



Hybrid integration for data-driven insights:

Grant Thornton Accelerates Client Service Delivery, Establishes Digital Workspace



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Ray Bernier
Senior Director of Enterprise Architecture
Grant Thornton

Goals	Solution	Results
Transform more customer and financial data faster to enhance accounting, audit, and tax practices while enabling technology-driven advisory services	Use Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services to bring together hybrid data from on-premises and cloud applications for analysis	Improves business decision-making, financial analytics, and client services with faster access to needed data
Integrate data from new cloud-based decision-making, financial analytics, and client services applications without spending time developing and maintaining integrations	Deliver accessible, trusted, and secure customer and financial data from most common data sources using Informatica Cloud Data Integration	Reduces the data integration development and maintenance lifecycle by 50%
Improve visibility into the profitability of client engagements for better resource management	Centralize data from all sources related to client services for more informed decision-making	Allows business managers to quickly measure the profitability of client engagements and adjust resources on the fly
Improve employee efficiency by digitally centralizing all employee information, public and private	Establish a digital workspace – essentially a “one-stop-shop” – a digital window for and into the employee	The employee portal is currently able to support 10,000 US employees with a future plan for supporting all employees with this single workspace

Business Requirements:

- Integrate a huge volume of financial reports
- Support an increasingly cloud-focused strategy
- Scale smoothly as data sources increase
- Establish a digital workspace for employees

About Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton LLP is the U.S. member firm of Grant Thornton International, one of the world's leading organizations of independent audit, tax, and advisory firms. Grant Thornton works with a broad range of publicly and privately held companies, government agencies, financial institutions, and civic and religious organizations.

For accounting, audit, tax, and financial advisory firms, being able to perform data analytics regardless of data source is crucial to optimizing operations. This is especially true at Grant Thornton, the sixth-largest such organization in the United States. Grant Thornton's vision is to provide the most innovative, highest quality services in its industry, empowering dynamic organizations in a variety of markets. To achieve this, Grant Thornton needed to transform customer and financial data, more quickly, from more sources into usable information that can be used for intelligent decision-making.

Grant Thornton generates a huge volume of financial reports such as time, billing, and expense activity, profit and loss statements, and net revenue reports. However, by the time data was available to the business, it was often too old to be of use for decision-making. A fragmented portfolio of data integration platforms led to a web of different data movement combinations, which increased costs, impacted data quality, and delayed time-sensitive integration.

To accelerate the pace of customer service delivery, Grant Thornton wanted a trusted data integration provider that it could partner with to help its clients access and manage data, balance business risk, and achieve their technology goals. The company also wanted to establish a single, streamlined client engagement management model so it could better measure the profitability of client engagements across its audit, tax, and advisory businesses.

"Our strategy is not just to be cloud ready, but to integrate new cloud solutions," says Ray Bernier, Senior Director of Enterprise Architecture at Grant Thornton. "There's a lot more technology out there that's playing a part in how our customers do business and therefore how we service them. Our advisory division does a lot of work with new technology and services related to that. As that changes in the industry, it changes for us."

Powering technology-driven services

To offer more intelligent, data-driven services on a large scale, Grant Thornton looked for an Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) solution that could handle the massive proliferation of data volumes and sources, as well as support the ever-increasing number of cloud solutions that the business wants to use. To quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively integrate data from legacy, on-premises data sources as well as new cloud applications, Grant Thornton chose Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services (IICS).

"We have a long history with Informatica PowerCenter, and Informatica has always been a trusted partner for data integration and management," says Bernier. "As we moved into the world of cloud and hybrid data integration, we not only liked the Informatica product set, but also felt that the company's philosophy was sound in terms of how they see the future of data management."





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A better view of information assets

To simplify data synchronization and mappings, Grant Thornton uses Informatica Cloud Data Integration, a service within IICS, which offers prebuilt connectors for hundreds of cloud, on-premises, mobile, and social data sources.

"We're working with a lot of different cloud vendors, largely SaaS and PaaS providers," says Bernier. "Informatica makes it very easy to integrate the data, even though it's coming from different providers. As we continue our transformation from a traditional data center-based architecture to incorporate more cloud solutions, Informatica is helping us be more agile, both within and outside of our data center."

With Informatica Cloud Data Integration, Grant Thornton can better leverage its information assets, whether they reside on-premises or in the cloud. Faster access to needed data helps the company improve business decision-making, financial analytics, and client services.

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Grant Thornton's data integration development and maintenance lifecycle has been reduced by 50 percent, enabling the company to make insightful, fast, consistent, and compliant decisions. Client services managers can quickly measure the profitability of each client engagement, allowing resources allocated to a project to be adjusted on the fly if needed. Grant Thornton also benefits from responsive and knowledgeable product support, helping to keep timely and trusted data available to business users and clients.

"We've worked with Informatica for years, and we've come to expect a high level of quality for both products and support," says Bernier. "There's also a large network of services partners that specialize in Informatica solutions, so we have a lot of options."

"One-stop-shop" employee digital workspace

Grant Thornton has a firmwide digital workspace and intranet based on the Microsoft Office 365 platform that provides collaboration and personalized services for its employees. This is a foundational component of the firm's enterprise digital innovation initiative. The digital workspace includes a customized employee profile that allows users to establish their "public" virtual identities within the organization as well as manage a private dashboard showcasing skills, resumes, education, benefits, travel itineraries, expenses, vacation balances, performance metrics, and more. By integrating with various core systems such as Concur for travel and Chrome River/BMO for expenses, this digital workspace is essentially a "one-stop-shop" – a digital window for and into the employee. Grant Thornton is integrating with these systems through API's that are developed using Informatica Cloud Application Integration (CAI) service.



Inside The Solution:

- Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services
 - Informatica Cloud Data Integration
 - Informatica Cloud Integration Hub
 - Informatica Cloud Application Integration
 - Informatica API Management
- Informatica PowerCenter

"Using Cloud Integration Hub, Grant Thornton can synchronize data across traditional, on-premises applications as well as the newer cloud application, and handle the challenges of data proliferation across the organization due to volume of data and growing numbers of data sources, and data consuming products that require the data in a variety of schedules and latencies," says Raj Khot, Associate Director of Enterprise Architecture at Grant Thornton.

"The employee portal pulls the data from Informatica's Cloud Integration Hub (CIH) via an API which then connects to those various data sources," says Khot. "There are over 10 APIs that have been developed, using Informatica's Cloud Application Integration (CAI) service, such as Get_Worker, Get_Skills, Get_Resume, Get_Travel_Summary, Get_Expense etc. These are being used for about 10,000 Grant Thornton US employees, driving over 100,000 API calls per day. Grant Thornton is using Informatica's API Management and API Gateway in conjunction with Azure API Management to manage these APIs. Being able to track API calls, monitor error and security reports, and get insights on API usage is important and included in Informatica API Management."

Focusing on what's important

With Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services, Grant Thornton no longer needs to worry about data integration. Instead of developing, maintaining, and patching integrations, the company can focus on using data analytics to offer some of the best services in its industry.

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