



#### Overview

**Country or Region:** Finland  
**Industry:** Retail

#### Customer Profile

Wihuri is the largest privately owned retailer in Finland and one of the five largest in the country. It operates 200 stores, mostly in the grocery and convenience sectors.

#### Business Situation

Wihuri ran a mission-critical SAP Retail installation on an Oracle database that was increasingly complex to manage. Performance and availability were also concerns.

#### Solution

Wihuri selected Microsoft, REALTECH, and Capgemini to migrate its SAP Retail Oracle database infrastructure to Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2000.

#### Benefits

- n Simplified database management.
- n Improved availability promotes innovation.
- n Reduced cost of ownership drives success.
- n Roadmap for future SAP deployments.
- n Enhanced decision making.

## High-Performance Database Helps Employees Drive Efficiency and Reduce Administration

“Because it’s trouble-free and much easier to manage, SQL Server has put our technical support staff back in control.”

*Annaliisa Aarnio-Wihuri, Management Information Systems Director, Wihuri*

Wihuri, one of Finland’s largest retailers, historically managed its corporate data using SAP Retail systems running on a large, 2.4 terabyte Oracle database. This was the largest SAP/Oracle installation in Scandinavia. For users, the database was complex to manage, negatively impacting on personal productivity. The solution was also storage-intensive, resulting in higher operating costs for the company. To address these issues, Wihuri migrated its database to Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2000 in just two days. As a result of the project, administrators have simplified IT management requirements and streamlined operational processes. The superior availability and performance of the new database means employees can now enhance their personal productivity and improve relationships with customers.



## Situation

Wihuri is one of the largest privately owned retailers in Finland. The store operates more than 200 fully and independently owned retail stores in Finland and is the country's second largest wholesaler with more than 30,000 customers. It has approximately 6,500 employees working in a number of different brands, mostly focused in the grocery and convenience retail markets. Wihuri net sales exceed U.S.\$2 billion a year.

For stores such as Wihuri, core tasks such as maintaining stock levels and replenishment depend on the availability of current, accurate business data. Increasingly, these processes are carried out using centrally managed IT systems and applications. To enhance the value of business data, retailers need to analyse sales and performance information by category, brand, store, aisle, and individual stock item. The ability to achieve this depends on capturing and managing huge quantities of data using sophisticated database technology and analytical software.

To support constant replenishment and restocking among the company's retail brands, Wihuri historically operated two SAP retail systems, installed and supported by Capgemini. One, the mySAP system, used a Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2000 database, while the other ran on database technology from Oracle. Both SAP systems ran Microsoft operating systems. With the demands of year round, 24-hour shopping, both systems were under intense pressure to maintain high availability and constant performance.

Wihuri's SAP Retail Oracle platform was the largest SAP Retail Oracle database in Scandinavia running on a Microsoft operating system. Around 200 stores fed up to 2 million transactions a day into the system. The database running under SAP Retail 4.6B was 2.4 terabytes in volume, and

expected to grow to more than 4 terabytes within the next two years.

For technical employees at Wihuri, the Oracle database system was too complex and time-consuming to maintain. In addition, it could no longer ensure the high levels of performance and storage required across the business. Annaliisa Aarnio-Wihuri, Management Information Systems Director, Wihuri, says: "This is a business-critical application. The system has to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is no room for error, but our technical support staff found the Oracle system too difficult to manage. It was also imposing a heavy load on our storage systems, and we needed to deploy a new solution that would reduce our storage and processor overheads."

Technical staff began the search for a solution that could help them streamline operations, maximise the efficiency of stocking processes, and enhance customer relationships. The ability to optimise the latest Microsoft Windows® operating systems and hardware, and support integration with additional Windows-based enterprise services, was critical. Aarnio-Wihuri says: "We were already running one of our SAP applications on SQL Server 2000, so we knew its potential and its ease of use. We wanted to upgrade our hardware base to the latest 64-bit systems, and we wanted a database that would give us the best ratios of price to performance and the lowest possible total cost of ownership. That's why we chose to roll out SQL Server 2000 across the store."

## Solution

Wihuri selected Microsoft, Capgemini, and REALTECH to support the migration from Oracle to Microsoft SQL Server. Capgemini is a leading SAP outsourcing specialist that manages Wihuri's technology infrastructure, including its retail systems. REALTECH, an IT

consulting firm, provides the company with advice on the design, implementation, and efficient operation of its SAP environments. Microsoft and SAP have been strategic partners since 1993 and Microsoft SQL Server 2000 supports 53 per cent of all current SAP installations and 63 per cent of new SAP deployments.

Wihuri faced significant challenges resulting from the scale and complexity of the migration. In addition, the new system had to be rolled out during the 48-hour Easter break, the only two days of the year that Wihuri stores are closed for business. Hinrich Mielke, Consulting Manager at REALTECH, says: "The time available to us for the database migration was very tight. Normally, we would look for a longer time window to migrate a 2.5 terabyte mission-critical system, but there was no more time available. If we hadn't got the migration right first time, the entire project would have been put back to Easter next year. Our experience, our excellent relationship with Microsoft, and the expertise of the SAP database group ensured ultimate success for the deployment."

Aarnio-Wihuri says: "Microsoft handled all the project management during the migration, and it planned carefully to make sure that the migration and database rollout went smoothly. In the event, the combination of Microsoft's project management and REALTECH's technical expertise were excellent. It all went flawlessly."

The migration was carried out using SAP migration tools and practices. The close working relationship between Microsoft, REALTECH, and SAP helped the three companies work on the technical blueprints for the migration. The migration included architecture design, hardware and software deployment, and the migration of the SAP Retail Oracle databases to SQL Server 2000.

Other supporting SAP systems, such as development and testing and quality assurance, were rolled out by REALTECH.

Keijo Kiviniitty, Practise Leader, Capgemini Finland, says: "This was a very large, complex migration that was performed in a very short time. Throughout the planning phase, Microsoft, Capgemini, and REALTECH worked very closely together to iron out all the technical details. Because we had such a limited window for migration, there was extensive planning and preparation, including testing, to ensure performance and availability goals would be met. Stress and regression analysis was also carried out to ensure that there would be no surprises during the migration. As a result of this planning, and the close collaboration between Microsoft and Capgemini, Microsoft was able to develop a migration plan that was much faster than normal. When we came to the migration everything went very smoothly."

## Benefits

By implementing SQL Server 2000, Wihuri is helping its employees increase individual productivity, understand business trends, streamline business processes, and enhance relationships with store customers. With simplified management and enterprise-class performance, technical employees are working more effectively, and sales staff can ensure an excellent shopping experience for consumers time after time.

### Simplified Database Management for Technical Employees

Wihuri Employees have enhanced operations by eliminating the complexity associated with managing their enterprise database platform. SQL Server 2000 has also greatly simplified the management of the strategic SAP installation and reduced training requirements for database administrators,

allowing new members of staff to contribute to the company's success immediately.

Aarnio-Wihuri says: "Personnel now have a less complex environment that can be managed from a single point of control. This brings a real benefit for us in the way we use our database support staff. Before, people were tied up with a system that demanded continual intervention and was complex to operate. Because it's trouble-free and much easier to manage, SQL Server has put our technical support staff back in control. Now, they have time to optimise the system and extend its functionality, helping us to enhance our business relationships. It's no longer a struggle to ensure availability, and that translates into a better, continuously improving service for our stores, retail managers, and planners."

#### Enhanced Performance and Reduced Total Cost of Ownership

With the ability to take full advantage of the latest high performance 64-bit hardware and greater efficiency in both processor and storage utilisation, SQL Server is delivering significant cost savings at Wihuri. Aarnio-Wihuri says: "Our previous database platform imposed a heavy overhead on both processing and storage devices. This was never a good recipe for smooth management or the kind of swift transaction response that our stores require, especially at the busiest times. Because it's trouble-free and much easier to manage, SQL Server has put our technical support staff back in control."

SAP Oracle database platforms can impose significant storage demands. Wihuri's migration from Oracle to SQL Server 2000 has helped to reduce the size of the company's production database and the number of storage devices required. Aarnio-Wihuri says: "With the next significant SAP upgrade, to ERP 2005, our old Oracle

database would have needed to double in size in just two years. That really imposes a heavy overhead in storage devices, storage processors and the network. By migrating to SQL Server 2000, we have significantly reduced the size of our database."

#### Better Integration Promotes Innovation Across the Business

Based on the most modern database technology, SQL Server is helping Wihuri employees integrate retail data across the business. By extending key sales and performance data to retail managers and planners, the company is enhancing the strategic decision-making process.

Aarnio-Wihuri says: "Now, core production data from stores is fed into sophisticated desktop analysis tools and visualisation software and made available to managers in a user-friendly way. By slicing and dicing production data from stores, and finding fresh ways to understand it, we are enhancing service levels for our customers in a competitive market, increasing our capability to make the best business decisions, and driving our overall competitive advantage."

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## Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

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## Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2000

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