



CASE STUDY

Avanade team shortens invoicing from days to minutes

Modernizing business processes for mergers and acquisitions with SAP-Microsoft Dynamics

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When Avanade acquired KCS.net, it wasn't just adding 300 new employees to the family. It was adopting hundreds of new clients, too.

Founded in 1989, KCS.net was one of the leading Microsoft Dynamics AX/ERP partners across Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Over the years, its highly certified team of Microsoft experts had built up a deep trust and loyalty with the people they serve.

So, when the time came to merge the company's existing business processes into Avanade's, we made it our mission to maintain – and even enhance – the new team's ability to serve its clients.

The situation Business process migration pains

This smooth transition would be easier said than done, however, since Avanade's existing business processes were not perfectly aligned to those at KCS.net. Avanade – a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft – runs its core financial operations, such as time tracking and invoicing, on the same large-scale ERP system that Accenture uses. KCS.net, on the other hand, served its clients on a Microsoft Dynamics solution.

"Clients were used to getting detailed, line-by-line summaries from KCS.net on every invoice. With the move to Accenture SAP systems, it wasn't easy to deliver that same level of granularity," said Kathrin Prostka, Avanade's client financial management lead for Austria, Switzerland and Germany.

Just to maintain the status quo, Avanade employees were having to duplicate efforts across two disparate systems. Invoices, time-tracking and project reports needed to be created and managed in one system, then repeated in the other.

KCS.net was producing up to 600 invoices a month and the new acquisition was creating a significant burden for Avanade's finance and operations team to manage.

"This was a major added workload and it was getting very painful for everybody – for our clients, for delivery leads, for financial teams," said Prostka.

Not only did these pains make client invoicing more costly and time consuming, they posed a strategic risk to mergers and acquisitions in general. At an average value of \$10,000 for each new invoice, the extra resources needed to handle the additional workload was simply not practical.

"The risk in these situations is you fail the integration by forcing the new company to operate on a business system that is not fit for its needs," said Francois Matte, Avanade's global finance and operations lead.

This caught the attention of Accenture's financial leaders, too, who for years had seen similar challenges emerge as new companies were acquired. "We were looking at this situation, and our financial leaders were saying, 'Hey, we need a better way to manage these acquired environments. What we are doing is not working so great,'" said Alexander Loncar, global finance transition lead at Accenture.

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The solution

An agile solution to enable business process innovation

"The idea was, why not use the same Microsoft Dynamics 365 platform KCS.net and Avanade are already delivering to clients, to create something more nimble?" said Matte.

So began an innovative project, combining the expertise and resources from across Avanade and Accenture, to create a seamless integration between the legacy SAP business applications and a new, more agile Dynamics 365 environment.

From its global delivery center in Buenos Aires, Accenture's financial operations experts began working closely with end-users to define the perfect solution. User workshops and cross-disciplinary sessions created a rich, upfront understanding of what employees required to seamlessly adapt to a new, hybrid system of record.

After an in-depth discovery and design process, Avanade and Accenture created an integrated solution. Called the high-volume, low-value (HVLV) billing system, it allows employees to continue to manage invoices and client relationships on Dynamics, while automatically integrating core project data, financial reporting and other essentials onto the legacy SAP system.

The results

Next-level experiences, realized

While technically sophisticated and innovative, what really counts is the impact this new solution is having on clients and employees.

"I love it," says Prostka, who uses the new billing solution as an Avanade finance professional. "It is saving us all so much time and it is so much easier to invoice clients. Lots of what we were doing before has been automated, and the rest is just much simpler and more streamlined."

From a business level, this story is also a success. Common, daily processes, such as invoice creation, used to take days of back and forth and additional resources to maintain. Now, those same processes are automatic, or done in minutes by just one person with a few clicks.

"Not only have we improved the employee experience, we have been able to exceed our revenues and growth plans," said Matte.

Accenture's Loncar sees this as an example that will be followed across industries.

Historically, mergers and acquisitions came with a cost – new business processes caused challenges to delivery leads and strained financial resources. But, with integrated solutions such as Accenture and Avanade's HVLV system, acquisitions have become an opportunity to improve business processes and the user experience.

"We think this kind of solution has the potential to make many other businesses, across many different departments and users, much more seamless and streamlined in the future," said Loncar.



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 35,000 professionals in 24 countries. Visit us at www.avanade.com

North America

Seattle
Phone +1 206 239 5600
America@avanade.com

South America

Sao Paulo
AvanadeBrasil@avanade.com

Asia-Pacific

Australia
Phone +61 2 9005 5900
AsiaPac@avanade.com

Europe

London
Phone +44 0 20 7025 1000
Europe@avanade.com