A STRATEGIC COMPARISON

a9s Cloud Foundry & VMware Tanzu

For Kubernetes, Cloud Foundry and Data Services

anynines

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Executive Summary

Time passes, technologies evolve, and better ways of doing things emerge. Yet it's the nature of business that no organization can ever afford to rip out the old and drop in the new in one fell swoop: real commerce happens in the real world, with all its shifting priorities, opportunities, and competing calls on resources.

When cloud-based microservices with Kubernetes gained traction, companies like VMware® – a pioneer in the virtualization space – rolled out its Tanzu Platform, today a big-name competitor to anynines' a9s Cloud Foundry and Kubernetes offerings. Yet many companies on its client roster – particularly fast-moving SMEs at less than enterprise scale – are finding Tanzu simply too big, too monolithic, too limiting in the tech stack. And its new licensing conditions – subscription-only with no chance to pay only for the parts you want – are proving expensive.

Conversations with our customers suggest there's a place for anynines in this picture, with its more customizable approach and experience with smaller organizations. In this paper, you'll see how VMware's Tanzu and anynines' a9s Cloud Foundry, a9s data services, and its open-source Klutch project compare – and how choosing one over the other might make the numbers more positive.

Introduction

In decades past, IT Managers joked you never got fired for buying IBM. In more recent times, that no-brainer decision has applied to many more companies: the "big names" that everybody's heard of. Microsoft, of course. Oracle for databases. SAP for supply chains. And if virtualizing? That name was VMware.

Before its recent purchase by Broadcom (a $69B deal), VMware was the recognized pioneer of server virtualization in the datacenter – and still dominates in many enterprise setups, thanks to its deep integration with tools like Active Directory and ability to work with the whole tech stack soup-to-nuts. And this recognition was well-deserved: VMware was a genuine innovator.

But just as VMware drove the industry's evolution from app-per-server to virtual separation of hardware and OS, the industry has since evolved further – with Applications and Workloads based on cloud-native microservices taking a bigger role, and container-based models like Kubernetes (K8s) sidestepping traditional virtualization approaches. And that's where anynines comes in.

Because while VMware remains competitive in this new world, with its Tanzu application platform – an infrastructure for building and deploying applications on K8s – there's an elephant in the room: recent jumps in its licensing model. Some say VMware's technology isn't an ideal fit for its new owner's product strategy. While its tech is great for many use cases, with developers finding its single interface for both K8s and Cloud Foundry useful, its pricing is now-subscription-only, locking developers into long-term agreements with little control over future costs. And revised bundling arrangements mean VMware is increasingly a take-it-all or take-nothing decision, with prices to match.

Ahead are four main parts. First, the context both Tanzu and anynines occupy in the market landscape, followed by an overview of the platform migration and release management offered by anynines with its a9s Cloud Foundry offering. Next comes a comparison of both in real-world scenarios, with notes on those

facing migration from monolithic apps to microservice-based clouds. Lastly we'll share our recommendations for different situations – so you can see where each shines brightest. Let's go!

In this paper, when we refer to "migration," we're talking about the ongoing evolution many organizations face: from VMware-heavy, virtualized environments toward more modular, cloud-native approaches. That may mean migrating monolithic apps to microservices, re-platforming from Tanzu to a9s Cloud Foundry, or reducing VMware dependencies in favor of Kubernetes-native deployments. Wherever you are in that journey, this comparison aims to inform your next steps. Let's go!

The market sector, in context

The first factor to note is that the choice of a Kubernetes-aware platform isn't static: it's deeply dynamic. Companies aren't ditching monolithic applications wholesale; they're transitioning them to a cloud-based model, service by service, app by app. And that's not an easy process.

This is the landscape into which VMware launched Tanzu. Big enterprises on Big Iron, looking to migrate and manage existing applications on a more modern infrastructure with a better fit for today's businesses, like Kubernetes. It's for companies who want to:

- **Modernize legacy applications**, using containers and microservices
- **Integrate CI/CD pipelines**, with secure, automated deployments
- Manage Kubernetes projects across **private, hybrid, and multi-cloud** setups
- Maintain excellent **data security** via baked-in policy, audit, and compliance functions

Tanzu Platform's biggest plus for many customers, though, is its deep integration with existing VMware infrastructure – meaning a constellation of billion-dollar companies with large investments in the datacenter will be looking at Tanzu; potentially eye-popping licensing costs still make sense in their cost structures. For anyone smaller than global scale, however, that cost case makes less sense – raising the question: ***do you need Tanzu?*** To answer it, let's look at what anynines does.

An overview of a9s Cloud Foundry

Just as Kubernetes abbreviates itself to K8s, we shorten anynines to a9s. (No, we're not deliberately one-upping!) The surprise for many IT professionals familiar with Tanzu: the a9s Cloud Foundry can answer many of the same use cases – including the full integration with automation pipelines and CI/CD workflows that Broadcom trumpets for Tanzu. Here are the parts:

1. a9s Cloud Foundry

If you know and love Cloud Foundry, know that anynines does, too – offering our Cloud Foundry distribution migration and managed services, enabling customers to develop and deploy at scale and speed without the need to manage underlying infrastructure. Some of its key features: