



# COX NEWSPAPERS

## SAP® RAMP-UP SPEEDS SAP FOR MEDIA UPGRADE

### QUICK FACTS

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**Kelly Webster**, Director of IT, Cox Newspapers

#### Company

- Name: Cox Newspapers
- Headquarters location: Atlanta, Georgia
- Industry: Media
- Products and services: 17 daily and 27 nondaily newspapers, direct-mail businesses, and classified advertising distribution
- Revenue: US\$1.4 billion
- Employees: 15,000
- Web site: [www.coxnewspapers.com](http://www.coxnewspapers.com)
- Implementation partner: SAP® Consulting

#### Challenges and Opportunities

- Obtain functionality available in new version of standard software
- Enhance supportability
- Help SAP better understand North American newspaper needs

#### Objectives

- Upgrade to standard SAP software
- Obtain software as soon as possible, ahead of general release
- Secure access to SAP development experts worldwide
- Assure close attention from SAP senior management

#### SAP Solutions and Services

- SAP for Media solution portfolio
- SAP Ramp-Up program
- SAP Active Global Support organization
- SAP Customer Competence Center location

#### Implementation Highlights

- Employed team of Cox Newspapers business and IT personnel and SAP media experts working closely together
- Called on expertise from SAP developers throughout the world
- Received close attention and immediate responses from SAP senior executives
- Went live on schedule, saving 4–6 months thanks to SAP Ramp-Up
- Achieved cutover with no downtime for core applications

#### Why SAP

- Early availability of new software release and training materials
- Access to wide variety of developers and executives on a high-priority basis
- Extensive knowledge transfer materials
- Commitment to better understand and fulfill the needs of the North American newspaper industry

#### Benefits

- Software now completely standard and highly supportable
- Substantial improvement in match between SAP software and North American newspaper industry needs
- Maintenance costs lowered by US\$2 million per year for several years

#### Existing Environment

Earlier version of SAP for Media solutions with substantial custom code

#### Third-Party Integration

- Database: Oracle
- Hardware: Hewlett-Packard
- Operating system: UNIX



Cox Newspapers upgraded its SAP for Media solutions to take advantage of new standard software with functionality equivalent to that which SAP had previously custom-developed for Cox Newspapers' needs. SAP® Consulting performed the upgrade using the SAP Ramp-Up program, which provided exclusive early access to the new release. The program also provided such close attention to the project from SAP management and developers that Cox Newspapers saved between four and six months on the implementation. Now Cox Newspapers enjoys substantially smoother operations, software that matches the needs of the North American newspaper industry better than ever, millions of dollars in annual savings, and full supportability.

### **SAP and Cox Newspapers Partner to Meet North American Newspaper Needs**

One of the top U.S. newspaper companies, Cox Newspapers publishes 17 daily and 27 nondaily newspapers

Several years ago, Cox Newspapers became one of the first North American news publishers to adopt SAP for Media solutions. Since the North American newspaper industry has many unique requirements, SAP partnered with Cox Newspapers to

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throughout the nation. Flagship papers include the company's hometown *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Austin American-Statesman*, the *Dayton Daily News*, and *The Palm Beach Post*.

develop standard functionality leveraging custom code developed at Cox Newspapers and Morris Communications, which was later called the North American extension to SAP for Media.

For example, home delivery is much more prevalent in North America than elsewhere, which called for circulation data volumes that are far greater than in the standard software, new financials functionality, and many other changes.

### **Cox Newspapers Receives Exclusive Early Access and Priority Attention**

When developing the next standard version of SAP for Media, to better serve the requirements of all North American newspapers, Cox Newspapers approached SAP well before the planned release date with a proposal to upgrade to the latest North American extension software.

“We were very eager to begin taking advantage of the standard functionality in the new version as soon as possible,” says Kelly Webster, director of IT for Cox Newspapers. “But we knew that as its first North American user, the implementation would be far from routine, and we'd need access to the SAP development organization. Through SAP Ramp-Up, which provided early access to the release along with priority attention from SAP developers and executives around the world, we addressed both needs – and became the first newspaper to use the latest solution in our industry.”

Under SAP Ramp-Up, SAP provided Cox Newspapers with a team of four media industry experts, led by a certified SAP Ramp-Up coach from SAP Consulting, who worked on-site for the six-month



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upgrade. On many occasions, Cox Newspapers suggested ways to better match the software with North American needs, and the team quickly identified the right people in the SAP development organization to implement these changes – and they responded just as quickly. “Among the huge benefits of SAP Ramp-Up were the visibility it gave us and the attention we received from the people we needed, wherever they were in the global SAP organization,” says Webster. “We headed off

smooth, with no downtime for key operations. Furthermore, since the SAP Consulting media experts stayed on to help the SAP support team and continue the learning experience, SAP was able to follow with another release shortly afterward that made even more improvements. The team remains intact today and continues to identify enhancements that help SAP for Media to serve the needs of Cox Newspapers and other North American newspapers more fully.

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“SAP Ramp-Up provides access to massive amounts of resources around the world with hundreds and hundreds of specialists, all available on a high-priority basis,” Webster says in conclusion. “We are recouping the up-front investment for the software very quickly. Our savings in maintenance costs alone are US\$2 million a year, and most importantly we now have software that works right for running our kind of newspaper.”

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many problems that would have stretched out the implementation if we had not partnered with SAP Ramp-Up, and we benefited from better software that meets our needs.”

### **SAP Ramp-Up Accelerates Implementation, Saves Cox Newspapers Four to Six Months**

The team employed the ASAP methodology to streamline implementation and conducted end-to-end user training using the extensive training aids and documentation that the SAP Ramp-Up program provided. Cox Newspapers credits the sudden drop in call center activity that followed go-live to the thoroughness of this training. Cutover was

“SAP Ramp-Up gave us a head start with the new application that we wouldn’t have had otherwise, and saved us four to six months easily. Without it, we never would have gone live on schedule,” says Webster. “Our SAP Ramp-Up coach was here on-site full-time, making sure we received priority attention within the whole SAP organization to cover all our needs.”

### **Cox Newspapers Improves Operations, Saves Millions, Attains Full Supportability**

“SAP Ramp-Up was a big win for Cox Newspapers,” says Webster. “It was also a win for other newspapers in North America, who are now in

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