



ISSUE 2

# Absoft Bi-Annual Newsletter

An insight into Absoft, SAP industry  
news and hot topics

# HELLO & WELCOME



**H**i and welcome to the Absoft customer newsletter.

Thank you all for your fantastic feedback from our first edition of the Absoft newsletter back in December.

Six busy months have passed, and we are back for Edition II with even more announcements and exciting developments to our ever evolving service lines.

In Issue II of our bi-annual newsletter we've chosen to focus on two main themes:

- Absoft's perspectives on some of the "hot topics" out there in the business and SAP world including GDPR, S/4HANA Business Cases, Cloud and HR & Payroll Compliance

- Updates and information about Absoft as a company. We have included exclusive updates from our recent annual company day, providing you with some insight into our people and some of the activities we involve ourselves in when we are not being SAP consultants.

In a similar vein, we will introduce you to some of the new faces in Absoft, and detail a day in the life of one of our consultants.

Since our last edition we are very proud to announce that Absoft have been accredited as a Microsoft Silver Partner for our SAP on Azure Cloud Services, one of only a few consultancies within the UK to obtain this highly sought after partnership.

With a relationship that backs over 20 years we are uniquely positioned to explain why Microsoft Azure provides the most comprehensive platform for the cloud migration of SAP systems. I hope that our experience comes through and you find the articles, including our thoughts on the recent SAP on Azure Microsoft Tour, thought provoking and useful.

I hope you all enjoy this edition just as much as the first and before I sign off, I want to take this opportunity to thank you once again for choosing to engage Absoft in helping you with your SAP needs.

***Don Valentine,***  
*Commercial Director*

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# A WARM WELCOME TO THE TEAM



## Steve McCann

Steve joined the Absoft sales team in January 2019 and now helps SMEs in Manufacturing realise their businesses' full potential by implementing Absoft Adima.

Coming from a background of investment consultancy (3 years) and business development for specialised construction products (6 years) Steve has a strong customer focused approach.

Outside of work he enjoys scuba diving, chess, rugby and football.

# NEW ABSOFT WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT

As you know Absoft has been around for almost 30 years during which our employees have done a tremendous job building a knowledge base, creating and sharing updates, and educational content from the world of SAP.

However, while having numerous topics covered for each service line, industry, client, specific business cases, particular SAP issues, general industry news and updates is fantastic (and in your words – very helpful) - we are also aware that it is quite difficult to find a lot of those resources on our current website.

Our new website will allow you to easily navigate through the Absoft knowledge base, blog posts, whitepapers, guides and case studies and find what you need in seconds.

We value your feedback and are making a lot of changes to make your use of our website more efficient and enjoyable.

Therefore, we would like to invite you to be part of this journey! Prior to entering the last stage of the new website build in several months we will invite you to take a short survey and share your views, so keep your eyes peeled!

[--> To keep up to date with the latest developments of the new Absoft website please visit our news page!](#)

# ABSOFT COMPANY DAY RECAP

With another whirlwind and successful financial year passing by it was time for us to host the annual Absoft Company Day at the end of May!

Hosted at Lochter Activity Centre in Oldmeldrum this year and in true Absoft tradition the day began with the board of Directors presenting a recap of the past year and future plans for growth and innovation from all areas of the business. There was also an update from the Charities Committee which you can read about later in the newsletter.

After the presentations the fun really began! Despite the rainy weather all the Absoft staff were put into teams to compete in various outdoor activities including archery, ziplining and go-karting.

The day was then finished with a delicious BBQ and rewards for both the best team of the day and the best individuals from each activity. Congratulations to Team 1 as the overall winning team for the day, Teresa Hainey as top climber and Don Valentine for both top archer and winning 1st place in the go-karting challenge!



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CONSULTANT

An insight into the people behind SAP.

In this edition we will be speaking to Absoft Senior HCM Consultant Teresa Hailey

## Hi Teresa can you please tell me a little bit about your career background?

I first worked for Absoft as a student on my University work placement year in 2004. I really enjoyed it and was delighted to be offered a permanent position after my final year at University. I've been here ever since!

## Since starting your graduate programme what is your current role and history with Absoft?

I started as a trainee HCM Consultant, progressing to a Senior Consultant about 7 years ago. Throughout the years I have been based at customer sites across the UK working on HCM implementation projects and now work predominately in the Support Team in the Aberdeen office and on optimisation and enhancement projects. I can also be based at local client sites from time to time.

## What is a typical work day for you?

Currently, I spend my days communicating with a varied range of clients whom we support. Every day is different dealing with various HR and Payroll queries and implementing enhancements to our customer SAP HCM Solutions.



## What would you say has been your career highlight working with Absoft so far?

It's difficult to choose just one but I think the highlight was becoming a Senior Consultant as I worked really hard to get there. #

I also enjoyed when I travelled quite regularly whilst working on implementations across the UK and visiting Norway.

There is a real sense of achievement when each implementation or project goes live.

## Do you have advice for anyone looking to work within SAP?

The best way to learn is to get thrown in at the deep end and get hands-on experience early on in your career. There really are no training courses to teach you how to be an SAP Consultant, it is all about learning from doing.

## What is the best thing about working with Absoft?

Working for a smaller organisation means that you know all of your colleagues and customers really well. I think there is also more opportunity to work across lots of areas of SAP and get involved in the whole process of delivering SAP solutions.

## If you could describe your job role in three words what would they be?

Learning every day

## What are your aspirations for the future?

To continue to develop my SAP expertise, keeping abreast of advances in technology and working with new and improved SAP solutions.

## What do you like to do outside of work?

I have two little girls who keep me very busy! My weekends are filled with play dates and kids birthday parties but when I do get some 'me-time' I like to attend music gigs and enjoy some nice food and cocktails with my friends!

[--> For more information on our people and vacancies please visit our careers page here.](#)

Absoft is a dynamic, forward thinking, growth-orientated SAP consultancy, with a recruitment philosophy to match. We are proud of our first-class reputation both as an employer and as a provider of excellent services to our clients.





# GDPR ONE YEAR ON

Take a look at the latest article from Absoft Account Executive Jennifer Brown for the main take-aways Absoft have learned over the last year about the best ways to ensure GDPR compliance in SAP.



**H**appy Birthday to GDPR! It has been 1 year since the General Data Protection Regulation was brought into EU law, bringing with it the biggest shake up to data autonomy since the 1990s. It has been a huge hot topic across the tech space this year and I'm sure at times it has felt like we can't escape it! Absoft have learned a lot and each project we have undertaken has added to this knowledge, which we would like to share with you. So, what are the main take-aways we have learned over the last year about the best ways to ensure GDPR compliance in your SAP system?

**Obfuscation** - A lot of the time in SAP it is not possible to simply delete data from your system therefore you have to find ways around this. We have worked with a number of customers this year to anonymise data in a way that works for them.

**Retention** - Managing data to comply with GDPR is not a one-off exercise - it is a constant requirement. Therefore, companies should ensure that they have robust retention strategies for how they manage data in the system going forward. Once the retention rules are defined, jobs can be set up to run in your system to ensure that any data which falls out of the retention period is obfuscated or deleted.

**The Law (and Fines!) Applies to Everyone** - This may seem an obvious one, however we continue to come across SAP organisations who have buried their head in sand about GDPR law for their SAP data and who are keeping data in their system that they shouldn't be - please don't let yourself fall into this category!

At Absoft, we have worked with a variety of different customers and understand that each business is unique in their SAP use - that's why we offer SAP consulting tailored to your needs. Getting your SAP GDPR compliant may seem daunting, however taking a few steps to ensure that your data is compliant will pay off in the long run and will ensure you avoid any fines from the ICO. Absoft recommends undertaking an exercise to identify all the PII data in your SAP system that is to be anonymised.

[--> Click here to read Jeniffers full article for more key takeaways and what you should do next.](#)

# HR & PAYROLL COMPLIANCE

UK SAP Consultancy, Absoft, has announced a flying start to 2019 by securing £500,000 worth of contracts during Q4 2018.



**T**he ongoing contracts represent both new and repeat business for the software experts, with new clients including a multinational automotive company and British retail banking provider.

The recent contract wins reflect an increasing demand for the company's expertise in supporting and optimising UK HR and payroll processes.

Commenting on the recent successes, Don Valentine, Absoft's Commercial Director, said:

"Increasing legislative reporting demands such as Real Time Information, Pension Auto-Enrolment, Gender Pay Reporting and [GDPR Compliance Heatmaps](#) have driven an imperative for companies to establish support relationships with consultancies who are experts in keeping their systems compliant with current and future statutory requirements.

"Companies whose systems are supported by overseas support centres are discovering that they lack the UK-specific expertise in these critical compliance related areas and that's when they come to Absoft for help, and we are delighted that this is reflected in these recent contract awards."

As GDPR and data protection continue to hit the headlines, Absoft's expertise in these areas has also led to additional project-oriented contract wins from both the commercial and public sector.

The company's portfolio of data management solutions has struck a chord with organisations increasingly conscious of the need to manage and secure the sensitive personal data of employees and customers. Elements of this portfolio have led to a contract award from an international mobile communications giant, helping them to manage and secure the data of tens of thousands of their customers.

[--> Are you worried your organisation might not be fully compliant? Contact Absoft for a chat or to book a Compliance Health Check.](#)



# 2019 EVENTS OVERVIEW



## UKISUG Connect 01/12/2019 - 03/12/2019

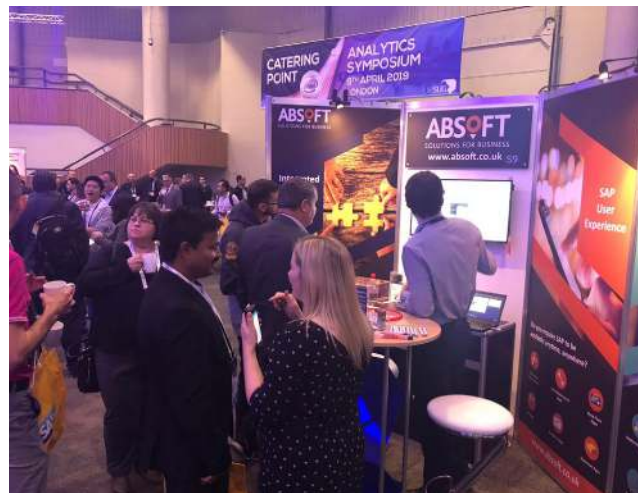
We are very pleased to announce that Absoft will once again be exhibiting at the UK & Ireland SAP User Group Connect taking place in December this year.

We will be exhibiting on stand **S11** over the course of the three days and bringing back our new and improved in-stand presentations! Similar to last year's event topics will vary and presentations will be delivered by our SAP experts throughout each of the three days so that everyone has a chance to view.

In true Absoft tradition we will also be giving away various prizes at our stand throughout the event

We will also be hosting a special speaker presentation after the huge success of last years in conjunction with Absoft customer Lyons Seafood. Details will be revealed shortly so keep your eyes peeled!

[--> Click here to keep up to date with the latest details and Absoft announcements for UKISUG!](#)



## Your SAP In The Azure Cloud 27/02/2019 - Online Webinar

Absoft hosted a webinar alongside Microsoft through the UK & Ireland SAP User Group back in February.

Hosted by Absoft Senior Technical Consultant Robert MacDonald, the webinar focused on the theme of how to unlock the savings and efficiencies of using Azure to run your SAP landscape, including some key tips and tricks and lessons learned for project success.

The webinar was a huge success with some of the highest attendee rates in UKISUG history and praises from both attendees and Microsoft. Cloud Solutions Architect for Microsoft Pankaj Meshram said it was *"An outstanding webinar from Absoft for SAP on the Azure topic! 40+ attendees, some very interesting questions and terrific feedback from users."*

[--> Did you miss the webinar? Not to worry you can view the full recording here.](#)



## S/4HANA – The Technical Preparation of a Business Choice 22/05/2019 - Online Webinar

Absoft recently hosted a webinar to explore how customers can prepare for S/4HANA in the 2nd webinar as part of our UKISUG series.

Absoft presented in conjunction with customer Lyons Seafood on the preparation of a move. Absoft Senior Technical Consultant



IT Projects Manager for Lyons Seafood, Joe Slaughter and Absoft Senior Technical Consultant Robert McDonald showcased the approach Lyons Seafood took using SAP standard tools available to prepare for the project including the functional simplification list, custom code roadblocks and determining brownfield vs greenfield all using Lyons own internal team with support from Absoft as a partner.

[--> Did you miss the webinar? Not to worry you can view the full recording here.](#)





# FREE SAP TOOLS FOR YOU S/4HANA BUSINESS CASE

Absoft Senior Technical Consultant Robert MacDonald takes a look at the free tools and services SAP offer in

**S**AP S/4HANA is on the radar for most organisations and SAP teams are on a quest to find a business case that works for them, but how do you find the benefits that are relevant to a specific organisation?

SAP are offering free tools and services that create bespoke reports based on the actual usage of existing SAP software including:

The **Business Scenario Recommendations** (BSR) tool provides relevant information on the business benefits of SAP S/4HANA. You need to upload an extract of anonymised transaction code usage by following the instructions, with the entire process taking 15-45 minutes. The report is emailed back to you after around a week.

Whilst the Business Scenario Recommendations tool is focused entirely on SAP S/4HANA, SAP also offer **SAP Innovation and Optimization Pathfinder** for SAP ERP and SAP Innovation and Optimization Pathfinder for Lines of Business reports that cover all of SAP's innovation up to an including SAP S/4HANA.

The SAP Innovation and Optimization Pathfinder may uncover benefits in stepping-stone projects as well as contributing items to the SAP S/4HANA business case. It turns up smaller projects that could prove the concept of SAP Fiori or SAP HANA in a business before the bigger investment in S/4HANA is made.

The **SAP Readiness Check** for SAP S/4HANA is helpful to understand the cost side of the business case. It offers a cloud-based dashboard showing relevant information that could affect SAP S/4HANA conversion of your existing system. The setup is likely to take less than a day but it can be much longer if the prerequisites are not met.

No automated report or free service will produce the completed business case, but the tools described help to focus on the relevant information that could be included and help SAP teams to convey those benefits to their business users to understand the potential impact on that specific organisation. Typical S/4HANA business cases are made up of a number of smaller benefits rather than a single killer item.

[--> Click here to read the full blog and for more of Absoft's expert insights to help you with your business case.](#)



# UNLOCKING THE VALUE IN CLOUD MIGRATION

Is your business moving to the cloud? If you are, which is your cloud of choice? ISS Sales Manager, Eilidh Clarkson tackles the million dollar question.

**O**ne sentence in and already the cloud is shrouded in confusion, and not a little mystery. And yet it has become a part of our everyday lexicon – whether that's discussing where we've saved the photos from our mobile phones, to why a move to the cloud is spearheading your company's five-year efficiency strategy.

It's the latter that I'm most interested in; you cannot turn around in business today without someone asking if you're using the cloud yet – and are you reaping the huge financial benefits associated with that move?

However, the "cloud" is such a buzz word that it can be hard not to feel the urge to adopt a "cloud first strategy"; in other words, migration of your IT systems into the cloud, in order to unlock operational and cost efficiencies. But what are those efficiencies? What do you need the cloud to achieve for you? And how much effort is required, not only to make the migration, but to then (crucially) ensure that the cloud is providing you with the results you envisaged.

The perceived risk of a cloud migration in this instance can appear to far outweigh the benefits. But to what extent do we really understand the benefits, in order to make that decision?

• **Security** - a cloud-based system provides options of regular updates and access to emerging technology

• **Flexibility** - the cloud allows you to plan for what you need today and not what you 'might' need in 3-5 years' time, providing you with the flexibility to scale up (or down) as required

• **Clarity** - the cloud offers constant access to real time analytics

• **Cost** - the received wisdom is that a "lift and shift" migration into the cloud will be instantly cost-effective, relieving your organisation of aging and failing hardware that requires constant maintenance

This prepared approach to cloud migration has resulted in startling financial efficiencies for one of my clients. Based within the public sector, they reported a reduction of server hosts by 40% through landscape rationalisation, ultimately leading to a reduction of 50% in cloud hosting costs.

[--> Does your 2019 IT strategy include moving to the Cloud? Contact Absoft to help map out your journey.](#)



# CHARITIES COMMITTEE 2019 RECAP



Absoft's Charities Committee have had another great year, having donated to 14 charities and great causes across Aberdeen and the north of Scotland.

The committee is made up of Absoft staff from across the business and each year they are given a proportion of the company revenue to donate to local causes that are in need of support.

Many of the charity suggestions come from our own staff who put forward causes that matter to them.

Some of the charities and initiatives that were donated to this year include:

- **Befriend a Child** - assistance with transport costs for summer playscheme
- **The Sue Ryder Dee House Appeal** - donation towards Dee House fundraising total
- **Aberdeen Cyrenians** - winter donation from Absoft's annual bake off
- **Mental Health Aberdeen** - donation after staff suggestion to keep services going across Aberdeen
- **CLAN** - raffle prize donation for Race Night
- **The Bread Maker** - donation to help keep services going in Aberdeen

- **Inchgarth Youth Group** - donation to help keep the club open in Garthdee
- **Willows Animal Sanctuary** - donation to assist with winter resources

No request is too small for us to consider. The committee also supported 4 local schools with fundraising efforts.

These included Crombie Primary School who were fundraising for new nursery equipment, Bridge of Don Academy as part of their summer festival and Aberdeen Grammar School which Absoft sponsored for being in the National Finals of the F1 STEM competition.

As an ongoing initiative, the committee decided to dedicate a portion of this year's funds to purchase a grove of trees in the Caledonian Forest in the Scottish Highlands.



We have planted 57 trees in the Caledonian Forest through the Trees for Life charity – one for each member of staff.

This is to offset Absoft's carbon emissions and to improve our environmental impact, and the committee will continue to add trees to the grove each year.

The committee look forward to starting another charitable year at Absoft and helping out more local causes.

[--> You can find out more about Absoft's charity initiatives and our Corporate Social Responsibility here!](#)





# MICROSOFT PARTNER UPDATES

An insight into what Absoft and Microsoft have been collaborating on these past few months since our recent Silver Partner accreditation.

Leading SAP® consultancy, Absoft, has recently announced it has become one of Microsoft's UK-based partners for its cloud computing platform, Microsoft Azure.

A major topic in recent years, cloud-based IT platforms have been proven to provide operational and financial efficiencies. However, migration to the cloud of a business-critical, enterprise resource planning (ERP) system – which can include control of financial accounting, HR, sales and distribution, material management and quality management – requires significant evaluation, planning and technical support.

With certified Azure consultants within its team, Absoft was approached by the technology giant to help educate and support companies across the UK who are looking to migrate their SAP® systems to their cloud-based platform.

Don Valentine, Commercial Director of Absoft, explains further:

"As the roll-out of SAP® S/4HANA - the latest generation software - gathers pace, businesses have the choice to adopt that software either on-premise or within the cloud; the benefits of choosing a cloud migration are significant.

Whilst mitigating the purchase and running costs of hardware, the cloud provides exceptional security, critical continuity of service during local power outages, and the flexibility to easily increase or amend ERP functionality as market conditions demand.

"Absoft's relationship with Microsoft reaches back over 20 years, with many of our clients existing Microsoft users."

"As experts in both SAP® and cloud migration, we are therefore uniquely positioned to explain why Microsoft Azure provides the most comprehensive platform for the cloud migration of SAP® systems."

[--> Click here to learn more about Absoft's SAP on Azure services and the certified MS Azure consultants within our team.](#)



# SAP ON AZURE TOUR RECAP

Check out Absoft Senior SAP Consultant, Ross Hamilton's key takeaways from this years SAP on Azure Tour in London and his thoughts on the SAP and Microsoft partnership.



After attending Microsoft's recent SAP on Azure tour in London, it was clear to see the partnership between the two companies is only going from strength to strength.

Microsoft have invested heavily into Azure infrastructure to support the latest SAP technologies and have announced collaborations to make data more accessible, and are empowering partners to make best use of both platforms to benefit their customers.

One of the big take-aways from the event, was the investment in technology from Microsoft, especially around HLI (HANA Large Instances). This enables up to 80 Intel CPU cores and up to 24 TB of memory – and we're expecting an announcement soon of even larger machines! HLI has snapshot capability as standard, for taking consistent backups of both the machine and the HANA database.

Even if HLI is not suitable for your landscape or organisation, there are still many reasons to use Azure for your SAP estate. Doing so brings security, scalability, enhanced analytics, monitoring, and easier management. The benefits to your business can be seen in savings on hardware cost, avoiding overprovisioned hardware due to right sizing, faster time to market, reduced cost of physical space, and a smaller team to manage.

Choosing a partner such as Absoft, who are both an SAP and Microsoft partner, means we have the knowledge and experience to apply these benefits, through understanding the distinct nuances for each technology to reap the largest benefits.

Azure allows both Microsoft and SAP to change the way DevOps are done in your organisation. Azure allows rapid sandboxing and you can ask you SAP partner about loaner licenses from SAP, meaning you can try out SAP products, to produce a Proof of Concept at little cost to see if these can produce real business benefits. BW/4HANA is a prime candidate for this!

SAP and Microsoft detailed their recent announcement of a joint partnership: the Open Data Initiative. Both SAP and Microsoft, together with Adobe, are collaborating on making data between their platforms more accessible.

[--> Click here to read Ross's full blog for other exciting announcements from the SAP on Azure Tour](#)







# ABSOFT

SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESS

**Absoft, SAP Partner and SAP Value-Added Re-Seller (VAR), has been specialising in SAP since 1991, uniquely combining business process and SAP expertise to deliver best practice solutions in implementation, development and support of SAP solutions.**

**In their words, our clients value our “flexibility, willingness to go the extra mile, full transparency, being proactive in suggesting and providing the right solution, not just overhead”**

# ABSOFT

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