



Life sciences case study

Premigration project keeps S/4HANA upgrade on track

Global manufacturer's customer—vendor integration hits timeline and synchronization marks to support larger-scale transformation journey.

At a glance

Industry
Life sciences

Location
Global

Challenges
Tight timeline with risk of significant costs from delays and requirement variations from typical conversion practices

Success Highlights

- 100% synchronization of almost two million records
- Retained customer numbering across data transformation
- Three-month project delivery

The challenge

Our client, a major medical device manufacturer with a global reach, was eager to embark on a transformation journey, migrating their old ERP system to SAP S/4HANA. This type of migration requires several complex preparatory steps that must be completed before the technical upgrade can commence.

A primary and mandatory premigration step for this brownfield S/4HANA migration was customer/vendor integration, or CVI. In ERP systems, vendors and customers have separate master data models. However, S/4HANA employs the business partner distinction, in which customers and vendors—any entity with which the company does business—are configured as business partners. For our client, this meant synchronizing two million records, with any failed conversions preventing the next stage of the upgrade.



Additional factors included:

- This premigration project timeline was limited to three months to ensure our client could move forward with their S/4HANA transformation journey
- Our client wanted to retain the original numbering in the transition from clients and vendors to business partners
- The conversion had certain requirements that varied from a typical CVI process, including removing deletion flag and suppression check steps

Additionally, the project timeline was limited to three months to ensure our client could move forward with the technical migration. Any delay to the CVI process would have financial risk to our client; even a one-month delay in a project of this scope could have incurred additional costs of over \$250K.

Our approach

As the SAP S/4HANA migration is a multivendor project, our client initially reached out to its SAP partner for this premigration activity, but Cognizant stepped in when our client's partner was unable to position the right resources within the tight timeline. We have delivered customer/vendor integration projects since 2022 for several global organizations. Going in, we understood that achieving 100% synchronization was mandatory for project success. With this data evolution, any updates to customer and vendor data are immediately transferred to the relevant business partner.



Our client was embarking on the process of upgrading from SAP ERP 6.0 with enhancement package 6. Our team started with the established best practices for S/4HANA migrations, including:

- Conducting prechecks and check reports
- Running master data cleansing and consistency checks
- Running a CVI customization check
- Establishing CVI and business partner customization

Additional typical steps in these migrations include archiving customer and vendor data with deletion flags and activating a suppression check to bypass data errors such as postal and tax jurisdiction codes. However, our client did not opt for the suppression check to bypass data errors, instead opting for those data errors to be fixed to move forward with the migration.

The Cognizant team created multiple iterations in lower environments, including development, quality assurance and verification, which helped to establish the processes and eliminate all the data issues in production. Initially, one full end-to-end conversion was executed in a sandbox environment. The team analyzed and corrected the data, then repeated the sequences in the other environments.

In the first run, Cognizant was able to deliver a 99.999% success rate. We experienced an unsync rate of less than 0.001% out of over 1.9 million records. These errors were due to invalid tax number (VAT) data and quickly resolved.

Business outcomes

A critical initial stage of the brownfield S/4HANA migration, our client's CVI project was completed with zero down time, resulting in no impact to business operations. Our client was able to keep its original customer numbering after the migration—a key requirement for the project. Now it has achieved simpler, faster updates in customer-vendor master data that flow in real time to the relevant business partners.



Business benefits included:

- On-time CVI project delivery enabled our client to adhere to its S/4HANA transformation timeline
- The 100% schedule adherence of master data migration eliminated potential financial loss from program delays
- The project realized 100% of customer/vendor-to-business partner synchronization by achieving a 99.999% data synchronization in the first run of data migration itself

As a result of the timely completion of this premigration project, our client was able to plan for the next phases of its transformation.