

The Deloitte logo, consisting of the word "Deloitte" in a white, sans-serif font with a small green dot to the right of the letter 'e'.

**Deloitte**

## THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Stories of purpose and lasting impact

A large, stylized profile of a human head facing right, composed of a dense, chaotic collection of various objects and materials. The head is rendered in a dark, almost black color, with the interior and surface details made of translucent and solid pieces of plastic, metal, and other debris. The background is a gradient of teal and blue, with some faint, abstract shapes. The overall composition is complex and layered, suggesting a vast, interconnected network of information or knowledge.

**Nobody likes a know-it-all.  
(Usually.)**

But if “knowing it all” means “financial omniscience”...

# FROM **HUNDREDS** OF STAND-ALONE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES TO A **SINGLE (OMNISCIENT?)** **SOURCE OF TRUTH**

## THE SITUATION

True omniscience belongs to the realm of the spiritual, or fantastical. Maybe the science-fictional. But for the largest global companies—comprising dozens upon dozens of products operating across dozens of countries—creating a unified view of the consolidated financials, performance measures, and global capabilities across the organization is the kind of omniscience that could be worth pursuing. And for one such company, the time had come to attempt to bring that vision to fruition.

The CFO at this global corporation knew that not only did the Finance function simply not have access to the unified financial view *or* foundational data it needed to perform planning, budgeting, and variance analysis tasks, but also its cost-to-serve model for finance was well above the industry average. The time for change had come.

The company's legacy processes were manual and their environments lacked standardization across different groups, leading to inconsistency, with wildly varying levels of detail and accuracy that made it difficult to compare financial actuals across different areas of the business or execute planning beyond a rudimentary summary level. And from a data perspective, each of those areas had built their own bespoke systems and data models. The result? There was no simple way to construct a view of financial results with any real granularity. Which meant that questions about what was actually driving real business outcomes were hard—often impossible—to answer.

While these challenges were hardly unprecedented, the *scale* of the transformation called for—a comprehensive process and technology transformation—was daunting. Perhaps unprecedented. The company had tried to tackle this issue before, but success had proved elusive. A new approach was needed—and to drive that approach, the CFO turned to Deloitte.



## THE SOLVE

To approach the challenge from a new perspective, Deloitte “flipped the script,” looking at what a new, leading practice approach would entail, rather than attempting to cobble together a solution by tying existing processes and technologies together with spit and baling wire. To start, Deloitte worked closely with the company to clearly articulate a visionary end-state design that would pave the way for what the organization actually wanted to achieve. Added bonus? By painting this compelling picture of the art of the possible, we were able to secure the executive support critical to achieve the transformation.

At the core of the approach were a joint [SAP Central Finance](#) transformation (to corral the financial actuals) and [Anaplan](#) implementation (to provide the enhanced business planning and execution capabilities needed to make use of those actuals). Of course, executing the transformation was no simple task. Bringing together a new data foundation alongside the needed planning applications, in parallel, and in a relatively short amount of time, would prove challenging. And given the scale and complexity of this global organization, the challenge was only multiplied. One critical step in addressing those challenges was the building of a Common Information Model (CIM) for the company, establishing common data definitions to be adopted by both the Anaplan and SAP platforms. This shared language allowed Deloitte to scale effort across the enterprise and drive consistency within the planning and actuals across the organization.

Success also required that we work hand in hand with the business, not only to drive the appropriate change management but to have frank, honest conversations around topics like accountability, target setting, management business reviews, and service-level differentiation. Also critical was our ability to balance different business units’ needs for their own independent processes with the need to align all on true global process standards.

A turning point in the journey was the realization that accountability had to be placed at the right level—from there, detail would fall into place. To share just one example: after go-live, the new solution made it possible for us to demonstrate how 80% of the planning intersections existed at very low levels of materiality. With accountability placed at the right level, the client began to organically stop planning at such a granular level.

THE TRICK TO A LONG JOURNEY?  
**KEEP TO THE VISION, KEEP TO THE PATH.**

# THE IMPACT

With the joint SAP Central Finance–Anaplan implementation complete, the company has moved to a more unified planning process that covers each financial statement across the entire organization. It is now able to more-closely coordinate planning across commercial and supply chain to create a unified view of the direction of the overall business. In addition, the company can now plan to a more elongated time horizon, allowing for better and more distant planning, with less variability in the planning process and greater transparency into how plans are derived. And, of course, at the heart of all of these improvements is the company's enhanced ability to derive better insights into the data and from there drive improved business decision-making.

Deloitte has substantially streamlined and automated the process for end users across the end-to-end planning cycle. This includes automating data reconciliation across processes; activating system-generated planning methodologies across the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow; and providing real-time reporting capabilities to facilitate management reviews. Finance planners now begin each planning cycle with a fully forecasted baseline to kick off and streamline planning activities. They are then equipped with the ability to influence assumptions and drivers based on market conditions and organizational strategies to finalize their plans. This can lead to automated reporting that facilitates the management review cadence.

The transformation has also allowed the client to meet its business case objectives by reducing the overall cost to serve in finance. We were also able to improve the quality of the forecast by implementing tighter process integration between commercial and supply chain organizations.

A hand holding a glowing lightbulb against a starry night sky with clouds.

HELPING FINANCE BECOME A BIT OF A KNOW-IT-ALL

# LET'S CONNECT.

Do these challenges sound familiar?



**KEVIN HOGAN**

Managing Director  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
+1 415 783 6831  
kevhogan@deloitte.com



**DAVID PIERCE**

Managing Director  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
+1 703 251 4088  
dapierce@deloitte.com



**ANKUR CHOUDHARY**

Senior Manager  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
+1 513 412 8349  
ankchoudhary@deloitte.com



**About this publication**

This publication contains general information only and Deloitte is not, by means of this publication, rendering accounting, business, financial, investment, legal, tax, or other professional advice or services. This publication is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional adviser.

Deloitte shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this publication.

**About Deloitte**

As used in this document, "Deloitte" means Deloitte Consulting LLP, which provides strategy, operations, technology, systems, outsourcing and human capital consulting services. Deloitte Consulting LLP is a separate subsidiary of Deloitte LLP. Please see [www.deloitte.com/us/about](http://www.deloitte.com/us/about) for a detailed description of our legal structure. Certain services may not be available to attest clients under the rules and regulations of public accounting.

Copyright © 2024 Deloitte Development LLC. All rights reserved.