Better data collection and control through Managed Kafka and Istio

A Case Study of focaldata & Banzai Cloud

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About the Customer

Situated in the UK, focaldata was founded in 2017 with a simple yet considerable goal in mind; that critical decisions, be they in government or business, should be driven by accurate and reliable information. The focaldata offerings consist of end-to-end solutions to help clients understand public opinion and move people to act, based on factual data. Their main objective was to establish a platform on which people could fill out surveys easily, and with confidence. To ensure this happened, data collection and control had to be owned and managed by focaldata.

They knew that data ownership on such a scale would mean lots of traffic and lots of log messages being passed around their Kubernetes infrastructure. They were in need of a messaging or queuing technology, like Kafka. To manage Kafka, focaldata required some extra tools, which led them to evaluate Confluent, RedHat and Banzai Cloud.

Eventually focaldata chose Banzai Cloud's Managed Kafka solution, Supertubes. The project leaders at focaldata agreed to share our combined journey and the reasons behind their decision in the form of an interview.

How did you find Banzai Cloud?

We did our research on Kafka, and there were many good reference points that showed us that Banzai Cloud has a great product for that, Supertubes. We evaluated Banzai Cloud, Confluent Enterprise and RedHat's solution simultaneously. Both Confluent and RedHat lacked some of the key features that were necessary in our use case, in addition to their steep prices. This is the point at which we met with Banzai Cloud. After the first meeting we realized how much Banzai Cloud could help us with managing our message brokers.

What was your first impression of Banzai Cloud?

Banzai Cloud's offered not only products, but much needed professional services and technical know-how. Also, their product portfolio was amazing and covered many areas where we needed help. The team is really committed to delivering the best products and services. They're consummate professionals in the Kubernetes field.

How did you work with Banzai Cloud during the implementation?

First, we started using their open source technologies and, when we needed more support, we contacted the Banzai Cloud team. Their technical forums were detailed enough to help us get started on our journey through their suite of products. We accumulated a lot of detail from their blogs and community slack channel but, when we want a quick solution, we could contact their professional teams, which we did. We didn't have to run a pilot project at all. We could easily transfer all the configurations we used in Confluent into Supertubes. It took less than a week to set everything up.

How hard was it to reach your conclusion about choosing Banzai Cloud?

We had a quick internal discussion about the license, but were sure we wanted to go with Banzai Cloud. It was one of our biggest investments but it has paid off extremely well. Their products and services are great and they take care of all our requests. We also saw a lot of potential in Backyards, Banzai Cloud's service mesh platform, which boosted our potential savings by managing our large-scale service infrastructure. In the end, it was a great decision to commit ourselves to their portfolio.

How do you use the product currently?

We are using Supertubes to manage Kafka message brokers. We also started to use their Backyards product to observe our microservices. It's worth mentioning that it only took only two days to make that happen.

What benefits do your customers see as a result?

We can serve much larger survey requests than before, and we haven't had any downtime since we launched our services. I think this is enormously beneficial to our customers.

Why would you recommend Banzai Cloud to other similar customers?

From a devops viewpoint the products work as expected, no bugs, no errors, no workarounds, no bottlenecks. This is very important for our team. Also, the support that Banzai Cloud provides is way above industry average.

I think the biggest takeaway here is that it really allowed our devops team to manage a large infrastructure in a reliable manner, and with only a handful of people. When using other

products, once a month engineers would have to spend a day or two patching and updating the Kafka service, which was obviously a bit of a risk in terms of business continuity. But that isn't the case now.

Banzai Cloud is the perfect choice for companies who are interested in managing their Kubernetes infrastructure in a more professional and simplified manner.

About Banzai Cloud

Banzai Cloud is changing how private clouds are built: simplifying the development, deployment, and scaling of complex applications, and putting the power of Kubernetes in the hands of cloud-first organizations and enterprises.

Contact Us

If you want to learn more about Supertubes or Backyards feel free to **schedule a meeting** with one of our experts, **join our slack community** or **subscribe to our engineering blog**.