VMware Cloud Foundation

Version 9

Offering summary

VMware Cloud Foundation (VCF) is Broadcom's flagship software offering from its VMware brand. It represents the latest and boldest attempt to incorporate multiple software products under a single offering. The offering includes advanced capabilities in multiple areas, which include compute (vSphere and Tanzu), storage (vSAN), network (NSX) and management. In contrast to previous disjointed attempts, VCF 9 demonstrates the benefits that come from investment in deeper product integration. Virtified expects the current approach to continue through at least 2028.

There is no doubt that VMware commands the largest share of the market for virtualised and hyperconverged infrastructure (VHCI) software. At the time of publication, VCF 9 has received the highest technical score among VHCI offerings evaluated by Virtified for the data centre use case. This position is well-earned and derived from over two decades of deep engineering effort.

It is not our analysis of VCF that raises concern. Rather, it is VMware's shift to private cloud[1]. Virtified considers this to be short-sighted; our research indicates that the overwhelming majority of enterprises will continue to favour a hybrid approach (despite challenges with managing public cloud expenditure and compliance mandates).

Strengths

1. **Financial viability**: Broadcom has demonstrated strong long-term financial performance. Its post-acquisition growth continues and its product portfolio is diversified across both hardware and software.

2. **Pedigree** and **completeness**: Refer to Key Considerations and Offering summary.

Challenges

1. **Customer sentiment**: Forced changes to pricing, licensing and packaging have had a significant negative impact. Virtified has spoken with hundreds of customers who are being pressured into purchasing functionality that they had not previously intended to adopt[2].

2. **Partner sentiment**: Forced changes to VMware's extensive partner ecosystem have had drastic implications for most of VMware's smaller hosting partners and resellers—the majority of which have been deliberately removed from relevant partner programs.

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VMware Cloud Foundation	Broadcom
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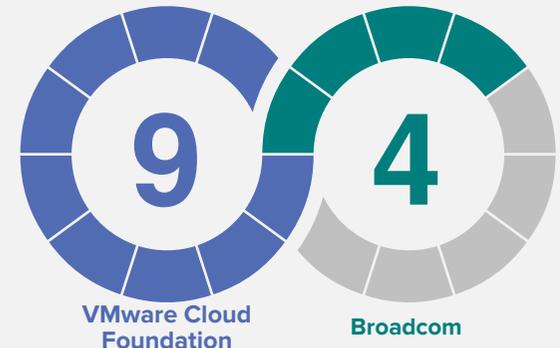
Data centre use case	
Compute	L
Containers & Cloud-Native Integration	L
Core	L
Data Protection & Resiliency	L
Hardware Acceleration & Offload	L
Identity and Access Management (IAM)	S
Management and Administration	L
Memory	L
Network	A
Security	L
Software-Defined Networking	L
Software-Defined Storage	L
Storage Interconnect	L
Storage Services	S
Virtual Resource Management	L
Customer Sentiment (Offering)	+
Documentation	+
Provider	
Financial Viability	+
Corporate Governance	S
Environmental Sustainability	B
Customer Sentiment (Provider)	−
Customer Sentiment (Support)	−
Partner Sentiment (Provider)	−
Value	?

Legend

L	Leader	+	Positive
A	Advanced	/	Neutral
S	Standard	?	Unclear
B	Basic	−	Negative

The Virtified Loops for VHCI evaluate over 100 technical criteria and a specific set of business metrics. Different weightings are applied to each use case. Virtified Loops are an independent and objective review of the provider and offering, which has been undertaken by Virtified Pty Ltd on a best-effort basis and in the interests of supporting improved decision-making. Virtified Pty Ltd does not receive any financial compensation for the analysis contained therein. Put simply, Virtified Loops are not 'cash for comment'.

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Recommendations

1. Continue to rely on VCF as a proven solution for mission-critical on-premises VHCI requirements (particularly organisations dependent upon external storage hardware).

2. Acknowledge and accept the vendor risks associated with your relative importance to Broadcom, which will determine the level of focus and attention that you receive.

3. Optimise existing investments. Reduce usage in non-production environments to divert licenses. Leverage performance-enhancing features (including memory tiering).

4. Investigate your strategic partner's commitment to Broadcom (and vice versa), which will have a direct bearing on ongoing investment by both parties.

5. Reduce your VMware dependence. Virtified does not expect Broadcom's behaviour to change in the foreseeable future.

Key considerations

- vSphere has been the default option for enterprise-scale on-premises VHCI for more than a decade. ESXi is the most widely-deployed hypervisor in the data centre and has a solid reputation for reliability and availability. Likewise, NSX provides advanced functionality for modern enterprise networking requirements.

- Broadcom has consistently indicated its prioritisation of large enterprises, which has alienated most of VMware's customer base.

- Broadcom's go-to-market strategy has created dramatic impact across VMware's vast partner ecosystem (including hardware providers, hyperscalers, hosters and resellers).

- Changes to established storage APIs are starting to raise questions about long-term product strategy and commitments to technology partners.

Provider summary

Broadcom's provider score is a function of its strong financial position. Virtified's financial analysis shows it among the highest when evaluating profitability and efficiency, growth and scalability, health and resilience. With a portfolio of software and hardware offerings, Broadcom has delivered strong shareholder value for many years.

However, market sentiment indicates few other positive indicators for the provider (regarding VCF). Multiple sources show that many customers lost their trust in VMware during 2024[2]. Although the majority acknowledge and value VCF's advanced functionality, Broadcom's behaviour has tarnished its reputation in the VHCI market. The provider has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to increase pricing and change software licensing with limited or no forewarning. Moreover, Broadcom's approach is precedented and echoes its behaviour with the acquisition of CA. Virtified does not expect Broadcom's behaviour to change in the foreseeable future.

- Website: broadcom.com
- Headquarters: USA
- Ownership: Public
- Employees: 50,000
- Total revenue: US$64B (FY2025)

Note 1: "The future of the enterprise is private", Hock Tan, 27 August 2024
Note 2: Virtified has consulted with over 800 VMware customers since Broadcom announced its intention to acquire the company. Our sentiment analysis includes more than 3,000 data points spanning the 18 months up to October 2025.

For more information go to virtified.com

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