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Why Service Providers Need Open Source Expertise To Drive Customer Success

The 451 Take

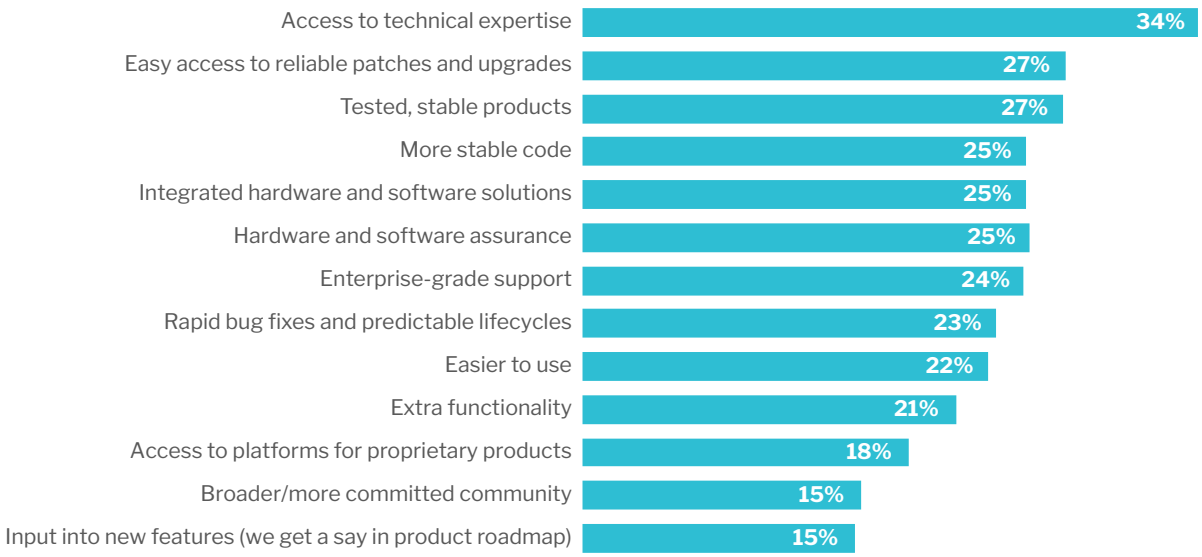
Open source software is behind many aspects of modern cloud environments, from private cloud to containers. Service providers that understand open source software are well-positioned to deliver the best experience across cloud environments and optimize midmarket customer workloads. In order to do so, service providers are leveraging commercial open source technology. According to a survey conducted by 451 Research on behalf of Red Hat, midmarket service providers listed access to technical expertise as the top driver for use of commercial open source technology over community versions.

Expertise Along the Value Chain

Source: 451 Research/Red Hat custom survey

Q: Why do you use commercial open source vs. free?

Base: All respondents (n=1,350)



Through cloud-native applications and DevOps strategies, service providers can leverage open source to move midmarket organizations further along the digital transformation journey and accelerate their ability to serve customers. Service providers with open source expertise are often better equipped to ensure that these environments are secure through patching and upgrades while delivering the stability that is required for midmarket organizations to focus on running their business. Open source software can help organizations scale applications and workloads horizontally while maintaining the appropriate level of permissions and compliance. Customers rely on service providers not only to be trusted advisors, but also to help them find cost efficiencies, provide expertise to expand internal knowledge, and improve performance and security supported by open source software in the cloud. Service providers can deliver this experience to midmarket customers through commercial open source technology, which offers more stable code, verified hardware and software, and enterprise-grade support.

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Business Impact

CORE CLOUD FUNCTIONS LEVERAGE OPEN SOURCE TECHNOLOGY. Modern cloud environments are highly dependent on open source technology. Advanced cloud applications such as containers and microservices require open source software to function effectively. Hybrid cloud leverages open source software across various components, from service provider private clouds to managing microservices. Service providers can provide advice not only about best execution venue in the cloud, but also about choosing the right open source software to manage workloads, VMs, containers, etc. In the 451 Research/Red Hat custom survey, 24% of respondents said they have selected an open source vendor based on a recommendation from their cloud service provider. Service providers leveraging open source technology can handle core functionality to scale, which can drastically improve the digital transformation process.

SERVICE PROVIDERS OFFER TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, ALLOWING ORGANIZATIONS TO FOCUS ON CORE IP. Service providers that maintain partnerships with commercial open source vendors have enhanced access to expertise and can pass that knowledge onto customers. Midmarket organizations may not have the internal skills required to ensure community open source software is stable and secure. According to the 451 Research/Red Hat custom survey, access to technical expertise (34%) is the top reason why organizations use commercial open source over community open source software. With open source software handling standard infrastructure management tasks via automating cloud-native applications and microservices, midmarket organizations can focus their resources on growing and improving their business.

COMMERCIAL OPEN SOURCE OFFERS GREATER ACCESS TO SECURITY CONTROLS. Security is not only among the key drivers of cloud, but it also drives the use of commercial open source software. In the 451 Research/Red Hat custom survey, security was the top factor influencing section of open source software vendor, cited by 43% of respondents, and 27% of respondents said that easier access to patching and upgrades compels them to use commercial open source over community alternatives. Service providers with open source expertise can deliver reliable patches and upgrades while offering hardware and software assurance that gives organizations peace of mind, along with additional managed services and support where needed. Open source allows for unified permissions and standardized security policies. Creating uniform security procedures across a hybrid network can improve overall management and ease of use.

Looking Ahead

Open source software will continue to be critical across hybrid cloud environments and will require specialized knowledge. Service providers with this expertise can provide assurances about security, stability and support to customers. Those with open source knowledge can quickly address internal skills gaps. They can pass along expertise so organizations can focus on core business and innovation and other aspects of digital transformation. Midmarket organizations can maintain a competitive position with larger enterprises if they can effectively leverage the advantages that open source software can bring at scale.