THE VMWARE EXIT HAS ENTERED THE COEXISTENCE ERA

Dual-platform operations. Control plane fragmentation.
The operating model most organizations didn't plan for.

"Replace VMware" Became "Reduce VMware Dependency"

1/3

of VMware workloads projected to alternative platforms by 2028

2/3

not moving — or not moving on any near-term timeline

Oct 2027

VCF 8 EoGS deadline — decision pressure, not execution speed

The de facto posture: contain the existing VMware environment, route new workloads elsewhere, operate both indefinitely.

The Hypervisor Moved. The Control Plane Didn't.

REPLACEABLE

ESXi / Hypervisor

AHV, KVM, and Proxmox have demonstrated this at enterprise scale.

NOT REPLACEABLE IN ONE MOTION

01 vCenter RBAC & Policy Hierarchy

02 NSX Network Policy Enforcement

03 SRM DR Orchestration & Runbooks

04 Aria Automation Workflows

05 Backup/DR API Layer (Veeam, Rubrik)

Third-party tooling integrated at the vCenter API layer — not the hypervisor. Moving the hypervisor breaks those integrations.

THE FRAGMENTED CONTROL PLANE

The operational state where infrastructure authority is distributed across multiple virtualization platforms, tooling layers, and governance surfaces simultaneously — with no unified authority model binding them.

01 Two governance paths · different RBAC models & policy engines

02 Two API surfaces · tooling that assumes vCenter breaks on AHV

03 Two backup models · different consistency guarantees & RTOs

04 Two lifecycle systems · patch cadence & upgrade windows diverge

05 Two observability stacks · operational memory splits across both

06 Two DR runbook sets · separate validation cycles, separate risk

Migration Programs Don't Stall. They Collide.

01 APPLICATION DEPENDENCY REALITY

Dependency chains invisible in the PoC surface at migration time. Undocumented integrations and hardcoded platform assumptions don't survive a hypervisor swap.

02 COMPLIANCE CONSTRAINTS

Compliance requirements tied to SRM orchestration and vCenter audit trails have no drop-in equivalent. Re-validation is required — and it takes time.

03 DR ASYMMETRY

VMware estate: 10 years of validated recovery procedures. Alternative platform estate: 18 months old. Operational maturity gap is closed by operating, not migrating.

The Final 20% Problem

The last 20% of a VMware estate represents 80% of the remaining migration complexity. Most organizations reach this point and recalculate.

04 OPERATIONAL RETRAINING COST

Every migrated workload adds dual-platform competency cost. Teams must maintain deep expertise in both stacks simultaneously — that doesn't amortize quickly.

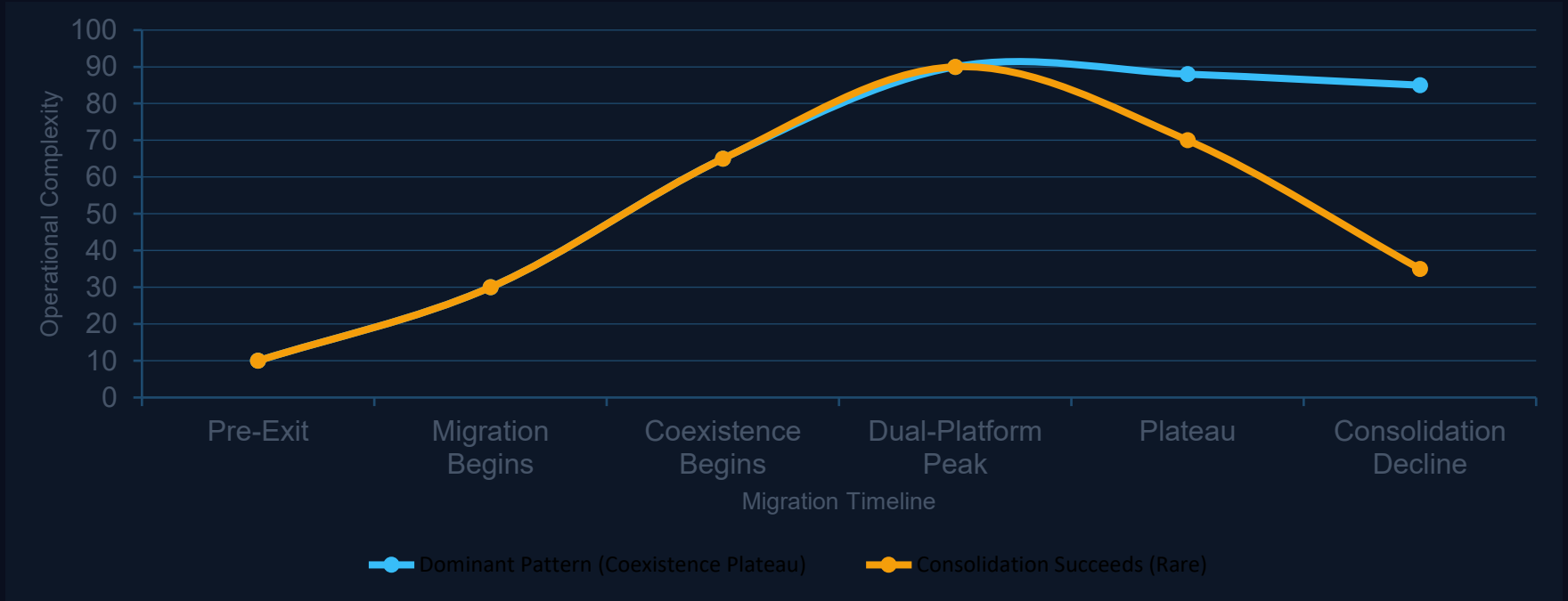
05 TOOLING DIVERGENCE

Backup, SIEM, observability, and ITSM integrations rebuilt for the alternative platform run in parallel. The tooling surface doubles before any consolidation is possible.

06 EXECUTIVE MIGRATION FATIGUE

Multi-year programs compete with AI infrastructure, cloud repatriation, and platform modernization for the same engineering capacity. VMware migration becomes a background initiative.

Complexity Spikes Before It Declines — If It Declines At All.



Two Platforms. Two Authority Models. No Single Enforcement Surface.

INCONSISTENT POLICY ENFORCEMENT

vCenter RBAC doesn't map cleanly to AHV Flow, Kubernetes RBAC, or cloud IAM. Policies require separate definition and audit evidence on each platform.

DIVERGENT DR PROCEDURES

SRM-orchestrated recovery vs. manual/Veeam-orchestrated recovery. Different RTOs, different runbooks, different validation requirements — and they diverge over time.

DUPLICATED OBSERVABILITY

Two monitoring stacks, two alerting configs, two dashboards. Operational memory distributes across both. Neither platform sees the complete state.

SHADOW OPERATIONAL AUTHORITY

Teams revert to platform-specific tribal knowledge. Governance documents become aspirational. Compliance surface fractures — demonstrating consistent posture requires evidence from both.

Strategic Flexibility
At the Expense of Operational Efficiency.

Most coexistence architectures initially optimize for strategic flexibility at the expense of operational efficiency. The licensing cost goes down. The operational cost does not.

01 VMware support contracts — retained at Broadcom subscription rates for legacy estate

02 Nutanix / AHV licensing — new contracts running in parallel with VMware

03 Backup vendors — two integration paths, or two separate vendors

04 SIEM + observability — two platforms generating two independent event streams

05 DR validation labor — two test cycles, two runbook sets, two platforms to certify

06 Operational certifications — platform competency needed on both stacks simultaneously

>_ ARCHITECT'S VERDICT

The organizations struggling most are trying to replace a control plane with a hypervisor swap.

The hypervisor was never the dependency. The control plane was.

Coexistence is not evidence the migration failed. It's evidence the operational dependency graph was deeper than the original migration plan acknowledged. Design for it deliberately — or inherit the worst version of it by accident.

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rack2cloud.com/vmware-coexistence-era/

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