

Case study

Continental Resources (ConRes)



VAR leverages HP SAP HANA solution for internal use and customer offering

Industry

Technology

Objective

Replace end-of-life reporting solution

Approach

Deploy HP Small and Medium Enterprise Solution for SAP HANA to power SAP BusinessObjects

IT matters

- Replace outdated reporting solution
- Generate reports in 8 seconds vs. 4, 5 minutes with alternative solutions
- Gain self-monitoring power of HP ProLiant ML350p Gen8 Server
- Gain knowledge transfer through HP Fast Start Implementation Services—which ensures that SAP HANA is operational and integrated with the clients application environment

Business matters

- Close monthly books quickly
- Extend analytics throughout enterprise (future)
- Extend business model to holistic solution sales
- Pursue strategy to increase revenue



“We went to our vendors and said, ‘Who can help us?’ HP brought the HP SME Solution for SAP HANA, and the expertise to implement and run it correctly.”

– Sam Schoelen, CIO, ConRes



Founded in 1962, Continental Resources (ConRes) is a certified woman-owned business headquartered in Bedford, Mass. Businesses, higher education and government organizations rely on ConRes for high technology products, services and support. An HP Specialist Partner and hybrid IT solutions VAR (value added reseller), ConRes employs a U.S. staff of 300. Seeking to replace an antiquated financial reporting package, ConRes recently implemented the HP Small and Medium Enterprise Solution for SAP HANA, which includes certified hardware based on the HP ProLiant ML350p Gen8 Server. Today the company offers the same solution to its own customers, bringing the power of HANA affordably in reach of small and medium size businesses as well as large enterprises.

Fast, accurate access to data and analytics is a competitive necessity in today's business environment. Sales people need to retrieve complete customer information quickly. Executives must detect and respond fast to performance indicators or shifts in customer demand. "To succeed, companies need to make smarter decisions, faster, using real-time analytics," says Sam Schoelen, ConRes CIO. "They have to get at their data and present it to the people who need it, faster and in an optimal format. The HP Small and Medium Enterprise Solution for SAP HANA was the ideal solution for us—and as a VAR, we can extend the benefits to our customers."

Search for speed leads to HP

SAP Report Writer and Report Painter, the reporting solutions used by the ConRes finance department to close the monthly books, were decades old and no longer supported by SAP. Wanting to stay within an SAP environment, ConRes aimed to upgrade to SAP BusinessObjects™ Business Intelligence (BI) software, and turned to its vendors to propose a solution architecture. "We went to all of our partners and asked who could help us out," Schoelen recalls. "We considered a number of alternatives: an SAP Business Warehouse; running BusinessObjects directly against our ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) platform; exporting our data daily. But none of the options we considered came close to the speed we were accustomed to—and that was unacceptable. I couldn't see upgrading to a slower system."

"The HP ProLiant ML350p Gen8 Server enables us to optimize the performance of our business intelligence application."

—Sam Schoelen, CIO, ConRes

The only exception was the proposal from HP, which brought not only the right solution but also the expertise to architect and implement it. ConRes was interested in SAP HANA, a real-time in-memory database platform that gives fast access to operational and strategic information. However, the SAP HANA Enterprise edition with which most vendors were familiar was oversized for ConRes, whose entire database is approximately 350 GB, with only 32 GB used at a time. SAP had recently introduced SAP HANA Edge edition for the small and medium enterprise market. SAP HANA Edge was right-sized for ConRes, and

would enable the finance department to run its reports against real-time information. In HP, Schoelen found the optimal implementation platform and knowledge-transfer expertise. "As a CIO, I was looking for answers," Schoelen says—what components to buy, how to implement them. HP brought us not only the solution, but also access to the correct information to install and run it correctly."

"As a CIO, I was looking for answers. HP had them. They not only gave us the right solution platform, but also empowering knowledge transfer."

—Sam Schoelen, CIO, ConRes

HP SME Solution for SAP HANA is right-sized

The HP Small and Medium Enterprise Solution for SAP HANA includes certified hardware based on the HP ProLiant ML350p Gen8 server, whose built-in intelligence continuously analyzes thousands of system parameters to automate data center operations, optimize application performance, and proactively improve uptime. ConRes also used the HP Fast Start Implementation Services rapid-deployment solution for SAP HANA, gaining the expertise of an HP consultant to integrate source systems with BusinessObjects, the reporting/front end application. Fast Start Implementation Services ensures that SAP HANA is operational and integrated with the application environment. "With any new product, it's important to know how it works, what you're getting into—and you have to follow approved methods to ensure vendor support," Schoelen says. "HP didn't just push some buttons and walk away. It provided outstanding implementation expertise and knowledge transfer."

SAP HANA Edge serves as the analytic foundation for capturing and processing business transactions in real time with near-zero latency. With the new solution in place, ConRes can generate a report compiling large amounts of data in eight seconds; all the alternative methods available would have taken four to five minutes. "I don't think any of our users would want to wait four minutes for a report," Schoelen says. "We certainly didn't want any solution that would double or triple the amount of time it took to close our books every month. In a sales-driven organization

Customer at a glance

Application

Financial reporting; customer solution offering

Hardware

- HP Small and Medium Enterprise Solution for SAP HANA
 - HP ProLiant ML350p Gen8 Server

Software

- SAP HANA Edge edition
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 11 SP3 for SAP Applications

HP services

- HP Fast Start Implementation Services rapid-deployment solution for SAP HANA

like ours, speed is essential." In addition, BusinessObjects opens the door to giving end users more power over information selection and presentation. "We use our reports to dive deep into the data," Schoelen says. "We can investigate anomalies even down to a particular order." ConRes is looking now to extend the solution footprint to cover its entire ERP platform. That would bring fast, accurate analytics to every corporate function, from order entry to manufacturing and warehousing. "We're thrilled with the solution," he says. "It enables us to see a lot deeper into our business and get a lot more out of our data." ConRes also uses HP printers, and most of the servers in its data center are HP ProLiant.

"ConRes not only benefits from the solution internally, we also offer it to our customers as a fully configured system delivered to their doorstep."

— Sam Schoelen, CIO, ConRes

A complete solution for ConRes customers

In addition to benefitting internally from the HP SME Solution for SAP HANA, ConRes today extends the offering to its customers. Typically when a customer orders a server it comes in parts, with an array, software, and hard drive coming separately, Schoelen says.

The customer must put these all together and then load their operating system. In contrast, ConRes provides a pre-assembled system with HP SME Solution for SAP HANA Edge edition pre-loaded. "We can deliver an affordable, fully configured solution to their doorstep—hardware, software, installation and configuration," he says. "It's a holistic approach, bringing our customers everything they need through a single vendor."

"We were told that no matter how we architected it, our new reporting solution would be slower than our old one. But HP took us in the right direction with the HP SME Solution for SAP HANA."

— Sam Schoelen, CIO, ConRes

For ConRes, this represents the evolution of its business model beyond hardware sales to value-added solution sales. For ConRes customers, it opens the door to a wide range of analytics use cases. Sales people can review up-to-date customer information, perhaps from mobile devices. Sales managers can use dashboards to review revenues and margins, and make strategic decisions on how to focus sales efforts. "In the past, by the time that kind of information was available, it often was too late to act on it," Schoelen says. "Now, companies can make smarter business decisions with real data in front of them."

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