



### Business challenge

Monolithic applications acted as barriers to innovation, hindering Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Co.'s ability to continually improve functionality for customers.

### Transformation

The organization containerized application development and standardized on a single cloud-connected platform, improving the agility and speed with which developers could update and release new customer-facing applications.

## Results

### Increases flexibility

by breaking up a monolithic architecture into container-based microservices

### Speeds up development

by reducing change deployment time from days to minutes

### Retains security strength

by providing cloud flexibility with firewall protection

# Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Co.

## Modernizing applications and accelerating change with IBM WebSphere Liberty and IBM Cloud Private

To continually deliver service enhancements to market at speed, Ilmarinen needed greater agility in its development environment. With help from IBM Business Partner Tieto, Ilmarinen eliminated development constraints by containerizing the process, transitioning to the IBM® WebSphere® Application Server Liberty Profile solution and choosing the IBM Cloud™ Private platform.

*"Now we have only one platform, and it's IBM Cloud Private. It's a lot easier to manage one platform than a lot of different platforms."*

— Jani Itkonen, Chief Technical Architect, Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Co.

## Business challenge story

### Increased demand for development time

Ilmarinen, the largest private-sector pension insurer in Finland, is putting the provision of stellar customer experiences at the center of its strategy. Specifically, the company wants to offer new digital services that deliver value through multiple channels, while boosting efficiency internally.

Jani Itkonen, Chief Technical Architect at Ilmarinen, explains: “Achieving short time-to-market is an essential differentiator in our industry, and we wanted to get ahead of the competition. To make this possible, we needed to take a different approach to development—but our existing landscape stood in our way.”

That landscape included more than 70 internal and external applications, many of which are based on the IBM WebSphere Application Server platform and supported by Tieto, an IT services provider based in Finland.



## How does pension insurer Ilmarinen drive innovation?

**Challenge**

- ⌚ Aimed to cut time-to-market for services
- 📉 Waterfall development slowed progress

**Solution**

- ☑️ Deployed IBM® Cloud Private

**Result**

- 📈 Builds cloud-native applications 99% faster
- 🏆 Enhances competitiveness

Itkonen continues: “Our release needs were increasing, but we had only a few static environments for developers to use for working and testing, and we had to schedule usage by the calendar and the clock. That meant our updates weren’t coming as quickly as customers wanted them. We wanted our developers to be able to fail fast and iterate.”

Furthermore, Ilmarinen wanted to increase development agility by adopting the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) development mode, but the company’s limited number of

development environments could not fully support SAFe across dozens of simultaneous projects.

After discussing their vision with Tieto, Itkonen and his team formulated a plan to modernize Ilmarinen’s application environment: they would convert monolithic application architectures to microservices and employ containers for more flexible and agile application development.

## Transformation story

### A cloud-based development

For applications based on the WebSphere Application Server platform, Ilmarinen and Tieto had a fairly easy first step: they deployed the IBM WebSphere Application Server Liberty Profile solution, a lightweight, cloud-based version of the larger platform that supports containerized development. But the company still needed an effective way to re-architect the rest of its applications, including its main insurance decision application, which was based on JBoss software that was nearing the end of its lifecycle. The need to identify and implement a next-generation application platform was becoming urgent.

With a largely outsourced IT environment that connects to a range of public cloud services, Itkonen faced a challenge: “How could we manage this transition without complexity getting out of control?”

IBM had an answer. It had just announced the release of the IBM Cloud Private solution, an enterprise-grade private cloud platform for creating and managing on-premises, containerized applications. Itkonen explains: “As a long-time user of IBM technology, I realized as soon as IBM launched Cloud Private that it was the right choice—an enterprise-ready offering that comes with great support.”

There were other advantages to the new IBM offering, says Itkonen: “We really wanted to use the container orchestrator Kubernetes. Before IBM Cloud Private, most of our options for a Kubernetes platform were from startups or vendors we didn’t know well. We were very pleased when IBM offered us an alternative with Cloud Private.”

Ilmarinen soon decided to move its entire application environment to the Cloud Private platform, which facilitates the shift to microservice architectures and incorporates Kubernetes software for managing Docker containers. This allows developers to move application components between development, test and production, and cloud and on-premises environments, seamlessly.

Itkonen describes the change: “We used to have the WebSphere platform,

a DataPower® platform, and Linux and Windows platforms like JBoss and .NET. We had to buy services and specialists for every specific platform, and managing them all was extremely complicated. Now, we have only one platform, and it’s IBM Cloud Private. It’s a lot easier to manage one platform than a lot of different platforms.”

Armed with IBM Cloud Private, Ilmarinen is also embracing the SAFe development methodology, an approach that synchronizes alignment, collaboration and delivery for multiple agile teams. The company now has 17 development teams that can work on individual decoupled components of a service in parallel. “Without Cloud Private,” says Itkonen, “it would be too difficult for us to adopt SAFe, which has been a crucial part in our transformation into a more agile, responsive organization.”

“Furthermore,” he adds, “IBM Cloud Private made the DevOps pipeline so much easier. We don’t have to provision or take care of the monolithic environment and try to conserve resources. We can just put everything directly into containers and provision different environments on the fly.”

***“By allowing us to modernize our application landscape in a cost-effective manner, IBM Cloud Private has become the driving force behind a new, more agile era for Ilmarinen, where we can race ahead of the competition to keep exceeding customers’***

—Jani Itkonen, Chief Technical Architect, Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Co.

## Results Story

### Flexible, fast and modern

Modernizing its application environment with Docker and Kubernetes technologies, the WebSphere Application Server Liberty Profile and the Cloud Private platform generated many significant advantages for Ilmarinen. Foremost is the increased flexibility of the new environment. The company’s previous environment was monolithic, which made creating and updating applications a complex and lengthy process. The new architecture helps Ilmarinen break up its massive infrastructure into microservices, allowing developers more flexibility to make changes immediately. Moving development between the WebSphere Liberty and Cloud Private platforms is also easy, so Ilmarinen can continually balance its workload—maximizing the use of the internal environment and paying only for the cloud time it requires.

Along with increased flexibility comes another key advantage for Ilmarinen: increased speed. In the past, deploying changes could take days; with the new development environment, these changes take just minutes. “For example,” Itkonen explains, “a development task that used to take 15 specialists three hours now takes one person just 10 minutes with IBM Cloud Private.”

He continues: “Best of all, Cloud Private makes it so easy, users don’t need to be very technically skilled, either. In combination, these two factors translate into very short time-to-market, so we can continually roll out new services to delight our customers. As time goes on, we’ll be able to introduce even more optimizations, free to experiment without the restrictions of being locked into a single vendor.”

Finally, as a pension insurance company, Ilmarinen manages retirement money for more than one million Finns. As a result, security is a very important consideration for the company. With the Cloud Private solution, Ilmarinen’s firewall-protected development environment remains just as secure as a conventional on-premises platform, but with added flexibility and speed.

Itkonen concludes: “By allowing us to modernize our application landscape in a cost-effective manner, IBM Cloud Private is the driving force behind a new, more agile era for Ilmarinen, where we can race ahead of the competition to keep exceeding customers’ expectations.”

## About Ilmarinen Mutual Pension

Established in 1961 and recently merged with Etera Mutual Pension Insurance Co., Ilmarinen is Finland’s largest and oldest private pension company. It provides earnings-related pension insurance services for Finnish entrepreneurs and employees of Finnish businesses. Headquartered in Helsinki, the organization employs more than 500 people and serves roughly 1.1 million customers. In 2017, its investment assets exceeded EUR 45 billion.

### About Tieto

IBM Business Partner Tieto is an IT services provider headquartered in Helsinki and operating in more than 20 countries. Its customers come from a variety of industries, including healthcare, financial services and consumer services. Tieto was founded in 1968 and employs more than 13,000 people.

### Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solutions featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or visit the following websites:

- [IBM@ Cloud™ Private](#)
- [IBM WebSphere@ Application Server Liberty Profile](#)
- [Tieto](#)

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