

Case Study:**Compass Group Netherlands Saves Thousands of SAP Data Processing Hours with Precisely Automate Studio**

Dutch catering business eliminates manual processes, resulting in significant time savings, fewer human errors, and a simplified upgraded journey to SAP S/4HANA

Introduction

Compass Group Netherlands is part of the Compass Group, a world leading food service company, serving 5.5 billion meals to people across 45 countries annually. With food as its core competency, Compass prides itself in its ability to provide clients with a wide range of innovative dining solutions and the highest quality service to its customers.

While catering companies aren't typically known for being data-driven, Compass sets itself apart by leveraging data gathered from its SAP systems to anticipate customer demand. The company understood that modernizing SAP data processing was key to securing its differentiation in the market.

The Challenge

Ruud Jackel, Application Manager for Compass Group Netherlands, is responsible for maintaining the region's SAP systems, which are core to operating back-end processes for the catering business. Initially, his team was using SAP ERP for Human Resources and Payroll, and they were using a different SAP system, that they shared with a team from another region, for Finance and Accounting purposes. The multi-system, cross-regional process created challenges with governance, and Ruud's team knew they needed a streamlined process.

"Compass is a data-driven organization because we want to be able to know what our customers need in advance and have it ready for them," said Ruud. "It was challenging to do this when we were operating on multiple systems because it created silos with the data. We needed a solution that would merge the two systems and then transition to the SAP for Retail industry solution."

While Compass understood their greatest challenge was automating complex SAP processes, getting the system set up to automate data was a challenge in and of itself. Transitioning to an updated SAP solution would require the company to migrate data from the other region's system to the new retail solution. The IT team did not want to use SAP's built-in legacy system migration workbench (LSMW) solution to move the data. "We had used that tool to do mass transactions before, but it was cumbersome and error prone," said Ruud.

Client profile**Client:**

Compass Group Netherlands

Business scale:

- \$17+ billion annual revenue (2021)
- 478,000+ global employees
- Serves 11 million meals per day

Key IT Systems:

- SAP ERP 6.0
- SAP BusinessObjects solutions
- SAP Fiori
- SAP Process Orchestration
- SAP Customer Activity Repository

Solution:

- Precisely Automate Studio



Solution

Compass knew that it needed a solution that not only could automate the data but also migrate existing data from one system to another. In researching which solutions to use, Compass selected Precisely Automate's premier Excel-to-SAP solutions platform that enables business users to automate complex SAP business processes and make mass data changes quickly and easily to do the master data and transaction data migration between systems.

Automate would also enable Compass to streamline business processes and eliminate manual data entry, allowing employees to work on priority tasks.

"The implementation of Precisely Automate was issue-free," said Ruud. "We had the correct master and transaction data completed for the go-live, and it didn't require months of programming to accomplish. We simply needed a spreadsheet and our Precisely partners to get the job done."

The Results

Increased Time Savings

Compass immediately noticed how much time was saved when employees transitioned from performing repetitive, manual tasks to automating SAP activities and processes. For instance, an employee who spent four days preparing monthly profit and loss reports was able to complete that task in three hours by using a script in Precisely Automate Studio.

During the company's implementation of SAP Fiori, the goal was to streamline the invoice validation process, therefore it needed to add accounts to the new Fiori system. Automate Studio enabled the IT team to save a minimum of 50 hours. "The data was put into a spreadsheet, a script in Automate Studio was run, and within an hour, we had 300 accounts set up in our SAP Fiori system," said Ruud. "Before working with Precisely, it used to take 10 minutes per account."

Improved Quality

Automation also helped dramatically reduce the occurrence of errors in Compass's SAP processes. For example, the catering unit would send invoices to customers at the end of each month with an itemized list of charges based on each beverage and food item they ordered. Traditionally, the process was completed by hand, which increased the number of mistakes. Automate Studio dramatically improved the process of making those itemized attachments and significantly reduced the number of errors. "It previously took employees two days after period close to send the attachments to the customer, but with Automate Studio, we now do it in two hours, fully automated, and it is always 100 percent right," said Ruud.

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Enhanced Master Data

Clean and accurate SAP master data is hugely important to Compass. It has repeat customers who plan annual events or parties along with one-event clients who plan weddings or special occasion events. Some of the clients might not call back for several years. "We do not want to keep thousands of inactive customers on file but deleting them from our SAP systems is a very big task," said Ruud. "So, we use Automate Studio for the task of maintaining our SAP master data. We do that for vendors, for customers, and for a number of other projects like maintaining sales prices in our POS tills."

With Automate Studio, Compass can program reports to run at night. For example, Finance can run a script every month to extract the line-item details from selected accounts. "Downloading them manually is not an option because that would take too long," said Ruud. "But with a query in Automate Studio, it happens at one o'clock in the morning. It doesn't bother any other users because they're sleeping, and the next morning, a couple hundred thousand lines of data are ready for our Finance team."

Ruud noted another benefit that Precisely offers is the automatic error notification when a script identifies a problem. The solution has the flexibility and ease of development of being able to identify errors or glitches that come up in the SAP environment. "Once there was a programming error in an interface that resulted in 3000 invoices getting stuck in the approval flow. We calculated that manually correcting the 3000 invoices would take more than 500 hours," he said. "After spending half an hour using Automate Studio's scripting capabilities, it took a total of 10 hours to fix the invoices. The building of the script takes no time at all, and you can use it for those kinds of mishaps, which otherwise can cost a lot of time and money."

Future Growth Opportunities

Compass is continuing to reap the benefits of Automate Studio by leveraging its functionality for additional purposes across the business. It recently embarked upon a project to connect the solution with TOPdesk, its service management software. Now, Compass can take new hire data from TOPdesk and automatically enter the employee records in SAP.

Ruud estimates that this automation saves Compass another 250 hours each year. "Now our IT teams use a script in Automate Studio to input candidate information into the SAP system, which has had a drastic effect on job offers and new hire onboarding times. We probably save between 10 – 30 minutes processing new hire data. In previous years, we've hired about 500 people a year – so that's a huge time saving!"

The upcoming SAP S/4HANA upgrade for Compass will be another opportunity when IT can rely directly on Precisely Automate to simplify a data migration process. "Some data will need to be moved from one SAP system to another, and I know that Automate Studio also works with SAP S/4HANA, so that will be a project where we will heavily rely on Automate Studio to help us with the migration," said Ruud.

Compass recognizes the positive impact that automation has already had on their business processes from using Automate Studio, including automating onboarding, time savings, high quality data, and improved internal efficiencies.

Moving forward, Ruud anticipates that even more functional employees will be able to benefit from Precisely Automate. "It's a tool that can truly be leveraged by multiple core functions of the business, across HR, Finance, IT, Sales, Operations, Procurement and more," said Ruud. "And it's the user — the one who knows the SAP business processes the best - who can easily use it to make modifications in just minutes."

