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Moving swiftly forward

Workday at Transurban:
empowering the future of work

“Our goal is to shape how our industry evolves and we look to excel in everything we do, so investing in the right technology across our business is a key strategy for us.”

Lisa Tobin,
Group Executive, Technology,
Transurban

On the surface, Transurban plans, builds and operates toll roads, primarily in Australia and North America. But, at its core, the company is more than an engineering firm: it is also a technology organisation whose reach extends well beyond the asphalt. With the vision of strengthening communities through transport, Transurban helps millions of customers get where they're going each day. From an operational perspective, keeping things moving smoothly requires accurate traffic management and forecasting capabilities, powerful transactional processing capabilities and many kilometres of fibre optics— areas in which the company has been steadily advancing. From a strategic perspective, it requires core business systems that have the necessary efficiency, agility and scalability to deliver information quickly and accurately; support a dynamic, international workforce; and keep pace with a rapidly growing enterprise. Here, Transurban determined it needed a new approach.

The challenge

As part of its transition from a traditional engineering organisation to a technology led business, Transurban reviewed its core business systems, and found that many were approaching end of life. Across the enterprise, systems were “clunky,” disparate, and not fit-for-purpose. It took a long time to put data into them and even longer to get real information out of them.

To support Transurban's rapid growth agenda, it needed a technology solution that is scalable as the company expands organically and through acquisitions. And, perhaps the biggest drawback: heavy reliance on manual processing took precious time away from strategic activities. All of these challenges pointed to a need not only to implement new systems but also to revise existing processes.

The objectives

Transurban launched an initiative to modernise its ERP systems and business processes across finance, procurement, HR and payroll. Through the program, the company sought to:

- Achieve agility and scalability for responding to the changing needs of the business
- Become more efficient and proficient in managing and using corporate financial data and people data
- Establish a single version of the truth
- Facilitate integration of acquisitions as well as organic new businesses
- Empower a mobile workforce
- Provide leading practice functional processes and services, including self service and an excellent user experience
- Support collaboration so the organisation can find even better ways of working
- Drive innovation and continuous improvement

“Our core values are around ingenuity and collaboration, so when selecting technology platforms and partners, we very much look at how they can bring everyone together to find better ways of working.”

Amanda Veldman,
General Manager, People and Culture Services, Transurban

Overall, the transformation was essentially about getting up to speed in the present while preparing for the future—no small feat in a dynamic business, that needs to respond not to just today’s environment but to the future.

“This was a unique opportunity for us to pause, look at what we do and really set ourselves up for the future.”

Sharmila Clancy,
ERP Program Director, Transurban

The solution

To fulfil these objectives, Transurban selected Workday as its ERP platform, mainly because it provided a genuine transformation opportunity. By moving to Workday’s cloud based Financial Management and Human Capital Management solutions, the company had the chance to rethink its business processes, simplify the way it operated, and deliver easy-to-use solutions to its end users. However, realising this potential wouldn’t be automatic: in addition to world-class, cloud-based technology, it would also require an experienced implementation partner with global Workday capabilities, business process know-how, a collaborative approach, and the capacity to think out of the box—especially when addressing the unforeseen issues that inevitably arise in any implementation. For these qualities, Transurban chose Deloitte to assist with the transformation.

Together, the joint engagement team:

- Implemented Workday HR, finance, and procurement together as single platform, which was a first for the Australian market
- Introduced efficient, integrated, global business processes

- Enabled employees to “work the way they want to” through greater mobility and self service capabilities
- Returned ownership of financial information and supporting data to the business units
- Put day-to-day activities back with the people who actually own those processes
- Established one source of the truth that can be accessed anytime from anywhere.

In addition to these accomplishments, part way through the transformation the team was called upon to help integrate a business that Transurban had acquired in New South Wales. Through ingenuity and close collaboration, the team successfully extended the solution to accommodate the newly acquired company, thus demonstrating the scalability of the Workday system live and in real time.

The lessons learned

Transurban leadership largely attributed the program’s success to three crucial elements:

1. Strong and vocal support from the CEO on down.
2. An intense focus on change management.
3. A committed and close partnership with Workday and Deloitte.

“This project required an exceptional level of collaboration between Transurban, Deloitte, and Workday, and from day one we really did work as a single team.”

Kurt Proctor-Parker,
Lead Engagement Partner, Deloitte

No matter how effective the technology is, there is no substitute for a highly collaborative engagement team. Achieving the goals of the transformation boiled down to relationships, which were characterised by honesty, accountability, and the ability to work through difficulties together.

“Whether it’s the year-end results, planning and analysis, or procurement, the Workday platform will make our organisation more efficient so that people can focus on where they can create value.”

Adam Watson,
CFO, Transurban

The bottom line

The new Workday platform greatly improved process efficiency at Transurban while providing the scalability needed to accommodate growth. It also enhanced the workforce experience. By enabling integration and visibility, the transformation program democratised data and processes throughout the company and introduced simple and efficient ways for people to work. Employees are now able to focus on what matters most—executing strategy, thinking creatively, and generating value.

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