## Business challenge

Before converting to SAP S/4HANA®, System Design Analysis (SDA) clients needed to evaluate their infrastructure requirements and find ways to reduce the cost and footprint of their new investments.

## Transformation

With SDA as their technology architect, a large Canadian city and a large Canadian retailer chose IBM® Power® Systems and Storage systems to support SAP S/4HANA. SAP-certified IBM systems saved money for SDA clients on hardware acquisition and infrastructure costs while delivering the highest performance required by SAP S/4HANA.

## Results

**4 out of 5 SDA clients**
chose IBM Power Systems and Storage systems for SAP environments when deciding to move to SAP HANA®

**50% footprint reduction**
by using IBM Power Systems to manage SAP workloads (compared to other systems)

**Ready to meet 2027 SAP S/4HANA migration deadline**
by delivering the higher levels of performance SAP S/4HANA requires

# System Design Analysis, Inc.

## Future-ready–building the road to SAP S/4HANA on IBM Power Systems

Since 2003, IBM Business Partner SDA has provided technology consulting services to clients across North America. Part of the SAP PartnerEdge® open ecosystem, SDA focuses on SAP technical architecture and design including hardware and infrastructure sizing and selection, SAP technology roadmaps for on-premise and cloud, and migration and conversion strategies. SDA differentiates itself by helping clients on their Digital Transformation Journey and building SAP Digital Transformation Roadmaps and technical architecture to move to SAP S/4HANA, SAP® BW/4HANA, and SAP® C/4HANA as soon as possible.

***"We pride ourselves on being objective. But IBM ends up being the best option or one of the best options when we make recommendations to clients."***

—Sean Shea-Schrier, SAP Technology Architect and Partner, SDA, Inc.

SAP Platinum Partner

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## A deadline and an opportunity

Since its inception in 1972, SAP has grown to become the worldwide market leader in enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. Over 400,000 customers rely on SAP platforms to streamline their business practices. One of the biggest reasons for the wide application of SAP is the ability to customize its software for different business needs.

Despite the different ways they apply SAP software, all SAP customers share something in common–a looming deadline. After 2027, SAP will only provide support for SAP S/4HANA, its flagship ERP software suite. This means that businesses running older SAP Business Suite (ERP, CRM, SRM, SCM, HCM, PLM, and more) products must migrate to SAP S/4HANA to continue receiving technical support after 2027.

SDA, a Canadian-based IT consulting firm, specializes in SAP technology and helps clients move from legacy systems to more modern versions. "SAP S/4HANA provides a foundation for our clients to digitize their business with AI and use real-time analytics and robotic process automation," says Sean Shea-Schrier, SAP Technology Architect and Partner for SDA. "Because SAP's new products run on top of the SAP HANA Platform, which is an in-memory database, they need a more sophisticated infrastructure.

> ***"IBM Power Systems was also the least expensive option because we were able to install a much smaller footprint."***
>
> —Sean Shea-Schrier, SAP Technology Architect and Partner, SDA, Inc.

Instead of gigabytes of memory, it's now terabytes of memory. Overall, it's a big change."

SDA provides technology blueprints to help clients optimize both productive and non-productive SAP environments. "Clients have to start thinking about consolidating their systems to make them cost-effective," says Shea-Schrier. "For example, a project in the past might have cost USD 150,000 in hardware and now it could be ten times more. The technical challenges are significant so they can't wait to 2027 to do this. They have to start much earlier."

## Roadmap for successful SAP conversion

Due to the complexity of upgrading highly customized SAP environments to SAP S/4HANA, many organizations are turning to SDA before starting the conversion process.

A large Canadian municipality came to SDA and posed the question: are we ready to convert our current SAP environment to a full SAP S/4HANA implementation? Complicating the question was the fact that the city had a large non-production SAP environment that included critical applications such as payroll.

As it does for all of its clients, SDA conducted an objective analysis of different technology platforms to support SAP, including multiple vendors for an on-premise solution, as well as virtualization, cloud and hybrid options. "We evaluated each platform in terms of price, performance, resiliency and what was best for the organization," says Shea-Schrier. "The end result was that on-premise IBM Power Systems was the best solution for the city."

"In fact, IBM Power Systems was also the least expensive option because we were able to install a much smaller footprint," Shea-Schrier says. "To manage the city's payroll on-premise with SAP S/4HANA, we installed seven IBM servers instead of the 14 servers that would be required from another vendor to handle the workload. And those seven Power servers were for the primary site as well as disaster recovery."

One of the seven IBM servers installed for the city included an IBM Power System S924 unit, with 30 percent more performance per core and twice the memory capacity of IBM POWER8® servers.

The combination of IBM Power Systems running on the SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications reduces power consumption and minimizes cooling requirements, which also helps lower the total cost of ownership.

After analyzing the technical aspects of the city's IT system, SDA determined that its municipal client was not ready to make a complete move to SAP S/4HANA. "We developed a technology roadmap based on a five-year time frame," says Shea-Schrier. "By upgrading their infrastructure and moving core systems to SAP Business Suite Powered by SAP HANA as a first step, they will be on track for 2027."

For another SAP S/4HANA implementation project, SDA advised a large Canadian retail chain how to upgrade its IBM iSeries infrastructure with IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage systems. "This solution went smoothly and enabled the retail chain to build out an initial platform for SAP HANA that would also be ready for SAP S/4HANA," says Shea-Schrier. "Like the majority of our clients that go with IBM Power Systems for SAP HANA, they also chose IBM Storage to go along with it."

The storage components included the IBM FlashSystem® 5010 as well as IBM FlashSystem 5030 and Storwize® V7000 systems with all-flash memory—all built with IBM Spectrum® Virtualize technology designed to reduce the cost of

storing data through increased utilization and data reduction.

SDA understands that its clients don't want to worry about the hardware infrastructure that supports their SAP environments. "Our clients need to focus on their business and their digital transformation," says Shea-Schrier. "IBM is scalable and easy to work with."

## A technology roadmap to the future

As technology architects, SDA takes an independent, unbiased stance when evaluating options for its clients. "We act as trusted advisors and impartial third parties in a collaborative manner," says Shea-Schrier. "However, in four out of five cases, we recommend IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage because they naturally come out on top."

From a technical standpoint, SDA appreciates the resilience and high availability of IBM Power Systems. "It stems from the ability to use a smaller number of servers and carve them up with large amounts of memory and different logical partitions," Shea-Schrier says. "When you deal with SAP systems that need large amounts of memory and CPU capacity, it surpasses the limitations of virtualized systems which can become unruly to manage."

With the clock ticking on meeting SAP's 2027 deadline, SDA is focused on helping SAP clients put the right infrastructure in place to support the full implementation of SAP S/4HANA. "From an advisory point of view, building infrastructures with IBM has been a much better experience for our clients," says Shea-Schrier. "It's a great relationship."

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> —Sean Shea-Schrier, SAP Technology Architect and Partner, SDA, Inc.

### Solution components

- IBM® FlashSystem®
- SAP HANA®
- IBM Power® Systems S924
- IBM POWER8®
- SAP S/4HANA®
- IBM Spectrum® Virtualize
- SUSE® Enterprise Server for SAP Applications

### Take the next step

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