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retraced keeps ethical sourcing in fashion

retraced uses Oracle Autonomous Database with blockchain and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure to increase sustainability in the apparel industry.

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"Having the infrastructure, database, and blockchain application running on one platform made it so much easier for us to expand our platform very quickly and at scale."

Peter Merkert, Cofounder and CTO, retraced

Products list

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Business challenges

Despite some fashion brands' efforts to mandate safe and upstanding working conditions at the factories they buy from, there hasn't been much visibility into the increasing volume of subcontracted work. The mission of retraced is to enable its manufacturing customers to provide that supply chain visibility, via a blockchain application that lets consumers know exactly who made their products, from which materials, and under what conditions. The most demand[...] their raw materials to the farm level, knowing where every cotto[...]

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key to that brand promise is the ability to reassure customers that they can trust that the data in the app is reliable and verified.

As retraced gained enterprise customers, the company needed to go beyond startup mode for its development and production systems, including being able to document all its information security and compliance best practices. That took new cloud infrastructure as well as new development practices.

Why retraced chose Oracle

It made sense for retraced, a participant in the Oracle for Startups program, to turn to Oracle for the underlying infrastructure for blockchain and other database technologies it needed to build that trust. Oracle Autonomous Database and Oracle Blockchain Platform ensure that the data collected at every step of each customer's supply chain is reliable. Also, the data can't be altered or erased without the knowledge of all participants in the chain. "Whenever we had questions, we could go to the guys at Oracle, and the next day we had a call for an hour with an expert," says retraced Cofounder Lukas Pünder.

Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) also provided services to support retraced information security—and security documentation—needs. The company used Oracle Cloud Guard to suggest security settings and best practices; OCI Maximum Security Zones let the company set security standards that can't be turned off; OCI Web Application Firewall provides security and also can help lower cloud compute costs, by weeding out bad traffic before it hits compute services; OCI Vault lets retraced centrally manage and control encryption keys; and capabilities such as Oracle Container Engine for Kubernetes for container management and compartment segregation helped the development keep development and production environments entirely separate in OCI.

Results

With the help of Oracle's technology and expertise, retraced managed to go from project start to launch within 12 months. Retraced achieved 400% growth in sales and 750% more traffic in 2021.

The company's early customers include CANO, a Mexico-based
leather-woven huaraches, and Jyoti - Fair Works, a German "fai

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to help it map, verify, and store its suppliers' activities. Retraced stores and analyzes data in Oracle Autonomous JSON Database, Oracle Autonomous Data Warehouse, Oracle Analytics, which all run on OCI. They store a variety of JSON documents connected with the application, including copies of orders placed by brands with suppliers and images associated with products, components, brands, factories, farms, and so on.

"Having the infrastructure, database, and blockchain application running on one platform made it so much easier for us to expand our platform very quickly and at scale," says retraced Cofounder and CTO Peter Merkert.

The company more recently has pushed its technology even farther to help one major customer track cotton production in Pakistan to the farm level, using retraced to track product from 500 farms in the first season of use. Big brand customers want this because consumers are looking for more information on what goes into their products. "You're selling a supply chain, not just a product anymore," Merkert says.

The application's microservices architecture quickly pulls in fabric images, on-boards new suppliers, or adds orders to the blockchain. Its Oracle Container Engine for Kubernetes "lets us run multiple instances simultaneously, even when the application is getting hit with thousands of requests at once," Merkert says. And with its Oracle Autonomous Database for transaction processing, "it really doesn't matter how many processes I'm running," he says. "I can just click to get more storage, click again to get more CPU power, and boom, it's there. With Oracle Cloud, networking and backup are highly automated so our small, lean development team are more focused on business solutions that add value to our customers."

The added OCI security features and services have made it easier for the company to document its security measures for clients, including compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation. And using tools such as Oracle Maximum Security Zone means Merkert can set rules for data access, control, and deletion that can't be overridden. "I sleep really well with that one in place," Merkert says.

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