"The fact that we have good communications with oXya has helped us resolve issues faster. The communication channel is working in terms of the quality of the information shared as well as the timeframe within which the communication happens."

Laetitia Debout, Business Relationship Manager
IT Department, McInnis Cement

CASE STUDY

oXya Services Support McInnis' SAP S/4HANA Live Environment, Amongst the First in North America

"I like the fact that oXya presents an assigned team of people I have come to know by name," says Laetitia Debout, a Business Relationship Manager in the McInnis IT department. "The fact that we have good communications with oXya has helped us resolve issues faster. The communication channel is working in terms of the quality of the information shared as well as the timeframe within which the communication happens."

Building the Future

Building a continuous process manufacturing plant from the ground up capable of producing 2.2 million metric tons of cement every year is no mean feat. It demands incredible efficiency and planning from all parts of the organization.

Just as McInnis is building the future of cement production and distribution, its IT shop is at the forefront of SAP

> oXya is not just a service provider; it's also an extension of our internal team.

Powered by Hitachi

McInnis Cement chose to implement its advanced SAP S/4HANA on Hitachi UCP for HANA, based on technical recommendations from oXya. "We have significant experience with infrastructure systems from various leading vendors, and we've found Hitachi's converged system – UCP for SAP HANA – to be superior in speed of implementation, performance, robustness, and ongoing daily operations", says David Desmettre, Service Delivery Manager at oXya. David manages oXya's support team in Montreal, Canada – the team which provides ongoing support services to McInnis Cement.

The hardware chosen was UCP 4000E on CB500 and HANA TDI on CB2500, sharing Hitachi Storage VSP G400 – all in a single 42RU rack. This system was installed at oXya's data center in Montreal. For disaster recovery purposes, McInnis is using oXya's data center in San Jose, California – a cloud DR that is also based on Hitachi UCP.

"Hitachi's UCP solution and Hitachi's UCP Director interface make it very easy for oXya's administration team to perform our daily tasks. This solution allows us to respond very quickly to the McInnis Cement's requests, such as creating a new virtual machine. In addition, this solution enables the service team to easily adjust resources (such as adding CPU, memory and/or storage to a virtual machine), and address potential incidents by ourselves, with less need to reach out to Hitachi's support," concludes Desmettre.

McINNIS CEMENT

About McInnis Cement

McInnis Cement is a privately held company with corporate headquarters in Quebec, Canada, and United States headquarters in Stamford, CT. The company is building a new cement plant in Port-Daniel–Gascons, Canada. It is one of the largest industrial projects currently under construction in eastern North America. McInnis is also the first cement company in more than 50 years to build a new plant that will serve Eastern Canada and New England.

The plant—which will be capable of producing 2.2 million metric tons of cement every year—will be a model of environmental performance in North America. The use of advanced technology will enable the McInnis Cement plant to meet—if not exceed—the most stringent environmental standards, making its ecological footprint on a per ton basis one of the smallest in the cement industry.

environments. It is one of the first firms in North America to implement SAP S/4HANA. "I think that once you've made the decision to go with SAP, it's a very natural decision to go with the latest and greatest to avoid having to migrate and upgrade," Debout says.

And just as the company seeks one of the smallest ecological footprints in the industry, the IT department has sought to minimize the financial and operational footprint of running SAP by engaging oXya for a managed SAP cloud service, that includes hosting and management services on oXya's private SAP cloud.

Focus on SAP

Laetitia Debout joined McInnis Cement in September 2015 after a career with Accenture in both France and Canada. While in Paris, Debout took part in the largest SAP implementation at the time for a French utility. After moving to Canada, she worked on a number of management consulting assignments and rose to a senior management level.

At McInnis her primary responsibility is to design and implement the architecture, systems, and applications for the company's sales, logistics, and distribution with a focus on SAP. In addition she is responsible for supporting corporate functions such as finance, communications, HR, and procurement.

"McInnis IT chose to invest in SAP because of its prevalence in the continuous process manufacturing industry. We're in a situation where that kind of investment has to be approved by the investors," reports Debout. "IT really had to make the point that SAP was right for the size of the company we are today and what we project to become. Key factors were 14 out of the 20 largest cement companies in the world ran SAP and 80 percent of SAP customers at that time were mid-sized companies, very similar in size to us."

AWS Not Cost-Effective

When Debout joined McInnis, all of their SAP environments were already deployed on Amazon Web Services (AWS), including both production and non-production environments. "When I joined McInnis, the IT team

realized that we had to go for a longer term solution, with a partner that provides long term commitment. The flexibility provided by AWS was great in the beginning, as it came with no commitment at all, and gave us time to find our longer term partner. However, McInnis IT was looking for a long-term partner that could give us both the hosting part of SAP, and also provide high-level managed services for our SAP environment," says Debout.

In August 2015, McInnis issued an RFP to several vendors, including oXya, for a technical partner to manage its SAP systems. Services requested included migrating the production and non-production SAP environments to the partner's cloud, and managing the SAP systems.

In mid-September 2015, McInnis chose oXya as their SAP services provider, and to have its SAP S/4HANA environment run on oXya's "Powered by Hitachi" private SAP cloud. At the end of January 2016, all the environments were migrated from AWS to oXya and the Finance module of the production system went live shortly afterwards.

Today, oXya provides a comprehensive package of services to McInnis with a flexible financial model that follows growth. The package includes all the technical layers including hosting on Hitachi hardware in oXya data centers, SAP management, asset management, database management, 24/7 monitoring, and remote disaster recovery in an enterprise class service model.

Adapting to Growth and Change

As a new enterprise, McInnis faces a lot of unknowns with business decisions yet to be made. "From an IT perspective, we have to build an architecture that's going to adapt to whatever business decisions are made," Debout says. "While there are many unknowns, the one thing we do know is that systems can be a limiting factor to growth and change unless they can align with business decisions very quickly. We've based our choice of architecture on its ability to scale and adjust."

McInnis IT has deployed the full potential of SAP's Finance and Procurement modules to around half of the company. The Plant Maintenance and Sales & Distribution modules have been implemented as well, but are awaiting the start of operations before being put to use.

Agility, Flexibility, and Understanding

In start-up mode, McInnis Cement has an extremely lean internal organization. "We have a lot of work to do in terms of stabilizing systems and putting processes in place," notes Debout, "but we can't do it alone."

Debout compares being a greenfield operation to a mature one. "If we had been operating for a long time, people would know exactly how to troubleshoot some of the issues we are having. We have several partners for the SAP environment, including oXya for managed cloud services, and another partner that handles the functional side. The service providers need to work together to solve issues, and they do that very well. Sometimes you don't know what you're looking for. In such a case, knowing the various stakeholders in person, and

having the ability to gather them around the same table to resolve the issue, is a lot faster than just dropping a question in an impersonal mailbox, which you don't know who will handle, when, and where in the world they are located."

"To us, oXya is not just a service provider; it's also an extension of our internal team. We do not have the capability internally to provide any of these SAP services. To be successful we need a personal touch—a lot of agility, flexibility, and understanding from our partners. And, of course, having great skills at a good price. Having a service provider like oXya – a Hitachi Group company, that can work in symbiosis with us and our other partners, is very important."

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