



80%
faster to spin up a
new environment

80%
faster to deploy a
new region

80%
faster to
resolve issues

Resulta

Industry and Location
Marketing & Advertising | Canada

Product and Service
Kubernetes

Resulta: Driving global expansion
with Kubernetes and SUSE
Rancher

Success Story

At-a-Glance

After a period of rapid growth, Resulta aimed to expand its operations and services overseas. To do this it needed greater efficiency and agility from its technology infrastructure than server-based architectures could provide. Kubernetes stood out as the right option. After deploying SUSE Rancher, Resulta gained the efficiency, agility and scalability it needed to hasten its international growth.

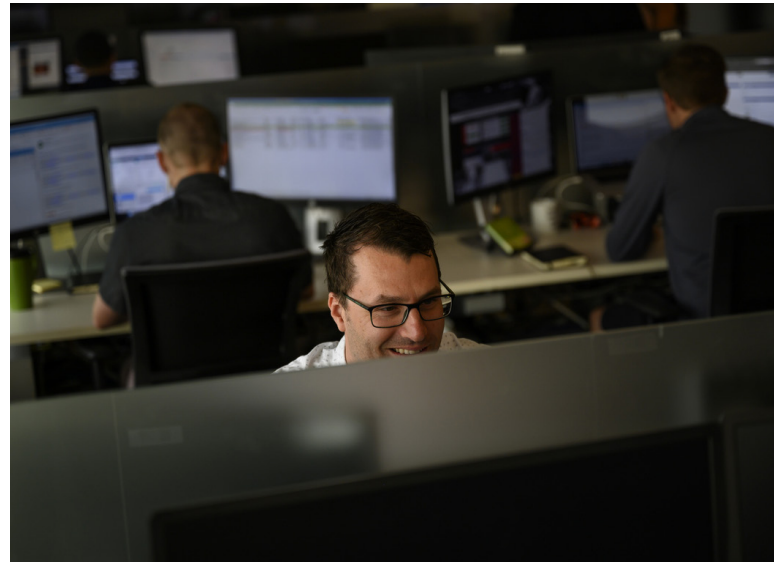
Introducing Resulta

Resulta is a global marketing services provider specializing in affiliate marketing and publishing. The company, which describes itself as, “Proudly Nova Scotian and fiercely world-class,” resides in Halifax where it employs 150 full-time staff comprised of expert brand and campaign managers, copywriters, developers and coordinators.

These in-house staff are supported by more than 150 contractors around the world, who help Resulta deliver on its mission to solve complex marketing problems. For more than 25 years, the company has used its dynamic approach to help brands develop web products and digital strategies, optimize their performance and make the most of business intelligence in their creative solutions.

The journey to Kubernetes

Global expansion is at the heart of Resulta’s mission, hardly surprising given the major growth the company has experienced over



the last few years. In a short space of time, it has grown from 24 to 150 full-time employees. Now, the IT operations team, led by Jamie Fifield, Kevin Bruce and Ilya Levin, manages web properties all over the world.

The company, which started life in 1993, kickstarted its global initiative in 2016. Initially focusing on clients based in North America, the team began their international rapid expansion, taking on new customers south of the border, and branching east out across the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Pacific. Resulta is now priming its technology stack for further diversification.

With a technology-first ethos, infrastructure evolution has long been a key component of Resulta’s expansion strategy. It was—and still is—using a LAMP (Linux Apache MySQL PHP) Stack in Amazon; a set of open source software that can be used to create websites and web applications, alongside virtual machines.

Given the somewhat primitive nature of the stack, Fifield and his team found it challenging to expand into new territories. In-

“We started down this path of containerization as a way to scale globally with a very small team. Kubernetes represents the best way to empower the development team – giving them more control to own the entire process.”

Jamie Fifield
Head of IT Operations
Resulta

stalling a new server in India, for example, was no trivial task—requiring dedicated resources and serious development time. Like many companies, the IT team viewed cloud migration as the natural next step toward increasing agility and removing some of the heavy-lifting associated with having a server-based architecture.

The team’s cloud strategy soon accelerated. Embracing AWS gave immediate access to data centers in multiple different regions. The company then moved toward containerization as a way to scale internationally with limited resources. The team started with Docker. Soon, though, the limitations of the platform prompted second thought. With momentum building around Kubernetes, and Docker’s “walled garden” approach losing favor, Resulta decided Kubernetes was the right option.

Why SUSE Rancher?

The decision then became which container management platform to choose. This was a simple decision for the team to make as they had prior experience working with SUSE

Rancher. Given fondness for the platform’s flexible, heterogeneous nature and active community, the decision to work with SUSE Rancher required little discussion.

The rationale for bringing a platform like SUSE Rancher on board was always to empower teams of developers to own more of the end-to-end software development and deployment process. Fifield and team envisioned a simplified, streamlined management experience that would enable developers to oversee projects from build, to test, through to deployment without the need to involve operations. Why? The more autonomy and power given to developers directly, the fewer the project overheads and delays.

For this to work, the company has added a layer they call the “GitOps Model,” which enables developers to control the entire workflow. Having previously worked with Docker Swarm, the team already had experience with containers, so the switch was natural. The team now simply branches, tags and goes to a specific URL to access projects.

“We needed an open source, cloud native solution with a big community behind it – deciding on Kubernetes was a no-brainer. The challenge then became how to provision, manage and monitor our clusters – SUSE Rancher solves that problem.”

Ilya Levin
DevOps Team Lead
Resulta



What are the challenges Resulta has overcome?

International expansion

Since 2016, Resulta has been keen to expand its client base globally, so it needed a platform that would enable it to spin up a new environment in each country in a seamless way. By running its infrastructure in Kubernetes and SUSE Rancher, the team found scaling a pain-free process. Once Resulta had its SUSE Rancher environment in place, spinning up a new instance was as simple as “popping up a tent.” What’s more,

now that the team has begun the process of migrating specific brands to the platform, they are confident about managing a greater number of clients with the same number of staff.

Developer empowerment and ease of use

Empowering its growing cohort of developers was instrumental in prompting Resulta’s journey to Kubernetes. The IT team wanted developers to “own” more of the process and so they were keen to equip them with the tools they needed to do their work more efficiently. Working in SUSE Rancher, it now takes developers 15 to 20 minutes to spin up a new environment—it’s simply a case of adding new instances from different regions into existing clusters. Regional expansion takes longer, but Resulta describes the process as “easy.” It now takes just hours, rather than days to deploy in a new geography.

Equally, it’s been a pleasant journey for Fi-field and his team who now enjoy greater visibility due to the fact they can see all their clusters and workloads through a single interface. SUSE Rancher enables them to see their sites being deployed automatically, which the company describes as a real “A-

“With a focus on building our international capabilities, it’s critical that our architecture can scale at speed. Kubernetes and SUSE Rancher bring an agile approach to IT that is making our vision a reality.”

Jamie Fifield
Head of IT Operations
Resulta

ha!” moment. The team currently has the majority—around 90%—of back-end services running in production in Kubernetes and SUSE Rancher.

Quality assurance and on-demand support

Reducing support overheads was another pain point Resulta was keen to overcome. Previously, production issues could take hours, if not days to resolve. With SUSE Rancher, the process is simplified. After filing a ticket, teams typically receive a response within 20 minutes, after which any issues are promptly resolved over Zoom. The company has also been making use of SUSE Rancher’s 12,000-strong online community, where they have been able to get rapid responses to pressing technical questions.

This improved efficiency is particularly important when it comes to Resulta’s quality assurance (QA) process. Previously, the QA team would spend valuable time waiting for a member of the operations or DevOps teams to push a project along, which led to wasted time and delays. With SUSE Rancher, the team can quickly check code and add a tag to a branch—these efficiencies are a boon for the QA team.

Reducing cloud overheads

As a company all-in on AWS, the company’s cloud costs are a growing concern. Resulta is now actively looking at a multi-cloud strategy to mitigate future rising costs. This is a decision that has been further spurred by availability issues in certain regions. AWS currently has no data center in South Africa, for example, and its Brazilian centers often struggle with reliability issues. With that in mind, and a desire to reduce increasing overheads, the company is keen to work with the SUSE Rancher Kubernetes management platform to more closely analyze its cloud costs and to make the switch to multi-cloud as easy as possible.

What’s next for Resulta?

The next 12 months for Resulta will see the company continue to focus on global expansion. While around 90% of the company’s back-end services are running in Kubernetes and SUSE Rancher, the IT team is currently in the process of migrating their clients’ WordPress sites to the platform; it has 29 sites in production right now, with many more to come.

The year ahead will also see Resulta focus on continuing to create efficiencies across its evolving architecture. By giving developers the tools they need to do their work more efficiently, the operations team can step back, transition accountability and focus on taking Resulta to the next level.

Timeline

- 2016: started cloud expansion with AWS
- 2017: started experimenting with containers
- 2018: selected Kubernetes container strategy
- 2019: selected SUSE Rancher as orchestration partner
- 2020: started moving systems into SUSE Rancher
- 2021: 90% of back-end systems running in production in SUSE Rancher—mission-critical systems to follow

Benefits

- 80% faster to spin up a new environment—from hours to minutes
- 80% faster to deploy a new region—from days to hours
- 80% faster to resolve issues—average 20 min resolution time

Find out how SUSE Rancher can help you become an innovation hero!

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