



Business challenge

C.Vale aimed to drive food production efficiency by adding new applications and analytics to its SAP ERP landscape. How could it provide sufficient compute resources to manage the increased workload?

Transformation

To support the new SAP ERP applications, C.Vale upgraded its IBM® Power Systems™ platform to IBM POWER9® processor-based E980 servers, integrated with IBM Storage solutions.

Business benefits:

42%
increase in
compute resources

23%
reduction in monthly
compute costs

Up to 19%
faster SAP ERP application
response times

C.Vale Produces better food for Brazilians by gaining enhanced business control with IBM and SAP

Founded in 1963 and today headquartered in Palotina, Brazil, C.Vale has 151 business units in the states of Parana, Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul and also in Paraguay. Its activities involve the production of soybeans, corn, wheat, milk, poultry, fish, pork, manioc and animal feed. For its associates, C.Vale provides technical support, agricultural credit, agricultural and livestock inputs, soy seeds and also the sale of agricultural machinery and parts. The co-operative manages a network of seven supermarkets and one hypermarket.

“Since we deployed our IBM Power Systems E980 servers, we’ve lowered our operational costs by 23 percent per month.”

Evandro Donel Foster
IT Supervisor
C.Vale

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Managing a multi-billion-dollar business

For more than 50 years, C.Vale has played a key role in agricultural production in Brazil. Today, the company drives multi-billion-dollar operations, and employs more than 10,000 people across 150 business units.

Managing complex, interconnected operations at scale demands effective control. Like many leading enterprises in its industry, C.Vale relies on SAP ERP applications to manage its business processes.

Evandro Donel Foster, IT Supervisor at C.Vale, explains: “Our SAP business systems help us coordinate our work with a degree of precision and efficiency that would be impossible to achieve with manual processes alone. SAP ERP applications support practically every part of the enterprise: from procurement and supply chain management to accounting and logistics.”

Gaining insights, cutting costs

Operating in a low-margin, high-volume sector, any improvements in cost-efficiency can have a significant impact on C.Vale’s bottom line. To uncover opportunities to reduce costs, the company augmented its SAP business systems with the SAP HANA in-memory computing platform: the beginning of a major digital transformation initiative for the company.

“With SAP ERP and SAP HANA solutions running on IBM Power Systems E980 servers together with IBM Storage, we’ve gained a cost-efficient, scalable platform to continue our digital transformation.”

Evandro Donel Foster, IT Supervisor, C.Vale

Targeting data-driven workflows

To drive further operational efficiencies, C.Vale decided to extend data-driven decision-making to more parts of its business. To open the way to the next phase of its digital transformation, the company aimed to deploy additional SAP ERP solutions, as well as extending and enhancing its existing applications.

“More than 1,400 employees log into our SAP business systems simultaneously at peak times, and business demand for data-driven services is growing constantly,” comments Evandro Donel Foster. “We knew that adding new applications to our SAP environment would require a significant increase in compute resources. To create that headroom, we looked for a new server platform.”

Building on a trusted platform

For many years, C.Vale has relied on IBM Power Systems servers with IBM POWER8® processors to support its SAP business systems. Based on its positive experiences with the platform, the company decided to move to a new compute infrastructure based on the latest-generation IBM POWER9 processors.

“Many of our core business activities depend on SAP business systems, which makes a rock-solid server platform essential for C.Vale,” explains Evandro Donel Foster. “One of the things we appreciate most about IBM Power Systems servers is their reliability—they’ve never let us down. As a result, we were confident that moving to IBM POWER9-processor-based systems would help us maintain high levels of availability for our business users.”

He adds: “Another major benefit we see in using IBM Power Systems servers is their price/performance ratio. We realized that we could consolidate our three existing IBM Power Systems E880C servers into just two IBM Power Systems E980 servers, reducing our total cost of ownership [TCO] while boosting our compute resources at the same time.”

Selecting expert partners

C.Vale aimed to complete its move to the new server platform in a small window of planned downtime. To help minimize the amount of time its SAP business systems were offline during the process, the company engaged a team of experts from [IBM Systems Lab Services](#).

“We set an aggressive deadline for our move to the new IBM Power Systems E980 servers, and support from IBM Systems Lab Services was instrumental in making it happen,” continues Evandro Donel Foster. “Over a period of three months, the IBM team helped us meticulously prepare for the move by updating our IBM AIX operating system, which supports our data protection solutions and a select number of our SAP applications.

“The IBM team also helped us design migration scripts, and perform a comprehensive array of tests. As a result of this careful preparation, we successfully moved our SAP business systems to the new IBM Power Systems E980 servers on target and within a matter of weeks.”

Seamless deployment

By taking advantage of the Live Partition Mobility (LPM) capability of IBM Power Systems servers, IBM Systems Lab Services was able to move many of C.Vale’s logical partitions (LPARs) seamlessly. Because LPM preserves processor state, memory, attached virtual devices, and connected users during the process, many of the company’s SAP ERP applications required no downtime during the process.

Delivered and integrated by IBM Silver Business Partner LB2, C.Vale’s new SAP platform consists of two [IBM Power Systems E980](#) servers with LPARs running [IBM AIX](#)® and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications. The SUSE platform supports the majority of the company’s SAP applications, as well as the SAP HANA data platform itself.

Deployed in an active/active high-availability configuration with [IBM PowerHA](#)®, the new solution ensures that the company’s SAP business systems will stay online even in the event of an unplanned outage at one of its data centers. By orchestrating the platform with [IBM PowerVC](#)®, C.Vale can automate the provisioning of new LPARs—helping it roll out new SAP ERP applications rapidly.

High-performance storage

The new IBM Power Systems platform is connected to C.Vale’s existing IBM Storage environment, based on two [IBM Storwize](#)® V7000 and two [IBM Storwize V7000F](#) for tier-one storage, [IBM Storwize V5020](#) for tier-two SAP ERP application storage and [IBM TS4500 Tape Library](#) for long-term data retention.

Evandro Donel Foster comments: “Reliable, low-latency storage plays an important role in delivering high end-user performance for our SAP applications—and we see that our IBM Storage solutions are helping us to maximize the value of our investment in the SAP platform.”

Managed from a single point with [IBM Spectrum](#)® Control and backed up automatically with [IBM Spectrum Protect](#), the [IBM Spectrum Storage](#) solutions help the company boost storage resource utilization while minimizing manual administration requirements.

Evandro Donel Foster adds: “We were extremely impressed by how smoothly the implementation project went. Throughout the process, we knew we could call on IBM Systems Lab Services and LB2 whenever we needed support, and both companies worked together very effectively to help us keep the work on time and within budget.”

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Evandro Donel Foster, IT Supervisor, C.Vale

Room to grow

By moving its SAP business systems to IBM Power Systems E980 servers and IBM Storage, C.Vale has gained the scalability to extend and enhance its SAP ERP application landscape—empowering it to bring more of its workflows under tighter, digital control.

“Despite the fact that we consolidated from 144 IBM POWER8 cores to 96 IBM POWER9 cores, we’ve cut end-user SAP ERP application response times by around 19 percent and SAP HANA access times by approximately 14 percent,” says Evandro Donel Foster. “Our new platform offers us a 42 percent increase in compute resources, which enables us to run more compute-intensive SAP ERP applications concurrently.”

Ready for the future

By reducing the number of servers and cores, C.Vale has cut the TCO for its IBM Power Systems E980 platform significantly. As well as shrinking its energy consumption by 37 percent, the company has reduced its IBM AIX licenses by 46 percent, its IBM PowerVC licenses by 33 percent, and its SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications licenses by 22 percent.

Evandro Donel Foster concludes, “Since we deployed our IBM Power Systems E980 servers, we’ve lowered our operational costs by 23 percent per month. Thanks to the cost-savings we’ve gained with our new IBM Power Systems platform, we can redirect investment in service improvements for the business. With SAP ERP and SAP HANA solutions running on IBM Power Systems E980 servers together with IBM Storage, we’ve gained a cost-efficient, scalable platform to continue our digital transformation. As we integrate more of our business processes with SAP ERP, we’re confident that we can build an even leaner, larger and more efficient enterprise.”

Solution components

- IBM® PowerHA®
- IBM Power Systems™ E880C
- IBM Power Systems E980
- IBM PowerVC
- IBM Spectrum® Control
- IBM Spectrum Protect
- IBM Storwize® V5020
- IBM Storwize V7000
- IBM Storwize V7000F
- IBM Systems Lab Services
- IBM TS4500 Tape Library
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications
- IBM Business Partner LB2

Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM SAP Alliance, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/sap

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