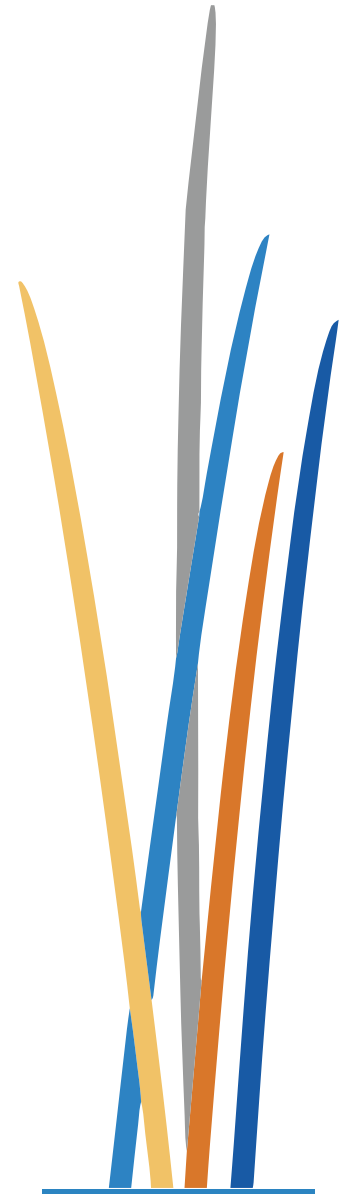


4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVALUATING OPENSIFT CONSULTANTS



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13880 Dulles Corner Lane
Suite 300
Herndon, VA 21071

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1. well, nicely Origin: Swahili

Vizuri is built on proven technologies, but it is our people that set us apart. -Joe Dickman, Founder

(703) 318-7800 Phone
solutions@vizuri.com
vizuri.com

INTRODUCTION

You made a smart choice to move to OpenShift. It allows you to quickly build, develop, and deploy with nearly any infrastructure—public or private. It reduces operational costs, increases organizational efficiency, and improves application performance.

Your next step, though, is harder to figure out: you need to identify a consultant to help make that transition. There is a growing ecosystem with hundreds of options, and unlike the underlying technology you chose, the “performance specs” for each firm aren’t readily available online for comparison. Your decision has substantial implications for the speed, pricing, and quality of the transition. So whom do you choose? And what criteria should you use?

Vizuri wrote this to help guide you. While it would be nice to claim that we have been experts from the start, the fact is that this guide is based on lessons learned as we have matured in our capabilities, worked with large clients, and developed the right processes to back up each engagement. We know containers well: we adopted version 2.0 of OpenShift and were the first Docker Partner and certified training partner.

We would also recommend referencing our blog post on [choosing a JBoss consulting partner](#). As we reflected on our guidance for choosing good OpenShift partners, we came back several times to points that we shared in that post. In the end, as always, you have to do your research and ask the right questions.

So with all that said, here are additional considerations for finding the right OpenShift partner. We hope you find these insights useful.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. PARTNERSHIP STATUS

This may already be on your list of considerations, but it is worth stressing that it is essential to choose a firm that is a Red Hat partner. Red Hat offers partners ongoing training designed to advance their expertise and ensure their capability to deliver on Red Hat technologies.

Red Hat has [three distinct partnership levels](#), and the level of partnership is designed to indicate the level of support, expertise, and demonstrated performance of a firm.

- 1. Ready Partner.** This is the entry-level membership and offers partners access to a variety of resources, tools, and benefits. For example, partners have access to Red Hat sales teams and joint customer calls. Through this affiliation, you will have access to someone who knows how to determine your subscription needs, and they will have access to the Red Hat sales team as needed to help understand the right solution for you.
- 2. Advanced Business Partner.** This is the mid-level membership and offers partners access to additional resources designed to help them build enterprise open source practices and increase revenue. For instance, at this level, partners are assigned a Red Hat solutions architect, have access to product roadmap updates, and have phone support at a “standard support” level. As a result, you get the added benefit of having access to a Red Hat solutions architect who can develop your solution and also keep in mind planned product features that may impact your initiative.
- 3. Premier Business Partner.** This level is reserved for firms that are heavily invested in driving new opportunities and contribute the most to Red Hat’s partner ecosystem. Companies at this tier have more certifications and have demonstrated solutions for clients with notable impact.

2. ACCREDITATIONS

The Red Hat accreditation program provides an independent validation of capabilities, giving you confidence that a firm has the ability to implement your solution. In fact, to qualify as an Advanced or Premier Business Partner, every firm must achieve and maintain accreditation.

At a high-level, an accreditation means the firm’s employees are proven sales specialists, sales engineer specialists, and delivery specialists in a specific area of practice. It also means that their customers vouch for both the quality of past engagements as well as their outcomes.

There are three partner accreditations. Take note of these specific accreditations to make sure they match your needs:

- **Datacenter Infrastructure.** This includes all Red Hat platform, migration, virtualization, and storage solutions.
- **Middleware Solutions.** This includes the Red Hat JBoss Middleware portfolio for use in building and integrating applications, as well as automating business processes.
- **Cloud Infrastructure.** This requires virtualization as a prerequisite and includes the newest Red Hat product offerings supporting Cloud infrastructure and management.

These criteria substantially helps to narrow the list of potential consultants, but they still leave you with a number of options. What criteria can you reliably use next?

3. TANGENTIAL TOOLS AND PRODUCT EXPERIENCE

We suggest that you evaluate for two separate skillsets for OpenShift: infrastructure and application. Our experience has demonstrated that both are important.

Infrastructure Skillsets

Infrastructure focuses on full automation for the installation in environments such as VMWare or AWS, using Ansible and related automation tools.

Infrastructure experts tend to have the following foundational skillsets:

- Fluency in Linux, Apache httpd, DNS, LDAP, PHP, Load Balancing, TCP/IP, Bind, and SMTP
- Familiarity with a scripting language such as Bash, Perl, Python or Ruby
- Experience with high availability infrastructure setups, particularly clustering and load-balanced production RHEL environments
- Experience in virtualization technologies such as KVM, RHEV, VMware or Xen

It is worth noting that an OpenShift implementation should not involve a mere installation and configuration of OpenShift. To be able to fully manage and have visibility into your environment once it is setup, you also need to implement a number of operations tools including monitoring, log aggregation (capable of Elastic, Splunk, SumoLogic), and identity management. As a result, the firm you choose needs to not only have OpenShift product experience but also experience with tangential tools like Ansible, CloudForms, monitoring, log aggregation, and identity management.

Applications Skillsets

Application focuses on full implementation of CI/CD pipelines on the OpenShift platform. This includes the complete pipeline for building the application, packaging it into Docker containers, and deploying it into OpenShift environments.

Application experts are developers that have a strong software development background, and you want them to have the following skillsets:

- Experience with container platforms such as Kubernetes and OpenShift
- Experience building and deploying applications with Docker

To containerize your applications, your selected partner should have experience with your application stack. They should also have experience with CI/CD tools such as Jenkins, Nexus, Git, and Ansible.

4. PAST PERFORMANCE

Some may claim that “past performance is not indicative of future results.” However, the fact is that experience and results are both valuable when selecting the right OpenShift consulting partner. In short, they demonstrate the

technical ability to overcome unique implementation challenges and they give you the benefit of a set of hard-won processes and best practices.

No implementation is ever the same, and be wary of anyone who makes that claim. There are always nuances with teams, individuals, and the environment that can introduce challenges and put a project at risk.

While years of experience can be a useful indicator, we think the most valuable signal of this performance is written documentation on OpenShift implementations.

This can be in the form of a case study to highlight the customer's business needs or challenges, the solution that was implemented, and results. Blogs posts can also be equally as valuable.

You should also ask if you can connect with previous customers of the same size that will vouch for their positive experience with the firm. Case studies can speak to the technical merits or management of a project, but ideally, you will also partner with people that understand your goals and are easy to work with.

We hope that these points will help you as you consider moving towards the Cloud. We would love to hear from you. What resonates most with you? Did we miss anything important?

Please feel free to drop us a note at solutions@vizuri.com.

ABOUT OUR WORK

You may also be interested in one of our standout OpenShift engagements, which has been highlighted as a Red Hat case study.

For LogistiCare, we externalized business processes and rules, providing a new foundation for innovation. We implemented OpenShift on AWS utilizing xPaaS (e.g., BPMS, Fuse), Spring Boot for microservices, and automated infrastructure provisioning using Ansible Tower. We developed CI/CD deployment pipelines using Jenkins and Nexus. We also helped to develop a custom B2B API to Lyft to schedule rides, shorten response times, increase customer satisfaction, and dramatically lower operating costs. [Read the full case study to learn more.](#)

ABOUT VIZURI

Vizuri is the commercial consulting division of AEM Corporation. We transform business through creative software solution, and stand out for our work in four core areas: business rules and process management, Cloud enablement, enterprise integration and messaging, and microservices and containers.

Vizuri designs solutions that pay for themselves. We align and integrate your business processes and strategies with our technologies to develop solutions that show a clear return on investment. With a relentless drive to innovate, we receive frequent awards, speak at industry conferences, publish solutions and strategies, and share code with the open source community.

We have a proud history of “firsts,” including first OpenShift partner (2013), first Docker partner (2014), and first recipient of the Red Hat Partner of Excellence Award in North America (2017). Learn more at vizuri.com.