## Business Challenge

As more of its enterprise-level clients moved business-critical data from on-premises data centers to the cloud, Syniti needed to provide a proven cloud solution with a reputation for reliability and performance.

## Transformation

Syniti, one of the world's leading enterprise data management specialists, used the Skytap on IBM® Cloud® solution to help clients move business-critical data to the cloud more quickly, securely and cost-effectively. This was especially important for moving to SAP S/4HANA®. Reducing risk, complexity and cost by taking advantage of cloud-based migration software, with RPA, AI and ML capabilities, ensures a significant ROI.

**Rex Ahlstrom**
**Chief Strategy and Technology Officer, Syniti**

**Business benefits:**

## 30–40%
data migration costs cut

## <1 hour
of provisioning time

## 99.5%
data quality levels

# Syniti

# Smarter data migration—from lift and shift to automate and transform

Syniti solves complex enterprise data transformation challenges with data expertise and intelligent software. The company's software applies automation and guidance infused by AI and ML to data migration, data quality, analytics, master data and metadata management, and information governance initiatives. Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Boston Massachusetts, Syniti employs over 900 data specialists in 25 countries around the world and has led thousands of data transformation projects for more than 200 Forbes Global 2000 organizations.

*"Our clients don't want to just move to the cloud. They want to take advantage of the new capabilities of SAP S/4HANA and transform their business."*

Rex Ahlstrom, Chief Strategy and Technology Officer, Syniti

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Syniti



Cuts data migration costs by 30 – 40% by automating and accelerating data journey from on-premises to cloud

## Opportunities for growth—and a deadline

For 24 years, Syniti, formerly known as Back Office Associates, has specialized in providing enterprise-scale data management and software-led services for some of the largest corporations in the world. "We focus on one thing and we do it really well, which is data," says Rex Ahlstrom, Syniti's Chief Strategy and Technology Officer. "Our solutions go beyond relying on technical experts to enable businesspeople and knowledge workers to engage with the software and drive business outcomes."

Syniti offers its clients expertise across a broad range of large-scale industries, such as capital management, manufacturing, life sciences, pharmaceuticals and retailing. To manage data migration projects, the company created its own Syniti Knowledge Platform to streamline data journeys, increase efficiency and reduce data errors.

"Customers are on a data journey that spans the life of their business because data is constantly in transformation and moving between systems," says Ahlstrom. "The Syniti Knowledge Platform is designed to be that unified, end-to-end platform."

For most of Syniti's history, it focused on on-premises data centers because that's

where large, multinational businesses hosted their computing resources. However, as cloud computing grew and more clients began moving databases and applications to the cloud, Syniti began expanding its software and services to support cloud migration.

A key product in Syniti's portfolio is the SAP S/4HANA solution. Since a growing number of SAP customers are migrating workloads to the cloud, the SAP customer base represented a significant area of growth for Syniti.

In 2019, SAP offered Syniti the opportunity to market its software and services directly to SAP customers through the SAP Solution Extensions program. But in order to be listed in the SAP catalog, Syniti

needed to have its own high-performance cloud migration platform operational by the end of the year.

Before committing to the SAP catalog, Syniti had to be sure that adding a comprehensive cloud solution was possible within this timeframe, and if so, determine the performance and pricing parameters. To meet the year-end deadline, Syniti launched an in-depth evaluation process to find a cloud provider that could meet its exacting performance criteria.

"We are essentially taking all of a company's proprietary data and managing it in our cloud service and the risk associated with a breach—anything would be catastrophic," says Ahlstrom.

> "We did a large global implementation and were able to show the client that we're going to save them over EUR 11 million, which was far more than the actual cost of the software."

**Rex Ahlstrom**
Chief Strategy and
Technology Officer
Syniti

"As a major decision, we felt that we had to go where we felt we could get that level of management support that would be required to convince some of the largest companies in the world to leverage our cloud service."

## An implementation designed for success

To find a cloud platform capable of meeting its technical and business requirements, Syniti evaluated all of the major cloud providers in search of the best fit. Syniti had previously worked with IBM on other joint partnerships and looked closely at the Skytap on IBM Cloud offering.

"Having the track record that IBM has in secure cloud environments was an absolutely critical part of the decision-making process," says Ahlstrom. "The confidence came from certifications, testing and everything we get in partnership with IBM and Skytap."

The Skytap on IBM Cloud service focuses on building and running hybrid applications and combines mission-critical applications with cloud-native capabilities. It provides the flexibility for clients to run applications on the cloud while still hosting data on-premises.

"We're taking the burden of deployment, application upgrades and system maintenance off the customer's plate," says Ahlstrom. "That is a big time-to-value in terms of our ability to stand that up."

Within the cloud solution, system administrators can create templates and automate template provisioning. "The Skytap app gives us the ability to manage and provision solutions for performance and reliability, equal or better than what we see on-premises, but without the administrative burden of that," says Chris Alberts, Global Senior Director of Corporate IT Services at Syniti.

In addition to providing the cloud infrastructure, IBM helped design the overall environment. "I appreciated the quality of the design IBM came up with for the environment. The design is tested, replicable and scalable, which is key for us,"

says Alberts. "We found that the project management was top notch and the professional skill sets were very good."

Building on its Skytap on IBM Cloud platform, Syniti can now market its product line through the SAP Solution Extensions program and reach SAP customers around the world as they search for cloud-based solutions. "We have premium qualification, which means we're vetted for certified integration and we pass all of their security vulnerability testing," says Ahlstrom. "We conform to their usability standards and everything that customers expect when they buy any SAP product."

But migrating to a cloud platform is only a first step for Syniti's strategically minded customer base. "Our clients don't want to just move to the cloud. They want to take advantage of the new capabilities of SAP S/HANA and transform their business," says Ahlstrom. "Hybrid and trust transformation are why we are on the SAP price list and why we are so important as a partner to SAP."

## A platform for future growth

After adding the Skytap on IBM Cloud solution to its portfolio during the fourth quarter of 2019, Syniti was well-positioned for the new year. When the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 severely limited access to client data centers, having a remote cloud-computing platform up and running provided much-needed operational resilience.

On behalf of its clients, Syniti has achieved significant cost reductions. Clients typically save 30 – 40% on the cost of data migration, with some clients realizing up to an 80% return on investment. "We did a large global implementation and were able

### Benefits in detail

- Cuts data migration costs by 30 – 40% by automating and accelerating data journey from on-premises to cloud

- Reduces provisioning time from months to under 1 hour on typical data migration projects for large enterprise clients

- Delivers 99.5% data quality levels while reducing average data footprints by one-third

### Key components

**Services:** IBM® Services®, SAP S/4HANA® Services, Skytap on IBM Cloud®



Reduces provisioning time from months to under 1 hour on typical data migration projects for large enterprise clients

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to show the client that we're going to save them over EUR 11 million," says Ahlstrom, "which was far more that the actual cost of the software."

Prior to the cloud solution, provisioning complete environments often required months. "Now, the actual provisioning of the servers is highly automated," says Alberts. "From pushing the button to having the servers ready to work is now typically under one hour and it makes a huge difference to us."

Syniti is also seeing a much higher level of data quality. "We're rarely below 99.5% data quality levels," says Ahlstrom. "We're also reducing our data footprints by at least one-third, on average, because we're focused on the data and not the technical conversion."

In addition to providing cloud-based solutions for SAP S/4HANA customers, Syniti is expanding its SAP-related business by supporting SAP® Ariba® software. "We're taking our Skytap on

IBM Cloud product and it will be on the endorsed app center for SAP Ariba," says Ahlstrom.

After working with IBM on the technical side to launch its Skytap on IBM Cloud platform, Syniti contracted with IBM to enable the resale of its products and services through the IBM Global Business Services® sales channel. "We're also looking at leveraging IBM Watson® services," says Ahlstrom. "If you think of the business process expertise of IBM coupled with our data expertise, and then you layer on that the ability to co-innovate around AI and ML and Watson Analytics®, that's where we're all trying to drive."

Where does Syniti see the most value in its relationship with IBM? "We are a 900-person company and we're asking the largest companies in the world to entrust their most important data to us," says Ahlstrom. "Doing that alone versus doing that with IBM, it is a substantial value to us to have that IBM brand and stability behind what we do for those customers."

## About the IBM and SAP Partnership

The strategic shift to the cloud and to intelligent technologies isn't easy, but it's how businesses of all sizes will create exceptional customer experiences, uncover new revenue opportunities, optimize investments and fundamentally reinvent how business gets done. SAP and IBM offer the innovations and industry expertise to help.

SAP provides the world's leading intelligent applications and technologies – connecting and clarifying the data that makes processes more nimble and decisions more powerful. IBM helps build smarter businesses and is a global leader in SAP transformations – offering in-depth industry experience, cloud and on-premise deployment expertise, and game-changing intelligent technologies.

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