

Diversified Communications transforms global technology infrastructure

RSM's NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning solutions streamline operations

Key takeaways

- As companies expand, technology tools and infrastructure may no longer align with demands.
- With growth, Diversified Communications saw an opportunity to transform their ERP and FP&A tools.
- NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning implementations have increased integration and insight.

As organizations grow and expand—especially globally—existing technology tools and infrastructure may no longer stand up to growing productivity and reporting needs. Selecting and implementing new technology solutions are often pivotal events in the long-term scalability and overall success of the business.

Diversified Communications is a family-owned global media company with divisions in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. The company develops market-leading trade show exhibitions, educational and networking conferences, digital content, and targeted industry publications.

Diversified Communications recognized the need to modernize both their enterprise resource planning (ERP) and financial planning and analysis (FP&A) tools to optimize global operations. From an ERP perspective, the company's divisions were on three different instances of Microsoft GP. Each instance was on-premises, the instances were not in sync with one another, and they had little connectivity to key business functions. In addition, Diversified Communications' existing FP&A system had significant lag time, and finance directors were reverting to manual processes to manage data.

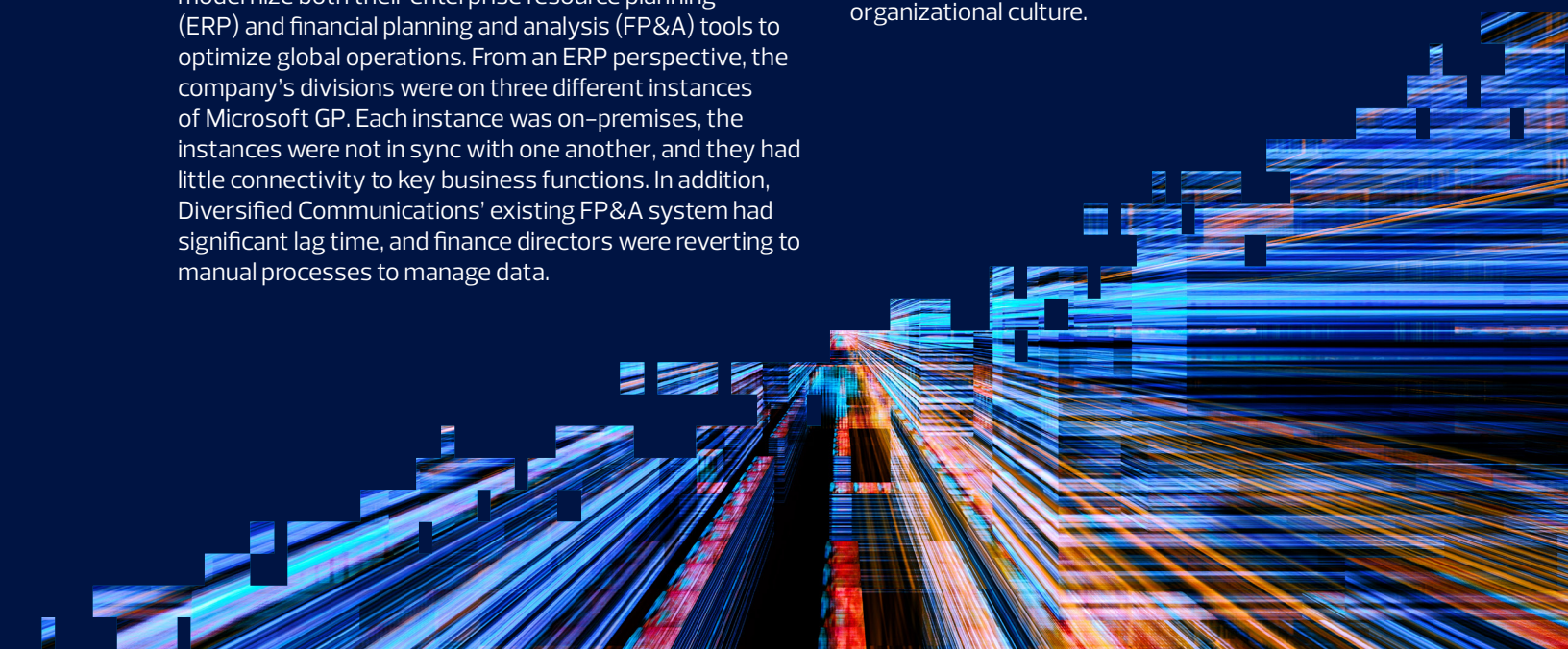
The systems were working, but they were quickly becoming outdated and no longer met evolving business needs. Diversified Communications leadership saw an opportunity for change.

"It was the first opportunity to really look at our solutions from a global perspective and understand how things would look if we were to connect everyone and have them on the same instance in the cloud and not on-premise," says Diversified Communications Financial Systems Manager Chris Holland. "Could we get better business insight? What could we be doing more? What value could we get from this initiative?"

In the past, the company allowed each division to generally operate independently, but they saw the significant value in bringing everybody together under more modern, consistent cloud-based solutions. It was a significant change, and the company began looking for an advisor to guide them on their transformation journey.

Establishing a new foundation

Diversified Communications chose RSM for system selection advice and implementation support. The company sought an advisor that had the necessary technical skills and experience, but also aligned with their organizational culture.



"RSM just clicked for everybody in a lot of areas," Holland says. "We were really impressed with the RSM teams initially, and they have proven themselves over and over again."

Selecting the new ERP and FP&A solutions both followed a similar process. Diversified Communications' stakeholders looked at the major providers in each area with RSM and evaluated how they would fit with their operational structure and align with their requirements. Ultimately, the company determined that NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning were the best solutions for their ERP and FP&A needs, respectively.


The RSM NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning teams initiated a comprehensive implementation plan for the two systems, tailoring processes and deliverables to the company's unique challenges and specifications. With both implementations, due to the global company's number of divisions and significant number of necessary integrations, RSM and Diversified Communications decided to take a minimum viable product approach to prioritize critical business processes. That strategy simplified the implementation process and built momentum as the systems were successfully implemented and integrated within business functions.

As the implementation progressed, RSM conducted extensive training to bring users up to speed with the new NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning systems and enhance adoption. The training sessions were held on-site in the United States and in a hybrid delivery format for international divisions.

The trust built between Diversified Communications and RSM led to deep teamwork and honest feedback that enhanced the system integration and implementation.

"We had 'lessons learned' sessions together through the implementation phases," RSM Manager Johnny Townsend says. "We had honest conversations with each other about what went well, what didn't do well, and what we could improve upon to make it a better project for all of us."

Holland echoed the importance of the ongoing communication and feedback. "RSM became a sounding board for us to talk about how to further our technology and further what we are doing process-wise," she says. "They became part of our family—a very important part."



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Chris Holland
Financial Systems Manager
Diversified Communications



'A completely different planet'

The NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning implementations have significantly strengthened Diversified Communications' business operations. By replacing aging technology infrastructure with new, more modern ERP and FP&A solutions, the company now has significantly increased cohesion among divisions, gained much more overall business insight and reporting capabilities, integrated effective tracking for multiple currencies, and created automated reporting for the board of directors.

With all finance and business operations in a consistent solution worldwide, many often unreliable middleware and homegrown tools that bridged the gaps between disconnected platforms are no longer necessary. In addition, many manual efforts have been eliminated, such as double entry, maintenance of data on local systems, and efforts to track missing invoices.

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Further progress on the horizon

Given the extensive capabilities of the NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning solutions, Holland is planning further potential process optimizations in the future.

"Now that we have a great system in place, let's really start to look at our processes more in-depth," she says. "We are going to have another evolution."

From a Workday Adaptive Planning perspective, Diversified Communications plans on looking at the end-user process and how to budget more effectively. With NetSuite, they are focused on integrating customer payments and other revenue streams—making it easier for consumers to pay for products.

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The power of teamwork

Diversified Communications identified some key concerns with their technology infrastructure and took advantage of an opportunity to transform operations with modern NetSuite and Workday Adaptive Planning solutions. The strong relationship between the company and RSM was a critical element of the project's overall success and has inspired further process improvements moving forward.

"We are very much about community, and it can be frustrating when someone doesn't see things through that lens of collaboration," Holland says. "But RSM took that in stride. From the start, we were not two individual companies—we are one team, where your success is our success. We all understood if we can figure out how to help each other, we are going to get to the other side better."