Case Study SAP on Azure
Automating the deployment for SAP S/4HANA

About

Thames Water are the UK's largest water and wastewater services company, and supplies 2.6 billion litres (570 million imperial gallons) of drinking water per day, and treats 4.4 billion litres (970 million imperial gallons) of wastewater per day. Thames Water's 15 million customers comprise 27% of the UK population.

> **We selected Centiq as they held the strongest reputation for expertise with SAP HANA and Microsoft Azure. We like working with smaller boutique consultancies, especially when they are so invested in the outcome our business needed. Working as a team, mirroring agile working behaviours was why we used the mantra 'If you're doing it twice you're doing it wrong"**
>
> Paul Haigh – Head of Cloud, Thames Water

Challenge

Thames Water are early adopters in the world of digital change, championing an agile and data lead IT strategy.

An enterprise level drive to move the business to SAP S/4HANA as a primary technology alongside a shift to Microsoft Azure meant automation, and the benefits it can bring, was required in order to realise the benefits of both platforms, and enable a modern operating model.

The scope of this project which involved automation at an infrastructure layer alongside the HANA database, the NetWeaver platform and also the S/4 product was a world first and furthermore a first for the utilities industry.

The business made the decision to insource their Cloud Team, bucking the trend of the industry, and tasking them with delivering world leading automation, to deliver SAP S/4 environments in hours rather than weeks.

The first challenge faced by the Thames Water team was the need to blend both Microsoft Azure and SAP technical skills to manipulate cutting edge technology from both vendors, ensuring the best possible outcomes.

The desire to use code at an infrastructure layer, and also further up the stack, meant support was required to complement the newly formed in-house team.

SAP Silver Partner

Gold Microsoft Partner
Microsoft

Accelerated & Sustained Transformation
Driving Success

Centiq were selected to assist in the delivery of the project following an introduction from Microsoft based on their unique combination of HANA, Linux, SAP on Azure and DevOps expertise. Through Centiq's Define, Design, and Build Methodology, and engaging all key stakeholders from day one in an agile working processes, where daily reviews, and iteration demonstrations were standard practice. A 4-month duration to deliver the design for a highly configured RedHat, SAP HANA Cluster on Azure, alongside the code needed to deploy the design, was achieved. Following the success of Phase 1, Centiq were invited to implement a second phase project. To deliver the design and build for S/4HANA and B/4HANA applications, championing automation and Infrastructure as Code (IaC) principles.

> **We don't fix things anymore. Where previously a substantial amount of time and resource was committed to working out why something had broken. Leveraging the power of code allows systems to simply be rebuilt.**
>
> Paul Haigh – Head of Cloud, Thames Water
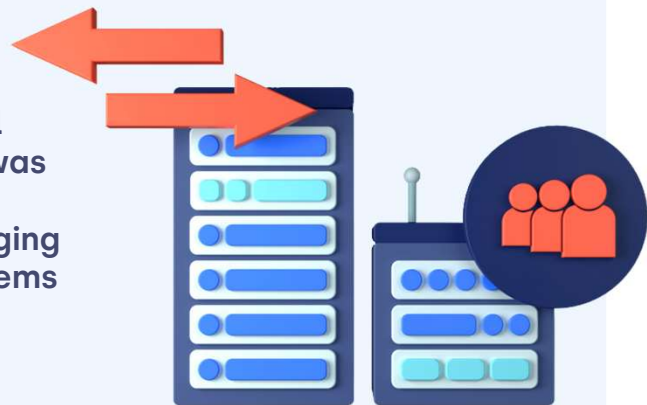
How have you benefited
From using Automation for S/4HANA?

"Previously every production environment was taking 4-5 weeks to build and deliver, a non prod environment up to 3 weeks. Third parties were engaged to deliver these with an average project consisting of 4 production and 15 non prod environments. Automation processes have now brought these builds down to a number of hours (4-5).

A tangible saving in time and cost. The most recent SAP Data project has gone from an expected greater than 6 month duration to 16 weeks. There is also the added benefit of data insights being delivered at pace, enhancing customer service levels and experience."

How have you benefited
From working with Centiq?

"Having a partner who is committed to working in an agile way, with SAP & Azure expertise was key. We wouldn't have delivered the outcomes we have without these three things, and Centiq have them all."

Business Benefit

- The flexibility and agility enabled by the adoption of code/automation has dramatically increased the pipeline of innovation and the pace that change can be delivered.

- Enhanced customer experience - Data insights being delivered at pace enhancing customer service levels.

- Internal Self Service - The adoption of code and automation has enhanced a self service culture, and less reliance on IT teams and third parties.

- Tangible savings in time and cost - Automation processes have brought down the build time of production and non production environments to a number of hours (previously weeks), and can now be delivered by Thames's Cloud Team as opposed to a third party.

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