SAP: Expanding the Scope of Shared Services

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Presentation script
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How did SAP start in shared services?
That’s already 10 years ago, 2003 and 2004, we started with shared services in Singapore and they were serving the whole APJ region. But not only the shared services but it was also the very first time where we brought things into task, roles, responsibility from the local side to corporate controlling, so we did already the first steps in centralizing corporate functions as well starting with corporate controlling.

How are the SAP shared service centers a showcase for SAP?
Yes, in the meanwhile, they are really showcases. So we have the big centers, we have Buenos Aires serving all of the Americas, we have Singapore for APJ and Prague for EMEA. And it is really in the meanwhile a great showcase for us because we develop from pretty single shared services now into global end-to-end process driven shared services. And it’s a great story for us because here we can really demonstrate how the scale works. So we can offer our services while we are using the whole global workforce, 5 days, 24 hours, that’s really great for us and using all the tools and the techniques. From SAP, we have also a great showcase towards our external customers and can demonstrate how SAP runs SAP.

What are the main benefits of the SAP shared services program?
Well, it’s difficult to answer because it depends from which angle you see this. So we have here definitely big benefits for the people working in the shared service center. So we could over the years develop great job opportunities for them. We could offer a real tailor-made training program for them. And we have a focus on people and talent development which makes it really exciting for the people working in the shared service center. But it’s not only the people, it is also our internal customers which gained over the years a lot of benefits from the shared service center. And one key benefit we see at the moment for them is that we have a full transparency. So we can report at any point in time where we are, how the KPIs are, where we can do better, where we are good, where we can focus on. So that’s also great for our internal customers. And not only that, having a loop to whole SAP with the scales, we are bringing year over year over year, we are contributing to our strategy really heavily and that’s a great benefit for SAP overall.

How will SAP shared services expand in the future?
We have in the meanwhile really migrated nearly all transactional activities into the shared service center. So when we are looking at what is left out, I see a big potential for is our record to report, a record to close. I see it also in the analytics area, but also in the forecasting area. So when we look on that, we see really that these are the potentials for the future coming in.

What challenges do you face going forward?
When you look at our organization model, at the moment, it is really a shared service center model. And I would say when we are really integrating record to report, record to close, analytics and forecast, we have to think about completely different organization and models. We have to be very creative. We have to think about center of expertise, we have to think about shared delivery in a completely different sense and we have to think about embedded services in the corporate functions. I guess these are the main challenges in the future.

How is the shared services organization considered a business partner to the rest of SAP?
Yes, absolutely. People and organization is much more mature, so underwent a very solid development. Now, we’re seen as trusted business partner as well. Processes are completely different as when we have started. We have a very comprehensive governance model for the processes and the structures are very mature in the meanwhile. We have our quality management, which is measuring the success which is providing the KPIs and the reporting. So, overall, these three things gained good maturity level of the shared services.

How do you plan to build on your shared services achievements?
I would say we can do really the next steps and we can offer to the field services to say this to consulting, also our helping hand and bring in much more activities also from completely different areas of SAP.
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