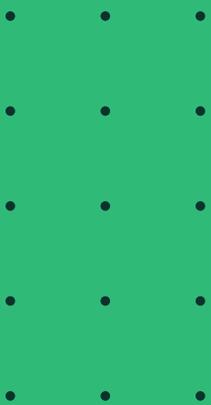# Safe-Guard Products International: Innovates with 98% faster new server spin-up

To help add direct-to-consumer sales to its existing B2B activities, Safe-Guard needs IT services that it can count on. The company migrated from Red Hat Enterprise Linux to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and deployed SUSE Manager, increasing availability and security dramatically. With these solutions and SUSE CaaS Platform, Safe-Guard can now innovate faster and more easily, helping the company build on its industry-leading position.

Safe-Guard at-a-Glance:
Safe-Guard serves the global automotive industry and its consumers with finance and insurance solutions.

Product and Services
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
- SUSE Manager
- SUSE CaaS Platform

Industry
- Automotive

Location
- Atlanta, GA, USA

Results
- + Accelerates innovation with 98% faster spin-up for new servers
- + Enables exceptional service continuity through live and automated patching
- + Boosts IT ROI by providing new capabilities within the same budget

Overview
Established in 1992, Safe-Guard is the number-one global provider of branded vehicle protection products in the finance and insurance space to the automotive, RV, marine and motorcycle/powersports sectors. Safe-Guard partners with leading automotive brands including Audi, Bentley, BMW, Ford, Honda, Jaguar, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Rolls-Royce, Toyota and VW.

Challenge
Safe-Guard saw an opportunity to offer its unique value proposition direct to consumers. To avoid putting the brakes on its plans, the company decided to address frustrations with its existing IT infrastructure.

Michael Johnson, Senior Infrastructure Engineer at Safe-Guard, says: "We've expanded rapidly over the past few years, and our growth rate will rise as we move into the B2C space. It was vital that our IT landscape was ready to support the next phase for Safe-Guard. We had spent dozens of hours working with external consultants to get our management product for Red Hat Enterprise Linux working, without a satisfactory outcome."

With major global automotive clients requiring access to Safe-Guard's systems around the clock, maintaining availability and security for core systems is always top priority for the company. As its environment grew, Safe-Guard was spending more and more time on patching and recovering unreliable systems, which was stealing focus from business innovation.

> "Before, coordinating this complexity could take us up to two weeks. Thanks to our SUSE platform, we can now complete the setup in just six hours."

Michael Johnson
Senior Infrastructure Engineer
Safe-Guard Products International LLC

Solution

When several Red Hat Enterprise Linux systems went down over a weekend, it was the final straw for Michael Johnson, who successfully rebuilt the systems on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. Having secured internal buy-in, Johnson's team then began migrating all business-critical systems – including a large Postgres database environment and the all-important in-house contract management solution – to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. To automate management, the company implemented SUSE Manager.

"Switching to SUSE technology was painless," recalls Johnson. "We've migrated almost all of our Linux-based applications to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, and any outliers are down to legacy application code. We were up and running with SUSE Manager in just one or two weeks, which was a huge change from our experience with Satellite!"

With SUSE Manager and SUSE Linux Enterprise Live Patching, Safe-Guard has a reliable automated security patch cycle for the first time. As a result, the company no longer needs to take key systems offline to patch them – always a challenge in the past, given they have customers in just about every global time zone.

SUSE Manager also makes it easier for Safe-Guard to manage legacy applications. Where an application is dependent on non-current software components, the team can "freeze" the relevant repositories so that any new environments that are created draw seamlessly on the non-current components, avoiding compatibility issues.

Since moving to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, Safe-Guard has also embraced containerization, deploying SUSE CaaS Platform to run its Kubernetes environment.

"Taking containers into account, we now have around 4,000 instances of SUSE Enterprise Linux Server," comments Johnson. "Introducing Kubernetes offers our developers greater freedom to innovate, while SUSE CaaS Platform gives us the control we need to manage that growing environment effectively."

Results

With greater flexibility provided by its SUSE solutions, Safe-Guard is strongly positioned to seize growth opportunities. The company can give developers the resources they need to work faster and enable better business outcomes.

"To provision resources for our developers, we have to spin up many systems at the same time," says

Johnson. "For example, setting up a new UAT (User Acceptance Testing) environment usually involves around 17 different systems! Before, coordinating this complexity could take us up to two weeks. Thanks to our SUSE platform, we can now complete the setup in just six hours – a huge improvement that translates into faster innovation."

Safe-Guard has also decreased risk by better securing its systems with regular, automated patch cycles – all without adding to its costs, despite very significant growth in its infrastructure.

"Switching to SUSE as our strategic provider for Linux and Kubernetes has enabled us to achieve better uptime and greater peace of mind around security," says Johnson. "SUSE Linux Enterprise Server is so cost-effective that we have been able to deploy SUSE Manager and SUSE CaaS Platform as well, all within the same total cost of ownership of our previous enterprise Linux platform."

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Safe-Guard is now free to focus on the road ahead and achieve its goal of a leading position in the direct-to-consumer market.

Johnson concludes: "We aim to double in size over the next two to three years. With SUSE solutions, we're confident that we have the right technology platform in place to make that happen."

SUSE
The Power
Of Many