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Red Hat

From Legacy to Leadership

Key Learnings from the
Crossvale x Red Hat Podcast

Executive Summary

In this exclusive conversation, leaders from Crossvale and Red Hat discuss the real-world shift from legacy systems to container-first architectures using Red Hat OpenShift.

They unpack modernization strategies, cost-saving wins, common fears, and the enablement gap holding many IT teams back.

Whether you're a CIO, CTO, CEO re-evaluating licensing costs, or a platform architect planning for hybrid cloud scale, this document delivers field-tested insights to guide your next move

The Strategic Case for Containerization

Rethink Infrastructure from a Business-First Perspective

Most technology transformations fail not because of tools, but because of mindset. That's especially true when it comes to modernizing enterprise infrastructure. For many IT leaders, the idea of moving from a virtualization-heavy architecture to containers feels risky, disruptive, or overly technical.

But the reality is: containers are not a fringe tech trend, they are now strategic enablers for flexibility, resilience, and cost efficiency across industries.

Why This Matters Today

- **Cost pressure is increasing.** With rising per-core and per-socket licensing fees from traditional vendors (e.g., VMware), CFOs are pushing back.
- **Innovation is being delayed.** Legacy virtual machines take time to provision and manage, slowing down teams who want to build and ship faster.
- **Cloud strategies are stuck.** VMs are harder to port across hybrid/multi-cloud environments, leading to unintentional vendor lock-in.

Organizations that stay tied to virtualization-first thinking often find themselves:

- Delaying application modernization efforts
- Spending more on infrastructure than necessary
- Missing opportunities to automate and scale

As shared in the Crossvale x Red Hat podcast:
" You don't need to boil the ocean. But you do need to start. "

Containers as a Strategic Starting Point

Containers provide a **lightweight**, **portable**, and **consistent environment** to run applications, from test environments to production, across on-prem and cloud.

The strategic advantage comes not just from speed, but from **building a platform layer that is future-proof:**

- Deliver services faster, without waiting for infrastructure.
- Make apps portable across environments, from data center to edge.
- Standardize DevSecOps pipelines and enforce security policies with automation.

With platforms like Red Hat OpenShift, the container strategy goes beyond orchestration, it includes security, observability, governance, and compliance baked in.

Not About All or Nothing, It's About Starting

One of the most common blockers to modernization is the belief that you need to rearchitect everything at once. The smarter approach is to **identify one or two high-impact workloads**, and begin by containerizing those first.

Crossvale's **Container First Assessment (CFA)** helps organizations:

- Identify container-friendly workloads
- Understand migration readiness
- Build a phased roadmap that aligns with team capabilities

This allows you to show value quickly, reduce risk, and gain buy-in internally.

" Containers are not a tactical shift. They're a strategic evolution giving IT and Dev teams the ability to deliver faster, scale smarter, and respond to change. "

The Economics: Cutting Costs Without Cutting Corners

Containers as a Strategic Starting Point

For most IT and platform leaders, budget is no longer a technical concern, it's a **strategic constraint**. The rising costs of traditional virtualization platforms (e.g., VMware, Microsoft Hyper-V) are forcing a re-evaluation of where infrastructure dollars are going.

You're not just managing systems anymore. You're being asked to justify spend, prove ROI, and deliver innovation faster **without expanding headcount or licenses**.

Why Virtualization is Becoming Financially Unsustainable

Here's the reality behind the numbers:

- **License inflation**: Legacy vendors are increasing prices, especially post-acquisition (e.g., Broadcom & VMware).
- **Per-core/per-socket pricing**: You're paying for hardware overhead, not application value.
- **Support contracts**: Premium support tiers eat up operational budgets without increasing agility.
- **Cloud replication costs**: VMs are expensive to run, back up, and replicate across clouds.

The result? You're locking budget into infrastructure that's hard to scale and harder to escape.

" We used to think VMs were efficient. But when you look at the total cost over 3–5 years, containers are leaner by design. "

Containers = Leaner, Smarter Infrastructure

Moving to containers with a platform like OpenShift doesn't just change your architecture, it changes your cost profile. Here's how:

Traditional VMs	Containers (on OpenShift)
Paid per core/socket	**Deploy as needed, pay per app/layer**
OS per VM = overhead	**Shared OS = lean footprint**
Manual scaling = ops cost	**Auto-scaling = efficiency**
Cloud lock-in risk	**Portability = optimized cloud usage**
Long setup cycles	**CI/CD & GitOps = faster time to value**

You're no longer provisioning infrastructure before it's needed. You're **delivering services at the speed of demand.**

Real Savings in Production

" One of our clients replaced Salesforce with a fully containerized platform running on OpenShift. The result? Over $2.5 million in annual savings, and full architectural ownership. "

This isn't just about cost avoidance, it's about cost optimization with strategic flexibility.

Other examples from the field include:

- Edge containerization for telecom clients, reducing site costs by 40%
- VM rationalization via OpenShift Virtualization, fewer licenses, same performance
- Cloud bursting managed with ACM policies, scaling workloads only when required

Overcoming Internal Resistance: Your IT Team's Silent Objections

When the Biggest Obstacle Isn't Technology, It's People

One of the most underappreciated blockers to container adoption is not the tooling or the architecture, **it's the human factor**.

While leadership may be excited about modernization and long-term savings, the **IT teams responsible for operating the infrastructure** often express quiet resistance.

This pushback is rarely loud or confrontational. Instead, it shows up as:

"Let's revisit this in Q4."

"We'll need to evaluate stability first."

"This might be too disruptive for our team right now."

These aren't bad instincts, they're the signs of an experienced team trying to manage risk. But left unaddressed, **these hesitations can stall transformation efforts for months, if not years**.

Why Operations Teams Hesitate

Many infrastructure or sysadmin professionals are hesitant about containerization because of:

- **Fear of Losing Control**: Moving from VMs to containers, especially via orchestration platforms like Kubernetes or OpenShift represents a shift in who owns what. Infrastructure becomes more abstracted, and the lines between Dev and Ops begin to blur. This can feel threatening for teams used to managing everything "at the metal."
- **Steep Perceived Learning Curve**: Kubernetes is notoriously complex for newcomers. Even experienced system engineers may feel out of their depth, fearing they'll become blockers instead of enablers.
- **Risk of Breakage**: Modernization efforts often carry the perceived risk of downtime, broken legacy integrations, and losing tribal knowledge tied to legacy systems.
- **Tooling Overload**: New platforms bring new dashboards, logs, processes, and tools, adding to cognitive load. Without clear enablement, fatigue sets in quickly.

What Actually Works: Addressing Resistance Proactively

The key to overcoming internal resistance is not by "selling" the transformation harder, it's by inviting the team into the process and showing them that modernization can be a bridge, not a cliff.

Here's what works:

Start with Low-Risk Workloads: Containerize a non-critical app or new greenfield service first. Prove the benefits in a safe context, and let internal champions emerge organically.

Run VMs and Containers Side-by-Side: Using OpenShift Virtualization, teams can continue managing traditional VMs while gradually embracing containers. This hybrid strategy gives time for upskilling and confidence-building.

Use a Guided Approach with Enablement Built In: Rather than dumping Kubernetes documentation on your team, you build their muscle in-context, with expert support behind the scenes.

Services like Crossvale's PodOps℠ give your team:

- Guardrails for adopting container-native processes
- Hands-on sessions and templates for real-world use cases
- Platform co-management to reduce operational burden

Culture Shift = Capability Shift

> "We're not replacing IT—we're unlocking their ability to lead."

That's the mindset behind Crossvale's approach. By showing infrastructure teams that containerization doesn't remove their value, it amplifies their strategic relevance, you create a culture of ownership instead of fear.

Your IT team becomes the platform team.
Your platform becomes the business enabler.

And you avoid months of friction, rework, and resistance by leading with empathy and enablement—not just technology.

The Role of OpenShift + Red Hat

From Orchestration to Enterprise-Grade Platform

When teams start exploring containers and Kubernetes, they often run into the same paradox.

Kubernetes is powerful but building and managing it yourself can be costly, complex, and risky.

This is where Red Hat OpenShift enters the equation. OpenShift takes Kubernetes and **transforms it into an opinionated, secure, enterprise-ready platform**, with all the scaffolding needed for real-world application delivery at scale.

What Makes OpenShift Different

Unlike upstream Kubernetes distributions or DIY stacks, OpenShift offers:

- **End-to-End Platform Integration**:
  - Built-in CI/CD pipelines (via Tekton & ArgoCD)
  - Service mesh, logging, and observability out of the box
  - Integrated security features (RBAC, policies, compliance)

- **Enterprise Governance & Support**:
  - 24/7 Red Hat support with hardened updates
  - Certified container image registry
  - Multi-tenant access and control

- **Hybrid & Multi-Cloud Flexibility**:
  - Deployable across on-prem, AWS, Azure, GCP, and edge
  - Advanced Cluster Management (ACM) for multi-cluster control
  - Consistent developer experience regardless of environment

OpenShift doesn't just give you Kubernetes, it gives you the tools, standards, and support model to run Kubernetes in production without the chaos.

" Kubernetes is a great engine.
OpenShift gives you the car, the road, and the seatbelts. "

Supporting the Full Modernization Journey

As highlighted in the Crossvale x Red Hat podcast, the real benefit of OpenShift is how it meets teams where they are.

Whether you're:

- Running legacy VMs (and using OpenShift Virtualization),
- Exploring GitOps workflows,
- Or scaling developer self-service portals,

OpenShift enables each layer of transformation without forcing you to leap ahead before you're ready.

This makes it a powerful backbone for Crossvale's services like:

- **PodOps**℠: Hands-on operational enablement for container-first delivery
- **EquiShift**: A modernization program that phases in containers, automation, and DevSecOps

OpenShift Virtualization: Bridging VMs and Containers

You don't need to choose "containers or bust." With OpenShift Virtualization, you can:

- Run VMs inside the same control plane as your containers
- Migrate workloads over time
- Maintain visibility and consistency across platforms

This bridges the gap between traditional and modern architectures, giving your teams one control plane without refactoring everything on day one.

Red Hat's Strategic Edge

Red Hat is not just a vendor, it's a trusted open-source enterprise partner, with:

- Proven collaboration with Crossvale for co-managed delivery
- A long history of secure, production-ready Linux and container technologies
- A reputation for stability, support, and upstream innovation

Together, Red Hat + Crossvale give you:

- A mature, scalable platform
- The expertise to implement it safely
- The ongoing support to expand without disruption

How to Start Modernizing (Without Breaking Everything)

The Myth of the “Big Bang” Migration

One of the most persistent myths in IT modernization is that you have to refactor everything at once to adopt containers or OpenShift.

That belief leads to paralysis:

“It’s too complex.”
“We’re not ready.”
“Let’s put it off another quarter.”

But here’s the truth: the most successful transformations start small, stay controlled, and expand over time. It’s not about ripping and replacing — it’s about evolving intelligently, and mitigating risk at every step.

Start Small, Think Big

Instead of trying to modernize your entire infrastructure in one go, successful teams follow a phased approach:

Phase 1: Container-First Assessment (CFA)

Start with a clear picture of what’s container-ready, what’s not, and what dependencies exist. Crossvale’s CFA includes:

- App discovery and dependency mapping
- Technical feasibility and risk scoring
- Candidate workload identification
- A tailored roadmap for pilot rollout

This makes it possible to confidently choose one or two high-impact apps as your starting point, rather than guessing.

Phase 2: Pilot and Prove Value

Move a manageable, non-critical workload (or net-new service) into a containerized environment, such as OpenShift. This helps your team:

- Learn the platform with real stakes

- Build confidence in CI/CD and GitOps workflows
- Align security and operations around new patterns

This phase isn't about scale, it's about proof and momentum.

Phase 3: Parallel Paths, Not Pressure

Using tools like OpenShift Virtualization, you can run your existing VMs and containers side-by-side, under the same control plane. That means:

- No disruption to legacy systems
- No pressure to refactor immediately
- Full visibility across both modern and traditional workloads

Your team can focus on modernizing what makes sense, when it makes sense.

Let Enablement Lead the Way

Even the best tools will stall if your team isn't enabled.

That's where PodOps℠ by Crossvale makes a difference. It's not just implementation, it's ongoing support, co-management, and guided upskilling.

"We don't just hand you a platform. We help you operate it, tune it, and make it your own."

Key Success Principles

- **Modernize without disruption**. Start with container candidates, not mission-critical systems.
- **Run side-by-side**. Use OpenShift Virtualization to bridge old and new environments.
- **Don't go it alone**. Use managed services and enablement (like PodOps℠) to reduce friction.
- **Focus on value first**. Prove ROI in small wins that earn trust and unlock resources.

" Your team learns while doing. You gain velocity without technical debt. And your leadership gets the roadmap they need to scale modernization beyond IT. "

Ready to modernize?

With OpenShift and Crossvale, you don't have to break things to evolve.
You just need to start smart, stay supported, and scale with clarity.

Schedule your assessment

Watch the full Podcast Video

Get in touch today

Schedule your free strategy call. We will map your current state, identify quick wins, and build a tailored plan to improve efficiency without sacrificing performance.

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