



JOURNEY TO INTELLIGENT FINANCE

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

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>> Our business is changing faster and faster and we can see everything that's ahead of us so we did this really to get ahead what we had supported our business just fine what we're doing is we're you know we're in this for the long haul and we want to make sure we're best prepared as our business continues to change.

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I'm Chris Crawford part of the Accenture internal I.T. organization and I'm glad to be here today with Dan Kurtzer who is also part of the internal art organization and Fred Huns in ski who is part of Accenture's internal finance organization where he is the director of strategic initiatives were discussing Accenture's journey to Intelligent Finance with S.A.P.'s for Hanna thanks for joining me guys a Great to be a Chris Hayden fantastic.

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So let's let's get into it Accenture I know we historically run the core financial processing on a single global instance of S.A.P.I. remember when that went in and we usually run that on micro Microsoft sequel server and in on prem data center but we recently moved to S. 400 Fred what's a I can understand some of the technical implications of that but Fred what are some of the reasons that finance want to move to the new platform well except just change a lot over the years and we've become a much more diverse business and because of that we needed to operate with more insight agility and efficiency across our multiple businesses and our multiple business processes both business and i t capabilities now must contend with a faster pace of change and growth and that drove our need to transform Accenture's

technical architecture supporting finance H.R. and analytics capabilities because of this we undertook a multi-phase program to implement S.A.P.'s for Hina version 1610 and we did that conversion and a brownfield basis so Bromfield You mean like if we just upgrade our existing stuff for house what's that mean yeah Brownfield meaning that we took all of our data and we did a data conversion so everything that we had in our in our old system we took that data converted it and we have it all there now and we can run our our historical comparables all in the same place I see OK yeah versus a greenfield I guess yeah exactly for sure All right well this is I'm sure that this was you know key in this journey to Intelligent Finance which maybe I'll ask you to explain what what exactly you guys mean by Intelligent Finance and maybe you can hit some of the key steps along the way through but what is Intelligent Finance for you well the toilet in finance is really operating more with the business so doing more automation analyses and and advising and so taking advantage of technology to get analytics automation.

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It's like that becoming more of an advisor versus you know freeing up time from the more repetitive things to do not just a matter of not just closing the books and making sure 2 plus 2 equals 4 but yeah exactly being more being more value value added I got it so how do you know so how did we get there what roles did does S. and P. play here well we started off by doing this we're doing this through phases so our 1st phase was laying the technical foundation when we migrated 1st to business suite on Hahn and that took about 6 months and that laid the foundation for R S 4 How to upgrade to enable transformation our next phase we started the



transformational technology foundation with the implementation of S 4 version 1610 we talked a little bit about the brownfield already but we greatly value having all comparative historical data in s.a.p So this was a route we wanted to take and also we have been very good over the years starting when we implemented S.A.P.O. over 15 years ago now with making sure that we had global finance processes and everything was optimized as well as our technical architecture and because of this and due to our you know our great need for Compared of historical data we decided to go with the brownfield conversion OK and you know I know that the technology plays a key role here and it gets a lot of the press and I am glad to see that this is Intelligent Finance and not just you know the rote stuff what I mean were that were the tough parts and the technology the cave in here yeah I mean this is a new platform right and when we talked about we migrated to it.

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You know it's not just a migration of data it's a completely new data structure that we're going after that we had to bring anything everything into and then you know like many companies that have S.A.P.'s the core of of their sis. Limbs that run their business or at least the back office systems I should say so we had 300 integrating systems we had 30 bolt ons and things like that so we did make sure that was all connected together in terms of solution and also in terms of testing capability and performance rights just about to go there the testing on this thing must have been incredible I mean how do you how do you do something like this that is core to the entire organization without bringing every other effort in the shop to a complete halt Well I think the 1st thing is from a governance standpoint we made sure that we didn't have to move in balls or we tried to limit the number of moving balls that or going on so that was clearly number one and that was a governance thing that we started out with and then you know we use the accent your methodology in more of an agile fashion than the new we do it to to drive both performance and capability items from end to end and we we really have what we call a fail fast approach so convert the data over full scale and and break it and then fix it quick know the risks immediately that's nice again I got to say that is the 1st time

I've ever heard agile and S.E.P. in the same paragraph let alone the same so you might be correct but that's fantastic I mean VI that ability to do that to get that testing out of the way and to not impact everything else is incredible you know Fred some of the benefits I'm sure I know and I've heard some of the story on the benefits here to hosting costs and whatnot but you know what are some of the ones that you seem with some of the benefits you see across the company.

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Really we're getting it we're just really getting into our 3rd phase with the benefits and that's going to allow us to take this flexible platform and to better support our diverse businesses and then get into more real time reporting and again more about the analytics and and robotics and automation and things like that and also the ability to leverage future s.a.p capabilities who are really just starting to touch on the value portion after getting the technical architecture sorted to sort it out so there are some so in addition to some costs I mean it has a business shifted that much that we needed to to move to this or was there was that more of a cost play here no it's really about are our business changing if you think about us you know a lot of people thought of us 15 years ago as a system integrator and I was still do that it's important or you know it's part of our D.N.A. And it's a great business but we've got into more and more services you know getting different different types of revenue streams doing different services were a big digital agency now it's really about that it's supporting our business as it evolves and we've seen these changes and you know we know some of the changes going forward we don't know all the changes all we know is that our business is changing faster and faster and we can see everything that's ahead of us so we did this really to get ahead what we had supported our business just fine what we're doing is we're you know we're in this for the long haul and we want to make sure we're best prepared as our business continues to change fantastic as last question can you share any insights or what what else somebody who's undergoing this transformation or considering it any insights that you could share with us that might be helpful for somebody else in a similar or contemplating the sort of move and then talked



a little bit about this but we I mean we being the business or finance in this case we are joined at the hip with C I O Chris so going back 2 and a half years when we 1st started doing this we were we were looking for you know what is the best thing to do for Accenture as based on our business changing and we brought the lead senior leadership in the place from both finance and and C.L..

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Planned this and decided you know that S 4 was the right thing for us and that a phased approach approach was appropriate and we've had everybody lockstep for it since we started this you know including finance leadership so that everybody knew what to expect and you know no surprises and it really is one of the big things here is a can't be C.E.O. driven it's got to be you know the business that that wants to do this is well now that's the way to make it work then you comfortable not being in the driver's seat not being driven project driven by C.E.O. I'm very comfortable I mean we partner in all our stuff to go through it to make sure that we meet the needs and I think that's been the key to our success you know I would say in addition to what Fred said you know about the partnership.

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And he talked about this a little bit before you know looking to phase stuff through based on your business needs every company is different as you go through it. And you've got to have checkpoints to mitigate the risk and to make sure your chief the outcome I think on the technical level what we experienced is that you know this is a new platform right and many companies including us have long histories on this platform but you need to take that stuff that you've implemented and had perfected over the years you need to optimize it on the new platform whether that's core s.a.p related items or custom things that you've done.

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And I think you know to add on to that there's also 3rd party applications like of vertex or a black line or the bolt ons that we think about that need we need to make sure that's optimizing those were fluently within the context your business and I mentioned this before you know

fail fast right in terms of getting things on the system running your and processes in most cases you probably many companies have been on a safety we run Sep for 14 years we highly leveraged our automated testing to really drive out the.

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Early so that we could design around them and I would say you know last but not least. Chris really eager to partner with S.A.P.I. on this it's a new piece of software. It's getting out there as if he was very helpful in helping us resolve issues that we couldn't resolve ourselves great great point Stan thank you Fred thank you Dan and thanks for the audience joining us today on our discussion of the internal S.A.P.'s for Hanukkah implementation at Accenture thank you for joining today's podcast the sure to subscribe to the extent your SEO podcast series on i Tunes for all episodes.

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