

Schneider Electric

Schneider Electric is an international energy company operating in more than a hundred countries spread across the Americas, Europe and Asia. Its current mission is to increase energy sustainability as it provides services to businesses and residences. Within the past ten years, Schneider has acquired forty or more digital-first companies that strategically advance its goal.

Schneider's IT modernization, ongoing since 2015, includes integrating all parts of the expanded organization into a common suite of business applications centralized on its SAP platform. As part of a larger cloud-first strategy, Schneider is currently migrating that SAP platform from a collocation in southern France to the Amazon public cloud (AWS). Running its business applications for sales, provisioning, supply chain and finance in the cloud will enable Schneider to agilely shift its market offerings.

As a consumer of IT services, Xavier Deprat, global head of SAP infrastructure operations, had multiple business objectives for moving SAP operations to AWS. In addition to improving run costs, eliminating technical debt and helping to reduce carbon footprint, Xavier says, "we wanted to increase the resiliency of our overall SAP landscape through the multi-region, multi-zone resources and other offerings that AWS brings to the table.

"Also important for us is the flexibility we gain to support business process evolution. The cloud gives us more agility to do things like create a test system or duplicate a landscape so the business can modify its landscape more easily. Kyndryl is helping us realize those benefits."

Results

8 of 12 SAP landscapes already migrated to AWS with no interruption to business operations

40 acquired companies integrated into centralized SAP operations to support continuous business growth

48 hours or less for each migration, confining risk of disruption to weekends only



A partnership built on mutual success

Most companies of Schneider's size would tip-toe into a large cloud migration with one or more proofs of concept involving low-risk workloads. But Xavier was confident his team could move the company's SAP platform without such tests.

It was a very bold decision! After all, these were mission-critical systems.

"If one of our SAP instances is not working, the people in the factory or distribution center cannot work," says Xavier. "So, we decided to work with a trusted partner who knows Schneider, understands which systems are critical, and can help us manage and mitigate the risks. That partner is Kyndryl."

The Kyndryl team has a seven-year history with Schneider's SAP operations, with Kyndryl playing a strategic role throughout the relationship. Kyndryl's initial mission was to migrate the SAP application landscape from an earlier outsourcer to a Kyndryl datacenter. In addition to managing the entire migration, Kyndryl was responsible for designing the hosting infrastructure and managing the IT stack up to the SAP application layer.

After migration, Kyndryl quickly brought the environment up to stable operations. During this period, Schneider had completed numerous acquisitions worldwide to further its digital services business. Kyndryl played a strategic role in integrating those ERP operations and uniting the business across those acquisitions.

The goal was to support a two-year designated quiet period for Schneider's SAP infrastructure operations, when no major infrastructure changes would interrupt business operations or any application-related business process improvement projects.

Kyndryl made that happen by providing continuous high availability, with an SLA of 99.999% uptime, moving the needle on the customer's Net Promoter Score (NPS) from 5.6 to 10. During that time, Kyndryl introduced numerous efficiency measures, including AIOps innovations to streamline management and establishing a dedicated team that got to know Schneider's business. It was also time used to plan for cloud.

Mission #1: Don't disrupt the business

Xavier's top priority for the SAP migration to AWS was to ensure uninterrupted business operations. His confidence in the plan of migrating test, development and production instances directly to AWS rested both on Schneider's long experience with AWS and Kyndryl's knowledge of Schneider's critical systems and its business.

"We have put in place an approach that allows us to stay in a kind of hybrid mode. While we are migrating to the cloud, we're still maintaining the existing landscape in the hosting datacenter to enable in-process business projects. So, the planning of each go-live is a real challenge. Each one has been different," Xavier explains.

Plus, each landscape migration had to take place within an allotted 48-hour over-the-weekend migration window. That took thorough preparation and test runs. If the test run determined that the time frame was too long, the Kyndryl team adjusted its data migration methodology to ensure compliance with the migration window.

"I believe we made a good choice to select Kyndryl as a partner for our migration to AWS. We know the team that we are working with, and we trust them to orchestrate all the activities involved. They've been extremely flexible."

Xavier Deprat

Head of Global SAP Infrastructure
Operations, Schneider Electric



Orchestrating a multi-enterprise team effort

The first step in planning on the Schneider side was to define the organization and operating model — one that would support the goal of continuous business operations. Determining who would be responsible for what was a major component of the overall migration plan.

“We all had to learn to work together with the new model, which led us to spend time on designing that model as well as designing the implementation,” Xavier notes, adding that moving mature mission-critical application infrastructure to the cloud carries some complexities around infrastructure design within the AWS environment.

Schneider’s internal team designed and built the AWS landing zone, a highly secured environment with strict rules about firewalls, connectivity, and security groups. In architecting the new operating environment, Kyndryl leveraged its well-established framework for cloud operations through a structured mapping of client SLAs and operational requirements to the target operational solution. This framework includes extensive Kyndryl intellectual property — assets, accelerators and reference models. These helped the design and migration processes run smoothly.

Kyndryl provided specifications that AWS and Schneider technical teams used to provision the new infrastructure in the landing zone. Moving each SAP landscape to AWS involves the three partners carefully coordinating connectivity. Post-migration, Kyndryl manages the SAP landscape on AWS.

A different Schneider IT organization, the global delivery arm of Schneider Digital, takes care of application management for the platform. An incumbent external partner is responsible for SAP application management. And, of course, there is the community of key business users who perform testing when needed.

“All of this ecosystem needs to be properly managed for each part to be ready to execute on time. That’s far more challenging than the infrastructure or technical components,” Xavier notes.

“At the beginning, it was a little bit messy and complex. But once we agreed on the model and moved to execution, it’s really flying. This is where I believe we made a good choice to select Kyndryl as a partner. Everything from Kyndryl has been well delivered and on time, and they’ve been extremely flexible and accommodating to help us manage this challenge.”

Going cloud-native is next

Up next is learning how to manage the cloud SAP environments in a cloud-native way. Because the migration has been primarily a “lift and shift” model, Xavier says, the environments are still being managed in an on-premises model.

“We have some ideas on how we can improve our costs by adjusting our provisioning to the right size. That’s one of the next steps we have in front of us to really achieve our TCO improvement promise.”





Take the next step

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