

Case Study:**At Carestream, Precisely Automate is the right prescription for enhancing SAP productivity****Introduction**

Carestream is a healthcare technology manufacturer and service provider with a presence in 170 countries around the world. An industry leader for more than 100 years, the company offers thousands of healthcare solutions including RIS/PACS, enterprise workflow, cloud-based services, and more. Carestream global headquarters are located in Rochester, New York, with more than 7,000 employees worldwide. In 2011 alone, the company generated approximately \$2.4 billion in revenue.

Challenge

Carestream relies on SAP to manage a wide range of day-to-day functions across the enterprise, from finance to HR to supply chain logistics. For years, however, the company depended on ABAP programmers to manage changes to master data processes in SAP, using HP QuickTest to fill in the occasional gap. "As we prepared to migrate to ECC 6.0, we saw a great opportunity to move away from our dependence on ABAP," says Mary Farmer, Supervisor for Applications and Technical Solutions at Carestream. "We were ready to take a more flexible, user-friendly approach to managing SAP master data."

As the company moved forward with its ERP upgrade, other factors emerged to create a more urgent need for an ABAP alternative. "In the middle of our migration, we brought a subsidiary into our SAP landscape, and they had been using a different ERP system," Farmer explains. "We quickly realized that business users at the subsidiary were unable to manage large-scale changes, because there was no easy way to coordinate data between SAP and their legacy system." Additionally, Carestream's data steward team was struggling with massive churn associated with master data material, pricing creation, and maintenance processing.

The conclusion was clear: Carestream needed a framework that would empower business users to manage master data across dynamic and variable environments. "Users at our new subsidiary needed to make multiple changes to materials and pricing across multiple records, and they needed to apply those changes across both SAP and the legacy ERP system," says Farmer. "It was a complex problem with far-reaching implications for the business, and we wanted to resolve the issue as quickly as possible."

Industry

Healthcare technology

Challenges

- Dependent on ABAP programmers to tailor SAP master data processes
- Unable to effectively integrate data between SAP and legacy ERP
- Master data creation subject to errorprone processes and maintenance
- Migration to ECC 6.0 prompted a new approach to master data management

Solutions

- Automate Studio
- Automate Evolve

Results

- 1.7 million records uploaded to SAP in less than a year
- Retired 100+ ABAP programs in SAP and eliminated external support provider
- Greater functionality in managing master data; reduced IT burden
- Streamlined master data material creation workflow

"Now we can fine-tune our management of master data, and business users can author SAP transactions without submitting an IT request—even for one-off changes. That's quite a trifecta: more functionality, happier users, and less administrative burden for our IT department."

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Applications and Technical
Solutions, Carestream Health

Solution

When Farmer and her team began searching for an ABAP alternative, the Precisely Automate platforms quickly emerged as the solution to beat. “Quite frankly, there was no real competition,” she says. “As a mature enterprise, we always go for the best-of-breed app. We expect solutions to deliver a full feature set, sophisticated auditing capabilities, and all-around rigor. Precisely Automate met and exceeded our standards and expectations, and nothing else came close.”

At Carestream, business users aren’t allowed to change SAP data directly. Instead, all changes to master data are routed through a coordinator known as a “steward,” who works with managers in Finance, Logistics, and Product to expedite approvals. “For our subsidiary with legacy ERP, we’ve streamlined the entire data approval process using Automate Evolve to automate the entire master data creation process from the original request to the final validation and update to SAP,” says Farmer. “The workflow is structured with loops, so we can bounce it back and forth between the different parties and retain a history of all comments and interactions. That captures all of the decisions and rationale in one place.”

Automate Studio is also very helpful in “cleaning up” data, especially for tasks that were once a major impediment due to the sheer volume of records. “Just last month, I needed to update 20,000 billing items because someone entered a bad date,” says Farmer. “In another case, we dropped 5,000 table indexes during our SAP upgrade process. Those mistakes no longer require days of backtracking—we simply create a script to address the problem, run the script, and move on.”

Since implementing Precisely Automate at Carestream, adoption has occurred at a monumental rate. “In less than a year, we’ve used Precisely Automate to upload more than 1.7 million records to SAP,” says Farmer. “It’s now an integral part of our day-to-day operations.” Specifically, Carestream relies on Automate Evolve for Master Data to create efficient workflows using simple SharePoint-based forms. Automate Studio automates data transfer, Automate Evolve helps distribute the solution via automated workflow throughout the organization, and Automate Studio makes it easy for Farmer and her team to extract data and create reports. Meanwhile, Automate Studio Manager offers high-level visibility and control across the entire SAP environment.



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Results

For Farmer and her team, the benefits are clear: Precisely Automate solutions simplified the upgrade to ECC 6.0—and will make future upgrades even simpler. “We’ve retired 100 ABAP programs in SAP,” she says. “We didn’t need to convert them and test them during the migration. We simply walked away from them. We also walked away from an external support provider who helped us maintain those ABAP programs. Precisely Automate made it possible for us to eliminate external support and do it all in-house. That represents a huge operating expense savings for us.”

Precisely Automate provides flexible, easy-to-use tools that reduce IT burden and enhance operational efficiency. “With our previous tools, we were able to perform blunt-force data transfers, but that was it,” says Farmer. “Now we can finetune our management of master data, and business users can author SAP transactions without submitting an IT request—even for one-off changes. That’s quite a trifecta: more functionality, happier users, and less administrative burden for our IT department.”

With the historical master data creation and maintenance transaction detail automatically stored in Automate Evolve, Carestream can rely less on email correspondence—a benefit both in terms of productivity and compliance. “Previously, our SAP approval process would result in an onslaught of emails, and it was easy for key decisions to get lost in the shuffle,” says Farmer. “These forms reduced our email load considerably. Just as important, the clear documentation helps establish accountability, which is very important from a regulatory perspective.”

For Carestream, Precisely Automate is already an indispensable tool, and will become more so as the organization continues to grow. “This software makes it easier for us to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, especially as we acquire more subsidiaries and bring them into our environment,” says Farmer. “We no longer require two months to make a small change in SAP. That makes us more agile as an enterprise—which adds to our competitive advantage.”

Future plans

Going forward, Farmer and her team see a great deal of untapped potential for simplifying SAP data management across the enterprise. “I’m currently giving presentations all over the company to show people how Precisely Automate can save everyone a lot of time and hassle,” she says. “I think we have the opportunity to use literally hundreds of Precisely Automate licenses to keep moving our business into the future.”

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