

SONEPAR GETS READY FOR THE FUTURE

Successful changeover to S/4HANA



Customer

- Sonepar Deutschland GmbH (part of the Sonepar Group)
- Year of foundation: 2006
- Employees: approx. 6,000
- Based in: Düsseldorf

Industry

- Electrical wholesale

Challenge

- Transition of accounting/controlling from SAP ERP ECC 6.0 to SAP S/4HANA with almost 500 million documents and a document volume of 2.4 billion document lines

Solution

- Transition to SAP S/4HANA according to the Brownfield approach
- Stepwise going live
- Final changeover to S/4HANA as a “big bang”

Benefits

- Faster processes within financial accounting
- Ideally connected interfaces
- Simplification of structures and processes

With regard to document volumes, FIS implemented one of the biggest S/4HANA changeovers in Germany so far for electrical wholesaler Sonepar Deutschland GmbH (Sonepar). Since 2012 already, Sonepar has relied on SAP in accounting and controlling. Ever since the SAP system has been able to keep pace with the enormous company growth of Sonepar, comply with the high demands on enterprise management reporting and, consequently, make an important contribution to Sonepar's success story. FIS Informations-systeme und Consulting GmbH (FIS) was Sonepar's implementation partner in 2012 already and has ever since provided the Sonepar data centers with application support and managed services together with its FIS Application Service Providing und IT-Outsourcing GmbH (FIS-ASP) subsidiary.

“In the future, we will fully exploit the chances and possibilities offered by the S/4HANA system.”

Mark Michaelis,
managing director of Sonepar
Deutschland Information Services GmbH



SAP S/4HANA as a sustainable basis

Sonepar decided in favor of a transition to the SAP ERP S/4HANA software as a sustainable and advanced IT basis. This software solution is to ensure digitized and optimized processes to keep pace with the future company growth.

The long and excellent cooperation with FIS was the reason why Sonepar again commissioned FIS with this project. Together, the teams discussed possible variants and drew up different plans that were validated with software manufacturer SAP. Finally, a strategy was determined. FIS was chosen due to “its market orientation towards wholesale, its high level of expertise in the industry-specific implementation of SAP and due to the long-standing mutual partnership,” explains Mark Michaelis, managing director of Sonepar Information Services Deutschland.

Together with FIS, the Sonepar IT and user departments worked out a detailed concept for the changeover to the new SAP S/4HANA finance software replacing the ECC 6.0 FI/CO modules. The migration of the data was scheduled for November 2018. Based on this deadline, the objective was now to plan the individual steps via backward scheduling in order to meet the target date at any rate. For this purpose, FIS had prepared a detailed guideline (cut-over plan) including all points to be observed which needed to be worked through by the weekend of the go-live.

Brownfield approach as appropriate strategy

The Brownfield approach was selected as implementation strategy: stepwise proceeding and go-live of each step – always assisted by the user departments – with final changeover as a “big bang”. “This procedure, however, extended the project duration and slightly increased the budget but provided maximum safety for our company and the project. In retrospect, I would make the same decision again,” Mr. Michaelis comments his decision.

Close cooperation with the user department

In the first project step, Sonepar replaced the previous Oracle database with the SAP HANA database in May 2018. In the following month, customers and vendors were converted to „business partner“ as a new master data object, which was a prerequisite for the transition to SAP S/4HANA. Next, FIS executed the transition to the new finance software.

Based on its experiences from previous migration projects, the FIS project team followed the classical SAP migration guideline and used the SAP data migration cockpit. Finally, the

In the Sonepar subsidiaries, the employees do their best every day to satisfy their customers.





With more than 2,800 locations in 44 countries and over 43,000 employees, Sonepar can today call itself the market leader in electrical wholesale trade.

data was migrated to HANA in November 2018. Each step passed through the three SAP system levels (development, integration, production). "In all project steps, we worked closely together with the user department on conceptions and tests," says Mr. Michaelis.

Document volume of the wholesaler as a challenge

The challenges were manifold. As a trading company, Sonepar traditionally has a very high transaction volume. The existing document volume of 2.4 billion document lines (in spite of intensive and prompt archiving) had to be prepared in such a way that the data could be completely migrated over an extended weekend. It was therefore one of the largest S/4HANA transitions in Germany up to now in terms of document volume.

Migration requires sufficient computing power

Migrations of this size also require sufficient computing power. "Luckily, our server landscape is highly virtualized," says Mr. Michaelis. "As a result, we were able to provide sufficient migration memory and we tied up all our computer capacities for this migration. With FIS-ASP, we had a strong and experienced partner at our side." Sonepar hosts the entire SAP system in its own data center and makes also use of managed services by FIS-ASP.

Seizing the opportunities of the S/4HANA simplification

In November 2018, the migration of documents was started on a Friday afternoon and finished on Saturday night. SAP S/4HANA was connected to other applications in the company via a distinctive interface landscape. Due to the changed master data structures (e.g. business partners) of SAP S/4HANA, all interfaces had to be checked, adjusted, tested and released. The project with FIS and FIS-ASP was now successfully completed right on schedule.



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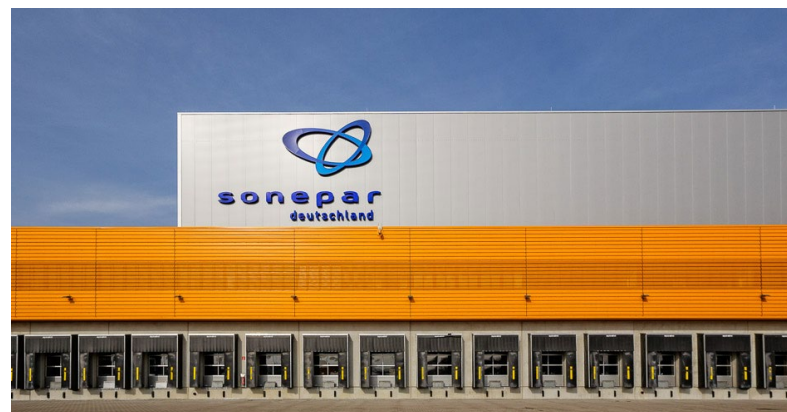
Mark Michaelis,
managing director of Sonepar Deutschland Information Services GmbH

Mr. Michaelis sums up the go-live as follows: „A series of jobs are already running much faster with the new HANA-based financial accounting system. Nevertheless, we have only created the technical basis to make optimal use of this technology for us. Now, we need to adjust our reports and the entire job management step by step to the opportunities offered by HANA. We must make proper use of the new structures and address the database correctly in order to

fully benefit from its performance. Only then will we enjoy the real “simplification”, as SAP calls it. One means to achieve this is the close cooperation between the IT department and colleagues from the user departments as already practiced in the course of the project. In the future, we will fully exploit the chances and possibilities offered by the S/4HANA system.



Sonepar Deutschland GmbH distributes electrical appliances of leading national and international vendors to customers from craft, commerce and industry. With annual sales of over three billion eu-ros, approx. 6,000 employees and 300 branch offices, Sonepar is the market leader in the German electrical wholesale trade. The company is part of the Paris-based family-run Sonepar Group with more than 2,800 locations in 44 countries worldwide and over 43,000 employees.



FIS Informationssysteme und Consulting GmbH

FIS Informationssysteme und Consulting GmbH is an expanding, independent company and forms the umbrella of the FIS Group. Within this group, more than 800 employees work to make companies more modern, more economical and more competitive every day. The focus of FIS is on SAP projects and the development of efficient solutions that drive digitalization in companies. As one of the leading SAP system houses in the D-A-CH region, FIS is the market leader in technical wholesale with its complete solution FIS/wws. Together with its subsidiary Medienwerft, FIS covers the complete SAP range of topics for the Customer Experience (CX) area.

In the subsidiary FIS-ASP, more than 100 specialists operate and administer customers' SAP systems in their own data centers in southern Germany. The subsidiary FIS-SST is a competent partner for nearshoring projects. Collaborative solutions for the convenient and secure process handling of different companies on common platforms are developed at the subsidiary FIS-iLog.



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