# Ortec Finance supports growth and accelerates time to market

Ortec Finance provides risk & return and wealth management systems for the financial services industry. To ensure its software-as-a-service solutions can be quickly updated to reflect changes in the regulatory landscape, the company decided to migrate to a cloud-native approach. With Microsoft Azure Red Hat® OpenShift®, Ortec Finance can seamlessly move workloads across continents and release new features faster, while safeguarding the quality and security of its solutions.

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**Question:** Tell us about Ortec Finance and the solutions that you provide.

**Tessa Kuijl, Managing Director of Global Wealth Management Operations, Ortec Finance:** Ortec Finance provides software-as-a-service solutions for the financial services industry. I'm in the Global Wealth Solutions team, where we're focused on delivering and supporting the OPAL platform for wealth management. OPAL enables advisers in the bank and wealth management industry to efficiently plan and monitor the financial goals of their clients with realistic insights. OPAL offers projections of how an individual client's investment portfolio will grow, allowing for timely course corrections caused by changes in financial situations, financial markets, or portfolio performance. Our clients need solutions that are easy to use, highly available, offer exceptional security, and integrate seamlessly with their other solutions – that's what we aim to provide with OPAL.

**Question:** What were the business drivers behind moving to a cloud-native approach?

**Milan Seijbel, Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Ortec Finance:** At Ortec Finance, our goal is to double the company's size every 5 years. But to achieve this, we need scalable systems and infrastructure, otherwise we risk technology becoming a limitation rather than a driver for growth. With our global client base faced with increasing regulatory demands, we also have to be able to launch new products and features quickly to keep up to date. At the same time as achieving scalability and speed to market, we must safeguard the quality of our solutions with robust, secure, and automated processes.

In 2019, we recognized that a cloud-native approach could help us with these challenges and started our journey. It's not just about keeping our clients happy though, the success of the company is dependent upon our highly skilled advisers, and they want to work with the latest technologies. As we're not a specialist in infrastructure or security, we realized that we needed a third-party vendor to support our new cloud-native IT strategy.

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**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.

**Question:** Why did you choose Azure Red Hat OpenShift?

**Joris Cramwinckel, Technologist, Ortec Finance:** Azure Red Hat OpenShift is a best-of-breed, open source, cloud-native platform, which is what we were looking for. It's battle-tested with lots of enterprise features and comes with guardrails – exactly what we need when operating in a highly regulated environment. And by leveraging a managed service, we can keep our platform team small. What we particularly liked about Red Hat was the culture of open collaboration – they're smart people and understand our problems.

**Question:** Tell us about the migration.

**Cramwinckel:** We used to run OPAL on private internal clouds that we hosted, built, and maintained ourselves. When it came to the migration, rather than lift and shift our software, we took the opportunity to modernize the application first. This meant OPAL was optimized for the new technology stack before the migration took place.

**Kuijl:** Our clients had to sign off on the Azure Red Hat OpenShift transition, but they were all very supportive. Most have large IT departments and were already transitioning to cloud-native platforms themselves, so they were familiar with the Red Hat/Microsoft solution and quickly understood how it would benefit them with higher security standards and faster delivery.

**Question:** What were the key challenges in adopting a cloud-native approach, and how did you address them?

**Cramwinckel:** The biggest shift with cloud-native is that now engineers have the responsibility of running the software as well as building it. Taking on this end-to-end responsibility has been a big cultural shift for the team. To help them adjust, we run a very intensive onboarding program, where we teach not only the basics of cloud-native and how to operate in Azure Red Hat OpenShift, but also what it takes to run software in a production environment.

Our engineers have been quick to recognize the benefits though. With the Red Hat components, our platform and software engineers can provide everything by code, which is a superpower for them.

**Question:** What key innovations are you working on with the new platform?

**Cramwinckel:** We always want to be better, and we innovate our platform in the same way that we innovate with our products. Last year, we built a framework known as Sailfish using Red Hat components, which allows us to quickly scale up compute demands. We do a lot of number-crunching at Ortec Finance, but it's usually seasonal so our requirements are elastic. We ran an experiment with Sailfish which involved scaling up to 1,500 CPUs – and back again - within 20 minutes. This is extremely powerful.

We're also working on reducing our carbon emissions. We have a large computational footprint, and upcoming regulations require that we can track and report on our carbon emissions across the platforms we use. Kepler (Kubernetes-based Efficient Power Level Exporter) is a project founded by Red Hat's Emerging Technologies group to enable the tracking of workload energy consumption. As well as using Kepler to monitor our emissions, we're also experimenting with moving or postponing workloads, so they run at optimal times when the energy grid is greener. For example, we can take advantage of solar energy when the sun comes up in California or move to hydro-powered energy in Norway. This follow-the-sun approach will potentially reduce our carbon footprint for computation.

**Question:** What benefits have you achieved by going cloud-native with Red Hat?

**Kuijl:** Using the Red Hat platform helps us in several key ways. With the scalability it offers we can support growth as well as temporary peaks. Plus, we can deliver to market faster, enhance productivity, and achieve higher quality standards thanks to greater automation. Having a more modern IT stack also makes us a more appealing place to work for developers, which aids recruitment. This wasn't an initial objective in our technology strategy, but definitely helps!

**Cramwinckel:** With Azure Red Hat OpenShift, we can seamlessly move workloads between continents to meet our clients' regulatory requirements and the platform enables fast disaster recovery times. Should the worst happen, we can duplicate a full production environment and be up and running within four hours.

It also drives innovation – with access to more computational power, we're now working on enhancing our analytical models for the insurance and pension industry with AI. It's one of our core values to continuously innovate – we always want the best available. And Red Hat supports that.

**Question:** What does the future look like?

**Kuijl:** OPAL is the first of 8 systems that we're planning to move to the Red Hat platform in alignment with our IT strategy. Over the next few years, we'll gradually onboard them all. We've documented our learnings and evaluated our processes to establish best practices that will make future migrations faster.

On a business level, we envision further expanding our global growth so we can open additional offices to work with new clients in other regions. Before, we might not have been able to meet the security standards or data sovereignty requirements of those countries or regions, but with Azure Red Hat OpenShift we can. This ability to deliver our solutions to market faster, act on changing demands, and update according to regulatory developments more easily will underpin our growth as a business. It also makes our existing clients happier, which is always a good thing!

**About Ortec Finance**

Ortec Finance is a global provider of solutions for risk and return management in the financial services and real estate industry. Serving more than 600 clients across 20 countries, the company helps its clients enhance investment decision making and manage uncertainty. Headquartered in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, it also has offices in Amsterdam, London, Toronto, Zürich, Melbourne, Singapore, and New York.

**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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