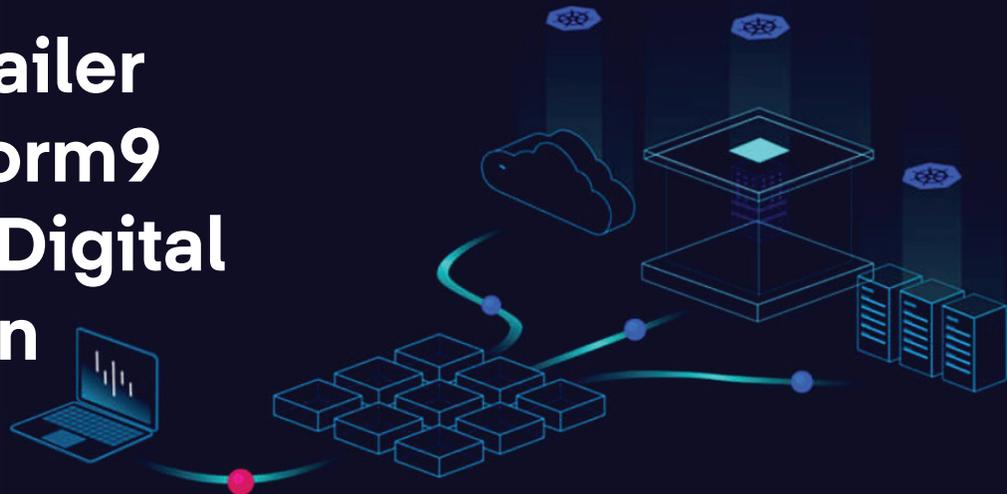


European Retailer Deploys Platform9 to Accelerate Digital Transformation



A SaaS-based management plane enables flexible, agile DevOps across the organization with a shared digital platform.

Based in London, an international retailing group specializes in consumer home products that sell in over a thousand stores across Europe. In addition to supporting an employee team of nearly 80,000, IT systems play a major role in keeping the stores, e-commerce websites, and backend systems optimized to support the business and its operating companies.

The company started using Platform9 Managed Kubernetes (PMK) and Managed OpenStack (PMO) to decompose an array of monolithic applications used across its multinational operations and transition to cloud-based microservices. Their goal was a shared platform that could be centrally managed by the Platform9 SaaS management plane — a single, simple, self-serve, containers-as-a-service type model.

The Challenges

For retailers, the pandemic has driven online sales to unprecedented volumes. This company estimates its e-commerce journey has been accelerated by at least two years. They've attracted 10 million new online customers, and their click-and-collect sales (order online, pick up physically) has more than doubled. And the IT systems are processing it all at 10x the levels they were designed for.

The Challenges

- Pandemic-generated 10x jump in online ordering and 10 million new online customers — requiring faster digital transformation.
- An array of monolithic retail data systems — across multiple European operating companies, all with unique needs.
- Inability to quickly deploy new apps and services.

The Solution

- Centrally managed and flexible shared standard digital platform enabling self-service development.
- Flexible API that empowers DevOps.
- SaaS management plane that's vendor agnostic and overhead-free.

The Results

- The ability to scale, organization-wide, with an unexpected and unprecedented 10x surge in online orders.
- An agile development environment that enables building innovative apps system-wide.
- A cloud-native, microservices mindset throughout the company.

“The enormous business value of Platform9 is that distributed teams can develop and deploy services, change order processes, or even set up new stores in days instead of weeks — or months.”

“We needed to move into the future with containerized microservices that could be used across all our operating companies and that could support our continuous integration/continuous deployment delivery view of the world.”

“In our IT world, when people say Platform9, they know what it is and they know what it delivers.”

Click-and-collect sales driving unprecedented demands on data centers is just one example of how fast the retailing environment is changing — and how that impacts IT resources. According to the digital platforms manager, “We need to be able to change very quickly, whether it’s a new version of a database, a new service, a new nexus, we need to be able to plug all these things in and unplug them just as fast.” The number of diverse operating companies, each with their own DevOps teams and unique needs, makes the flexibility of an API and a standard, shared platform essential.

Major retailers recognize the need to enable a seamless, dependable online experience while at the same time providing brick-and-mortar venues where consumers can look at big kitchen ranges and bathroom models or browse through the tool department. Achieving this requires agile technologies such as Kubernetes and distributed clouds. “There’s no option, you can only do it that way,” says the manager.

The Solution

Enabling developers, both their own and those of their operating partners, is a key requirement for the company, and it’s one of the reasons they chose Platform9 in the first place. Its API provides flexibility for DevOps groups and it agnostically manages a wide variety of applications. The manager says, “We can tell our development community, ‘Here’s our onboarding guide. Give us this and this, click on this API, and off you go.’” Platform9’s abstraction layer means that IT can quickly onboard a service regardless of whether the developer chooses AWS, Google, Azure, or their own private cloud.

Platform9 runs its management plane as SaaS, an essential cloud-native characteristic for retailers building cloud-native IT environments. There’s no operational overhead from upgrading or patching software and no hardware overhead for running a dedicated server.

As for the Platform9 management plane, there is guaranteed 99.9% uptime, 24/7 monitoring, and proactive troubleshooting. “The managed services aspect of Platform9 is a real differentiator,” the manager says. “We recognized the great value in the simplicity of installation and the ongoing operating model.” They also value how the Platform9 dashboard offers visibility into infrastructure across compute, storage, network, and existing workloads.

The Results

The digital acceleration the company has been able to sustain is a major reason for their success coping with the cataclysmic impact of the pandemic. When the company first deployed Platform9, their objective was to deliver a self-service container-as-a-service platform. Next, they wanted to empower their franchise partners and development community to take advantage of it. They succeeded with both big wins. Lastly, they wanted to decommission the legacy OpenStack configuration, and that’s well on its way.

An unexpected accomplishment was how quickly IT and developer teams got on board for the cloud journey. The company recognized how a cloud-native, microservices approach is the only way they can deliver massive amounts of change very quickly, and the manager anticipates 50% of the organization’s apps will be container-based within a few years. “In our IT world, when people say Platform9, they know what it is and they know what it delivers,” declares the manager.

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