



Cascades unlocks SAP data in Google Cloud for advanced analytics

Overview

Cascades specializes in sustainable paper solutions and, for the past 60 years, has adopted a responsible approach to business that embraces the circular economy. But while the company is ranked as an industry leader and top employer, its legacy SAP Business Warehouse environment was holding it back from effectively meeting the demands of the business.

While all SAP environments are complex, Cascades was also dealing with issues of scale. They relied on this legacy infrastructure to drive a large volume of business—and it struggled to provide the advanced analytics needed to help the company meet its business goals.

With data siloed across different SAP modules, they couldn't dig deep into their data for insights. While the company was already using SAP Business Warehouse (BW)—a platform for developing analytics applications in SAP—it was prohibitively expensive, with limited functionality and there was a scarcity of senior talent with SAP BW expertise. So Cascades started looking for a more efficient solution to solve their broader data access issues.

The challenge

Like many manufacturers, Cascades had disparate data across its lines of business, including manufacturing, sales, and marketing. The IT team wanted to centralize data from various SAP modules and complement it with data from outside of SAP to improve their analytics capabilities.

Cascades needed analytics capabilities that were both user-friendly and cost-effective. The IT team had some knowledge of Google Cloud, so they met with Google to learn more about cloud-based data analytics tools for SAP environments. After consulting on their needs, Google recommended Pythian—a preferred Google Cloud data analytics partner—to help Cascades simplify their environment and benefit from automation and [analytics](#).

Technologies

- Google Cloud Cortex Framework
- Google BigQuery
- Google Cloud Composer
- Google Cloud Storage
- Google Cloud Dataproc
- Looker
- SAP ECC and SAP Business Warehouse

The solution

Pythian began with a discovery phase to examine the goals, challenges, limitations, and technical requirements of Cascades to evaluate exactly which products and services were needed for the project.

Through that discovery, Pythian corroborated the decision that Cascades should leverage the Google Cloud environment and recommended three steps, completed in quick succession: [Pythian GCP Foundations](#), [Pythian EDP QuickStart](#), and [Google Cloud Cortex Framework](#).

- **Pythian GCP Foundations:** As part of its service offerings, Pythian validated that Cascades' [Google Cloud](#) environment was production-ready, including identity management, [data security](#), and network connectivity. Pythian recommended and implemented slight modifications to specific settings to prepare for deploying a data cloud foundation for Cascades' SAP environment. This ensured a strong foundation and set the stage for the next two projects.
- **Pythian EDP QuickStart:** [Enterprise Data Platform \(EDP\) QuickStart](#) is Pythian's solution accelerator for [Google Cloud](#). This simple, streamlined platform that combines multiple data sources into a Google BigQuery data warehouse, making datasets available for analysis. The solution incorporates various Google Cloud components such as [Cloud Composer](#) for orchestration, Google Cloud Storage for redundancy, and [Dataproc](#) for data transformation. Using EDP QuickStart, Pythian could securely move data into [BigQuery](#) from Cascades' SAP manufacturing forecasting system quickly.
- **Google Cloud Cortex Framework:** Using the [Google Cloud Cortex Framework](#), Pythian could integrate SAP data directly into Google Cloud. This framework helps to decode SAP's complex acronyms, making it much more consumable for business users. Every SAP environment is different, so Pythian customized it for Cascades' unique needs, and a [Looker](#) dashboard was implemented to help users visualize and interact with the data.

“Pythian's professional services team was thorough and knowledgeable about what it would take to build an enterprise data platform on Google Cloud. They outlined how we could do this cost-effectively, while still meeting our most urgent business requirements.”

– Guillaume Fournier, Director, Business Intelligence Centre of Expertise, Cascades Canada

Results

Working with Cascades' BI team, Pythian unlocked SAP data across multiple modules and securely moved it into BigQuery, allowing Cascades to automate their processes and gain advanced reporting and insights through its new platform.

With SAP data connected to BigQuery, not only can the BI team run their own analyses, but they can also connect data from manufacturing, sales, and marketing—something that wasn't easily possible before. Their executive team is excited with the results since the solution empowers their strategic decision-making through access to advanced insights and reports.

Cascades is now working with a strong data foundation within the SAP environment using the Google Cloud Cortex Framework.

- Cascades' BI team now has the capability to provide executives with real-time insights and reports quickly and easily.
- Cascades can now do more with their SAP data in Google Cloud, such as adding parameters for different forecasting needs, unlocking customer insights, and analyzing data.
- The Cascades' BI team—which previously had limited knowledge of Google Cloud—can now run the system on their own and bring in new data sets, thanks to Pythian's thorough knowledge transfer.
- Cascades can also shift their investment from a more expensive platform to a more modern, cost-effective cloud solution.

Want to see similar results for your company?

Get in touch with a [Pythian Google Cloud](#) expert to see how our team can help.

About Pythian

Founded in 1997, Pythian is a global IT services company that helps organizations transform how they compete and win by helping them turn data into valuable insights, predictions and products. From cloud automation to machine learning, Pythian designs, implements and supports customized solutions to the toughest data challenges.

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