



80%

faster to deploy new environments

60%+

of workloads migrated to SUSE Rancher

## Sara Assicurazioni

Industry and Location  
Insurance | Italy

Product and Services  
SUSE Rancher

Sara Assicurazioni: Driving innovation through digital transformation with Kubernetes

# Success Story

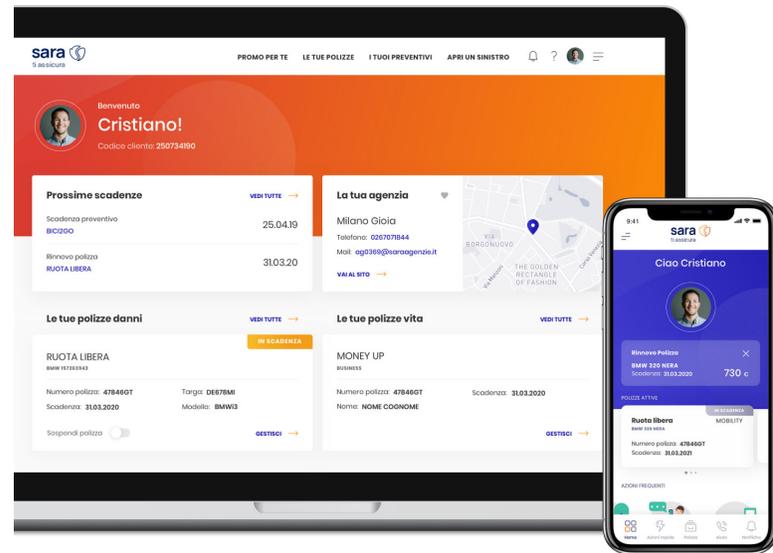
## At-a-Glance

Like many successful financial organizations, Sara Assicurazioni has looked to cloud migration to drive agility and innovation into its growth strategy. At the heart of the technology team's digital transformation journey is the desire to run services and applications in a mix of cloud environments. Embracing Kubernetes was always the natural choice to make this possible and, as the only 100% agnostic Kubernetes management platform, SUSE Rancher underpins this established company's forward-thinking, multi-cloud strategy.

## Introducing Sara Assicurazioni

Sara Assicurazioni is a leading Italian insurance company, offering automobile, home, health, protection, accident, savings, investment, security and property insurance products. Founded in 1946, the company is the official insurer of the Automobile Club d'Italia. As well as supplying motor insurance services, the company also works in the life and fund management arenas. Based in Rome, Sara Assicurazioni has more than 600 employees.

For many years, the organization ran its critical internal business applications, including its claims processing system, on monolithic technologies. As it grew, its technology team led by head of



infrastructure Paolo Perrucci, realized they needed to scale quickly and equip themselves with more modern tooling to better manage the rapidly expanding infrastructure. With an eye on cloud migration, and a desire to work in an open and agnostic way, Kubernetes and SUSE Rancher have become linchpin technologies in the company's stack.

## The journey to Kubernetes

Since joining Sara Assicurazioni in 2018, Perrucci has been preoccupied with one key goal — how to create a modern and resilient technical architecture that can operate across multiple clouds. Soon after his arrival, the company began to migrate its entire estate of on-premises servers and systems to AWS (Amazon Web Services) and GCP (Google Cloud Platform). From the start, the team knew a multi-cloud strategy would be the most direct route to reducing overheads and avoiding vendor lock-in.

“If, for some reason, we want to change cloud provider — this could be for a host of reasons including cost and availability — we want the process to be easy, it is in SUSE Rancher.”

**Paolo Perrucci**

Head of Infrastructure  
Sara Assicurazioni

Perrucci comments: “The decision to work with AWS and GCP stems from our desire to drive greater flexibility into our systems. These public cloud services have proved mature enough to handle the stringent governance and compliance regulations we must adhere to.”

During migration, while some systems could be manually lifted and shifted to the cloud, much of the legacy mainframe architecture had to be rewritten from scratch. This was a major project for Perrucci and his team, and a process that was finally completed at the end of 2019. It was then that the team started to explore containers as a way to streamline the infrastructure, standardize its Kubernetes environments and simplify the development process.

The journey to containerization began with the use of standalone containers in Docker. Several workflow problems experienced by the team were resolved through the creation of a standard environment that allowed developers to work freely, be it on a local machine or a staging server. Docker also helped resolve interoperability issues with Jenkins but,

at the close of 2019, the team decided that it needed something to make the management of its container estate even easier. To capitalize on the benefits of open source interoperability, they started working with Kubernetes.

Sara Assicurazioni then needed a Kubernetes management platform to orchestrate its Kubernetes clusters. The company trialed two solutions — Red Hat OpenShift and SUSE Rancher. The team quickly realized OpenShift wouldn’t suit their needs; it tried to install the solution on AWS and ran into several problems due to the complexity of the documentation. During its two-month, hands-on proof of concept (PoC) with SUSE Rancher, they experienced no issues, and the decision was made.

There were many reasons behind Sara Assicurazioni’s selection of SUSE Rancher but, critically, it came down to ease of use. The company found SUSE Rancher both easy to install and run and, within hours, had a cluster up and running in its development environment. Now, the company has migrated 60% of its workloads and expects this process to be complete by the end of the year.

“In SUSE Rancher we can standardize all our images and create a new container in a matter of seconds – it’s extremely easy. We also share these images with our development teams who can use them on laptops in the field.”

**Paolo Perrucci**

Head of Infrastructure

Sara Assicurazioni

## What are the challenges SUSE Rancher solves?

Pioneering a multi-cluster, multi-cloud future

While ease of use was at the top of Sara Assicurazioni’s wish list when choosing a container management platform, it had several other requirements. As the company uses separate development, staging and production clusters, support for multi-cluster environments was top priority. OpenShift’s monocluster model didn’t meet this need and so SUSE Rancher became the natural choice. SUSE Rancher allows the team to spin up multiple clusters at a moment’s notice and run them separately side-by-side, all managed via one central platform. This significantly hastens development velocity and the completion of new projects.

From multi-cluster to multi-cloud, Sara Assicurazioni was equally keen to ensure its chosen management platform was well-suited to a multi-cloud strategy. Looking ahead, the company plans to migrate workloads between different cloud providers to make it easier to re-

duce overheads and increase availability. Kubernetes, Perrucci believes, is the best way to do this – and SUSE Rancher the best technology to guide the journey. He says: “If, for some reason, we want to change cloud provider – this could be for a host of reasons including cost and availability – we want the process to be easy, it is in SUSE Rancher.”

## Driving scale and innovation

Before it transitioned to the cloud, Sara Assicurazioni was using an outdated data center, which lacked elasticity and hindered the company’s ability to grow. While it still runs some legacy applications inside an old application server, Kubernetes has given the team the capacity needed to scale and, more importantly, better manage both its cloud and on-premises infrastructure through a single pane of glass.

This shift has also transformed the company’s workflow; the process of creating a new development environment, for example, is now 80% faster than before. Perrucci comments: “In SUSE Rancher we

can standardize all our images and create a new container in a matter of seconds — it's extremely easy. We also share these images with our development teams who can use them on laptops in the field."

As part of its digital transformation journey, Sara Assicurazioni also wanted to ensure it was equipping itself with the right tools to enable it to innovate in the insurance space. Currently, the company is doing a number of tests using machine learning on both AWS and GCP. For example, it recently developed and tested a new machine learning application to prevent claims fraud. It is this ability to innovate quickly, in response to market pressures, which will stand the company in good stead.

### Improving visibility and behavioral insights

Sara Assicurazioni's earlier development methodology often left developers wanting greater access to and visibility of their systems. With Kubernetes, the company has managed to create a DevOps environment that brings developers closer to the infrastructure than ever before. SUSE Rancher gives developers a live and granular view of cluster posture and performance, allows instantaneous decisions to be made and, as a result, has forged greater alignment with IT operations. Not only has this instilled more confidence across the Sara Assicurazioni IT team, it has also helped developers to understand how important and integral their roles are to the company's success.

Sara Assicurazioni also needed a platform that would improve its monitoring capa-



bilities. While AWS equipped the company with tools to monitor its VMs, a similar method was needed for the Kubernetes implementation — tools not available from AWS unless using its EKS Kubernetes service. SUSE Rancher comes with all the tooling needed, and its open support for third-party solutions means any alternative — such as external log management solutions — can be easily integrated.

Due to the nature of the industry it works in, Sara Assicurazioni collects huge amounts of customer data. During the digital transformation process the team realized there is valuable insight to be gained by finding an effective way to analyze this data. The company already works with Octo Telematica on its black box automotive insurance offerings, but the team is now looking to ingest this data into Sara Assicurazioni's own infrastructure to better analyze it, conduct behavioral analysis on it and drive the resulting insight into its portfolio planning. This approach, which will see the company process terabytes of data every month, was simply not possible three years ago. Now, with a cloud-centric, Kubernetes infrastructure in place, this kind of heavy-duty analysis can take place in containers, at no extra cost to the business.

## What's next for Sara Assicurazioni?

As well as continuing its mission to migrate all its workloads to the SUSE Rancher platform, Sara Assicurazioni has set itself a number of other goals. The company is taking its cloud-native approach even further and has said it plans to stop developing applications using its legacy approach altogether. With the Ops and DevOps teams working closer together than ever before, the company now plans to use containers for all the new applications it develops.

## Timeline

- 2018; opted for multi-cloud strategy and chose AWS and GCP as destinations for infrastructure migration
- End 2019; cloud migration completed
- Early 2020; experimented with stand-alone Docker instances
- 2020; selected SUSE Rancher after competitive PoC with Red Hat OpenShift

## Benefits

- 80% faster to deploy new environments
- Multi-cluster, multi-cloud strategy enabled by Kubernetes and SUSE Rancher
- More than 60% of workloads migrated to SUSE Rancher

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