CASE STUDY: SAP EHP upgrade for a utility company

Customer Profile

The client for this case study is a utility supply company that provides electric, gas and water, serving three different states in the US. The company has more than 250 employees.

Implemented SAP Modules

- Finance (FI)
- Contract Accounting
- Utilities (IS-U)
- Sales & Distribution (SD)
- Material Management (MM)
- Plant Maintenance (PM)
- Human Resource (HR)
- Project System (PS)

Business Need

This client was planning to implement SAP HANA in the near future. In order to be SAP HANA ready, they needed to upgrade their environment from SAP ERP 6.0, EHP6 to EHP7.

Additionally, the company wanted to adopt new functionalities offered in the upgrade in order to improve their existing business process. The company also wanted to upgrade their existing hardware so they could benefit from improved performance today while also gaining the agility to deftly adopt future technologies.

To increase efficiency in their financial accounting department, the client wanted to change their month end closing process and automate the period closing. The client also wanted to enhance their current collection and dispute process.

Due to the problems they were facing with many mission critical business processes, this client decided to award Mygo Consulting PI and Portal upgrade projects as well to meet the compatibility requirements and ensure the seamless integration with SAP ERP 6.0, EHP7.

System Landscape

- SAP ERP 6.0
  - Sandbox
  - Dev
  - QAS
  - PRD
- VMware Servers (Hosted On-site)
  - Database Server (Microsoft SQL Server)
  - Application Server
  - SAP BW environment
  - SAP PI environment
  - SAP portal environment

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Challenges

• Client wants a parallel environment for the upgrade process along with existing landscape.
• Create new boxes and refresh with the production server.
• Configure and implement new change management process and path for the duration of the project as well as for the new landscape after go-live.
• Integrate all current and ongoing development with both environments.
• Coordinate with several departments and subject matter experts in validating the changes our team makes in order to enable new functionalities, as well as verifying all test scripts.
• Ensure proper testing of integrations with multiple modules, which are involved in several projects already in progress, effectively ruling out any and all possible side effects.

Solution

Immediately after Mygo Consulting was awarded the contract, we began working on the new parallel environment hardware and best configuration to accommodate the targeted data and performance needs. We started with the newly prepared Sandbox as a baseline and started the upgrade process.

During the kick-off meeting, both Mygo and client teams were finalized and together we agreed upon the following: project timeline, test plans, cutover activities and change management process. It was decided that both new and old dev and quality environments will maintain the exact same ongoing configuration and development changes, at any given time, until the actual day of go-live.

We conducted a meeting with end-users and BPOs to explore new FI functionalities and discuss their configuration options according to the business need. The client agreed to adopt a new SAP-offered collection and dispute solution along with Closing Cockpit to meet their finance needs and increase the efficiency of their month end closings.

Implementation

We started with a new sandbox and upgraded to EHP7, applying necessary OSS notes and performing initial testing. After the successful sandbox upgrade, we started new DEV and QAS boxes and upgraded them to EHP7, performing SPDD and SPAU checks for any object change(s).

We enabled the new functionalities, such as financial closing cockpit, dispute and collection management, and release strategy for purchasing. Unit testing was performed in both sandbox and Quality systems, and UAT was done in Quality system for final end-user's and BPO's approvals. In addition to the SAP ERP, EHP7 upgrade, we also upgraded SAP PI and SAP Portal environments (PI 7.0 to 7.4, Portal 7.01 to 7.4), testing in lower environments for compatibility and functionality.

We conducted training seminars on the new functionalities, consisting of hands-on training for the users, and prepared standard business process documents for them to keep as reference material. During our Go or No-Go meeting two days prior to cutover activities, we had a 100% vote to go ahead & proceed with the upgrade process.

We started cutover activities four days prior to the go-live and placed a hard freeze on any system change(s). Backing up and transferring the database as well as copying the new system were both completed during the cutover/down-time.

Result

By working together closely with the client's department heads and IT team, our team was able to successfully upgrade all the servers in the landscape to SAP ERP 6.0, EHP7, culminating with a 100% successful go-live and experiencing zero errors in the upgraded system. Mygo Consulting quickly gained the support and trust of all department heads, and subject matter experts.

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