Heineken Centralizes Global ERP Datasets in SAP BW 4 HANA on AWS to Drive Business-Critical Insights

To fulfill its Evergeen strategy and become the world's "best-connected brewer", Heineken N.V. (Heineken) needed to unify datasets from dozens of business systems in use by its subsidiary operating companies (OpCos) worldwide. The company needed a cost-effective, scalable solution that facilitated access to data for business reporting and advanced analytics at the global level as well as within individual OpCos.

The company engaged Amazon Web Services (AWS). Working with Lemongrass, an AWS Partner that is a leading provider of SAP on AWS, Heineken collected disparate ERP datasets and built a centralized solution in the cloud called the B1 Analytics Enablement Platform. The B1 Analytics Enablement Platform based on SAP BW 4 HANA seamlessly integrates, stores, and analyzes tens of terabytes of ERP data in a secure environment, unlocking insights that help Heineken to optimize business operations.

Using Data to Drive Business Decisions Across the Enterprise

Founded in the Netherlands in 1864, Heineken produces more than 300 brands of beverages sold in 192 countries. The company has a decentralized model in which more than 80 OpCos—which oversee 167 breweries, distributors, and other entities—operate independently while the main company manages global operations. Each OpCo had its own SAP ERP Central Component or other ERP system with siloed datasets. These datasets were not easily shareable and caused long lead times for global reporting and analytics use cases when the company needed to scale.

In 2017, Heineken launched a digital transformation initiative to unite data from individual ERP systems and other data sources to facilitate global reporting. The company wished to collect and centralize datasets in a cost-effective, scalable way in the cloud. "We wanted to build a spider in the web, where the spider is the central solution to catch all the outlying dataset sources and systems," says Jelle van Etten, Heineken's head of global data platform. "While we approached it as a technology exercise, there was a lot of effort in mobilizing our operating companies to plug into the central environment and deliver their data."

Uniting Disparate Datasets in a Secure, Centralized Solution on AWS

To build and manage the B1 Analytics Enablement Platform infrastructure in the cloud, Heineken's Digital & Technology team worked alongside Lemongrass. "We have support from Lemongrass and AWS solutions architects to assist Heineken on how best to interact with and integrate data," says van Etten.

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Jelle van Etten
Head of Global Data Platform, Heineken N.V.

Built on AWS, the B1 Analytics Enablement Platform has remained highly available since its deployment into production, despite scaling to ingest and compress tens of terabytes of data. In addition to data from around 50 SAP-based environments, the solution also integrates more than 30 other enterprise applications, such as Oracle's JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and Microsoft Dynamics AX. "Given the flexibility of the solution now, it's just a matter of minutes to scale up," says Rob Antens, account director at Lemongrass. "That's a big plus for Heineken."

In February 2021, Heineken launched its EverGreen strategy, emphasizing sustainability and responsibility practices, sharpening resource allocation, and driving continual improvements in productivity. A major part of the strategy involves data driven insights using advanced analytics and business intelligence to better meet the needs of Heineken customer. "The B1 Analytics Enablement Platform fits our data analytics ambitions," van Etten says. "By bringing everyone to the same technology stack, we create great efficiency in operating and supporting these environments." Internal global teams no longer have to find teams of engineers to build integrations that collect data from various OpCos, a process that used to take 9 months or more and now happens instantly through a self-service instance on the B1 Analytics Enablement Platform. "We can unlock all these data sources and have them available in one platform," says van Etten. "If someone has a good idea for an analytics or reporting use case, the time to market and proof of value is now way faster."

At an enterprise level, the B1 Analytics Enablement Platform drives big-picture reporting on global finance, supply chain, and procurement. The company also is gaining greater visibility into its sustainability practices. For example, Heineken gleans insights from the integration of datasets involving consumption of raw materials, inputs into production processes, and financial metrics from OpCos around the globe. "We've greatly improved visibility and transparency for sustainability reporting," says van Etten. "This solution helps to bring datasets together to drive insights, which lead to actions in our sustainability agenda." Furthermore, Heineken's data and analytics initiatives empower its OpCos to do their own learning and benchmarking. Using front-end visualization tools, Heineken OpCos build their own reports from data they access from the centralized, standardized platform.

Automating Data-Driven Applications

Increasingly, Heineken and Lemongrass are incorporating automation in the deployment of business data warehouse applications. "We can complete a full deployment for one business unit within a few weeks because it's fully automated," says Antens. "We recognize the power of automation in the cloud, where you achieve a consistent level in quality of deployment but also save a lot of time and cost."

Heineken continues to work on optimizing data-driven solutions to advance its EverGreen strategy and aim to become the world's "best-connected brewer". "Our solution built on AWS makes data available, is scalable, and reduces the time to market of developing solutions globally and rolling them out in individual markets," says van Etten. "It greatly contributes to our goals of standardization and harmonization of data and solutions. That's how we support our digital transformation and drive insights from data.

About Lemongrass

Lemongrass is a software-enabled services provider focused on delivering superior, highly automated Managed Services to Enterprise customers. With a portfolio of services designed to deliver the desired outcomes from an SAP transformation, Lemongrass engineers strategies and services that enable the economics, scale and agility of hyperscale computing while unlocking business innovation and controlling the risks and uncertainties. Our customers span multiple verticals and geographies across the Americas, EMEA and APAC.

Contact

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