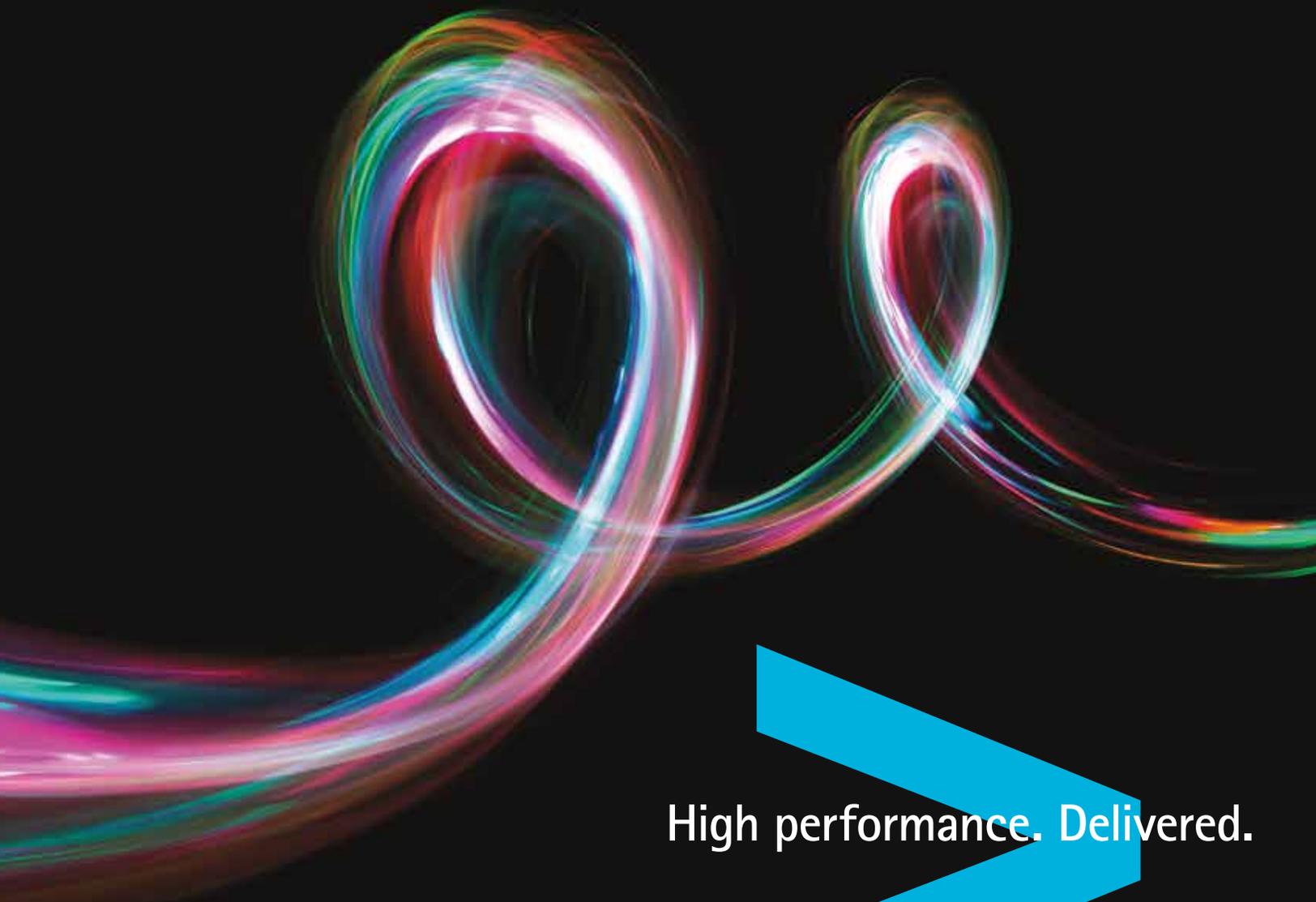


Accenture designs a leading  
ERP production support model  
for today and a digital tomorrow



High performance. Delivered.



## Client profile

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 358,000 employees with access to the information and capabilities to be a high-performing business. The company's single-instance SAP enterprise resource planning (ERP) is critical to the organization's drive for a digital future.

## Opportunity

When Accenture made the strategic decision to migrate to a single, global instance of SAP for its internal business functions more than a decade ago, it knew that implementing a multifunction ERP system would entail more than simply changing the company's technology platform. The introduction of such a large and complex application into the organization would require a well-functioning production support model to achieve the full benefits of the ERP solution not only upon deployment but especially over time.

By following its guiding principle of beginning with the end in mind, Accenture recognized early on that as part of the SAP deployment, the company would also need to introduce cross-process governance, common, scalable user and application support processes and tools, and a common set of comprehensive, proven methodologies to ensure long-term success. All of these components would help build employee proficiency, drive collaboration across the diverse internal business functions that use the ERP solution, and safeguard its ongoing stability and efficient operation. For these reasons, Accenture set out to build a leading-edge production support environment from the very inception of the ERP program, thereby reducing the stabilization period and paving the way to achieve repeatable success even as the solution begins to evolve to a digital ERP today.

## Solution

Resources from Accenture's Operations Support for the Enterprise (OSE) organization, in collaboration with Accenture's business teams and its internal IT organization, began by examining production support capabilities at a number of large-scale companies. Based on this assessment, Accenture proceeded to rethink the entire concept and effectiveness of production support. The result was a powerful new ERP production support paradigm comprising three primary components.

The first component was strong governance. To manage and integrate information related to enterprise functions, a governing body was formed to balance the three groups' requirements and guide the right decisions for the business. According to Matt Foulger, Accenture's Director of OSE, "Our expansive approach to governance is arguably the most pivotal aspect of Accenture's production support capability." The governance structure includes business leaders from Accenture's internal IT organization, Finance, Human Resources, Sales, Business Operations, Denied Party Screenings, Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC), Forecasting and Geographic Services.

As Foulger explains, "Today, the governance structure serves as an essential integrator. It challenges each member and encourages each support person to think beyond their departmental boundaries to understand the effects that any proposed changes to

the ERP might have on other processes." Rounding out the governance model is a cross-operations team composed of IT and OSE resources that work across three support tiers to track service level agreements, measure production support effectiveness, monitor benefits, drive business requirements and provide user support.

The second component was robust methodology. To ensure that production support structures were in place when the new solutions went live, the team tailored and then leveraged a repeatable production support enablement methodology based on Accenture Delivery Methods for SAP. This approach ensured that the procedures, tools and people were ready to support users as soon as they logged onto the system for the first time.

The third and final component was a comprehensive, scalable support structure. For day-to-day support, one group controls master data and user security access and delivers process and technical support via a single global network and a common toolset. A three-tiered support model, in which both IT and business representatives play crucial roles, is also in place (see Figure 1). As new capabilities are added to SAP, business, process and technology teams are adjusted to support those capabilities. For example, the company has enhanced its enterprise master data management capability and added and evolved SAP Identity Management to accommodate for ventures and acquisitions and new compliance requirements, respectively.

### Tier 1 support

- Trained Lead/Super Users to provide peers with guidance on SAP-enabled processes.
- The global Technology Support organization provides local functional and global technical support day or night.

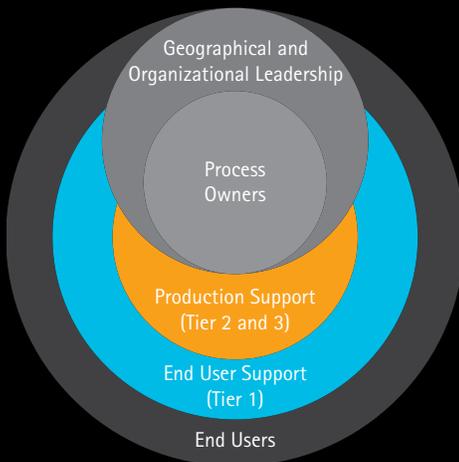
### Tier 2 support

- Full-time subject matter experts from Accenture’s internal business teams work with the IT team to answer escalated queries from Tier 1 and to define, prioritize and test enhancements to the solution.
- A Security team governs and operates security provisioning, compliance and reporting for Accenture's core global business applications.

### Tier 3 support

- Developers and technologists maintain infrastructure, the ERP solution, system performance and network.
- A Master Data Management team runs a single, cohesive data model that spans process areas, confirms one version of the truth, and ensures that impacts of changes in one area are recognized and addressed in related areas.
- OSE's Communications and Learning & Knowledge Management team provides timely, uniform communications, training and SAP functional/business support for Accenture SAP users around the world.

Figure 1: Tiered ERP Support Model



	Tier 1 End User Support		Tier 2 Production Support		Tier 3 Production Support	
Business Teams	Lead/Super Users	Local Functional Support	Process/Solution Teams	Process and Business Expertise	Functional Operations	Master data maintenance
			Business Data Architecture	Business Data Expertise		Learning and knowledge management
			User Security	User Security and Compliance		User communications
IT Teams	Help Desk	Global Technical Support	Application Product Management	Product and Solution Expertise	Technical Operations	Application management
			Technical Data Architecture	Technical Data Expertise		Basis (developers) and technical architecture
						Production, data and network services
Integrated Business and IT Teams	Cross Operations and Governance Prioritization, service management (SLAs), metrics and measures, monitoring benefit realization					

## Results

Stabilizing an ERP implementation for some companies can take years. Accenture's early and ongoing focus on production support—as well as its commitment to establishing robust governance capabilities, methodologies and support structures—allowed the company to quickly generate value from its solution while also adding new capabilities.

By implementing a fully integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution across Finance, HR, Sales, Denied Party Screening, Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC), Forecasting, and more, Accenture has improved productivity by focusing on comprehensive processes across business units and countries. The company has also benefited from a single instance of integrated business data, which provides much greater visibility into the business and enables the early identification of challenges and opportunities. Finally, the ERP solution addresses statutory compliance risks that vary by country and facilitates the integration of new business areas and acquisitions.

"From the perspective of our IT organization, a critical success factor for the implementation and maintenance of our single global instance of SAP has always been the ongoing engagement of our business stakeholders," explains Dan Kirner, executive director—Global SAP and Finance Applications Lead, Accenture.

"The collaborative partnership that we have forged with our internal business functions, and embedding them into our production support model at all levels, has been central to the internal process improvements that we have been able to drive for Accenture."

By tapping IT and business resources from across the organization, Accenture developed a leading-edge production support capability that enables the company to quickly maximize returns on its ERP investment. Specifically, the production support model:

- Encourages enterprise-wide, robust process orientation that blurs the traditional functional boundaries. "Production support has helped us integrate our employee data and financial data in a powerful way and in the process, has eliminated many of the legacy activities needed to reconcile data between HR and Finance. Most importantly, we also have the integrated information necessary to make better decisions," says Todd Harding, Accenture's Director of Global Operations Programs and Reporting.
- Promotes standardization, which improves the company's business and risk management capabilities, while reducing costs. "We focus on quality at the source, which allows improved visibility of key information across the enterprise," points out Penny Hughes, Accenture's Assistant Controller. "More accurate information enables us to manage risks, and spend

more time providing business support and analysis that helps grow the top and bottom line faster."

- Reduces the stabilization period, leading to faster value realization from new capabilities. Whereas it took four months to stabilize the initial SAP deployment, subsequent, much larger releases have benefited from common, scalable support processes that ensure that new capabilities, users and business acquisitions are fully supported right away, and can therefore stabilize in half the time or less. This time-tested model proves resilient every year as Accenture continues to release huge numbers of new capabilities into the environment and the operating model easily adjusts to support it.

- Creates operational efficiencies by reducing the learning curve for users and minimizing the post-implementation productivity dip that is typically experienced.
- Reduces internal costs by reducing the number and size of support teams and leveraging Accenture's Global Shared Services teams. Standardized structures, toolsets, business processes and functionality across the capabilities and use of a relatively low number of virtualized high-powered servers contribute to reducing the support required. Despite the fact that the number of frequent users of the application has grown by 270 percent, Accenture has reduced the size of the production support team by more than a third. About 70 percent—an industry-leading average—of the support team is drawn from low-cost locations and is supported by a large network of support staff from across the business that can manage user inquiries and reduce calls to technology support.
- Enables the company to prioritize and deliver enhancements across multiple functions, improving efficiency and value realized. Each successive release since the initial SAP Finance implementation has added a significantly higher number of batch processes. Despite the increase in scope and growth of the business, the support teams have reduced finance, HR and sales reporting cycles by more than 30 percent. Accenture today is able to close its books in four days at the local level, in five days globally, and in six days to deliver final management reporting—what business leaders consider world class.
- Establishes common, scalable support processes that ensure that new capabilities, users and business acquisitions are fully supported from the outset.
- Sets a solid foundation for taking SAP to the next phase, evolving it to a digital ERP to continue to build Accenture's digital capabilities and improve ERP operations as Accenture's businesses become more differentiated.

Accenture continues to look for opportunities to leverage this support model as it brings on new capabilities and advances digital operations. Accenture's internal IT organization, for example, is currently building an operational excellence program designed to support all of its technology applications in a similar fashion. In this way, the production support solution is helping Accenture optimize even more of its business capabilities and lay an even stronger foundation for a digital ERP and long-term high performance.

## About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with more than 358,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US\$31.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2015. Its home page is [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

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