



This article appeared in the Oct • Nov • Dec 2012 issue of *SAPinsider* (<http://sapinsider.wispubs.com>) and appears here with permission from the publisher, WIS Publishing.



Build Solutions Powered by SAP HANA to Transform Your Business

4 Ways SAP HANA and SAP Custom Development Intersect

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The technology field is buzzing about in-memory computing and SAP HANA. Companies are using SAP HANA to accelerate data loads, store data in memory, and speed data queries, for example. On top of that, many organizations have unique business challenges that require a custom solution. And that's where SAP Custom Development comes in.

SAP HANA is more than just a database — it is a platform for innovative development. The SAP Custom Development organization has zeroed in on this concept and is building business-critical solutions powered by SAP HANA to meet customers' specific needs.

Customers are engaging with SAP Custom Development to leverage SAP HANA for four key reasons. Let's explore each one.

1. Accelerate Business Processes to Boost Performance

Some customers have come to us because they are struggling with significant performance issues with their existing business processes, caused by data being housed in traditional disk storage. Performance is hindered because their servers are slow, and there may be a significant amount of complex calculations and data reads associated with certain business processes within an application.

SAP Custom Development enables customers to overcome this challenge and speed up performance by introducing SAP HANA as a concurrent, secondary database. Large amounts of data — either SAP or non-SAP data — from the existing application are replicated to SAP HANA, and

the calculations on this mass data are performed within the SAP HANA platform. This is a non-disruptive approach: Customers can keep their existing data-intensive processes and familiar user interfaces in place while SAP HANA works separately to significantly increase performance.

Let's consider a real-world example. The SAP Custom Development team worked closely with a customer in the fragrance and flavor industry to build an application to enable the company to perform necessary, complicated compliance checks as it developed new product recipes. By introducing SAP HANA to the procedure, the company has reduced the time necessary for each compliance check from 20 minutes to a few seconds. By speeding up this process, key employees can work more efficiently and can develop and deliver innovative new products more quickly and at a lower cost.

2. Differentiate the Business by Developing Cutting-Edge Applications

Seeking to access mass data and to make critical decisions in real time, customers are clamoring for new, next-generation applications that are powered by SAP HANA.

SAP Custom Development collaborates with customers to build these applications, which can incorporate transactional, analytical, or even predictive capabilities. By running these applications on top of SAP HANA, companies can address business problems that were previously unsolvable with conventional technology. By doing so, they are differentiating their business from that of their competitors to gain a significant edge.

There are several excellent examples of next-generation applications that we co-developed with customers. For instance, SAP Custom Development created a solution with an airline to enable the company to more efficiently rebook passenger flights in the event of a travel interruption. Using the application in conjunction with SAP HANA, the company can slash the time it takes to calculate updated travel options from minutes to seconds. By quickly finding new flights, the airline can keep its passengers happy and prevent them from rebooking with a different carrier.

We have also worked with a customer in the public sector on an application to detect and analyze fraudulent and wasteful spending. The organization's existing system did not have the capacity to perform the necessary searches on millions of data rows to identify fraud. The new solution incorporates complex business rules, logic, and algorithms, and benefits from the speed of SAP HANA, which enables the organization to save significantly.

3. Migrate Legacy Applications to Avoid Costly Maintenance

In addition to the challenge of building new solutions, many customers are struggling with how to retire applications that are at the end of their life cycle. Rather than trying to enhance or update these outdated legacy applications or spending time and effort maintaining them, they want to migrate the applications to a new platform.

SAP Custom Development has the capability to help customers move their legacy applications and rebuild them on the SAP HANA platform. The group also provides support options for the long-term maintenance of the custom solution to ensure that it works as designed after applying support packages and executing upgrades.

4. Leverage Predictive Analytics and Optimization

Many companies across all industries are inundated with mountains of business data. As they sift through the information, they use classical analytics and reporting to understand how the business has run in the past. But to really gain a competitive advantage, they need to take the analysis to the next level and predict future performance. SAP Custom Development can help them do this — and do it quickly.

A Closer Look at SAP Custom Development

The SAP Custom Development organization works with businesses to build targeted, customer-specific solutions. The team focuses on two approaches:

- Create a unique solution for a specific customer, based on that customer's requirements, to address a particular business opportunity, accounting for the customer's specific business values and competitive advantage
- Create niche solutions that address the business needs of market segments that aren't traditionally addressed by mainstream, standard development

The organization specializes in building solutions that target mission-critical core business processes. The unique makeup of the team blends a combination of technology expertise, deep industry knowledge, and a clear understanding of existing SAP applications.* As part of each SAP Custom Development engagement, a customer has access to support services for the entire life cycle of the developed solution.

* SAP Custom Development has worked closely with SAP HANA developers since the technology's inception to gain deep insight into its capabilities.

SAP's Performance and Insight Optimization team is instrumental to this process.

Leveraging their industry knowledge, the Performance and Insight Optimization team has created solutions that enable customers to analyze their data and predict how the business will run in the future based on trends and forecast modeling. These customers are creating a detailed forecast for the future and can optimize performance based on that prediction.

For example, a retailer wanted to analyze purchasing trends at the individual market-basket level to create more effective product promotions and optimize its store layout. The custom application we developed enables the retailer to track and, using SAP HANA, quickly analyze point-of-sale data to ultimately plan specific promotions and boost sales.

Power Your Business

SAP HANA has evolved into an innovation platform that companies are leveraging to enhance their most complex business processes to enable competitive advantage. SAP Custom Development helps them get there by delivering targeted, customer-specific solutions. To learn more, visit www.sap.com/customdev.¹ ■

¹ For more details about SAP Custom Development, see the feature story by Klaus Weber on page 22 in this October-December 2012 issue of *SAPinsider* (sapinsider.wispubs.com).

Note: In addition to creating custom applications, SAP Custom Development extends standard products that are built on SAP HANA, such as SAP Smart Meter Analytics and SAP Trade Promotion Management.