PLATFORM9

Global Telecom migrating 2800 VMs from VMware to Platform9 Private Cloud Director

Case study

Table of Contents

Executive summary

A global telecommunications enterprise faced rising VMware costs and the risk of vendor lock-in. With **2,800 VMs across 500 hosts** in distributed locations, they needed a cost-effective, enterprise-grade alternative that could seamlessly replace VMware while maintaining high availability, automation, and compliance.

After evaluating DIY options and competitors, they selected Platform9 Private Cloud Director (PCD) for its robust migration capabilities, self-hosted architecture, integration with existing infrastructure, and VMware feature parity (HA, vMotion, Storage vMotion, DRS). A rigorous Proof of Concept (PoC) validated PCD's performance, automation, and ease of use, with rapid deployment and strong customer feedback: "I'm really confused by the simplicity."

The full migration is being executed in under six months with a phased rollout, leveraging Platform9's migration tool vJailbreak to migrate complex workloads like MSSQL clusters and SAP workloads. Platform9's fast engineering response time, seamless storage and network integrations (NetApp, Fortigate), and automated resource rebalancing played a key role in the decision.

By the end of the migration, the enterprise will have a fully modernized, VMware-free infrastructure with lower costs, greater control, and streamlined operations—without sacrificing features or performance.

Scale of infrastructure and migration scope

The organization is migrating from VMware to Platform9 Private Cloud Director (PCD) to modernize its virtualization infrastructure and eliminate vendor lock-in. This full-scale migration spans multiple global locations and is being executed in phases to ensure minimal disruption while maintaining operational continuity. Here is the scale of their infrastructure:

- **500 VMware hypervisor hosts** transitioning to Platform9
- **2,800 virtual machines** to be migrated within six months
- **4 globally distributed data centers** for internal IT workloads
- **7 cloud regions** supporting customer-facing operations
- **Phased deployment** for a controlled and repeatable migration process

Existing virtualization environment and admin/ user requirements

Previously dependent on VMware, the customer needed an alternative offering:

- **Enterprise-grade features** like High Availability (HA), Dynamic Resource Scheduling, and vMotion-equivalent migration options.
- **Day-2 operations** capabilities such as centralized control over multiple sites, and simplified upgrades.
- **Seamless integrations** with existing third-party storage (NetApp) and networking (Fortigate) solutions.
- **Robust and responsive** engineering support to quickly address feature requests and deployment challenges.

Primary users

The solution serves:

- **Customer-facing cloud operations teams** running multi-tenant environments for 100s of customers.
- **Internal IT operations** teams responsible for managing infrastructure workloads across the enterprise.

Current use cases

Platform9 will serve as a **complete VMware replacement and a private cloud management stack,** enabling:

- **Multi-tenant cloud management** for both internal and external customer environments.
- **Enhanced VM lifecycle management,** orchestration, and automation.
- **Migration** of complex workloads, including:
  - Standard MSSQL Servers
  - MSSQL Servers with RDM
  - RHEL Clusters with Quorum Disks and RDM with HA
  - SUSE Clusters for SAP Services with HA and RDM disks
  - Other DB Servers as well as other specialized workloads

Rigorous proof of concept (PoC) evaluation

The customer conducted a rigorous Proof of Concept (PoC) to validate whether Platform9 Private Cloud Director (PCD) could meet their enterprise-scale requirements, multi-tenant management needs, and seamless VMware replacement goals.

The PoC was deployed across **two sites**, testing both **SaaS and self-hosted models** to compare flexibility and control.

One of the key decision factors was on-premises management (self-hosted deployment model) with centralized control across multiple global sites. The enterprise needed a highly scalable, multi-tenant solution to manage infrastructure for hundreds of external customers. Additionally, seamless integration with NetApp storage and Fortigate firewalls and VPNs was critical to ensuring smooth operations across their distributed cloud regions.

Another critical factor was Day-2 Operations readiness, with comprehensive support and training provided for:

- Control Plane Node Failure Handling
- Multi-region Upgrades
- Backup and Restore
- Disaster Recovery with Hystax Integration

Migration capabilities

Migration capabilities were critical in the evaluation, particularly Platform9's vJailbreak tool, which enabled the successful migration of complex workloads like MSSQL clusters, SAP services, and HA-enabled database servers. Enablers include:

- Automated workflows to move various workloads, including database servers with special disk requirements, into the Platform9 environment.
- Minimizing downtime for critical services by mirroring VMware's live-migration-like capabilities.
- Confidence in an approach that would scale to 2,800 VMs with minimal disruption.

Equivalent VMware features and integrations

To ensure parity with existing VMware setups, the PoC validated:

- **VM-HA** and cluster-based failover mechanisms.
- **Dynamic Resource Rebalancing** akin to VMware's DRS.
- **Live VM migrations** equivalent to vMotion and Storage vMotion.
- **Integration** with NetApp for storage provisioning and Fortigate for network-level policies.

Automation & self-service

The organization prioritized **self-service** and **automation** capabilities to streamline IT operations:

- **Cluster blueprints** for simplified onboarding and provisioning.
- **Multi-backend storage support** for dynamic allocation of volumes across NetApp, LVM, and NFS.
- **Dynamic Resource Rebalancing** to intelligently shift workloads across hosts in the cluster.

Highlights of the successful PoC and key decision factors

The Proof of Concept (PoC) experience reinforced Platform9's ability to deliver a scalable, VMware alternative while meeting the enterprise's strict security, compliance, and operational requirements.

One of the standout aspects of the PoC was the speed of deployment. The customer quickly stood up a fully functional environment across two pilot sites, ensuring immediate hands-on evaluation. Throughout the process, cross-team collaboration was a key success factor—Platform9 engineers worked both in-person and virtually to provide deep technical support, address feature requests, and rapidly resolve issues. The agility of the engineering team was a deciding factor, with one customer remarking,

> **"We're impressed by the turnaround time for enhancements requested during the PoC."**

Beyond deployment speed, Platform9's ability to meet aggressive timelines proved critical. The team delivered feature enhancements within days, alleviating concerns about vendor responsiveness and ensuring the solution could be tailored to the customer's unique requirements.

By demonstrating technical excellence, strong engineering support, and rapid innovation, Platform9 emerged as the ideal VMware replacement, paving the way for a full-scale migration within six months.

Summary of the migration plan

The migration will occur over six months, focusing on:

1. **Canary environment deployment:** Establish a non-production environment to test component configurations and upgrades.

2. **Single production datacenter rollout:** Build out the platform to host production VMs in one datacenter.

3. **Automation for multi-datacenter expansion:** Supply the automation framework allowing for quick scaling into the remaining global data centers.

4. **Repeatable VM migration patterns:** Develop reusable processes for VMware-to-PCD migrations, empowering internal teams to handle subsequent migrations independently.

5. **Selective VM migration:** Jointly migrate critical Windows and Linux VMs to refine and validate the migration process.

6. **Day-2 operations training:** Educate operations teams on monitoring, scaling, backup/restore, and troubleshooting to ensure long-term success.

Conclusion

By opting for a phased yet comprehensive migration strategy, this global telecommunications enterprise has laid a solid foundation for reducing costs, eliminating VMware dependency, and modernizing its virtualization infrastructure. The rigorous PoC demonstrated that Platform9 Private Cloud Director (PCD) not only met but often exceeded enterprise requirements for reliability, scalability, and feature parity.

Following the successful PoC, the organization made the strategic decision to fully transition to PCD, driven by:

- **Security and compliance –** Platform9's **self-hosted architecture** aligned with the company's privacy and security requirements.
- **Advanced migration tooling –** The **vJailbreak migration tool** successfully demonstrated **workload migrations,** reinforcing confidence that the migrations will go faster with minimal disruptions.
- **Responsive engineering and support –** Platform9's ability to provide **real-time collaboration and rapid product iteration** instilled confidence that their needs would be met long-term.

With the migration set to be completed in under six months, the enterprise is on track to achieve simplified operations, faster feature turnarounds, and a fully modernized private cloud solution, free from the constraints of VMware.

Platform9 is the leader in simplifying enterprise private clouds. The company's flagship product, Private Cloud Director, has all of VMware's enterprise-grade features today along with private cloud features for the future. Platform9 was founded by a team of VMware cloud pioneers and has over tens of thousands of nodes in production at some of the world's largest enterprises. Platform9 is an inclusive, globally distributed company backed by prominent investors, committed to driving private cloud innovation and efficiency.

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