



Aircelle reduces risk in SAP implementation and saves 30% in time, 40% in cost with Informatica

CHALLENGES

- Migrate mission-critical business and technical data from legacy system to a new, and not yet stabilized, SAP system
- Handle data extraction, transformation, and loading from seven functional domains into SAP

INFORMATICA SOLUTIONS

- Informatica PowerCenter®
- Informatica PowerExchange® for SAP

ARCHITECTURE

- Data integration: Informatica
- Sources: Legacy applications, databases, and mainframe systems
- Target: SAP ERP

BENEFITS

- Reduced risks and improved QA through iterative development and testing
- Reduced development time by 30%
- Saved 40% in migration costs
- Maintained greater speed and flexibility to modify business rules, workflows, and mappings

“In every migration to SAP, there are two crucial dimensions: controlling changes, a key element for adoption by users, and the migration of legacy data, which determines the overall success of the project. The power and flexibility of Informatica PowerCenter allowed us to adhere to our schedule during migration to an SAP system not yet stabilized. According to our systems integrator, Capgemini, development time was reduced by 30 percent, and we saw a 40 percent financial saving over the previous project that was done without the Informatica technology.”

— Cindy Blondeel, SAP Project Manager, Aircelle

A company in the SAFRAN Group, Aircelle is a major player in the world market for aircraft engine nacelles (or housings), thrust inverters, and, through its affiliate SLCA, aero structures. With more than 3,500 employees at seven sites in France, England, and Morocco, Aircelle produces aeronautical components for such companies as Airbus and its A380, the world's largest passenger airliner, as well as Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, Rolls-Royce, and others. Headquartered in Le Havre, France, Aircelle has more than 600 engineers and technicians dedicated to research, development, and industrial design.

Previous Headaches with Hand-Coded Data Migration

In 2006, as part of a multi-phase implementation of an SAP ERP solution to replace its legacy enterprise applications, Aircelle mapped out a strategy for migrating mission-critical data supporting its Small Nacelles Divisions (SND) to the new SAP solution, in concert with SND's move from Meudon, France to Le Havre. Aircelle had the benefit of lessons learned from the initial phase of the SAP rollout, called SAP2005, when an IT contractor used hand-coding and Microsoft Excel and Access to migrate legacy data to SAP pilot sites in Le Havre and Toulouse, France.

The hand-coding approach proved costly, time-consuming, and inflexible. Developers had difficulties adapting migration processes as legacy data sources were added and modifications were made to the SAP target. Moreover, data migration processes for extraction, transformation, and loading would not be reusable in subsequent migration initiatives. "The difficulties encountered during the SAP2005 project showed how critical data transformation and data migration were for the success of the project," explained Cindy Blondeel, Aircelle SAP project manager. "The source systems were not the same and the SAP target was not stabilized, which made development changes unpredictable."

An Automated Approach with Informatica PowerCenter

For the second phase with SND data, Aircelle turned to Informatica PowerCenter. The enterprise data integration platform was recommended by systems integrator Capgemini, which had worked on the initial SAP deployment (though not the data migration aspect, which was handled by another contractor). Because Capgemini was knowledgeable in the SAP target system and the use of Informatica technology, they were tasked with heading the data migration effort.

"We were convinced that an automated approach with Informatica PowerCenter would be superior to the hand-coded method used for SAP2005," Blondeel said. "Taking into account our aggressive timeframe and instability of the target, PowerCenter offered the guarantee that the migration of data would not be a roadblock to the overall success of our SAP implementation."

Migrating Complex Data from Seven Functional Domains

Residing in disparate legacy applications, databases, and mainframe systems, the data spanned seven functional domains of Aircelle's SND business unit (purchasing, inventory, production, sales, quality, finance, and management control), as well as technical and engineering data. Including both static data (covering customers and suppliers, tax rate tables, store codes, etc.) and dynamic data (inventory, production orders, accounting, etc.), the mission-critical nature of the information made a seamless migration imperative for business efficiency.

Teams of Aircelle and Capgemini developers collaborated on the project, with Aircelle in charge of the verification and extraction of source data, and Capgemini handling transformation and migration into SAP with PowerCenter. PowerCenter's codeless development environment helped accelerate initial processes of defining source data to be migrated from each functional domain, and then the necessary fields and transformation rules for migration into the new SAP system.

A 30% Reduction in Migration Development Time

With Informatica PowerCenter's drag-and-drop GUI and capacity for component reuse, Capgemini estimates having reduced development time for the SND data migration by at least 30 percent compared to alternative approaches.

For instance, the start-to-finish time to develop a mapping averaged 3.6 workdays, with a total of 55 mappings generated for the SND migration. According to Capgemini, it typically takes about nine workdays to develop a mapping using SAP tools and/or Excel templates. In Aircelle's initial SAP rollout at the Toulouse pilot site, the hand-coded approach to mapping development took from five to 19 workdays—excluding the more complex mappings.

In addition, PowerCenter's comprehensive support for all phases of data migration—analyze, extract and transform, validate and cleanse, and load and test—enabled simultaneous and iterative development and refinement that proved key in helping ensure the quality of the project and meeting an aggressive eight-month deadline for project completion.

Migration Costs Reduced by 40% with PowerCenter

Capgemini estimates that, with PowerCenter at the heart of the migration effort, Aircelle realized a financial savings of 40 percent compared to the previous hand-coded data migration with SAP2005. Though PowerCenter does not require that developers have a deep knowledge of SAP, Aircelle used an SAP expert in development to address issues specific to the target SAP application, Blondeel noted.

“PowerCenter connects in a few clicks to all SAP objects—IDOC, BI, DI, RFC—and allows modification of mappings and workflows quickly and as often as necessary, without coding of any kind whatsoever,” Blondeel said. “To be able to test the data first in PowerCenter before sending it to SAP also impacted productivity positively and helped ensure the integrity of our mission-critical data.”

Aircelle's Parent Company Turns to PowerCenter for Data Integration

Before the final migration of SND data in November 2006, Aircelle performed three test migrations. “If we had developed everything by hand we would never have been able to meet the deadline, but PowerCenter allowed us to be proactive, not trip up on the data migration part, and therefore make the final migration on the anticipated date,” Blondeel said.

As a result of Aircelle's data migration success, PowerCenter has been licensed for other data integration initiatives by Aircelle's parent company, the SAFRAN Group. SAFRAN, a Paris-based conglomerate with companies in aerospace propulsion, aircraft equipment, defense security, and communications, has 62,000 employees and operations in more than 30 countries.



Worldwide Headquarters, 100 Cardinal Way, Redwood City, CA 94063, USA
phone: 650.385.5000 fax: 650.385.5500 toll-free in the US: 1.800.653.3871 www.informatica.com

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