



Business challenge

This multi-billion-dollar agribusiness aimed to drive fast growth whilst reducing headcount — but acquired legacy systems stood in the way.

Transformation

The business worked with IBM® Services® to transform its core application landscape, powered by integrated SAP solutions, including SAP S/4HANA® on Microsoft Azure.

Business benefits:

Creates

unified business data to enable enterprise decision-making, boosting efficiency

Standardizes

processes, enhancing governance and reducing business risk

Empowers

a lean team to drive a multi-billion-dollar business, facilitating growth

Global agribusiness Targeting industry leadership with an SAP Intelligent Enterprise strategy delivered by IBM

Part of a large, international group of companies, this agribusiness is focused on becoming a world leader in its industry.

“Having IBM Services as our trusted advisor was, and continues to be, extremely helpful.”

Spokesperson
global agribusiness

Share this



Targeting industry leadership

This agribusiness has set its sights on global leadership, and aims to become one of the five largest players in the industry.

The company operates through multiple legal entities across many countries. Many of these entities were the result of several acquisitions, each with their own legacy processes and independent IT systems.

A spokesperson for the agribusiness explains, “After acquiring two medium-sized companies, our business volumes grew rapidly and annual revenues climbed dramatically. Despite that change, we’ve remained a lean organization.”

The spokesperson continues, “We knew that it would be impossible to achieve fast growth with so many different legacy systems resulting in different sets of business data, hampering efficiency and ultimately slowing down our decision-making. To solve the challenge, we looked for a new approach.”

The company was confident that consolidating its legacy business systems would bring far-reaching benefits. By centralizing the delivery of IT services, the company could decommission costly on-premises data center infrastructure, resulting in an immediate reduction in operational costs.



Most importantly, the move to a harmonized way of working would enable the company to harness a single source of business data to unlock efficiencies in human resources, procurement, financial accounting and more—vital to drive global growth with a limited headcount.

Selecting a proven solution

To maximize the synergies with other parts of its organization that also rely on SAP solutions, the agribusiness decided to move to [SAP S/4HANA](#) and [SAP Master Data Governance](#). Combined with [SAP® Ariba®](#) (an end-to-end procurement solution that includes supplier lifecycle management, contract management and strategic sourcing capabilities), [SAP SuccessFactors®](#) for human resource management, and

[SAP Concur](#) for travel and expense management, the solutions enable unified global operations based on a single, enterprise-wide data foundation.

The spokesperson elaborates, “We wanted a single global platform that would support us in the long term and enhance our ties with the rest of the group. By choosing a long-established vendor with a proven track-record of success in our industry, that’s precisely what we’ve gained.”

For flexibility, scalability, and cost optimization, the enterprise chose to deploy SAP S/4HANA and SAP Master Data Governance on [Microsoft Azure](#).

The spokesperson says, “By selecting cutting-edge SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure, we were confident that we could harness native integration with

cloud platforms such as SAP Ariba to reduce the complexity and duration of the implementation process. We also saw great benefit in embracing the [SAP Fiori®](#) user experience, particularly as enterprise mobility is a key aspiration for the next phase of our business transformation journey.”

Partnering with the experts

To turn its vision for a global back-office process template into a reality, the agribusiness engaged [IBM Services](#) to drive its business transformation project.

The spokesperson explains, “After a thorough vendor evaluation process, IBM Services stood out as the clear leader. IBM had previously worked to deploy SAP ERP solutions to one of our subsidiaries, so they already had a solid working knowledge of our business processes, culture and commodities trading systems in the front office.

“These insights proved to be a solid foundation for the project, and IBM Services gave us the confidence that we would be able to move quickly to meet our aggressive target for the SAP solution deployment. Equally, the close strategic partnership between IBM and SAP assured us that both companies would be able to resolve any technical challenges along the way quickly and effectively.”

Harnessing best practices

IBM Services recommended the IBM Ascend for SAP Application Development methodology for the transformation project. This phased approach guides companies through iterative stages of exploration, requirements-gathering, gap analysis and process design. With the exception of the SAP Concur deployment, which was to be managed as a separate internal project, the agribusiness worked closely with IBM Services on the SAP solution implementation process.

In conjunction with the IBM Ascend methodology, IBM used **IBM IMPACT**—a collection of tools and best practices that help to accelerate SAP deployments. Using the IMPACT toolset, IBM made an instances of SAP S/4HANA available in a sandbox environment from the earliest stage of the design process. As well as helping to engage business users from the outset, the IBM IMPACT toolset empowered the project team to quickly understand which SAP solution functionality it could use straight out of the box, and which areas would require custom development.

Using IBM Blueworks Live, a component of the IBM IMPACT toolset, IBM Services enabled the company to accelerate the business process modelling process using best practice templates and powerful data visualizations.



“The agile approach, IBM Ascend methodology and IBM IMPACT toolset that IBM brought to the transformation initiative created an environment where teams from across the global business could freely share expertise and insights with their peers in other regions and geographies,” adds the spokesperson. “By assigning global business process owners and forming a new process advisory council, we gathered requirements and best practices with the involvement of employees from across the organization—and together we have designed our new global processes.”

“Thanks to our work with IBM Services to deploy SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure, we are building world-leading digital capabilities for less than a third of the total investment of our nearest competitor.”

Spokesperson, global agribusiness

Making the vision a reality

Thanks to its agile approach from earliest phase of the design process, the agribusiness completed its global back-office template in less than eight months and worked with IBM to deploy SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure for an initial pilot project. In parallel, the company rolled out SAP Ariba procurement and contract management solutions to user communities in a number of global regions.

The spokesperson comments, “We hadn’t experienced a global project of this scale before. Having IBM Services as our trusted advisor was, and continues to be, extremely helpful. The IBM team has more experience of similar projects, and were therefore able to provide guidance on the framework for our internal discussions, suggest best

practices, and brainstorm our design options with us, when needed.

“Happily, our first year of SAP deployments went very smoothly, and the solutions are now supporting one of our largest business units by revenue. This success gives the team a great deal of confidence that our designs are correct, and this boost is extremely important as we widen our scope to deploy the SAP solutions to the next wave of countries in 2020 and 2021.”

Staying lean, growing fast

The company is confident that SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure will enable it to stay lean, continue its fast-paced global growth, and ultimately continue to compete as a world-class agribusiness.

“The transformation initiative is already making fundamental changes to the way that we work, and we have no doubt that the transformation journey we’re on with IBM Services will have a powerful, positive impact on our operational efficiency, elaborates the spokesperson. “For example, by moving a single chart of accounts in SAP S/4HANA, we will create opportunities to automate transaction processing and enhance our month- and year-end closing cycles.”

The spokesperson adds, “The efficiency improvements won’t be limited to our finance function. We recently opened

a new center of excellence [CoE], which is already delivering sourcing and procurement services to our business using SAP Ariba. Looking ahead, we plan to centralize many of our back-office processes to the CoE, including human resources administration, expenses management, recruitment, and accounting—all managed using SAP solutions.”

As the agribusiness moves more of its business processes to SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure and cloud services such as SAP SuccessFactors, it will decommission much of its on-premises infrastructure. This process is designed to reduce operational costs and enable IT personnel to focus on higher-value work.

Boosting efficiency, improving satisfaction

The company predicts that transitioning to SAP SuccessFactors for human resource management and to SAP Concur for expense management will streamline employee journeys for key administrative processes, saving time and improving employee satisfaction.

The spokesperson remarks, “In the past when employees booked vacation leave, checked their remaining vacation days or claimed for expenses, they and their managers—particularly those based in different countries—often needed to work in several different systems, and/or needed to get support from administrative employees.”

The spokesperson continues, “With SAP SuccessFactors and SAP Concur, all employees will be able to use self-service capabilities online and via mobile devices to complete common user journeys themselves. Eventually, we plan to integrate SAP SuccessFactors and SAP Concur with SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure, which will offer unprecedented insight into the performance of our people strategy.”

The spokesperson concludes, “Thanks to our work with IBM Services to deploy SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure, we are building world-leading digital capabilities for less than a third of the total investment of our nearest competitor. As we continue our collaboration with IBM, we are in a strong position to build the lean, efficient operations we need to reach the very top of our industry.”

Solution components

- IBM® Ascend for SAP Application Development methodology
- IBM IMPACT
- IBM Services®
- Microsoft Azure
- SAP® Ariba®
- SAP Concur
- SAP Fiori®
- SAP Master Data Governance
- SAP S/4HANA®
- SAP SuccessFactors®

Take the next step

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

To learn more about IBM IMPACT solutions, please contact your IBM representative or visit: ibm.com/services/sap/digital-transformation

Connect with us



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2020, IBM Corporation, 1 New Orchard Road, Armonk, NY 10504 U.S.A. Produced in the United States of America, September 2020.

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, and IBM Services are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the Web at “Copyright and trademark information” at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml.

Microsoft, Windows and Windows NT are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates.

The performance data and client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions. THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED “AS IS” WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

The client is responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations applicable to it. IBM does not provide legal advice or represent or warrant that its services or products will ensure that the client is in compliance with any law or regulation.

Statements regarding IBM’s future direction and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice, and represent goals and objectives only.

Actual available storage capacity may be reported for both uncompressed and compressed data and will vary and may be less than stated.

© 2020 SAP SE. All rights reserved. SAP, R/3, SAP NetWeaver, Duet, PartnerEdge, ByDesign, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, StreamWork, SAP HANA, and other SAP products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SAP SE in Germany and other countries. These materials are provided by SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company for informational purposes only, without representation or warranty of any kind, and SAP SE or its affiliated companies shall not be liable for errors or omissions with respect to the materials. This document, or any related presentation, and SAP SE’s or its affiliated companies’ strategy and possible future developments, products, and/or platform directions and functionality are all subject to change and may be changed by SAP SE or its affiliated companies at any time for any reason without notice.



48035648USEN-00

