

JAL Digital boosts developer support with Platform Engineering



Industry

IT Consulting Services

Headquarters

Tokyo, Japan

Number of employees

1,096 (end March 2026)

"Red Hat's deep commitment to open source makes it highly attuned to the current state of solutions, consistently offering precise recommendations for the next steps. The partnership is an invaluable source of support."

Daisuke Sako

Specialist
Digital Design Planning
JAL Digital Co., Ltd.

As Japan Airlines' digital arm, JAL Digital (JALDX) launched its Platform Engineering project to reduce the cognitive load on developers and boost productivity. By forming cross-organizational teams and implementing practical training programs from Red Hat Consulting, JALDX is actively fostering the development of autonomous engineers and establishing transformational governance with active management involvement. To achieve a highly scalable system with exceptional flexibility, JALDX adopted Red Hat OpenShift Service on AWS and Red Hat Developer Hub, allowing greater developer support and shorter lead times, as well as a commitment to building a sustainable platform for the future.



Software and services

Red Hat Consulting
Red Hat Developer Hub
Red Hat® OpenShift® Service on AWS

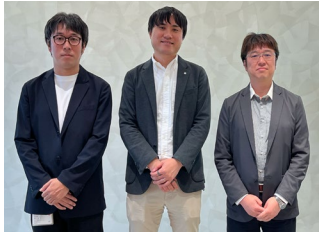
Benefits

- ▶ Equipped the next generation of leaders to work independently
- ▶ Reduced developers' cognitive loads with Red Hat Developer Hub and Red Hat OpenShift Service on AWS
- ▶ Cut time to set up development environment from 165 days to 30 minutes



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.](#)



(from left) Daisuke Sako,
Hideaki Yaze, Hiroyuki Higuchi

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Hideaki Yaze

Professional Engineer
Digital Design Planning
JAL Digital Co., Ltd.

Introducing APIs to build developer efficiency

To ensure stable IT system operations and accelerate digital transformation, Japan Airlines (JAL) merged its Digital Technology Division with JAL Infotec (JIT), the core IT company of the JAL Group. This integration created a unified digital promotion framework, and led to the establishment of JAL Digital (JALDX).

At JALDX, various initiatives are being advanced based on the IT objective to reduce developers' cognitive loads and increase productivity. A key initiative was the standardization of application programming interfaces (APIs) aimed at increasing development efficiency and quality, simplifying operations and maintenance, and strengthening resilience. However, despite the introduction of an API management platform, APIs did not gain the expected traction within JALDX's development teams.

"Even though we built the platform to reduce burdens, and encouraged its use, most developers saw it as an additional workload," said Daisuke Sako, Specialist, Digital Design Planning at JALDX. "There are over 100 shared platforms within the company, so the API platform was perceived as just one of many."

Hideaki Yaze, a professional engineer in the same group who worked alongside Sako on the overall platform design, said: "No matter how great the functionality we build, if we don't consider ease of use and deliver accordingly, it's nothing more than a pipe dream. And this has happened to us countless times."

Re-evaluating challenges from a holistic perspective

According to Hiroyuki Higuchi, Director of the Digital Applied Development in JALDX's Digital Delivery Department, responsible for technology strategy and one of the members involved in promoting API development, there has long been a movement to generalize and standardize the developer platform.

"But the challenges are overwhelming," he said. "With issues ranging from increasing quality and security, and accelerating development to supporting developers and standardizing PC environments, it's difficult to figure out how best to proceed or even where to start. Balancing priorities and narrowing the focus is a constant challenge."

Following the failure to establish API standardization, the development promotion team revisited the issues. It concluded that it was necessary to comprehensively reassess challenges across the entire company—not just focusing on developers, engineers, and programmers—and implement countermeasures accordingly.

"Of course, the challenges are diverse, but we also recognized that our perspective had been too narrow," said Sako. "Keeping the benefits for all employees in mind, we aimed to create an environment that continuously reduces workloads and increases productivity. Our first step was to build that foundation. We then shifted our approach to place Platform Engineering at the core, starting with small improvements like APIs as part of the bigger picture."

As it advanced its Platform Engineering project, the development promotion team chose Red Hat as its partner, appreciating Red Hat's globally neutral perspective—in open source principles and technology collaboration—and phased, long-term solutions.

"It's important to tackle immediate challenges, but solutions that just relieve symptoms are not our ultimate goal," said Yaze. "Our objective is to build a sustainable, versatile platform that can be smoothly handed over to the next generation. For that, Red Hat—with its context-aware approach—is the ideal partner."

"Platform Engineering is almost its own culture. At its core, it reflects the unique characteristics of each company, and corporate culture is built up by the involvement of every employee. It cannot be imposed from outside or from the top down."

Hiroyuki Higuchi

Director
Digital Applied Development
Digital Delivery Department
JAL Digital Co., Ltd.

Approaching platform engineering with a long-term vision

Equipped the next generation of leaders to work independently

To expand Platform Engineering activities company-wide, the promotion team recruited members across organizational boundaries. Even within application development, processes differ significantly between areas such as operations, maintenance, cargo, and passenger services, creating a tendency toward isolated workflows. Cross-organizational teams are essential to minimize these gaps.

"Platform Engineering is almost its own culture," said Higuchi. "The management cannot mandate a culture from above; a culture thrives only when every employee truly feels ownership and brings his unique perspectives to the table. Our role as leaders isn't to impose solutions from the top down, but to create a collaborative space where our young engineers can naturally understand each other's challenges, and work together toward common goals."

Accordingly, JALDX has launched training programs for young employees in partnership with Red Hat to nurture the next generation of leaders. Based on a detailed analysis of business needs and skill gaps, Red Hat Consulting designed the training using a hands-on approach. The defining feature of this approach was the introduction of "Real-Time Learning with Guidance," in which participants acquired technical skills while solving actual business challenges.

"At first, we ran a trial with a few early career associates, and the response was extremely positive," said Sako. "Knowledge gaps decreased, and staff acquired accurate product knowledge. We saw a significant shift in mindset, with participants genuinely enjoying their growth. That's why we continue to offer Red Hat training."

Red Hat's training programs, covering domains such as "Enterprise Agile," "Outcome Delivery," "Platform Engineering," and "Next Generation Leadership Development," combined knowledge acquisition training with coaching that supported practitioners and encouraged their adoption, ensuring that practical skills steadily permeated the workplace.

Reduced developers' cognitive loads with Red Hat Developer Hub and Red Hat OpenShift Service on AWS

The Platform Engineering promotion team prioritizes flexible, transparent, and stable solutions with high degrees of freedom in pursuit of a sustainable platform.

"I'm also involved in IT-BCP, and considering the rapidly changing global landscape and accelerating advances in technology, risk control when selecting solutions is becoming increasingly critical," said Yaze. "Building a system that doesn't rely on any single thing is the best approach."

With open source software, JALDX avoids vendor lock in and black-box scenarios, allowing flexible customization and the acquisition of versatile technical skills. JALDX introduced Red Hat OpenShift Service on AWS and used Red Hat Developer Hub on the platform to standardize development processes and promote self-service, thereby reducing developers' cognitive loads.

"In cloud-native development, container platforms are indispensable," said Sako. "Red Hat OpenShift stands out for its features and stability, and the fact that it's fully managed significantly reduces our operational burden. Plus, Red Hat OpenShift Service on AWS provides a scalable platform that allows new teams to onboard quickly. The ability to shorten development project release times owes much to these Red Hat solutions."

Cut time to set up development environment from 165 days to 30 minutes

Platform Engineering promotion activities have progressed through team building and roadmap creation, and are now in the implementation phase. Through a phased approach involving everything from cross-organizational team formation and training to presentations for management and securing budgets, a clear path to the future has emerged.

“Platform Engineering is transforming development,” said Higuchi. “When I was involved in promoting digital transformation, even if a proof of concept showed promise, moving to production often meant waiting for the next year’s budget, resulting in long lead times. By then, the technology might already be outdated. Thanks to self-service capabilities delivered by Red Hat, ideas can be realized without lengthy delays.”

While tangible results will continue to emerge, the Platform Engineering promotion team currently anticipates reducing lead time to set up development environments from 165 days to 30 minutes, achieving at least 620 million yen in annual cost reductions.

“These are the numbers we can foresee now, but I believe release times can be shortened even further and savings multiplied many times over,” said Sako. “With future initiatives like providing golden paths and automating policies, risks will also be significantly reduced.”

Passing flexible thinking onto the next generation

JALDX is currently consolidating documentation and expanding Platform Engineering to further reduce developers’ cognitive loads and establish golden paths. As company-wide adoption gradually takes hold, efforts toward enterprise architecture governance have also begun alongside Platform Engineering.

“We have started creating the necessary documentation and software templates to optimally align JAL Group’s business strategy with its IT systems,” said Sako, adding that the goal is to establish enterprise architecture governance as a guard that balances growth and resilience for the JAL Group without sacrificing agility.

JALDX is also considering applying Platform Engineering to domestic and international partner companies. “When outsourcing development to partners, including offshore teams, maintaining quality and controlling costs have been challenges,” said Higuchi. “By applying standardized templates through Platform Engineering, these issues can be resolved swiftly, contributing to JALDX’s risk control.”

A dedicated Platform Engineering team called LUX has also been established to act as a “beacon” for future activities. “Platform Engineering is just at the starting line,” said Yaze. “What we’ve built so far is only the beginning, and we are moving forward with a holistic vision. Of course, our current approach isn’t a rigid, absolute answer. As technology advances, we fully expect the next generation team to challenge our choices and steer their own courses as needed. The LUX team is building a culture where open dialogue and taking ownership are becoming second nature, and we have high expectations of what they’ll achieve in the future.”

Reflecting on the progress of Platform Engineering, JALDX’s strategy of building small successes while keeping the big picture in mind is progressing smoothly.

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About JAL Digital

JAL Digital Inc. serves as the JAL Group’s core IT company, developing a wide range of systems that support the safe and stable operation of airline services and significantly enhancing customer experience. While primarily focused on the aviation industry, offering system consulting, packages, and tools, JAL Digital has also been actively creating new value beyond aviation by establishing strategic partnerships with IT companies across Asia.



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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