

Establishing a Robust Analytics and MDG Program for an S/4HANA Implementation

INDUSTRY



Consumer Products

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



Make-to-Order
Manufacturing

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION STORY & BUSINESS CHALLENGE

A global engineered-to-order parts CPG manufacturer undergoing a major SAP S/4HANA Greenfield implementation sought to establish a robust data foundation and analytics framework to move toward intelligent decision-making. The goal was to modernize how data was governed, analyzed, and consumed across the enterprise while ensuring readiness for future AI and advanced analytics initiatives. The client sought to eliminate data siloes, embed governance at the core of its operations, and equip decision-makers with timely, actionable insights to support strategic business outcomes.

The client engaged Clarkston Consulting's data and analytics experts to build out their data pipeline, augment their reporting portfolio in their data visualization tool (Qlik), build out SAP Analytics, and develop an enterprise-wide data governance program alongside their organization-wide S/4HANA implementation.

The data and analytics program was delivered in parallel with the S/4HANA implementation, ensuring full integration and business alignment. The approach focused on two major pillars: Master Data Governance and Analytics in SAP and enterprise wide (i.e., across the Azure data lake and the organization's report visualization tool, Qlik).

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Lead data architecture design and implementation
- Streamline portfolio and integration of new S/4 data into Qlik reporting environment
- Design a roadmap for implementing organization-wide, system-agnostic master data governance program
- Ensure full integration and business alignment for data and analytics program and S/4 upgrade



SOLUTION

For organization-wide analytics and data governance, the Clarkston team:

- Designed and implemented a report disposition process and data design, which included:
 - defining the requirements;
 - filling the role of business translator to navigate data requirements discussions and successfully identify business needs incorporating the new datasets;
 - working with technical SAP leads to assess how best to leverage planned SAP usage and datasets in the data warehouse and subsequent reporting;
 - leading consistent standup meetings to discuss processes, identify and overcome roadblocks, deliver implementation plans, and ensure team alignment to top priorities; and
 - navigating conflicting priorities and aligning the team to deliver progress on the key priorities, while also obtaining leadership buy-in, when needed.
- Designed a data architecture schema, code, naming convention, and a data source prioritization to create the structure that could pull in S/4 data into the legacy infrastructure, taking into account the prior SAP customizations that were no longer applicable in the new S/4 environment
- Conducted a report rationalization project to assess current reports and determine future state reporting needs, which informed the priorities established for the data architecture development, as well as that of the report development work in both SAP and Qlik
- Adjusted Qlik reports to incorporate the new S/4 datasets, alongside the legacy reports, to enable consistent trend reporting for integrated systems reporting
- Designed a systems-agnostic master data governance program that satisfies the client's near-term needs and sets the foundation for future growth



For implementing SAP MDG and Embedded Analytics, the Clarkston team:

- Designed an enterprise-wide master data governance strategy, including organizational roles, policies, and governance structures
- Implemented a dynamic, rule-driven workflow engine for approvals, allowing stewards to adjust configurations without IT intervention

- Integrated SAP MDG with Dassault's 3DX PLM system, enabling automated Change Request creation and significantly reducing manual touchpoints
- Introduced data quality rules that trigger automated Change Request generation and auto-completion of the Material Master Data to ensure compliance before records are activated
- Automated end-to-end population of master data attributes, improving accuracy, consistency, and turnaround time
- Deployed real-time operational analytics across Finance, Supply Chain, and Manufacturing to improve visibility and agility
- Established a report disposition framework to separate embedded analytics (for SAP-only data) from cross-system analytics, which flow through Azure Data Lake and Qlik visualizations
- Implemented FP&A analytics and planning capabilities via SAP Analytics Cloud (SAC), unifying planning, forecasting, and performance tracking
- Conducted hands-on training programs for both super users and end users, promoting adoption of self-service analytics and empowering business teams to design and explore insights independently



KEY BENEFITS

Analytics

- A future-ready data and analytics landscape that integrates seamlessly with SAP and non-SAP ecosystems, positioning the organization to embrace AI and advanced predictive capabilities
- Efficient, scheduled extraction of S/4 data into the enterprise data warehouse
- Developed internal data engineering capabilities
- Accurate, up-to-date organizational reports that include S/4 and SAP ECC data for trend reporting
- Real-time visibility into core business operations through SAP Embedded Analytics, reducing dependency on offline reports for SAP-based data

- A streamlined reporting environment with fewer datasets and reports, improving consistency and ease of maintenance
- Empowered SAP business users who can now explore, analyze, and visualize data independently, accelerating decision cycles

Master Data Governance

- A comprehensive data governance roadmap defining scope, roles, processes, and phased implementation across domains and systems
- A scalable governance framework designed to support current requirements and future growth
- Significant reduction in manual master data maintenance, with automated master data creation, review/approval workflows and rule-based validation driving accuracy and speed via SAP MDG
- Streamlined SAP governance framework that ensures compliance and accountability without bottlenecks

KPIs

- S/4 data extraction timeliness, i.e. lack of failures
- Report availability: are reports available, accurate, and updated with recent data?
- Program implementation: do people named in the data governance roles understand their roles and responsibilities?