SAP S/4 conversion with a certified solution for integrated supply chain management

Accompanying Customers Into The New World As Enablers

Even though the support deadline for ERP/ECC 6.0 has been extended until 2027, many companies are already thinking about the SAP S/4 HANA conversion. The new platform offers functional improvements in the ERP system and room for innovation, but the related effort is causing customers headaches.

It's an imperative that ERP systems have to work perfectly. Most SAP Business Suite customers are concerned that the tried-and-tested functionalities supporting their processes now won't be available in S/4 Hana anymore. Based in Siegen, Germany, GIB knows about these concerns. As software provider and certified SAP Silver Partner, the company specializes in the optimization of SAP supply chain processes. When SAP announced its new solution portfolio, GIB was quick to recognize its benefits for customers and positioned itself as conversion enabler, combining the technological advantages of S/4 with the strategic excellence of GIB's integrated, comprehensive supply chain management.

Keep proven functionalities

GIB's strategy is clearly directed towards S/4 and the enhancement of the digital core. Felix Grab, Vice Director Development at GIB, says, "From 2020 onward, we will only develop for SAP's new world. If functionalities are useful for the old R/3 world as well, we will downgrade them for customers who are still hesitant to make the switch. The most important thing to us is that all of GIB suite's tried-and-tested functionalities also work in S/4 HANA environments to ensure customers can continue to use the software solution they know. GIB's suite can be migrated from the R/3 world to the S/4 world without additional effort (brownfield), or it can be newly implemented in S/4 (greenfield)."

For companies embracing innovation who want to leverage the possibilities of the S/4 world, GIB is now offering the new Supply Chain Excellence (SCX) suite. GIB SCX uses S/4's digital core and the highly performant HANA technology to enable end-to-end supply chain management. The visionary software solution offers room for many additional innovative functionalities which significantly optimize daily routines.

> *It wasn't an easy journey. You need a pioneering spirit to tackle this challenge. This is not only true for IT departments, but also especially for our colleagues in software development. The certificate proves: GIB is able to do cloud as well.*
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> Stefan Theis, Manager Software Logistics and Technology, GIB.

GIB SCX offers a sophisticated role concept which makes highly complex supply chain processes transparent and manageable. It presents users with a tailored view of relevant steps. The new tool offers a higher level of user friendliness and simplification and guarantees that no item in the work list gets overlooked. Furthermore, based on live data from the SAP S/4 system, the SCX suite evaluates the process maturity level of the supply chain as well as each individual process and provides the result based on an innovative indicator model. These KPIs, which have been calculated based on the SAP core, the single point of truth, provide insight into the quality of the entire end-to-end process as well as the sub-processes demand planning, manufacturing, procurement, inventory management, and sales and distribution.

Conversion to S/4 HANA only with the GIB solution

GIB SCX is one of the first solutions certified for SAP S/4 HANA cloud worldwide. Even though SAP does not mandate it for its on-prem products, GIB has always recognized the value of certification. Since 2005, its solutions have been continuously certified by SAP to guarantee customers that the software products work in perfect harmony with SAP's own solutions. GIB's suite has been certified for S/4 HANA on-premises use since 2018. "We were under enormous time pressure to certify our new SCX suite," recounts Stefan Theis, Manager Software Logistics and Technology at GIB. The urgency stemmed from the wish of one customer who started their cloud conversion to S/4 HANA EX in 2020 and will go live on the

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cloud extended edition (EX) in 2021. SAP mandates certification for its cloud solutions, and this particular customer did not want to switch to the new world without their proven GIB Supply Chain suite, which is why the certification of GIB SCX was a priority for the German software provider in 2020 – because the customer did not want to give up their GIB Manufacturing, even though SAP promises new beneficial functionalities in S/4.

Move all services to the cloud

Over the past two years, GIB has accompanied numerous successful S/4 conversions, but the cloud scenario was a special challenge for the software provider. "The certification for the SAP cloud was tied to many changes in the source code," explains Florian Lenz, Manager Development at GIB. "And there wasn't a lot of time, either! We decided on certifying our GIB solution for the cloud in early spring, but the final SAP requirement catalog for the certification wasn't available until July."

Fiori–tized interface to map processes more efficiently

Even though proven GIB functionalities for supply chain management will also be available in SAP S/4 HANA, the interface has been fiori-tized. A more polished appearance wasn't the priority here; it was always about supporting users as efficiently as possible.

"The pilot project was certified quickly and successfully, all thanks to the close and fruitful cooperation of the involved GIB departments and the responsible colleagues at SAP," explains Stefan Theis. "Of course, we also needed a pioneering spirit and high flexibility to quickly react to new requirements." GIB's success speaks for itself: In September, GIB's suite was certified by SAP. The cooperative partnership with the SAP certification team and the clear message of our customer of how important the solution was to their S/4 launch have been imperative to the acceleration of the certification process. "We got involved in the testing phases early on so that we could try out the tools in the new environment and see how the processes worked in the cloud," adds Stefan Theis.

With the certification (which has to be renewed every year with every new cloud release), GIB has made a huge step towards the new SAP world. According to a 2020 GIB survey, most companies will start the migration in the next two years – high time to start learning more about the advantages of GIB SCX in the new world.

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