

Case study

NTT DATA deploys SAS pharma capabilities in S/4HANA rollout recovery project



Client profile

The client is a pharmaceutical company based in Japan. It has a strong global presence with subsidiaries in more than 40 countries, as well as sales activities in 70+ countries. On account of its vast operations, the company consists of around 11,000 employees, where 1,500 are engaged in research and development.

Historically, the client's major therapeutic area has been neurology. In recent years, however, the client has partnered with a major biotech venture to expand its business. At present, the client is focused on building a customer-oriented digital platform to help prevent neurological diseases. Aside from this, oncology is another pillar of their core mission. The client has its own anti-cancer products in addition to an R&D pipeline, supported by a global alliance with another major pharmaceuticals company.

Business need

Prior to its engagement with NTT DATA, the client had already started a global S/4HANA deployment and rollout project. Undertaken with a different SAP implementation partner, the client's overarching objective is to migrate to S/4HANA as their global standard platform.

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NTT DATA leverages cross-industry SAP experience to meet the needs of clients in key global sectors.”

Although this project has been in the works for over three years, the client has decided to extend the project schedule several times. So far, the quality has been insufficient at each stage, and it has not yet progressed to the point of system launch. As a result, there has not been a system go-live for the Japan global headquarters, which is the first target site.

The client's engagement with NTT DATA was driven by these issues. With the S/4HANA transformation behind schedule, the client sought out NTT DATA's assistance to help identify issue areas and improve the project.

From the client's perspective, the main requirement would be to gauge the scale of the problems they were experiencing. Due to a lack of internal resources and limited evidence that could warrant quality improvements from the current SAP partner, the client wanted to establish more clarity about the direction of the project. Specifically, it would be important to decide whether to maintain the current project procedure, or switch to a recovery activity.

On NTT DATA's side, the challenge would be working with deliverables created by a different SAP partner. Since these resources would not necessarily be aligned with NTT DATA's approach, it would be more

difficult to identify and diagnose problems. In addition, NTT DATA did not have extensive client knowledge since previous engagement between the two had been fairly limited. NTT DATA would need to leverage the full extent of its expertise to carry out a fast assessment, identify the issues and make a recommendation to the client about how to best recover the project. On an internal level, the project also offered a good opportunity to deploy NTT DATA's advanced SAP capabilities in the pharmaceuticals industry.

Solution

NTT DATA's solution needed to clarify whether the client's current project documentation and system quality were sufficient to permit a global rollout and HQ go-live. For this, NTT DATA proposed a double-sided analysis, consisting of a document assessment and system assessment.

The first step was performing the document assessment, which addressed project deliverables created by the client's current SAP partner. These included resources such as the grand design, User Requirement Specification (URS), and File Repository Server (FRS), among others. For this process, NTT DATA established three key assessment points based on the client's particular needs. The first point assessed the documentation against general global pharma business requirements, looking at industry-specific best practices,

fourth-party logistics models, manufacturing subcontracts and management structures. The second assessment point aggregated client-specific requirements and checked for consistency throughout project documents. The third and final assessment point was based on how well project documentation integrated regional regulatory requirements, which would be important for scheduling and resource allocation.

Following on from the document assessment, the second step involved a system assessment. This was a technical process that required NTT DATA to verify the client's S/4HANA architecture and check whether there were any system bugs, or any other obstacles seen from a quality assurance perspective.

Outcomes

By deploying several expert teams and uncovering quality defects one by one, NTT DATA was able to deliver all assessment files within a single month. These files amassed over 200 pages for all business areas including sales, logistics, manufacturing, finance and business planning.

Thanks to NTT DATA's robust experience with S/4HANA implementation, teams were able to arrive at a clear and confident diagnosis. The assessment process indicated that there were several documentation issues contributing to the client's SAP S/4HANA project bottleneck. In the documentation assessment, problems were discovered with regard to global pharmaceutical requirements, client-specific requirements and regional regulatory requirements.

NTT DATA's findings have given the client a new awareness of the issues surrounding current project deliverables. The necessity of project recovery is now clear, and the client is seeking further engagement with NTT DATA as a partner in a new phase of the global migration.

Why NTT DATA

NTT DATA is widely recognised as a global expert in system quality, with extensive technical knowledge. Due to previous experiences with troubleshooting ERP transformation projects and vast project management capabilities, NTT DATA was a particularly suitable partner for the client's needs.

NTT DATA was also well-qualified from an industry perspective. NTT DATA has global pharma SAP capabilities at its disposal, and has served many other clients in the pharmaceuticals space. A deep knowledge of such a complex global industry made NTT DATA stand out to the client as a strategic choice for this phase of the project.



Unparalleled expertise in ERP architectures means NTT DATA is able to add immense value to any digital transformation project.”

What's next

For the client, the next step will be to demand quality improvements from the current SAP partner. Once system quality improvements have been made, the client should be able to safely implement the S/4HANA go-live at the global headquarters. The client will then look to redesign the global rollout plan with a trusted SAP partner.

NTT DATA intends to continue supporting the client throughout the global headquarters go-live, monitoring system quality. Beyond this point, NTT DATA will be in a strong position to take over as the SAP partner for stage two: the global S/4HANA rollout. With a view to continuing the positive engagement already established, NTT DATA hopes to work with the client on further digital innovation offerings and business enhancements, eventually becoming its go-to digital partner.

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