

Know Now, Act Now

Drive financial decision-making with analytics that can deliver instant insights



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.

Such 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 receive in a timely manner all the information they need to make informed business decisions. Instead, they tend to move forward and use whatever limited information they do have. They may spend an incredible amount of time opening additional applications or massaging data outside of their existing ERP systems for financial reports. The likely result? Ineffective decisions that come too late to make a difference.

New solution capabilities such as SAP® S/4HANA Finance, however, can push data-driven insights to people at the right moment, in real time, and in a more intuitive manner—to help organizations more easily and more efficiently assess information. SAP S/4HANA 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 lot of imagination to understand the value that SAP S/4HANA Finance can provide for decision-making in finance activities. Virtually any process—from interacting with customers over the phone to forecasting capital needs—can benefit from SAP S/4HANA 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, 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 (manufacturing 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 dedicated analytical reporting and dashboards that can track performance and value, understanding its true worth can become difficult or time-consuming. How can you truly 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? By instantly knowing what you have, you can act quickly to make fact-based business decisions.

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

Know what's happening

Improve your view of transactions

In the realm of real-time client service, information lag can force you to make an inadequate financial decision. Consider a scenario in which a customer credit specialist works to remove a credit block on a customer account. Then, at that very moment, a payment transaction is being processed on the customer account. Having an immediate view into which transactions are occurring and which ones already have occurred can help customer service prioritize tasks during the business process, determine the need for other actions, and—if interacting live with a client—communicate more efficiently.

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 posted by the second. Those postings are often taking place in systems that are disparate to the existing system of record. Planning tends to be a laborious monthly (or even an annual) process for many organizations to complete. In other words, planners might undertake a manual and sometimes lengthy process to extract and pull together all the relevant data they require—with that data being crucial for determining ways to effectively reallocate resources, whether personnel, equipment, or other business resources. But such processes today are likely rife with information lag.

With an approach powered by SAP S/4HANA 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 full-time job. Having more timely, more relevant information can help organizations that want to improve their processes for managing working capital and forecasting liquidity—and for taking action. *How many vendor invoices are due for payment in the next 15 days? How much incoming cash will be received in the next few days from customers? Also, which invoices will go out to clients in the next few days?* These are the types of questions that can help improve the understanding of an organization's current cash position and short-term working capital. Applying “instant insight” tactics with SAP S/4HANA Finance can help organizations address such operational questions immediately and efficiently through an SAP Fiori® application dashboard. The approach helps eliminate the need to open numerous applications, run numerous reports to extract data, and manually assemble the pieces to build an information picture for use in decision-making.

For cash-planning scenarios, an SAP S/4HANA Finance-driven approach 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 multiple locations? 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 and efficient.

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 improving financial insights with SAP S/4HANA Finance can start small, with one or a few business processes. They can then later 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 new information and new value while using SAP Fiori apps and other reporting capabilities.

There are about 781 SAP Fiori apps today, and more than 300 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. Additionally, 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 your organization, Deloitte leverages the in-depth knowledge of its service professionals—professional service teams that understand our SAP S/4HANA Finance offerings and have a keen understanding of our clients' financial challenges, their industries, and the technologies involved in today's market.

Next steps

If you're ready to learn more about SAP S/4HANA Finance and how it can help 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

SAP S/4HANA 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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