SERVICEMASTER SPEEDS APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT WITH AGILE APPROACH

redhat

ServiceMaster

SOFTWARE

Red Hat Ansible® Tower

ServiceMaster, the parent company of several trusted brands, helps millions of customers across the country clean up after everything from a busy week to a harrowing natural disaster. The company was shifting to an agile development approach to support a faster launch of its mobile and web applications when customers needed to schedule services and communicate with technicians. To support this new approach, ServiceMaster used Red Hat Ansible Tower to automate processes and streamline infrastructure management. Its IT staff can now easily automate infrastructure management and application development tasks. In addition, groups within ServiceMaster can collaborate more efficiently, freeing time for strategic projects that improve the customer experience.

Memphis, TN, United States ●

HEADQUARTERS

HOME AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES

10,000+ employees;
8,000+ company-owned and franchised locations

"With Ansible, we're spinning up servers in minutes instead of hours and automating all kinds of day-to-day operations instantly."

CHAD DAVIS
DEVOPS MANAGER, SERVICEMASTER

BENEFITS

- Improved service-related communications for better customer experience

- Automated repetitive tasks, freeing teams to focus on strategic, customer-centric work

- Enhanced collaboration and simplified tools for more efficient DevOps work

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SPEEDING APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT WITH AN AGILE APPROACH

ServiceMaster has been a leading provider of residential and commercial services for more than 90 years. Its well-recognized brands include ServiceMaster Restore, Terminix, and Merry Maids. The company operates an extensive network of more than 8,000 company-owned and franchise locations, serving tens of thousands of customers across the globe. To maintain its high customer service standards as it continues to grow, ServiceMaster adopted agile development frameworks and a collaborative DevOps approach.

"We've gone in a new direction from our legacy monoliths, towards APIs [application programming interfaces], microservices, and DevOps," said Chad Davis, DevOps manager at ServiceMaster. "We've had to adjust everything to match the development team's new, faster model. The one thing that's been constant lately is that we're changing how we work."

The company sought to quickly create and launch test environments for chat, billing, and other applications. ServiceMaster also sought an automation solution that would work with its existing hybrid infrastructure. In addition, ServiceMaster wanted to free administrators to focus on improving its services by providing self-service capabilities for routine tasks.

AUTOMATING AND INTEGRATING PROCESSES WITH ANSIBLE

While attending Red Hat Summit 2016, Davis received a demo of Red Hat Ansible Tower. "That event was the first I'd heard of Ansible," said Davis. "I went home and literally bought a book on it and was provisioning servers by myself in a month. Ansible is just wired for the way system administrators think. I didn't have to go offsite for a week or two to get training or bring anybody in to teach us. We were able to learn it using the Ansible website and a couple of books."

ServiceMaster began by deploying the community version of Ansible and has now transitioned to Ansible Tower for provisioning virtual machines (VMs) in its on-premise and cloud environments, as well as for network management and other repetitive task areas. With Ansible Playbooks, ServiceMaster's infrastructure team can create easy-to-use templates for simple tasks, such as installing software on servers.

## STREAMLINING WORK TO FOCUS ON CUSTOMERS

IMPROVED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

ServiceMaster has improved its customer experience by ensuring development focus on the systems used by customers, contractors, and business partners, rather than routine provisioning or maintenance tasks.

"We're focused on improving our communication so that, whether through a phone app, website, or text, customers will know when technicians are en route, how much the service will cost, and other important information," said Davis. "The systems that support that information need to always be online and able to expand, something that we can do with Ansible."

AUTOMATED PROVISIONING AND DEVELOPMENT

Automating manual or repetitive tasks, such as granting template access, has freed ServiceMaster's infrastructure teams to focus on more strategic work.
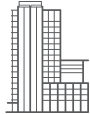
ABOUT RED HAT

Red Hat is the world's leading provider of open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to provide reliable and high-performing cloud, Linux, middleware, storage, and virtualization technologies. Red Hat also offers award-winning support, training, and consulting services. As a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and open source communities, Red Hat helps create relevant, innovative technologies that liberate resources for growth and prepare customers for the future of IT.

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"Working manually, it took us two to four hours to build a VM," said Davis. "Using Ansible's surveys function, an administrator can now fill out the survey within Ansible Tower and, within 10 to 15 minutes, have a fully provisioned, production-ready VM on our network. And our experts don't have to constantly stop to help with something very simple, like adding a server to IP management."

Automation also helps ServiceMaster's infrastructure teams spend more time offering advanced support to teams that build and support the company's customer experience.

"Before, we had to spin up handmade systems and let them test, then delete the application and redo or update it while keeping the same test system throughout," said Davis. "Now a test server is spun up exactly the way production servers are spun up. With Ansible, we're spinning up servers in minutes instead of hours and automating all kinds of day-to-day operations instantly."

COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

Ansible Tower has helped ServiceMaster drastically streamline work by automating routine processes, freeing DevOps teams to focus on more valuable work. In particular, Ansible Tower lets DevOps teams easily integrate tools like Puppet and Jenkins using an API, without manual configuration or detailed understanding of the underlying infrastructure. As a result, development teams can focus on creating more innovative customer services.

Improved automation has also helped ServiceMaster's infrastructure team to work at the pace demanded by agile, DevOps, and continuous integration and delivery (CI/CD) practices.

"About two years ago, we changed from a classic waterfall project model to an agile framework. The infrastructure teams had to adjust to keep up—and that's where Ansible came in," said Davis.

EXPANDING ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT NEW INNOVATION

Its success with Ansible is inspiring ServiceMaster to explore new directions and continue its adoption of open source technology.

"Including automation in all of our future plans, we can be more proactive in preparing infrastructure to meet the constantly changing needs of our developers, driven by the needs of our customers," said Davis.

ABOUT SERVICEMASTER

ServiceMaster solves the homeowner's dilemma. Every day, technicians visit tens of thousands of homes and businesses through an extensive service network of expert professionals. Technology powers these trusted experts to engage with customers so they can order, buy and receive services when, where, and how they want them. Its well-recognized brands include AmeriSpec (home inspections), Furniture Medic (furniture repair), Merry Maids (residential cleaning), ServiceMaster Clean (janitorial and residential floor cleaning), ServiceMaster Restore (disaster restoration), Terminix (termite and pest control), and Terminix Commercial (commercial termite and pest control).