MR.PLANB FIELD GUIDE · VMWARE

OpenShift Virtualization vs VMware: Comparison Sheet

Ledger scores, licensing models, migration prerequisites and when each fits, as of October 2026.

Updated **2026-10-29** · Full guide: www.mrplanb.com/comparisons/openshift-vs-vmware

> OpenShift Virtualization suits teams that already run or are moving to Kubernetes and want VMs and containers on one API. VMware suits traditional VM estates that need the most mature vSAN, NSX and GUI-driven operations. In the VM Platform Ledger, OpenShift Virtualization has the higher Index, and VMware leads on capability.

72.0 vs 63.9
Ledger Index, OpenShift Virtualization vs VMware

93.1 vs 83.0
capability, VMware ahead of OpenShift Virtualization

11.0 vs 23
commercial risk out of 25, lower is better

31 Dec 2026
deadline for Red Hat's first-year-free migration offer

Scores side by side

Index and capability are out of 100. Risk and lock-in are out of 25, AI is out of 20. For risk and lock-in, lower is better.

Platform	Index	Capability	Risk	Lock-in
Red Hat OpenShift Virtualization	72.0	83.0	11.0	11.0
VMware vSphere / VCF	63.9	93.1	23	15.5

Feature comparison

Area	OpenShift Virtualization	VMware
Philosophy	VMs inside Kubernetes via KubeVirt	Hypervisor-first, mature integrations
Deployment	VMs as pods on bare metal; YAML and GitOps	vCenter, GUI-driven; vMotion, HA, DRS, vSAN, NSX
Automation	Ansible, Tekton, GitOps; one model for VMs and containers	REST APIs, Terraform, Ansible
Licensing	Subscription per bare-metal node (VM-only) or per core pair	Subscription only, per core, 16-core minimum per CPU
Learning curve	Needs Kubernetes skills; higher initial complexity	GUI-driven and admin-friendly
Ecosystem	Growing CSI and CNI vendors	Very large partner ecosystem and skills pool

Migration from VMware: prerequisites

Red Hat's Migration Toolkit for Virtualization (MTV) is the supported path and supports warm migration of powered-on vSphere VMs.

1. Plan the target platform first: bare-metal nodes and enough Kubernetes skill.
2. Provide storage with ReadWriteMany access if you want live migration inside the cluster.
3. Enable Changed Block Tracking on each VM and disk.
4. Keep each VM to at most 28 CBT snapshots; too many can make warm migration fail.
5. For Windows guests, make sure the VSS service is running so snapshot quiescing works.
6. Start with development and test, then move production by application group.

Choose OpenShift Virtualization if

- [ ] You already run OpenShift, or are modernizing toward containers.
- [ ] You want one Kubernetes-native platform and API for VMs and containers.
- [ ] You have, or can hire, Kubernetes and GitOps skills.
- [ ] You want less dependence on a single proprietary hypervisor vendor.

Choose VMware if

- [ ] You need the most mature storage, networking and DR features (vSAN, NSX, vMotion).
- [ ] Your operations team is built around vCenter and GUI-driven change.
- [ ] You depend on vGPU live migration or integrations OpenShift does not yet match.
- [ ] You can accept Broadcom's subscription-only licensing and renewal risk.

Licensing facts

- OpenShift Virtualization Engine is VM-only: one subscription per physical bare-metal server regardless of sockets or cores, unlimited VMs, no container workloads.
- RHEL guest entitlements are bought separately. Support is Standard (8x5) or Premium (24x7).
- Full OpenShift Container Platform is licensed per core pair or per node.
- VMware is per core, sold as VVF or VCF, with at least 16 cores licensed per CPU.
- Neither vendor publishes a full public price list.
- Red Hat waives the first year on qualifying 3-year agreements with a Virtualization Migration Assessment, for deals signed by 31 December 2026.

Sources and notes: VM Platform Ledger 2026 · Red Hat OpenShift Virtualization Engine and subscription guide; KubeVirt documentation · Broadcom June 2026 program documents