

TAKING ACCENTURE'S FINANCE REPORTING TO A NEW LEVEL

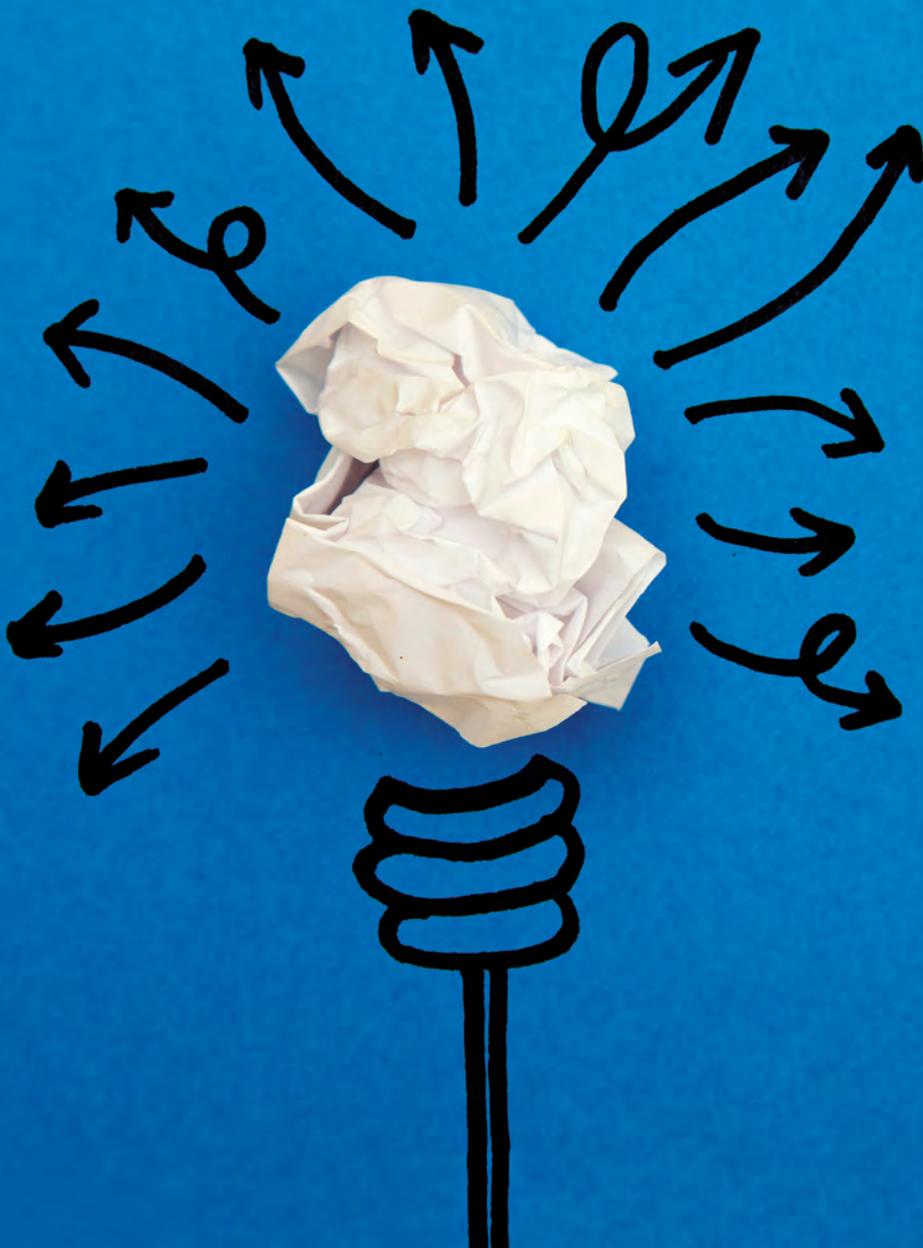
USING SAP HANA® AS A DATA
MART IN THE PUBLIC CLOUD




accenture

OPPORTUNITY

Accenture runs its core financial processing on a single global instance of SAP® Business Suite on HANA. As Accenture becomes a more diverse business it 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 faster pace of change, growth, larger volumes and diverse businesses—all driving the need to evolve Accenture's ERP to be ready for future needs.



To this end, Accenture's internal IT organization is undertaking a multi-year effort to implement a more powerful ERP. Accenture chose to implement SAP Business Suite on HANA because it is a necessary step to getting to SAP S/4HANA®—the final upgrade step in Accenture's journey. This suite is built on SAP HANA, an in-memory data and application platform for processing high volumes of data in real-time, running analytics applications smarter, and making data infrastructures simpler. As part of the journey, internal IT seized the opportunity to implement SAP HANA as a data mart in the public cloud, a separate SAP HANA system used as an analytics platform, to enable new analytics capabilities.

SOLUTION

The journey began when the internal IT organization migrated Accenture's Finance and HR system from SAP Business Suite on Microsoft SQL to SAP Business Suite on HANA. The effort involved migrating Accenture's enterprise database to SAP HANA, installing new hardware devices and then working through the complexities of how to build, host and operate a SAP HANA physical environment for Accenture's scale. The team went live with SAP Business Suite on HANA and in production on time and without business disruption, delivering the scale, agility and performance benefits expected.

During this time, a smaller Accenture IT team implemented SAP HANA as a data mart in the public cloud, used as an analytics platform, and integrated it with Accenture's existing platform in addition to the existing SAP Business Warehouse (BW) platform. The aim was to take advantage of the new ability to access live data and deliver analytics capabilities that were never available before, starting with the finance domain.

Before SAP HANA as a data mart was enabled, Accenture faced challenges in generating real-time finance reporting. Like many large organizations, Accenture's enterprise data architecture is complex with distributed systems that make it difficult to work with different sources, in some cases requiring manual effort to consolidate the different data

feeds. That complex architecture also creates constraints for cross-enterprise analytics due to different siloes of data, preventing exposure of advanced analytics that require cross-area and external feeds. The inflexibility of the architecture also means that delivering even minor changes requires a long timeline and is costly.

“THE MIGRATION TO SAP HANA OPENED NEW DOORS FOR NEW POSSIBILITIES. ONE OF THE FIRST WAS TO ENABLE SAP HANA AS A DATA MART AND SUBSEQUENTLY DEPLOY A NEW, INNOVATIVE ARCHITECTURE.”

STEVE COLLINS

Managing Director of Accenture's Enterprise Data and Finance Portfolio

This architecture is a new SAP HANA data mart platform that is connected real-time with Accenture's SAP ERP and SAP BW through the SAP System Landscape Transformation (SLT) system. The architecture also enables direct connectivity with Accenture's data lake for advanced analytics business cases utilizing data sourced from SAP and non-SAP systems. This new architecture allows real-time finance reporting for numerous Finance groups within Accenture.

To build the finance data analytic models, the team used SAP HANA Studio. It is both the central development environment and the main administrative tool for the SAP HANA system that is used to create the data models directly from the SAP HANA database tables. SAP HANA Studio establishes governance around the different functional areas and is used by Finance, HR and Forecasting groups to allow flexible data modeling and rapid delivery of new business reports. The solution is fully automated by directly accessing data sources that allow agile data modeling, avoiding large, manual end-user efforts.

Using agile methodology and the flexibility of the SAP HANA data mart platform, it is now possible for the Accenture IT reporting team to implement specific real-time analytic use cases rapidly. Furthermore, Finance users can view financial data in a user-friendly way through charts and other visualizations, leveraging front-end tools like Tableau, QlikView, Qlik Sense, SAP® BusinessObjects™ Analysis for Microsoft Office and SAP® BusinessObjects™ Lumira. The feed of data from different SAP sources into these front-end tools is automated. On top of that, new front-end applications were developed using SAPUI5 (HTML5) to improve the user-experience interfaces when operating in the new data mart.

RESULTS

For Accenture, the new SAP HANA as a data mart generates live data and provides new reporting tools and robust analytics capabilities never before available, and available in user-friendly ways. “The SAP HANA data mart initiative has changed the game around our finance reporting,” says Scott Wilson, Finance Director – Strategy & Enablement. “We have been able to leapfrog a complex and constrained environment and create some very powerful reporting capabilities that we are only getting started with.”

For example, the project team was still in the process of implementing the technology when they received an unplanned request for Treasury executive reporting. Given that the SAP HANA as a data mart provides agile analytics modeling capabilities allowing for quick responses to business needs, the team was able to complete this request—a very real and valuable business case—at no additional time and cost. This new set of Treasury executive reporting enables real-time reporting and data analytics. It is empowering Accenture’s Treasury professionals to effectively manage the company’s global cash and make critical liquidity decisions by leveraging alerts and flags, helping to reduce foreign exchange risks. The new reporting moves Accenture to proactive, best-in-class Treasury operations, anticipating trends and mitigating financial risks.

In yet another example, one high-importance Finance report used to take eight hours a week to produce and was refreshed twice a week. With the new architecture implemented, Accenture is experiencing a high increase of data refresh frequency to around 50 times a month as well as a high reduction of data refresh effort from 56 hours a month to one hour per month (a 98 percent reduction). Load time has been reduced by more than 90 percent. In addition, changes are delivered faster with lower risk.



More reporting and analytics opportunities lie ahead. “The new architecture we have developed provides the foundation to open finance data to future cross-enterprise analytics capabilities,” notes Collins. “We have only begun to scratch the surface as we plan to migrate old reporting to new analytics, ultimately enabling full integration of Accenture’s analytics ecosystem.”

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 411,000 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.

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