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Beyond VxRail: Building a path to Dell Private Cloud with SHI

Organizations need a new infrastructure strategy for the AI era.



Introduction:
Modernize for a flexible future

The infrastructure decisions organizations make today will shape what they can support tomorrow. As AI, containers, and other workloads place new demands on the data center, IT leaders need to look beyond replacing aging technology and consider whether their architecture is built for the next generation of applications. For Dell VxRail hyperconverged infrastructure customers, the path forward is an opportunity to move beyond a like-for-like refresh and toward a more flexible private cloud foundation for the AI era.

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What is hyperconverged infrastructure?

For years, hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) platforms such as Dell VxRail helped organizations reduce operational complexity and modernize traditional data center environments. Along with other hyperconverged solutions, VxRail became a go-to choice for consolidating infrastructure, supporting virtual machines (VMs), and streamlining lifecycle management within VMware-centric environments.

HCI has benefited organizations that need to scale without turning up the volume on IT complexity. It centralizes infrastructure management while also simplifying operations through an aggregated, centralized approach. HCI brings together the physical compute, memory, network, and storage resources in a single system. Resources are consolidated under a virtualization layer to be managed and controlled as an adaptable pool of resources.

But today, for many organizations, the next infrastructure decision has a deadline. Dell VxRail 7.x reached end of life in September 2025, and VMware vSphere 8 reaches end of general support in October 2027. Most VxRail and vSphere customers will make a platform decision in the next two years: whether to move to VxRail on VMware Cloud Foundation 9.1, to Dell Private Cloud, or to other products.

Dell has made its path forward clear: Dell Private Cloud is the strategic successor to VxRail for customers pursuing virtualization, containers, AI, and other modern workloads.

Why IT environments are shifting to private cloud architecture

70%

of organizations were considering a shift back to private cloud in 2025.

But to be clear: HCI is not suddenly the wrong architecture for modern environments. The value of HCI is still valid. As enterprise infrastructure requirements change, however, companies have turned to automation and AI to drive productivity, innovation and cost-efficiency all at speed and scale. As a result, AI adoption is dramatically changing data center infrastructure and architecture choices.

Organizations are not just supporting traditional virtualized workloads. They also have to support AI initiatives, containerized applications, hybrid cloud strategies, modern developer platforms, rapidly growing data volumes, and increasingly complex security and compliance requirements.

Further, the rising economics of public cloud, increasing infrastructure sprawl, and the need for operational consistency are forcing IT leaders to rethink where workloads should run. Organizations are increasingly moving selected workloads back into private cloud infrastructure: nearly 70 percent of organizations were considering a shift back to private cloud in 2025.

The modern data center also demands flexibility and efficiency, often leading organizations to favor server, storage, and networking lifecycles that can be planned and scaled more independently than traditional HCI architectures typically allow.

This becomes increasingly critical as organizations face hardware procurement challenges, where they may not be able to time their upgrades as they normally would and have to adjust to vagaries of the supply chain and the market as they procure new hardware.



From VxRail to Dell Private Cloud

That's where new platforms that can enable private cloud and AI workloads enter the picture. For organizations running Dell VxRail, as well as some VMware vSphere customers, and evaluating their long-term strategy, Dell Private Cloud extends some of the benefits of HCI while firmly stepping into the AI era.

Most notably, Dell Private Cloud captures the increasing shift toward disaggregated resources while retaining the simplicity that made hyperconverged infrastructure so compelling in the first place. Dell Private Cloud keeps resources independent while enabling coordinated management of resources. The platform separates compute, storage, and networking while using automation to manage the infrastructure as an integrated system.

Consider the myriad capabilities for customers migrating from Dell VxRail to Dell Private Cloud for Dell—and VMware—customers:

Key reasons to consider Dell Private Cloud



1. Disaggregated infrastructure

Disaggregation of resources has become a hallmark architecture in the AI era. Dell Private Cloud allows compute, storage, and networking to scale independently. Organizations can add storage when storage is the bottleneck or compute when compute is constrained. Organizations do not have to procure both simultaneously to suit an aggregated architecture. Customers benefit from better resource use, reduced resource overprovisioning, and greater flexibility in building infrastructure for AI and data-intensive workloads.



2. Hypervisor and platform flexibility

Unlike VxRail, which is tightly coupled with VMware, Dell Private Cloud allows customers to "bring their own" cloud operating systems, including VMware and Red Hat OpenShift as well as Azure Local and Nutanix. Customers benefit from reduced vendor lock-in while also building in flexibility to retain VMware rather than making dramatic migration moves.



3. Automation and lifecycle management

Dell Private Cloud includes automation features, such as automated deployment, infrastructure onboarding, lifecycle management, and validated states through Dell Automation Platform. Automation helps reduce the manual administration load, enables faster deployment of resources in an IT environment, and enables consistent upgrades and maintenance—all critical as environments scale. Users can keep the appliance-like operational experience of an HCI without the aggregated HCI architecture.



4. Validated blueprints

Dell Private Cloud uses pre-tested, validated deployment blueprints that automate the deployment of cloud platforms and workloads. This speeds implementation, reduces deployment risk, and minimizes integration work through consistent configurations and so on.



5. Hardware investment protection

Dell Private Cloud allows customers to reuse hardware instead of tying the hardware permanently to a specific software stack. This is becoming table stakes in an era of supply chain volatility and attenuated hardware procurement lifecycles. Users need a cloud operating system that provides more hardware flexibility. This eases modernization burdens, reduces hardware refresh costs, and paves the way for future flexibility.



6. Better support for AI-ready infrastructure

Today, a major message that all infrastructure providers are heeding is that AI workloads require infrastructure that can evolve independently throughout compute, storage, networking, and accelerators. Organizations are discovering that AI is not simply another application workload. It changes infrastructure planning requirements across the entire stack.



7. Multi-workload support

Many infrastructures are no longer primarily VM consolidation platforms. They must support a variegated set of workloads, including VMware, containers, AI, analytics, and edge workloads simultaneously.

For customers that remain on VMware, Dell Private Cloud can also serve as an infrastructure foundation for VMware Cloud Foundation while simplifying deployment and lifecycle management. It provides a platform that can evolve toward private cloud, private AI, and hybrid cloud operating models. This becomes increasingly important not only for Dell customers but for VMware customers moving off vSphere) and toward VMware Cloud Foundation (VCF), version 9.1.

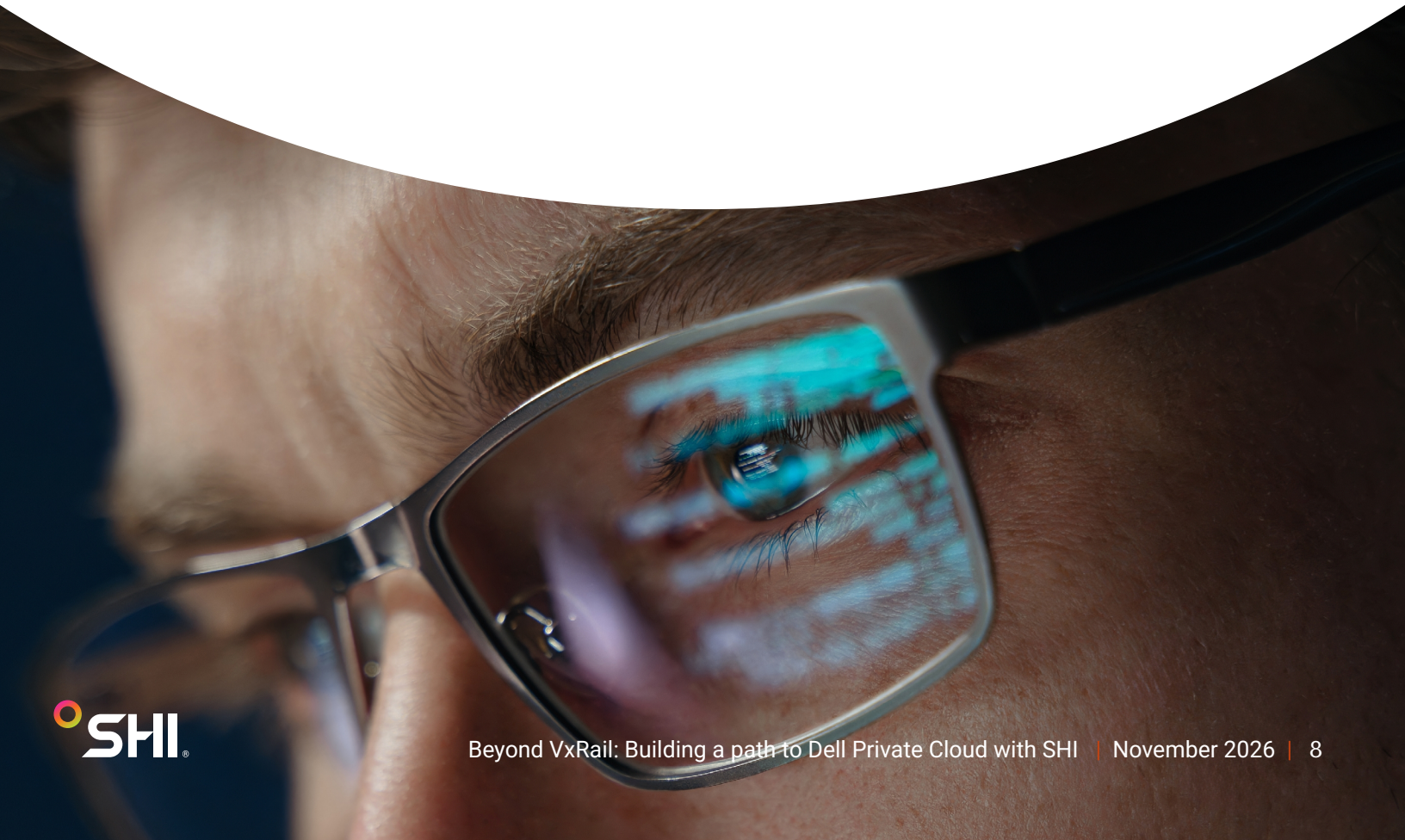
With the release of VCF 9.1, organizations gain the capability to deploy mixed hardware. This feature allows customers to combine VxRail and Dell vSAN Ready Node hardware within the same VCF deployment – within defined Dell support guardrails, marking a new era of infrastructure deployment versatility.

Why Dell Private Cloud still matters for VMware Private AI Cloud customers

Organizations pursuing VMware Cloud Foundation and VMware Private AI might assume that selecting the VMware software stack largely determines their infrastructure strategy. Increasingly, however, infrastructure flexibility is becoming just as important as software selection.

Dell Private Cloud allows organizations to support VMware-based AI initiatives while benefiting from a disaggregated infrastructure model. This helps organizations avoid overprovisioning resources and adapt infrastructure investments more efficiently as AI workloads mature.

For many organizations, this can mean deploying Dell Private Cloud alongside VMware Private AI Cloud. The question is how to build a platform that can accommodate both today's VMware workloads and tomorrow's AI requirements without continually redesigning the underlying infrastructure. Dell Private Cloud provides the flexibility through reusable infrastructure, bring-your-own VMware licensing, automation, lifecycle management, and validated blueprints, while preserving the option to support additional cloud operating environments in the future if business requirements change. This approach creates a “both and” approach with added value from each platform.





Building a foundation for the next decade with Dell Private Cloud

AI, hybrid cloud, modern applications, and evolving economic pressures are driving organizations toward cloud operating models that provide greater flexibility, automation, and workload portability. Dell Private Cloud helps organizations evolve toward that future.

For existing VxRail customers, the conversation is about expanding beyond traditional HCI toward a cloud operating model. For VMware vSphere customers, it is an opportunity to modernize operations while creating a path toward VMware Cloud Foundation and AI-ready infrastructure.

The organizations that begin this transition now will be better positioned to treat infrastructure not as a constraint on innovation, but as a platform for it.

How SHI can enable your Dell VxRail migration to Dell Private Cloud

Migrating from Dell VxRail to Dell Private Cloud is not simply a hardware refresh or platform replacement decision. It is an opportunity to reevaluate how infrastructure supports all aspects of the environment, from virtualization and private cloud to AI.

But modernization does not have to mean replacing a functioning VxRail environment all at once. For organizations with significant remaining lifecycle on their VxRail nodes, the better strategy may be to modernize the software foundation first and transition the underlying infrastructure over time. That is especially relevant with VMware Cloud Foundation (VCF) 9.1, which provides an in-place upgrade path for eligible existing VxRail environments and greater flexibility to incorporate different Dell hardware within a VCF deployment.

As a result, organizations are asking a broader set of questions such as these:

1



Which workloads should remain on VMware?

2



How can we get to VCF 9.1 while protecting the useful life of our existing VxRail investment?

3



When should aging VxRail nodes be replaced with Dell Private Cloud infrastructure?

4



Does a move to disaggregated architecture align with long-term business objectives?



SHI helps organizations answer these questions and turn what could be a disruptive migration into a phased modernization roadmap.

For customers committed to the Broadcom/VMware ecosystem, that also means helping establish a true VCF 9.1 environment first, while evaluating the remaining lifecycle and suitability of existing VxRail infrastructure.

The objective is not simply to replace VxRail because a newer platform exists. It is to determine when and where modernization creates enough value to justify the investment, while getting more value from infrastructure that still has useful life.

SHI experts can assess existing VxRail and VMware environments, evaluate infrastructure utilization, identify cloud repatriation opportunities, and develop a roadmap for transitioning toward a more flexible private cloud operating model. SHI offers total cost of ownership workshops to understand the customer's existing environment and define recommendations around business outcomes rather than beginning with a predetermined product decision.

Whether customers are preparing for VCF 9.1, planning a VxRail refresh, evaluating Dell Private Cloud, or building infrastructure for AI, SHI can help determine what should move, what should stay, and in what order. From workload placement and infrastructure sizing to private cloud design and AI-ready infrastructure planning, SHI can turn modernization from a onetime migration project into a sequenced strategy that protects existing investments while building toward the architecture customers will need next.



Next steps

SHI helps organizations deploy, manage, and upgrade IT infrastructure with a phased modernization strategy that protects existing investments while building a flexible foundation for AI.

Learn about the Dell Private Cloud; get an assessment