

WORKING ON THE RAILROAD

Railinc helps North American freight rail industry operate more efficiently



SOFTWARE AND SERVICES

Red Hat® JBoss® BPM Suite

Railinc Corp. provides innovative Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and Data-as-a-Service (DaaS) solutions to the North American freight rail industry. The company supports business processes and provides business intelligence that help railroads and rail equipment owners increase productivity, achieve operational efficiency, and keep assets moving. The complexity of managing the business rules and processes that support Railinc's applications reduced the company's agility and increased response times to customer requests. To provide more value to its customers, Railinc decided to modernize its business rules and process workflows with Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite. As a result, Railinc increased business agility, improved process efficiency, and reduced operational costs.



TRANSPORTATION

285 EMPLOYEES

"Open source technologies help support Railinc's culture of innovation. They give our developers maximum flexibility to create solutions for the freight rail industry, and they cost less than other, more rigid technologies."

JEANINE BRADLEY
SR. MANAGER OF RULES AND PROCESS MANAGEMENT
RAILINC

BENEFITS

- Simplified process of understanding, developing, and managing applications by enabling seamless knowledge transfer between developers, business analysts, and customers.
- Projected to reduce business rules and process application errors and time to resolution by 34%.
- Projected to reduce initial development costs by 13%, business rules change costs by 41%, and workflow change costs by 28%.



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“Our mindset goes beyond just writing code. We want to consult with our customers to develop solutions that meet their needs. Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite helps make that possible.”

JERRY VAUGHN
DIRECTOR OF INTERLINE SERVICES
RAILINC

IMPROVING BUSINESS AGILITY TO KEEP UP WITH RAILROAD INDUSTRY NEEDS

Railinc is the railroad industry's resource for innovative, reliable IT and information services. The company's applications and services are embedded in critical operations and financial systems throughout the industry, supporting everything from railcar repair to equipment health monitoring to financial settlements among railroads.

The North American freight rail industry depends on specific business logic to ensure the proper movement, interchange, monitoring, and repair of more than 1.5 million railcars across a 217,000-mile rail network. This business logic—often expressed as rules and processes—has traditionally been buried in code in Railinc's applications, making it difficult to respond quickly to customer questions or requests, update applications, or share knowledge across the company.

To keep up with industry needs, Railinc needed to increase its agility by enabling seamless knowledge transfer among its developers, business analysts, and customers. To achieve this goal, Railinc launched the Rules and Process Modernization (RPM) program, a five-year, enterprise-wide effort to modernize business rules and process management for the company's applications and systems.

“Nearly half of our project development activities involve the implementation of business rules and processes,” said Jeanine Bradley, senior manager of rules and process management at Railinc. “We wanted to manage the life cycle of the rules and process capabilities within our applications to create value through improved quality, increased productivity, and greater speed and innovation.”

RED HAT JBOSS BPM SUITE ENABLES A MORE CONSULTATIVE APPROACH

As the foundation for the RPM program, Railinc chose Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite, based on its flexibility and cost-effectiveness, as well as Railinc's existing relationship with Red Hat's consulting, sales, and support teams. Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite provides key capabilities, including the flexibility of open source, which prevents vendor lock-in and promotes innovation for both technical and business teams.

In addition, Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite was implemented to help improve internal understanding of Railinc's applications, making it easier for employees to manage, develop, and understand the company's applications and systems and provide improved customer support.

These capabilities enable a more consultative approach and help Railinc deliver the business results customers expect.

“Open source technologies help to support Railinc's culture of innovation,” said Bradley. “They give our developers maximum flexibility to create solutions for the freight rail industry, and they cost less than other, more rigid technologies.”

RED HAT SOLUTION HELPS IMPROVE WORKFLOWS AND COLLABORATION INCREASED AGILITY

Before, researching answers to customer questions would take significant time and resources. Now, Railinc can research and respond to customer questions faster. For example, a customer wanted to know if individual railcars were qualified to carry a specific commodity and provided the commodity specifications. Railinc documented these specifications in the business rules engine, then ran the rules against its comprehensive North American railcar database to instantly generate a list of which railcars could or could not transport the commodity. As a result, the customer could take action based on the inquiry in record time and keep their freight cars—and their business—moving.

Externalizing the business processes and rules that support Railinc systems creates greater transparency around products and makes it easier to provide maintenance. With greater visibility into applications, developers, business analysts, product support specialists, and others can quickly correct issues and make changes to incorporate industry rules and better align product functionality with rail operations.

“Extracting the business rules and processes makes it easier and faster to update applications in response to customer feedback,” said Jerry Vaughn, director of interline services and chair of Railinc’s RPM program steering committee. “It also empowers a broader group of employees to quickly make changes to applications and improve the customer experience.”

IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

Railinc can now extract business rules and processes from application code and rewrite them in plain English to provide developers and business analysts with documented rules and processes they can use to respond to customer requests and make application updates faster.

“Responding quickly to customer requests gives our people more time to focus on their core work of developing innovative solutions for the freight rail industry,” said Vaughn.

Supported by Red Hat technology, Railinc’s RPM program will help staff across the company. At full maturity, product and customer support teams will be able to update applications immediately based on customer feedback. Internal auditors will be able to assess whether Railinc applications are designed in sync with internal RPM standards.

ENHANCED INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

Using the Red Hat solution helps Railinc improve support for the consultative approach that is a key strategy for the company. By extracting and translating business rules and processes and discussing them with customers, Railinc employees develop a more thorough knowledge of the industry and its operations, as well as the role of the company’s applications.

“This broader knowledge helps us do things like identify disconnects between rules and processes in our applications and actual rail operations, ensuring that applications meet customers’ needs,” Bradley said.

ON TRACK FOR CONTINUED INNOVATION

Railinc has now used Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite to modernize business rules and process management for several applications, including one that automates the process for tracking, identifying, and repairing damaged and defective railcars. At the end of the five-year RPM program, Railinc expects to have applied RPM best practices to 30 applications, or about half of its product portfolio.

“Our mindset goes beyond writing code,” said Vaughn said. “We want to consult with our customers to develop solutions that meet their needs. Red Hat JBoss BPM Suite helps make that possible.”

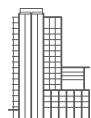


CUSTOMER CASE STUDY Working on the railroad

ABOUT RAILINC

Railinc Corp. is the railroad industry's innovative and reliable source for rail data, IT, and information services. The company deploys data that helps railroads, rail equipment owners, and other industry participants manage their businesses more effectively and efficiently. Railinc is the largest single source of real-time, accurate interline rail data for the North American railroad system. Located in Cary, N.C., Railinc is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Association of American Railroads. For more information, please visit www.railinc.com.

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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