TOA Corporation

Creating a global management system with SAP and Kyndryl solutions to enhance operational efficiency

Headquartered in Japan, TOA Corporation manufactures sound equipment and CCTV surveillance cameras for commercial and professional use. Since it was established in 1934, TOA has grown into a multinational organization with operations in 31 countries and currently supplies products to more than 120 countries around the world.

Business challenge

With a presence in 31 different countries, how could TOA keep its manufacturing, product planning and sales activities running smoothly around the clock?

Transformation

To enhance the performance of the core applications powering its global operations, TOA moved its SAP® ERP systems to Kyndryl™ Enterprise Application Management for SAP Solutions on IBM® Cloud®.

Results

Reduces IT infrastructure costs and maintenance workloads at each of TOA's regional sites

Strengthens global management and governance, while maintaining the uniqueness of local operations

Provides an environment that will enable the use of the latest cloud services for digital applications and boost infrastructure performance

"As we continue to meet the diverse needs of our clients around the world with our unique products and services, we will continue to rely on [Kyndryl] to support our activities."

Mr. Akinori Ueda
General Manager of the Information Systems Department, Corporate Planning Division
TOA Corporation

Moving SAP managed services, which are compatible with localized product development and global management, to the cloud

Established in 1934, TOA manufactures a variety of professional audio and broadcasting equipment, including speakers and microphones, as well as security equipment and surveillance cameras.

Following the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing has become increasingly important to protect public health. In response, TOA has been focusing on providing services that can help health organizations monitor the number of people in a given place and track the number of people passing through public spaces. To achieve this, the company combined its extensive network of surveillance cameras with artificial intelligence (AI) to create a solution that helps to reduce congestion in public spaces.

Mr. Akinori Ueda, General Manager of the Information Systems Department of the Corporate Planning Division at TOA, describes the company's latest initiatives: "In line with our philosophy of 'smiles for the public, creating a society where people can smile,' we are leveraging our expertise as a leading producer of audio and video equipment to refine new solutions and give back to the communities we serve. For example, since August 2020 we have been conducting a proof of concept at Sannomiya Station on the Kobe Municipal Subway. In this project we used cameras and AI to automatically identify congestion and provide guidance on busy routes via public address systems to help passengers stay safe and avoid lines."

TOA is also developing digital platforms designed to strengthen customer relationships and improve operational efficiency. For instance, the company is working on creating a new portal for its customers that will provide detailed product information and help them to better manage their orders. Similarly, the company is creating a user portal that will monitor the status of currently installed audio broadcast and surveillance systems using Internet of Things sensors and automatically notify maintenance teams when repairs are required.

In recent years, TOA corporation has pursued a strategy of producing products locally in each of the five regions in which it operates: Asia Pacific, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. But with everything from product planning to production and sales carried out at a local level, key decision-makers at the company's head office struggled to get a clear picture of the performance of each regional division.

To address this issue, TOA established an integrated global management system using SAP ERP to unify the core systems that it had been running separately in each region. To support this SAP environment, the company selected Enterprise Application Management for SAP Solutions on IBM Cloud from Kyndryl, fomerly known as IBM Infrastructure Services. This solution includes SAP Basis operation services as a standardized offering. TOA began using the solution in the Asia-Pacific region in early 2015 and rolled it out to 20 sites in 15 countries by March 2019.
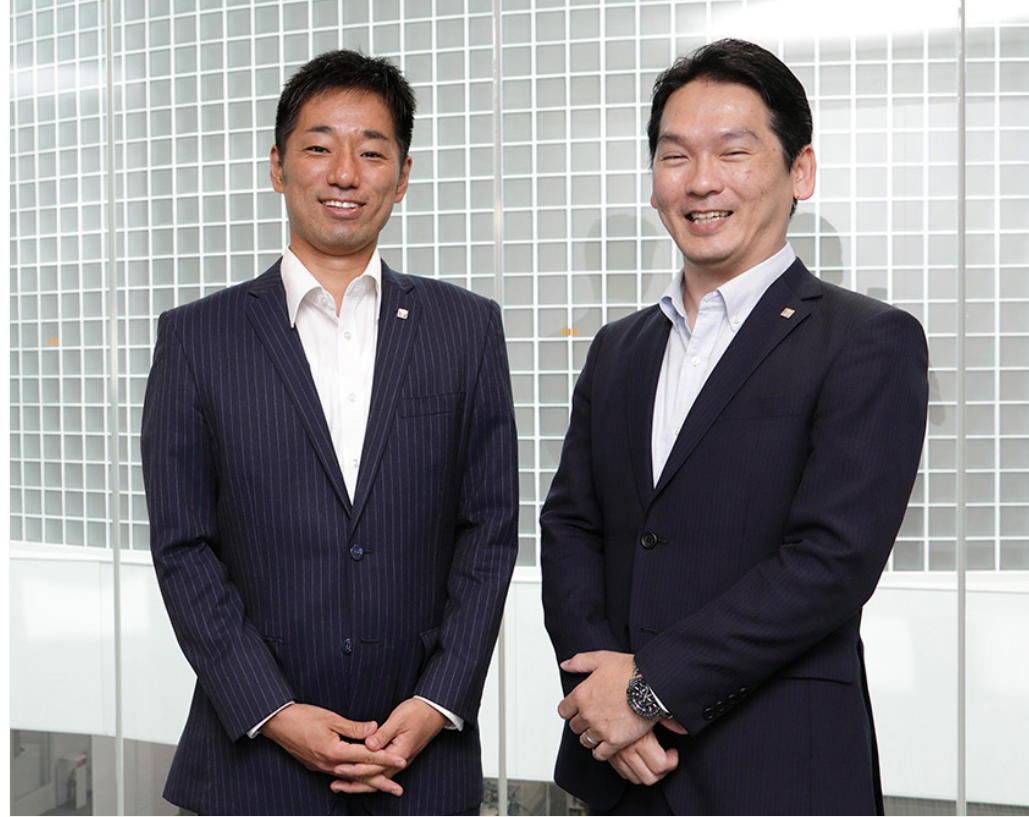
Mr. Kentaro Hamada, Manager of the Information Systems Department, Corporate Planning Division, TOA Corporation (left), **Mr. Akinori Ueda**, General Manager of the Information Systems Department, Corporate Planning Division, TOA Corporation (right)

Mr. Ueda reflects on the impact of using Enterprise Application Management for SAP Solutions on IBM Cloud: "Thanks to [Kyndryl], our global management system has been running smoothly around the clock. In addition, system availability has been improved at each site, and with the [Kyndryl] team on hand to deal with any failures that may occur, we've also reduced system maintenance activities."

TOA initially chose to run its managed SAP applications from IBM's Makuhari data center, which is specialized for this purpose. To support future innovation, the company also wanted to create an agile environment and enhance its digital platforms with the latest cloud technologies. In 2020, TOA decided to migrate to IBM's Tokyo data center—a move that would help to further improve system performance, stability and reliability.

Migrating SAP ERP to IBM's Tokyo data center in just three months with help from Kyndryl

Once it migrated its SAP applications to IBM's Tokyo data center, TOA then upgraded its SAP ERP database and replaced Microsoft SQL Server 2008 with Microsoft SQL Server 2012, as support for the company's existing SQL server was due to expire. This work was carried out in January and February of 2019 with the support of Kyndryl, followed by planning for the migration to IBM's Tokyo data center in July of the same year. The actual migration started in August. Kyndryl helped TOA migrate to the new SAP ERP database and then verified and tested the environment before moving it into production.

After the migration to IBM's Tokyo data center, Kyndryl configured a managed cloud environment for TOA's SAP applications, including support for the company's SAP Basis operations. This move has helped to greatly enhance the company's IT infrastructure and other features.

Mr. Kentaro Hamada, the Manager at TOA's Information Systems Department who led the migration, outlines the role that Kyndryl played in accelerating the project. He explains, "When migrating to SAP ERP infrastructure, it is common to apply a support package, but [Kyndryl] had already applied the support package as part of the SAP Basis operation service. Because we could treat the move to the Tokyo data center as a pure migration, we were able to complete it in a short period of time."

Mr. Hamada also praised the efforts of the Kyndryl Japan team, which oversaw the progress of the project and ensured that there were no gaps in the collaboration between the various companies and organizations involved. He also reflected that the Kyndryl team helped to make sure that the implementation ran smoothly.

"Because of the preventive measures [Kyndryl] has taken, we have not experienced any issues with our SAP applications since the migration. If something does happen in the future, [Kyndryl] will assemble a team to solve the issue and respond promptly in cooperation with us."

Mr. Kentaro Hamada
Manager of the Information Systems Department, Corporate Planning Division, TOA Corporation.

Providing an environment for digitization and improved SAP application performance

After migrating to Enterprise Application Management for SAP Solutions on IBM Cloud hosted in IBM's Tokyo data center, TOA was able to establish a stable, standardized global management system and reduce the burden of IT system administration at each of the company's regional sites.

Mr. Hamada continues, "Because of the preventive measures [Kyndryl] has taken, we have not experienced any issues with our SAP applications since the migration. If something does happen in the future, [Kyndryl] will assemble a team to solve the issue and respond promptly in cooperation with us. Because of this, we no longer need to handle IT maintenance activities ourselves."

Looking ahead, TOA will continue to work on the development of customer and user portals as well as creating a remote maintenance system.

The company is also considering migrating its consolidated accounting system and several other systems, which are currently being operated on-premises, to the cloud when its current infrastructure needs to be renewed.

Mr. Ueda concludes, "We will continue to rely on [Kyndryl's] strong reputation and global presence. As we continue to meet the diverse needs of our clients around the world with our unique products and services, we will continue to rely on [Kyndryl's] to support our activities."

kyndryl

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vital systems that power human progress.