Rexel simplifies and accelerates multi-platform application deployment using DROPS

The client

Rexel is a world leader in the distribution of professional electrical supplies providing a wide range of products for electrical and lighting specialists.

The company also has a rich service offering, including training, maintenance and installation of electrical equipment. Rexel has approximately 5,000 employees over more than 450 sites, including local branches, call centers, administrative and logistics platforms, etc.

Rexel's IT Department is made up of some 40 employees who implement and manage the IT solutions that support the company's various business sectors as well as the IT infrastructure. Developers work on a wide range of platforms such as IBM i, Windows, Linux, DB2, Oracle, SQL, etc.
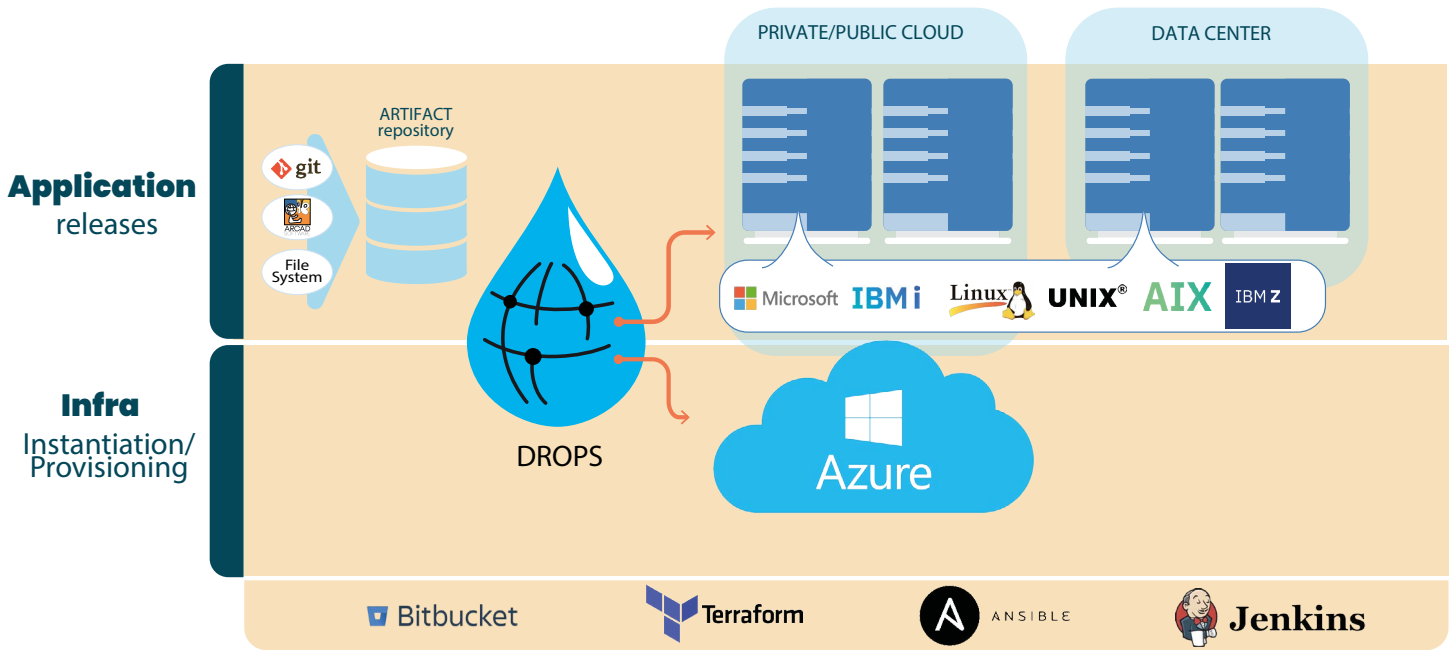
Project background

The Covid crisis in 2020 accelerated Rexel's focus on Cloud/SaaS technology. To simplify online account creation, a set of new cloud-based archiving, pricing and customer portal solutions were developed. Rexel also adopted a cloud-hosted microservices approach, including real-time evaluation of eligible delivery options based on orders placed by customers on the website.

Challenges

Along with the shift to SaaS and Cloud, Rexel was experiencing a significant growth in business. To cope with demand, an upgrade in access to services was needed. As the company expanded, the IT team had to accelerate development, testing and deployment processes to keep pace and deliver new functionality to the business faster. Rexel has more than doubled the number of major deployments, from 4 to 10 releases per year.

Rexel's ambitions on the IT and Ops side are to guarantee the best quality of service to its businesses and customers. With the arrival of "continuous business" and online sales, a 24/7 service became mandatory. This had a wide-ranging impact, not least on some of the more legacy IBM i applications. Service continuity and zero downtime required a whole new level of automation and new tools.

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Solution provided: DROPS

Rexel selected the open-source DROPS Release Management solution from ARCAD Software to centralize the deployment of their multi-technology applications across Windows, Linux, and IBM i.

A key objective behind the choice of DROPS was to achieve a single point of control for deployment across cloud and on premise systems. This would simplify compliance by leaving only one single route to secure in a hybrid cloud architecture. In addition, by decreasing deployment time and automating consistency checks, DROPS helped the team eliminate human error and reduce downtime in Rexel systems.

DROPS also facilitated a DevOps transformation within Rexel. By giving the deployment manager more autonomy, DROPS enhanced agility within the team. Rexel were able to reduce the deployment workload, allowing staff to focus on service innovation and delivering value to the business.

"As compared to other tools, DROPS gave us a secure, centralized solution to manage our multi-platform deployment needs.

It aligned perfectly with our shift to hybrid cloud. Just as important, the ARCAD Software team was a good match for our way of working.

Throughout the implementation and even today there is a powerful collaboration between the Rexel teams on one side and the DROPS teams on the other."

Franck Bougheriou, Test and Release Manager, Rexel

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