

F5 Networks builds innovative container service with Red Hat



When application delivery services provider F5 Networks (F5) saw its customers deploying Red Hat software, F5 partnered with Red Hat to build integrations between F5 products, Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform, and Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform. The partnership helps F5 ensure its customers transition smoothly to architectures based on containers and microservices; it also opens the door to nontraditional buyers of F5 services.

Partner resources

Red Hat® Independent Software Vendor (ISV) program

Red Hat technology partner program

Software

Red Hat Enterprise Linux®

Red Hat OpenStack® Platform

Red Hat OpenShift® Container Platform

Red Hat Ansible® Automation Platform



Technology

5,000 employees

Benefits

- Ensured the transition of application policies and security onto next-generation platforms
- Increased awareness internally and opened the door to nontraditional buyers
- Allowed joint customers to quickly find and confidently deploy Red Hat certified Ansible Content Collections

“Red Hat products bring greater efficiency and faster time to value for F5 customers.”

Matt Quill

Senior Strategic Business Development Manager
F5 Networks



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Matt Quill
Senior Strategic Business
Development Manager
F5 Networks

F5 Networks

Headquartered in Seattle, F5 Networks (F5) has been providing services and security to protect enterprise-grade applications for more than 20 years. Its customers span all sectors and include 48 of the Fortune 50 enterprises. The application delivery services company also helps its customers migrate from on-premises deployments to multicloud environments.

Located in 85 offices across 43 countries, its more than 5,800 employees help customers ensure the delivery, performance, and availability of applications. F5's products improve manageability, strengthen security, enhance scalability to control load-balancing, ensure availability, and provide failover.

“Containers and microservices are becoming more important for our customers as they adopt new pricing and new consumption models,” said Matt Quill, Senior Strategic Business Development Manager at F5 Networks. “We’re also seeing an increase in customers’ desire to adopt automation to realize the efficiencies of cloud providers.”

An open and flexible relationship

F5 and Red Hat partner closely to automate, scale, and secure application workloads across multicloud environments. “Our customers were deploying Red Hat software, which generated demand for solutions that integrate Red Hat and F5 products,” said Quill. “The relationship has blossomed over the years.”

F5 and Red Hat first saw a joint opportunity when the two companies were working together on a large OpenStack deployment for a leading North American telco. The project increasingly used Ansible to automate application delivery services, such as identity and access management, web application security and TCP optimization, to ensure they remain fast, secure and available in production environments. As the relationship grew, [F5 became a certified Red Hat Ansible Automation Partner](#).

What started as producing joint go-to-market collateral evolved to F5 building an automation practice with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform. Red Hat OpenShift integration followed, with F5 and Red Hat partnering to build F5 Container Ingress Services. The service delivers critical application services, such as routing, scaling, and security, to container deployments.

Today, F5 is a member of two Red Hat partner programs: The Red Hat Independent Software Vendor (ISV) program and the Red Hat technology partner program. “Red Hat has an open and flexible approach to partnering and a strong willingness to collaborate with ISVs,” said Quill. “And there’s a recognition within Red Hat of the value F5 brings to our mutual customers. We don’t see that with every partner.”

Integrating complementary technologies

F5 and Red Hat technologies complement each other well. “In the telco industry, for instance, F5’s BIG-IP Network Functions Virtualization runs on the OpenStack platform,” said Vincent Ng, Senior Manager in Architecture and Engineering at F5 Networks. “The integration between the OpenShift Container Platform and the F5 Container Ingress Services ensures F5 services are aware of new containers spun up within Red Hat.”

Conversely, F5 services allow customers to scale and secure their applications as they move from single to multiple OpenShift clusters. They provide load-balancing along with disaster recovery and failover for multicluster OpenShift deployments.

F5 has built reference architectures to differentiate the fully integrated F5 and Red Hat solutions from competitive offerings. It has also built Ansible Playbooks and Ansible Collections that allow its customers to use integrations between F5 and Red Hat products easily.

Innovating with a willing and able partner

Facilitating smooth customer transitions

Organizations are changing the way they do application development: adopting microservices and agile development. Working in partnership with Red Hat helps F5 facilitate customer transition to new architectures. “Red Hat is on the cutting edge with its open source stack, in automation, containers, and cloud,” said Quill. “Our technologies being so tightly integrated allow us to move with our customers as they transition.”

The partnership helps F5 build those integrations with Red Hat technologies that are crucial to its business—the integration with OpenShift that is vital to the company’s container offering, for instance. Discussions with the Red Hat product teams are an ongoing and continuous process.

“Having access to the Red Hat product teams and visibility of the Red Hat roadmap is vital for F5,” said Quill. “We can’t build our integrations without that insight, and we would be unable to pursue our container business, for instance.”

Increasing access and influence revenue

“Red Hat is one of the most effective partners for F5 from a business development standpoint,” said Quill. “We see a lot of influence on revenue.”

Both Red Hat and F5 have resources dedicated toward field alignment; they highlight the joint Red Hat and F5 value proposition internally, increasing sales. “The fact that we can navigate a large organization like Red Hat and make technical and business introductions between key executives helps us drive awareness,” said Quill.

Moreover, the Red Hat partnership allows F5 to have meetings with nontraditional buyers of F5 services. Red Hat introduces F5 sales teams to novel buying centers within organizations: application owners in addition to the network operations teams F5 traditionally sells to.

Improving efficiency and reducing time-to-market

“With the Red Hat certified Ansible Content Collections, our joint customers will get the end-to-end support on automating F5 application services that mission-critical environments demand,” said Phil de la Motte, Vice President, Business Development, F5 Networks. Additionally, joint customers can quickly find and confidently deploy networking modules that F5 has made available as part of Ansible Collections within the Automation Hub.

Ansible automation allows IT departments and DevOps teams to automate deployment, reconfiguration, optimization, and more. Both legacy and new infrastructure can be fully automatable, shortening deployment windows and reducing overall IT friction and overhead.

“F5 is proud to be one of the first Red Hat partners to work with the Red Hat Ansible team on a pioneering security automation initiative,” said Ng.

Expanding on a successful joint story

F5 looks forward to building on its already very successful partnership with Red Hat by doing even more with open source. “We plan to participate more actively in the open source community,” said Quill, “and will be looking more seriously at the open source business model.” Showing its commitment to open source, F5 recently acquired NGINX, a company heavily involved in open source.

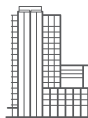
F5 has already integrated products from its recent NGINX acquisition with Red Hat solutions: NGINX is fully automated by Ansible, and NGINX OpenShift Router provides advanced traffic management and security services for Red Hat OpenShift. It plans further integrations in the future. “We see our Red Hat partnership allowing us to expand our NGINX portfolio,” said Quill, “specifically with Ansible and OpenShift.”

Quill and Ng conclude by highlighting how the IBM acquisition of Red Hat further solidifies the partnership: “We look forward to taking the joint F5 and Red Hat story to more than 30,000 salespeople, which will allow us to scale. Creating a story around multicloud with F5 and Red Hat technologies is important for our future.”

About F5 Networks

F5 Networks is a transnational company that specializes in application services and application delivery networking. It powers applications from development through their entire life cycle, across any multicloud environment, so enterprise businesses, service providers, governments, and consumer brands can deliver differentiated, high-performing, and secure digital experiences.

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 integrate new and existing IT applications, develop cloud-native applications, standardize on our industry-leading operating system, and automate, secure, and manage complex environments. Award-winning support, training, and consulting services make Red Hat a trusted adviser to the Fortune 500. As a strategic partner to cloud providers, system integrators, application vendors, customers, and open source communities, Red Hat can help organizations prepare for the digital future.



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