

Know Now, Act Now

Drive financial decision making with analytics
from SAP Simple Finance



Analytics can help organizations look deeply into their histories — and plan far into their futures. But the power of analytics also can extend to routine, day-to-day business tasks, delivering instant insights that can fuel decisions on daily financial processes and activities.

Instant insights can enable workers to perform routine processes faster and more effectively — which in turn can give finance teams and the businesses they serve a serious competitive edge

Decision time

In a typical finance organization, the people guiding key business processes often do not have all the information they need to make informed decisions. Instead, they tend to press ahead with whatever limited information they do have. Or they might spend many extra minutes — possibly hours — opening additional applications and running additional queries in an effort to cobble together knowledge to aid their decision making. The likely result? Ineffective decisions that miss the big picture.

New solution capabilities such as SAP Simple Finance, however, can push data-driven insights to people at the right moment, in an intuitive manner that can help make it easier to assess information and efficiently make decisions while executing business processes. Simple Finance also can serve as a key first step in a more extensive insights-driven journey powered by SAP® Business Suite 4 SAP HANA® (SAP S/4HANA).

The possibilities

It doesn't take a big imagination to understand the value that SAP Simple Finance can provide in the realm of instant decision making for finance-related activities. Virtually any process — from interacting with customers over the phone to forecasting capital needs — can benefit from instant insights enabled by SAP Simple Finance. The solution, built on the in-memory platform of SAP HANA and armed with state-of-the-art SAP Fiori user experience, offers businesses the ability to “Run Simple” in the digital, networked economy.

Here are some prime examples:

Know what you have

Understand assets

With the ability to efficiently analyze data for instant insights, organizations can quickly determine the value of an asset and then make timely, informed decisions on how to use that asset. For example, a fixed asset (such as a piece of equipment) that you acquired five years ago might have cost \$X when you bought it, and it has depreciated by \$Y over the years, while producing Z number of widgets. But without a dashboard that allows you to see that asset's performance and value over a given period, understanding its true worth can become difficult or time-consuming. How do you understand the revenue that the asset has produced over the years? In other words, how do you understand what you have? How do you understand the value of what you have? Instantly knowing what you have enables you to act quickly when making decisions about replacing, maintaining, or redeploying an asset.

Key question: How do you understand the revenue that an asset has produced over the years? In other words, how do you understand what you have?

Know what's happening

Improve your view of transactions

A lag in information can hinder instant insight, and in the realm of real-time client service, information lag is a very real hurdle to smooth communication and smooth transactions. Consider a scenario in which a credit account specialist works to remove a credit block on a customer at the very moment that a payment transaction is happening. Having instant insight into which transactions are occurring and which ones already have occurred can help the specialist prioritize tasks during the business process, determine the need for other actions, and — if interacting live with the client — communicate more accurately and effectively.

Key question: How do you make real-time transactional information part of essential finance-related functions?

Know where you stand

Pull together planning-related data instantly.

In many corners of the financial realm, transactions are posting by the second — and those postings are often taking place in systems that are not connected to systems used for planning purposes. Planning tends to be a monthly (or even an annual) process for a lot of organizations, meaning that planners might undertake a manual and sometimes lengthy process to extract and pull together all the relevant data they need to produce a monthly snapshot that they can then use for planning purposes — to compare actual performance against expected performance and to prepare for the coming month. Such a process is essential for determining ways to reallocate resources — whether personnel, equipment, or other business resources. But such a process is also likely rife with information lag.

With an “instant insight” approach powered by SAP Simple Finance, anyone involved in the planning process can see up-to-the-minute actuals and discover operational trends without having to wait until the end of the month. The approach enables real-time planning rather than “after the fact” planning. Planners can provide timely answers to questions such as, “Do I need to keep my resources in this profit center or reallocate them to another?”

Key question: How can you make more effective decisions on reallocating resources before a regularly scheduled reporting process?

Know what's coming

Get ahead of financial events

Money generally moves fast, and managing cash flow is a real-time, full-time job. Having instant financial insights stands to help organizations that want to improve their processes for managing working capital and forecasting liquidity — and for taking action. Questions like “How many vendor invoices are coming due for payment in the next 15 days? How much money will come in over the next few days from customers? And which invoices will go out to clients in the next few days?” are questions that can help improve understanding of an organization’s current cash position and short-term working capital needs. Applying “instant insight” tactics with SAP Simple Finance can help organizations address such operational questions immediately and efficiently through a single dashboard. The approach helps eliminate the need to open numerous applications, run numerous reports to extract data, and manually assemble pieces of data to build an information picture for use in decision making.

For cash-planning scenarios, SAP Simple Finance-driven instant insights can deliver real-time understanding to help an organization decide what, if anything, it should do to strengthen its standing and meet obligations. Do you sell bonds? Do you pull funds from somewhere else? Do you borrow money? At what interest rate? Perhaps most critically, the approach can enable an organization to get ahead of cash-flow requirements and make decisions well in advance of key events — helping drive decisions that are more focused on efficiencies and cost-saving measures.

Key question: How do you see your cash-flow picture more swiftly and in more meaningful detail—and how do you plan ahead to meet cash-flow challenges?

Putting it all together

Organizations interested in moving toward instant financial insights with SAP Simple Finance can start small, with one or a few business processes, and expand to more financial functions as needs evolve. The path typically starts with understanding your current database, applications, and systems landscape. Migrating your SAP application layer onto SAP HANA database is a typical first step in the process — one that prepares an organization to begin unlocking instant insights while using SAP Fiori apps and other reporting capabilities.

There are about 400 SAP Fiori apps today, and close to 80 of them are strongly focused on finance-related functions. Some SAP Fiori apps can even work on a non-SAP HANA database — allowing organizations to experiment with SAP offerings while taking the time to decide how they'll develop their capabilities for instant insights. And all SAP Fiori apps can be delivered out of the box, with minimal customization.

To deliver SAP-driven instant insights directly to the screens of workers within an organization, Deloitte leverages the in-depth knowledge of its corps of professionals who understand SAP offerings — and who also have a keen understanding of many of the financial scenarios, the industries, and the technologies involved.

Next steps

If you're ready to learn more about SAP Simple Finance-driven instant insights and ways that they can strengthen your financial operations, Deloitte is ready to help. Contact us to learn more about how a new approach to instant insights can help improve your organization's business processes.

Insight to value

Simple Finance-driven instant insights for your finance-related functions can offer significant benefits that can help your organization enhance productivity, stay competitive, and make smarter decisions.

Speed. Instant insights support timely decision making, which can help improve client and stakeholder satisfaction — and help organizations close their books faster.

Performance. Instant insights can deliver new understanding that can help drive business or process improvements.

Efficiency. The ability to reduce information lag and to analyze scenarios via a single dashboard can help save workers time in extracting and assembling the pieces of knowledge they need for making decisions.

Simplicity. Intuitive drag-and-drop features enable users to build reports easily, right off of transactional systems.

Flexibility. The ability to generate reports at any time — rather than on a pre-set schedule — can help your workforce get ahead of challenges instead of scrambling for solutions at the last minute.

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