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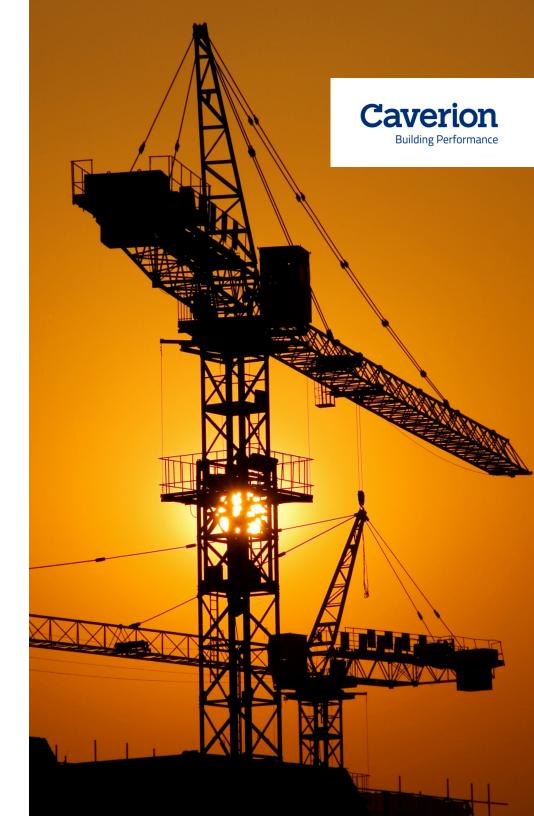
Caverion

Syntax supports Caverion in migrating SAP to Microsoft Azure and takes over the basis operation

How we work and how we live is significantly influenced by the environment we create ourselves. Therefore, Caverion is committed daily to ensuring a safe environment, continuously improving conditions for well-being and productivity, while also acting in harmony with the environment and conscientiously managing natural resources. Customers rely on our technical expertise throughout the entire life cycle of buildings, infrastructure projects, and industrial plants – from planning and construction to maintenance and service, from consultation to implementation.

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Caverion
Building Performance

Overview

With more than 14,000 employees in ten countries in Northern and Central Europe, Caverion generated a revenue of around 2.3 billion euros in 2022. The Caverion Deutschland GmbH has 19 branches and employs 2,100 people nationwide.

"SAP is our central ERP system and our most important business application. It contains our master data, and almost all operational processes are mapped there – the heart of the company," explains Florian Kazak, Manager, Enterprise Systems at Caverion Group. Until now, the system ran in an on-premises operation at a data center in Finland, managed by one of the giants in the IT service provider market. However, Caverion follows a Public Cloud-First strategy, and the company had already moved numerous workloads to Microsoft Azure. Now, it was time for the critical SAP system. To continue to develop in SAP services, not only the migration but also the future SAP basis operation should be taken over by a new partner.

"Our goal was to migrate a system landscape with around 45 SAP systems to Azure and consolidate the infrastructure," says Florian Kazak. Fewer servers mean less monitoring, patching, and maintenance effort – saving time and money even in the cloud. Moreover, the public cloud offers Caverion a variety of advantages over an in-house data center: more flexibility in designing the

landscape, servers that can be started, stopped, or deployed at any time, and systems that are not needed at night can be pre-set to shut down. However, a larger range of action regarding service providers was also crucial for Caverion. In the cloud, apart from the hosting provider, it is much easier to change partners or buy services from various companies.

Looking for Cloud Know-how, SAP Expertise, and Nearshore Support

Carverian realized that a new SAP partner could offer a better price-performance ratio – even though the previous service provider provided SAP basis services offshore from India. In any case, the building technology specialist desired a nearshore model for support since the majority of the corporate IT is located in Europe, especially in Scandinavia. In addition, the future service provider should have high SAP and Public Cloud expertise and, above all, fit Caverion with its more than 14,000 employees in terms of company size.

"From the beginning, Syntax convinced us with the technical expertise of the architects, the entire landscape, and how it was designed and set up. I would do such a project again anytime with Syntax experts. And the ongoing operations from the nearshore location run smoothly and competently," says Florian Kazak, Manager Enterprise Systems, Caverion Group.

"We did not want a provider with hundreds of thousands of employees," emphasizes Florian Kazak. The providers who met these requirements were called upon to present their ideas and services. One company stood out from this group: Syntax. "Technical competence and highest technical expertise, strong business in Europe with a powerful German branch and nearshore support in

Europe, partners at eye level – that's what we envisioned," says Florian Kazak. "We were particularly impressed by the transparent approach and clear ideas of Syntax. From the beginning, there was openness about how the service will be provided from the EU, and the experts immediately showed in detail how server sizing, backup, failover strategy, and so on would look like. Syntax was thus clearly ahead and also took on the risk. Overall, it was a perfect overall package according to our ideas, including the price-performance ratio."
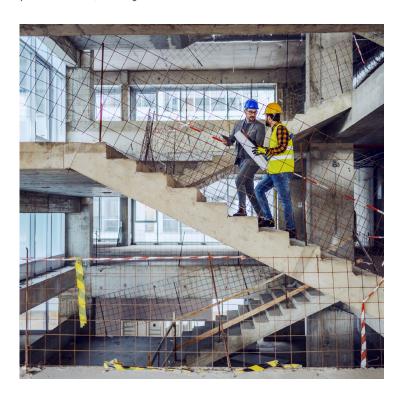
SAP Migration with Import/Export Approach

After selecting the service provider and concluding contract negotiations, the partners began planning and designing the future landscape, determining how the SAP systems would communicate with other Caverion applications running on different Azure subscriptions. The concrete migration approach, on the other hand, was fixed from the beginning: Caverion had decided on an SAP export/import approach rather than lift & shift, primarily due to the outdated infrastructure. The export/import approach involved reinstalling servers, OS, and databases before importing SAP. In addition, extensive test migrations were planned to minimize risks and downtime.

Smooth Go-live

For the go-live, the productive systems were divided into two groups and were to be migrated on two consecutive weekends. The largest database contained five terabytes of data – a challenge within such a short time frame. Nevertheless, the partners stayed fully on schedule. The only scare came when thousands of end-users accessed the system at the beginning of the week, suddenly causing performance issues. However, the error was quickly identified: The consolidated, powerful servers used only a fraction of the available memory due to the server configuration inherited from the old data center. After correcting the memory parameters, the system ran as desired – and even faster.

High-Performing SAP System in the Cloud

The performance numbers of SAP on Azure speak for themselves: system response times are up to 40% shorter, and batch jobs now run up to ten times faster. The export/import migration approach, Azure Cloud, and reorganized databases have clearly paid off. In the next step, Syntax takes care of specific optimizations and rightsizing of the servers, subsequently reserving the appropriate Azure capacities. As companies committing for a longer period receive discounts from Microsoft, this saves us money," says Florian Kazak. For SAP basis operations, the IT service provider has developed a solution using Microsoft Power Automate to automatically create SAP monitoring alerts in ServiceNow, Caverion's ITSM tool, as tickets – with a sophisticated logic that prevents flooding. Moreover, by integrating with Syntax's own ticketing system, tickets can be directed to the support team without email or phone calls. This reduces effort for all involved parties and ensures fast issue resolution.

A Good Plan Leads to Succes

For companies facing a similar SAP migration, Florian Kazak recommends defining responsibilities, availabilities, and procedures in the contract negotiations to avoid misunderstandings. "Our specific lesson learned – and this is also a tip for others – is to address 'resourcing' on the service provider side as well as on our side early on. In the end, around 20 colleagues were involved internally, but they need to be informed and reserved for the right times," explains Florian Kazak. Therefore, it is essential to allow enough time for the early planning phase, just like design and architecture. "Those who discuss, finalize, and put the important aspects in detail on paper at the beginning can easily work through and implement the migration later on without issues. Moreover, for the next time, the IT expert would focus even more on testing – it is a real time consumer but also an absolute necessity to ensure a fully functional system.

Overall, Florian Kazak is very satisfied with the SAP migration: "We wanted to carry out a project that end-users wouldn't even notice at first, and then eventually realize that the systems are running much faster. And we achieved that. Syntax was precisely the right partner for this, and we look forward to the SAP basis operation running smoothly – that will save us a lot of time in IT."