Retail Case Study

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Preparing SAP Security for an S/4HANA Migration

As part of its SAP modernization journey, a leading retailer with operations across the United States and Canada sought to strengthen its SAP ECC security design and user management processes in preparation for a future SAP S/4HANA migration. The organization had heard from users about pain in the security space, with additional time and extra approvals required to provide access. They worried that security role architecture had become misaligned and failed to scale with evolving business structures and operational processes.

Beyond the current state, this retailer wanted to know which other best practices to adopt as they upgrade to S/4HANA. To address these challenges and set the stage for the upgrade, the organization engaged Clarkston to provide a comprehensive security and user management assessment to identify risks, streamline processes, and establish a scalable foundation aligned with SAP best practices.

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PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate current user provisioning workflows and SAP security role design through stakeholder interviews to identify process pain points and access control concerns
- Assess gaps against leading SAP security practices and identify opportunities to reduce inefficiencies, improve governance, and establish a scalable security framework
- Develop prioritized recommendations and align remediation activities to the appropriate SAP S/4HANA migration phase: before, during, or after transformation
- Provide a perspective on security team capacity and operating model needs, informed by comparable organizations and the added complexity of SAP S/4HANA Fiori security

RESOLUTION

- Reviewed existing SAP security design documentation and conducted stakeholder interviews to develop a clear understanding of current provisioning processes
- Analyzed birthright role mappings and current role design against business processes to assess alignment to the current state and readiness for SAP S/4HANA
- Organized key findings into structured observation categories, including business impact commentary and actionable recommendations for improvement
- Segmented identified risks into current operational risks and future SAP S/4HANA migration delivery risks to support targeted decision-making
- Developed six prioritized recommendations across role design, provisioning framework, business-friendly role catalog, security staffing, documentation, and training to strengthen the client's SAP security foundation

KEY BENEFITS

- Established a clear view of current SAP security risks, enabling leadership to distinguish immediate operational concerns from future SAP S/4HANA migration delivery risks
- Improved transparency into access governance by identifying gaps in role ownership and approval visibility across provisioning workflows
- Created a prioritized roadmap for strengthening SAP security design, including role rationalization, provisioning improvements, catalog governance, documentation, and training
- Positioned the client for a more scalable SAP S/4HANA security model by highlighting required changes to support Fiori security, cross-team collaboration, and future-state operating needs
- Enabled more informed executive decision-making by translating technical security findings into business impacts, actionable recommendations, and timing considerations aligned to the modernization journey

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Key Measures of Success

- Improved access governance by identifying high-risk role design gaps, approval visibility limitations, and ownership weaknesses across the provisioning lifecycle
- Increased SAP S/4HANA migration readiness by classifying security risks and remediation activities across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases
- Enhanced provisioning efficiency by assessing birthright role mappings and access request workflows to identify opportunities for simplification, standardization, and reduced administrative effort

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