

“Fujitsu helped us digitally transform our IT platforms as we became an independent company, optimizing interfaces with other key systems and business partners.”

Jacqueline Grunwald
VP and CIO
AdvanSix

AdvanSix needed to create its own ERP platform and turned to trusted partner Fujitsu to develop a flexible, scalable, and reliable SAP HANA® solution built on Microsoft Azure®.

At a glance

Country: USA
Industry: Chemical
Founded: 2016
Website: advansix.com

Challenge

AdvanSix needed to quickly build an ERP platform to migrate its SAP systems enabling it to thrive as an independent company. AdvanSix wanted to explore the public cloud option but needed an experienced partner to guide it.

Solution

Working with Fujitsu, AdvanSix transitioned to Linux®-based SAP HANA® on Microsoft Azure®, including over 50 interfaces with non-SAP systems. At the same time, it moved to a Microsoft SQL Server® platform from an Oracle database.

Benefit

- ERP systems can scale effortlessly to meet demand
- New functionality makes the business operate more efficiently
- Improved performance and reliability increase productivity
- AdvanSix exited its original service agreement six months early, saving considerable expense
- Cloud approach is 10 percent less expensive than a traditional data center

Customer

AdvanSix is a new, public company with roots in the chemical industry stretching back more than 90 years. The company is a pioneer in resin and chemical production and is now a leading manufacturer of Nylon 6, a synthetic polymer resin used by customers to produce fibers, engineered plastics, filaments and films. The company was established in 2016 following a spin off from Honeywell.

Products and Services

■ FUJITSU Professional Services

Becoming an independent company

When AdvanSix became an independent company in 2016, it was faced with numerous challenges, not least how to manage its IT infrastructure. It had relied on Honeywell's existing data center and related systems, however, now it needed to forge and support its own technology platform. The company wanted to define a new approach that would both modernize and future proof its technology, while enabling it to hit the ground running as a standalone business.

"We were primarily using an aging version of SAP running on proprietary hardware in the Honeywell data center, but when AdvanSix was spun off there was a clear need to re-platform elsewhere. Perhaps the simplest solution would have been to pick a co-location partner, but the effort and expense would have been significant," explains Jackie Grunwald, VP and CIO, AdvanSix. "We believed that a public cloud running the latest version of SAP would be the most flexible and cost-effective approach to IT."

AdvanSix understood that a traditional captive data center incurs ongoing costs and significant investment, whether it is being used or not, whereas the cloud offers Infrastructure-as-a-Service. This means that the company would pay only for what it uses and could seamlessly scale as the company grows. It would also future proof the platform to cope with further technological developments.

"I didn't need an SAP development sandbox all year round but if we had our own data center, I'd be obliged to procure virtual machines at a cost. With the cloud, I can run a proof of concept and then shut it down. We simply pay as we go," adds Grunwald. "What we needed was a partner that could help us make the transition to Microsoft Azure® and the new Linux-based SAP platform. That would provide the flexibility, scalability and affordability combined with the best infrastructure governance we were looking for."

A cloud-first approach

AdvanSix evaluated several potential partners before choosing Fujitsu because of its long experience with SAP, specifically SAP HANA®, as well as its expertise in public cloud deployments. Together, they worked to migrate from an AIX-platform SAP 6.0 to Linux-based SAP HANA deployed on SUSE Enterprise Linux for SAP Applications virtual machines on Microsoft Azure, including over 50 interfaces with non-SAP systems. At the same time, they moved to an SQL Server platform from an Oracle database.

"We began with the infrastructure build and then spent nine months creating the new environment. Three four-week cycles of aggressive value chain confidence testing helped engage key users across operations and manufacturing," continues Grunwald. "It enabled us to identify and resolve issues while checking user acceptance."

Fujitsu collaborated to provide a value-led end-to-end solution. Fujitsu provided skills and resources from its global development center in India, as well as delivered an onsite presence in the US to ensure the migration happened seamlessly.

The new SAP HANA solution, running on Microsoft Azure, is providing a future-proof, flexible, and scalable business platform with added functionality. Moreover, it is estimated to cost 10 percent less than any alternative solution.

"Fujitsu helped us digitally transform our IT platforms as we became an independent organization while optimizing interfaces with other key systems and business partners," says Grunwald. "It all came in on time and on budget, which reflects the precise planning each company put into the process."

Unlocking business benefits at lower cost

With the help of Fujitsu, AdvanSix was able to exit its original service agreement for the old SAP platform six months early, saving considerable expense.

Fujitsu also performed an extensive workload analysis to properly size the virtual machines to effectively allocate costs, ensuring the most efficient use of the platform.

"It has opened up transactional activities, such as profitability analysis in the Finance and Controlling module, which means we now have a platform we can do more with," comments Grunwald. "It also allows us to explore additional software like SAP Fiori®, which adds further flexibility to our interface."

Reliable access to new functionality and capabilities gives AdvanSix users the tools they need to succeed around the clock. There has been only one instance of network-related outage in six months.

"Fujitsu has been a strong partner for us on our digital transformation journey," concludes Grunwald.

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