners with more than 40,000 dealers, as well as most major auto manufacturers, and touches two-thirds of car buyers in the United States via its brands, which provide an end-to-end solution for buying and selling.

ABOUT RED HAT
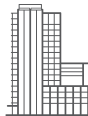
Red Hat is the world's leading provider of open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to reliable and high-performing cloud, Linux, middleware, storage, and virtualization technologies. Red Hat also offers award-winning support, training, and consulting services. As a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and open source communities, Red Hat helps create relevant, innovative technologies that liberate resources for growth and prepare customers for the future of IT.

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