



# Accenture prepares for a digital future with SAP Business Suite on HANA and S/4 HANA Finance

A large, solid green chevron graphic pointing to the right, positioned behind the text.

High performance. Delivered.

Accenture's internal IT organization is charged with driving the company's digital agenda. Building on the legacy of a notable IT transformation, the organization is focused on three key roles: aligning IT with business priorities, enabling a digital Accenture and driving down the cost of IT. Accenture must put in place the technologies that provide its more than 375,000 employees with access to the information and capabilities to be a high-performance business. The company's single-instance SAP® enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution is critical to the organization's drive for high performance. Separately, Accenture and SAP have a co-development agreement to design, develop and jointly take to market SAP Business Suite on HANA.

## Opportunity

Accenture runs its business on a single global instance of SAP, using it for internal business functions, including Finance, Human Resources, Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC), Forecasting and other capabilities. Accenture's business, however, is changing as the company transforms into a digital and more diverse enterprise. In this new world, Accenture needs to operate with more insight, agility, efficiency and compliance across multiple business units, business processes and applications. This means both the business processes and IT capabilities must contend with a fast pace of change, growth, larger volumes and diverse businesses—all driving the need to evolve Accenture's ERP to be ready for the future.

"We are investing in SAP Business Suite on HANA not because it is needed now," says Dan Kirner, Executive Director of Accenture's SAP Program, "but rather because Accenture will need it in the near future when we will need to be more insightful, agile and faster—a true high-velocity enterprise." At the same time, Accenture is advancing the company's digital agenda, an agenda of investing in technology to operate the business in a digital way. SAP HANA will become Accenture's new platform in its digital transformation agenda to ultimately enable a strong foundation for long-term performance.

## Solution

Accenture has consistently kept its SAP application up to date, treating SAP as a significant business asset. "Instead of having 50 different cars, so to speak," says Kirner, "we have one highly powerful, technically advanced automobile, and we take care of it." Accenture viewed a migration to SAP Business Suite on HANA as a key step on its digital road map—an opportunity to deliver value to the business and to meet future business needs.

For these reasons, Accenture has embarked on the next step of its strategic road map—migrating its current Finance and HR instance to SAP Business Suite on HANA in order to implement new capabilities in the future. This suite is built on SAP's advanced in-memory platform, SAP HANA. In determining the implementation approach to SAP HANA, Accenture recognized there are two key options—migrate and "greenfield." Accenture chose to migrate to SAP HANA considering its highly optimized existing platform and standardized business processes. When an organization's current business processes and configuration cannot meet its future business needs and its current environment consists of diverse platforms, a "greenfield" or reimplementation approach may be better.

## Business challenges and solutions

Accenture's internal IT organization teamed with Accenture Finance to define Accenture's finance vision, needs and challenges and to assess how SAP S/4HANA Finance can address them and provide business value. "Our Finance organization needs to operate with greater responsiveness based on real-time insights," says Grant Ireland, Accenture's Senior Managing Director – Corporate Finance Planning & Strategy, "in order to drive business outcomes and enhance Accenture's competitiveness." This initial assessment gave the team preliminary findings of the value of the migration that Finance and IT then proceeded to prove out.

## Proof of concept

Using the initial findings, the Finance and IT team set up an SAP S/4HANA Finance proof of concept. Three key objectives were set to: 1) determine whether the migrations would provide the desired value, 2) gain an understanding of the technical challenges and 3) determine the cost.

A team consisting of Accenture's internal IT organization, SAP resources from Accenture Technology, Accenture Consulting, Accenture Digital, Accenture Finance subject matter experts and consulting resources from SAP came together to perform the proof of concept. The team defined test business use cases based on key business value levers of speed, agility, analytics and future ERP capabilities. With the use cases prepared, conducting the proof of concept was next.

Working with a masked copy of Accenture's production system, the multi-organization team set up a pilot system in an Accenture Innovation Center for SAP Solutions, performed an upgrade to Enhancement Package 7 and migrated the database to SAP HANA. The team then ran the Accenture HANA Profiler Toolset to identify and apply ABAP programming optimizations and installed SAP S/4HANA Finance. The final steps were to perform Accenture regression testing. The proof of concept was completed in three months, rapidly enabling Accenture to evaluate the results.

The proof of concept demonstrated significant value to Accenture and aligned with Accenture's digital agenda. As expected, the migration to SAP S/4HANA Finance did uncover challenges that needed to be remediated for the actual migration. The overall findings of the proof of concept were used to complete Accenture's detailed planning for the business case and migration.

### Business case

Using speed, agility, analytics and future ERP capabilities as the criteria for value, the Finance and internal IT team confirmed that SAP Business Suite on HANA with a future plan to upgrade to S/4HANA Finance is the best SAP HANA scenario for Accenture, with a parallel implementation of BW on HANA. The team then developed a full business case with scenario analysis of high-value necessities and optional scope items and a full study of the implementation plan. This included the following:

- An integrated program plan depicting timeline options with associated prerequisites and dependencies
- Budget analysis for various options including capital and expense items across hardware, software, business, IT, internal consulting and external consulting
- Resource/role and headcount projections
- Major risks and mitigations

### Implementation

The implementation of SAP Business Suite on HANA took six months, and was performed by the same team consisting of internal IT, Accenture's Consulting, Technology, and Digital practitioners, Accenture Finance and consultants from SAP. Project governance was performed by a weekly operating committee and a steering committee that met monthly, and included leaders from all the participating organizations. The team used Accenture's methods, assets and tools, including Accenture Delivery Methods and estimators to increase the reliability, quality, speed and predictability of the delivery work. Business disruption due to the SAP Business Suite on HANA

migration was minimized by separating functional changes into a previous deployment. As Accenture's SAP strategy is to keep current on Enhancement Packs, the prerequisites of Enhancement Pack 7 were delivered in an earlier release.

Accenture's dynamic business environment demands frequent delivery of incremental business capabilities, posing the decision to delay the SAP Business Suite on HANA migration or develop in parallel to the migration. Careful risk assessment and early go/no-go decisions provided the steering committee with supporting facts to approve a concurrent go-live of SAP HANA and business change. With enhanced stabilization and hypercare support, the overall solution was brought live on time and without business disruption. In the first month, full business volume was executed ahead of schedule, and without major defects. Within the same quarter, the solution accelerated finance close processes by two days.

As SAP's leading partner and largest implementer of SAP HANA-based solutions and applications globally, Accenture was able to leverage a range of unique, proprietary tools to accelerate migration to SAP HANA and reduce the risks. The Accenture SAP HANA Profiler, for example, significantly reduced manual effort to ensure a successful and more efficient migration. The team also used SAP's ABAP Test Cockpit tools for remediation and automated testing capabilities to reduce project efforts. Applying tools, accelerators, lessons learned, best practices, a dedicated team and standardized processes in pre- and post-migration activities can significantly reduce the time and risk compared with a traditional migration approach.

## Results

The SAP Business Suite on HANA and S/4HANA Finance proof of concept confirmed the overall business value Accenture expected and provided important direction on the best approach to a full-scale migration. Accenture is one of the largest live systems on SAP Business Suite on HANA in terms of database size, users and transactions. SAP HANA moves Accenture from a SQL database to an in-memory database that provides the value of speed, agility, analytics and future

ERP capabilities. Highlights of outcomes include:

- Progressing Accenture's digital transformation road map, and gaining the ability to leverage future capability and flexibility, enabled by SAP S/4HANA Finance, including Central Finance, Cash Management, Fixed Assets and Forecasting.
- Delivering analytics on real-time transactional data versus the historic approach of using extracts and monthly roll-ups.
- Experienced on average a 25 to 50 percent improvement in performance across transactions, batch programs, distribution of data and report performance on an already highly optimized system, with select transactions across these same areas improving in speed by up to 98 percent.
- Reduced disk storage footprint by almost 50 percent on an already highly optimized database.

Accenture's experience demonstrates that a proof-of-concept migration can provide benefits with minimal risk. Helping to ensure the active involvement of the business and SAP at all levels through the proof-of-concept, planning, testing, migration and post-migration phases enabled a detailed road map to be developed for the actual implementation. In addition, taking a business value-driven approach by consulting extensively with Finance leaders to understand their priorities confirmed that the migration is strategically advantageous for Accenture—positioning it to take the necessary steps to establish an SAP HANA platform for delivering new capabilities and get the most value from its IT investments.

The migration to SAP S/4HANA Finance supports Accenture's digital strategy of harnessing technologies to drive transformational changes in value, productivity and capacity. "Accenture views its migration to SAP Business Suite on HANA as a huge step forward in preparing its ERP for the future and key to delivering business value," says Kirner. "The qualities of speed, agility and analytics insight will be needed to support Accenture's projected growth and performance in a diverse range of businesses in a more complex and volatile environment."

## About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world's largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With more than 375,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

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