



HFS Hot Vendor: Valohai

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Introduction

The HFS Hot Vendors are an exclusive group of emerging players, each with a differentiated value proposition for the HFS OneOffice or HFS OneEcosystem. HFS analysts speak with numerous exciting startups and emerging players.

We designate a select group as HFS Hot Vendors based on their offerings' distinctiveness, ecosystem robustness, client impact, financial position, and the impact in our OneOffice and/or OneEcosystem Frameworks. The HFS Hot Vendors may not (at the time of writing) have the scale and size to be featured in our Top 10 reports, but they have the vision and strategy to impact and disrupt the market.

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Valohai is a machine learning (ML) platform-as-a-service company that helps clients quickly deploy advanced machine learning models by automating their training and deployment infrastructure. The company was founded in Finland in late 2016 after the founders recognized the potential value an infrastructure platform for machine learning and deep learning could bring to enterprises. It went on to onboard its first customers just over a year later, and it has reported impressive growth since, working with over 5,000 data scientists and signing marquee clients, including Twitter and LEGO Group.

The Valohai team saw that enterprises investing in their own machine learning models were often hindered by lengthy setup and training times before they realized any value from their investment. To that end, Valohai's MLOps platform helps its clients automate the training process for machine learning models, ensuring they reach sufficient accuracy, and then efficiently deploys them with "one click" from data scientists. The Valohai leadership team advises that the MLOps platform can be deployed in any environment—cloud, hybrid, or on premises—and integrate with the likes of Git and Jupyter Notebook, making it as simple as possible for enterprises to adopt Valohai with minimal disruption to existing operations.

However, the real value proposition is not just the rapid deployment of a single machine learning model; it's Valohai's ability to help clients do it at scale. Once enterprises have deployed their first model, they are eventually faced with instances where they must re-train the model; for example, when onboarding a new client. Changes could lead to hundreds of models needing constant re-training, a significant resource drain if it's even viable. Valohai's capabilities allow clients to automate the re-training process, too, meaning data scientists can focus on higher-value tasks such as analyzing data and assessing model architecture.

When we connected with a selection of Valohai's clients, they all cited the flexibility of the platform and team as a key strength. One explained that because Valohai is a relatively young company, it is incredibly responsive to client feedback, often amending the platform to fit client needs. Another client explained that the platform's UI/UX made it easier for their data scientists to effectively monitor even the most advanced machine learning models and track execution logs, helping keep the pressure on resources low and ensuring models are as scalable as possible.

HFS' take

HFS has designated Valohai as an HFS OneOffice™ Hot Vendor because of its ability to automate a complex resource-hungry process to drive genuine business value for its clients in emerging technology. One client explained that working with Valohai made its teams more efficient as they could look beyond model training and deployment; it made them happier because they could focus on value-adding tasks, allowing them to deploy new products faster and at scale. Another client claimed that by leveraging Valohai, it could deploy approximately 10 times more machine learning models than it could before with no additional strain on resources—an impressive efficiency gain.

However, one client advised that while Valohai offered some support for best practices in the early stages of leveraging its platform, the client would like to see some more use cases and examples from previous clients to ease the adoption process. The client explained this would save time “brainstorming” with the Valohai team and allow it to get “up and running” much faster. Another client cited challenges around file management and how it would like to see Valohai include a better method of filtering executions, ensuring data scientists had access to only the information they needed rather than the entire catalog. As the vendor finds more success out in the market, it will need to proactively develop and share best practices through targeted communications and community development programs.

Vendor factsheet

- **Founded:** 2016
- **Key personnel:** Eero Laaksonen, CEO; Otso Rasimus, CIO; Aarni Koskela, CTO; and Ruksi Laine, ML Engineer
- **Headquarters:** Turku, Finland, with other locations in Helsinki, Finland, and San Francisco, California, USA
- **Funding:** Raised a seed round in 2019, led by Angular Ventures
- **Clients:** 50+
- **Key clients:** Twitter, Syngenta, LEGO Group, Maytronics, Jfrog, Neonode, KONUX, Preligens, Sama, Omhu, Greensteam, Berlin Brands Group, Yousician

Solutions portfolio

- Valohai provides an MLOps platform that supports and accelerates clients' machine learning projects by automating the model training and deployment infrastructure.

Industry coverage

- Valohai is industry agnostic, working with clients from multiple sectors.

Partnerships

- Valohai is a founding member of the AI Infrastructure Alliance (AIIA).



About HFS

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HFS is a unique analyst organization that combines deep visionary expertise with rapid demand side analysis of the Global 2000. Its outlook for the future is admired across the global technology and business operations industries.

Its analysts are respected for their no-nonsense insights based on demand side data and engagements with industry practitioners.

HFS Research introduced the world to terms such as “RPA” (Robotic Process Automation) in 2012 and more recently, the HFS OneOffice™. The HFS mission is to provide visionary insight into the major innovations impacting business operations such as Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Internet of Things, Digital Business Models and Smart Analytics.

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