




## Solvay builds a foundation for fast, high-impact decision-making

Leading chemical and materials company creates an integrated, agile, and automated platform for financial data and operations

### Customer Story

**SOLUTIONS:** Finance

**INDUSTRY:** Manufacturing

**PARTNER:**  **accenture**



Specialty chemical and advanced materials company Solvay set out to transform its globally distributed organization for greater efficiency and collaboration. Finance brought in Anaplan to support that transformation, starting with zero-based budgeting. With Anaplan, Solvay has transformed its culture to embrace data transparency, information self-service, and “what-if” scenario modeling for greater speed, agility, and accuracy in a rapidly evolving business landscape.

**One**  
reliable source of financial information improves transparency and collaboration company-wide

**One year**  
ROI target demonstrates transformational business value

**Alignment**  
between financial systems and corporate strategy makes decisions faster and more impactful





**Great companies evolve in response to the business environment they operate in, and great finance organizations transform themselves in parallel with the companies they serve.** An outstanding example of this truth can be seen at Solvay, an \$11 billion specialty chemicals and advanced materials company based in Belgium.

In the first decades of the 2000s, Solvay grew through mergers and acquisitions, which created a decentralized finance operation. When Ilham Kadri was appointed CEO in 2019, she established a new initiative, Solvay One, to transform the company by breaking down silos and increasing agility and efficiency. **Read about Solvay's ambitious transformation here.**

Solvay's corporate transformation required the finance team to reexamine both its processes and technology. "Creating a forecast and making decisions were often slow and painful when finance was decentralized," recalls Alexandre Blum, a 20-year Solvay veteran who is now Director of Controlling and Head of Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A). "Finance was appreciated by the business in general, but we were lagging behind in terms of technology."

The FP&A team also faced external pressures to transform. "We operate all around the world, in a variety of different business activities," Blum says. "Because of the volatility of our markets and ongoing developments within them, we need accurate information in order to change course quickly." The COVID pandemic created additional urgency around the need for new technology, as 10,000 Solvay employees began teleworking.

#### **Tangible benefits within a year**

The Solvay team looked for a platform that was strongly visual, because many non-finance users would be accessing the system; real-time, because user acceptance would hinge on whether the solution could provide timely information; and high-performance, so users anywhere in the world would not have to wait for information and answers. "We looked for a platform that is accessible and versatile, and we found it in Anaplan," Blum says.

Supported by Anaplan partner Accenture, Solvay established zero-based budgeting (ZBB) as its first Anaplan use case. "It is a collaboration of procurement and finance," Blum says of the solution. "We used Anaplan as a platform for ZBB and will build additional Anaplan capabilities based on that foundation. We expect the solution to deliver tangible benefits within a year."

In addition to the specific financial benefits that Anaplan will unlock, Blum notes that the new solution brings finance in sync with the One Solvay initiative. "Our financial models are now in line with group strategy," he says. "With the support of Anaplan, we are moving toward more centralized control of finance and adapting the way we do our FP&A. Anaplan enables us to work in a way that is fully integrated, agile, digitized, and automated."

#### **Promoting a culture of action**

Solvay's finance team also sees that the Anaplan solution can enable cultural change, both inside and outside of finance. The solution increases transparency, because information from all parts of the company is available in one place; it also promotes a culture of action and self-service. "You can have the best technology and processes, but they won't succeed without the right culture," Blum says. "By integrating Anaplan deeply into our organization, we can ensure that people throughout Solvay use these tools themselves—and don't have to ask someone from the controller's office to sit with them as they enter data."

Blum says Anaplan's features for developing "what-if" scenarios will be especially useful in years ahead. "The COVID crisis has shown us how important it is to be able to test scenarios quickly," he says. "The way people work is changing, and our employees want to be involved in that story. Anaplan empowers them to do that."



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**Alexandre Blum, Director of Controlling**

## **About Anaplan**

Anaplan (NYSE: PLAN) is a transformative way to see, plan, and run your business. Using our proprietary Hyperblock™ technology, Anaplan lets you contextualize real-time performance, and forecast future outcomes for faster, confident decisions. Because connecting strategy and plans to collaborative execution across your organization is required to move business FORWARD today. Based in San Francisco, we have 20 offices globally, 175 partners and more than 1,800 customers worldwide.

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