Powered by SAP HANA

Partners Help Push SAP's In-Memory Platform into Its Next Phase

by Scott Leatherman, SAP

Scott Leatherman (scott.leatherman@sap.com; Twitter: @leatherman_SAP) has been with SAP for six years via the acquisition of Virsa Systems. In his current role as Vice President of Solution Marketing, Powered by SAP HANA, Scott leverages his passion for building new markets by enabling developers to solve today's "big data" challenges and empower the development of applications that will change the way we do business. Scott has successfully launched several marquee events that are now foundational for the GRC and EPM community, and has served in field sales organizations including the SAP Premier Customer Network organization. Prior to SAP, he held senior marketing positions at Virsa Systems, ActivIdentity, MarketFirst, and USWeb/CKS.

Database technology hasn't changed in a long time. Over the past 20 years, databases have become larger and faster thanks to advances in computing power, but their basic structure and architecture hadn't changed — until recently. In-memory technology represents the first dramatic change in database structure, flipping the basic database concept on its head. SAP HANA, SAP's in-memory database solution, is opening up countless new opportunities for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

Now, the SAP HANA platform, a combination of SAP's in-memory software and partner hardware, is taking the next leap forward and reaching net-new customers in more markets. We are offering our partner community the platform they need to deliver exciting new technology to customers in a number of ways. The resulting level of momentum and enthusiasm is unprecedented.

Primed for Innovation

As databases continue to grow and more data is collected, database processing technology must keep pace. Advancements in technology are critical, as the volume and velocity of data available to companies is only meaningful if it can be quickly accessed and analyzed to drive fully informed business decisions in real time.

SAP HANA brings about a major change in database performance in terms of both speed and scope. As a hybrid database that simultaneously uses both columnar and row-based data storage, SAP HANA significantly increases data query speeds, reducing the time it takes to realize results from days to minutes and from hours to seconds. Customers have reported performance increases of 100,000 times faster over their existing database structure. The scope of what can be processed is also expanding dramatically at a time when many companies see the analysis of unstructured data as their next major challenge. SAP HANA provides the coveted ability to seamlessly model those masses of unstructured data and gain value from it.

The business value of the SAP HANA platform is growing and expanding almost daily, as SAP customers and partners explore new and innovative applications for the technology. But the most direct business application of SAP HANA remains real-time analytics. Companies can now process and view data in real time and quickly run reports that previously weren't being generated due to the required processing time.

Delivering SAP HANA to Customers

The scale of adoption for SAP HANA has been like nothing SAP has ever seen. We are relying on our partners to get our customers the "powered by SAP HANA" analytics and custom applications they need to leverage the speed and transparency offered by this new database technology. SAP's value-added resellers, independent software vendors, and systems integration partners are helping companies that have "big data" challenges understand the scale of SAP HANA, and they are identifying areas where it can help drive their business forward. Each customer has its own unique business challenges and requirements and can envision SAP HANA solving those challenges in different ways.

For example, faced with a mounting volume of marketing-related data, T-Mobile looked to improve its ability analytics campaign and promotion information, as well as speed up the process of calculating offer acceptances. This used to be a laborious, time-intensive task requiring extensive SQL scripting. Working with systems integration partner Deloitte, T-Mobile implemented SAP HANA and was able to efficiently analyze huge data volumes in seconds — up to 1 billion rows and a 300 trillion record set in as little as 16 seconds. As a result, the company is able to dynamically modify its marketing and promotions vehicles to deliver more effective results.

Similarly, UK-based Camelot had a data analysis problem to solve. The company's successful lottery business involves selling both draw-based games and instant-play games (both online and scratch cards) through retailers, the Internet, and on mobile devices. And growth for this company is good for all, because 28% of its revenue goes to the UK National Lottery Good Causes each year and 12% goes to the Treasury for disbursement to government programs.

But the massive transaction volumes collected by the company made any deep, real-time analysis nearly impossible. Camelot knew that if it could analyze its sales trend data better, it could improve its sales and new product development strategies and maximize its returns to the Good Causes program.

When Camelot's IT team learned about in-memory computing, it approached Bluefin Solutions, an SAP systems integration partner, to find out if SAP HANA was the solution to its challenge. Bluefin loaded a sampling of Camelot's sales data into the SAP BusinessObjects Analysis solution powered by SAP HANA and instantly began analyzing trends in the company's sales by outlet and promotional activity. Eyes lit up. But what really impressed the company was the ability to build predictive models based on that data in real time to analyze the impact of various business decisions. And the smarter this company is about its sales growth, the more money goes to Good Causes.

The Power of the Platform

The development of custom applications on the SAP HANA platform is another area in which new and old SAP partners are bringing the technology into unique areas. SAP is developing a number of applications on SAP HANA, but by opening that opportunity up to the independent software vendors and systems integrators in our ecosystem, the number and variety of applications is also expanding exponentially in areas and directions where SAP does not have specific expertise.[1]

For example, SAP partner gicom develops solutions for procurement professionals in the retail and wholesale industries. gicom understood that one of the most pressing challenges for buyers in those industries is the ability to analyze all of the necessary data during a negotiation in real time and perform what-if scenarios on offers from vendors and suppliers. If a supplier offers a price on a specific product at a specific volume, the buyer doesn't analyze that offer in a vacuum, but in relation to the millions of other conditions, contracts, parts, invoices, and suppliers it has in its system to know the true value of that offer.

While that analysis was possible at a very high level, when gicom integrated SAP HANA into its Strategic Condition Management solution, a new level of data analysis and modeling was made possible. Using SAP HANA, buyers can now use the solution to run various scenarios to see how a specific agreement may impact earnings and margins as well as the business as a whole. And because buyers are often traveling to supplier locations for negotiations or don't have all the relevant supplier information at hand, Strategic Condition Management, powered by SAP HANA, was developed for the iPad.

Social business provider Jive Software has a long relationship with SAP. Jive is the social business platform powering the SAP HANA developer network called Experience SAP HANA (**experiencesaphana.com**). When Jive learned

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— **Chris Morace**, Senior Vice President of Strategy, Jive Software

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[1] The applications being developed may include business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-consumer (B2C) offerings.

about the capability SAP HANA brought to data analysis, Jive began to evaluate potentially leveraging SAP HANA strategically for its own platform. Real-time analysis of unstructured data is one of the biggest opportunities for social business leaders such as Jive.

Jive first leveraged SAP HANA by integrating it into Experience SAP HANA that it built for SAP. With a deeper understanding of how in-memory computing works, Jive is now looking into how this technology will fit into its product roadmap. For example, Jive's platform currently recommends conversations or documents to users based on real-time analysis of their activity in the community. SAP HANA could speed that analysis up so the recommendations being made better match the current activity of that user.

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A Platform for the Future

As the examples in this article illustrate, SAP is focused on giving its partners the platform they need to bring SAP HANA into new and exciting areas for customers. Providing our partners with this platform has reinvigorated many areas of our already thriving ecosystem, and the level of momentum and enthusiasm around our platform strategy continues to spread rapidly. ▪

Additional Resources...

■ "A Peek Behind the Curtain: Medtronic Shares Its Experiences as an Early SAP HANA Adopter" by David Hannon (*insiderPROFILES*, October-December 2011, **insiderPROFILES.wispubs.com**)

■ "Implementing SAP HANA: Experiences and First Impressions" by Jonathan Haun (*SAP Professional Journal*, Volume 14, Issue 2, **www.SAPpro.com**)