

From Legacy to Innovation

The Automotive reverse greenfield

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Foreword By Jim Hamilton, Retired IT Executive

As a former IT executive in the automotive industry, I have had the privilege of helping to guide an organization through the complex and rewarding journey of digital transformation. In this book, we delve into the story of Falcally Automotive, a fictitious company that faced the daunting task of migrating from SAP ECC to SAP S/4HANA. Their story resonates deeply with my own experiences in leading similar initiatives.

This book highlights the myriad choices and challenges that arise for any company considering, or in the process of, migrating to S/4. From initial skepticism and budget constraints to moments of breakthrough and the eventual realization of a functioning S/4 system, this journey is marked by strategic decisionmaking, leadership under pressure, and an unwavering commitment to innovation.

The book captures the essence of Falcally journey, emphasizing the lessons learned, strategies employed, and outcomes achieved. It serves as a valuable guide for businesses embarking on their own migration path. More importantly, it is a testament to the resilience and ingenuity that companies must muster to stay competitive in the digital age.

This book is meant to spur thoughts into the reader and generate the right discussions within their organizations. It is not just about technology; it is about people, processes, and the drive to create a better future. May Falcally story inspire you to boldly embrace change, navigate the complexities of transformation, and emerge stronger and more agile on the other side.

A New Implementation Strategy: The Reverse Greenfield

Conversions to a new ERP system can be a complex and time-consuming process as you want to ensure that the data is migrated fully and precisely to prevent any disruptions. Since tools to monitor whether the project is on track are often nonexistent, project teams continue to struggle with gauging the time and costs associated with the project. As the planned implementation date nears, they wonder if the implementation will be postponed on account of some subsystems not working or integrating. They want to ensure that a situation doesn't arise for the project to be abandoned because by that point, hundreds of millions of US dollars may have been wasted, and valuable years lost without any results.

The Reverse Greenfield Implementation offers an alternative approach with tangible results and a contribution to cash flow just a few months into development. It breaks the process into thousands, of small, low-risk projects, topped off with a short and smooth final implementation stage.

SAP software is migrating to the cloud on the SAP® S/4 platform. Any organization running SAP will eventually have to make this migration. However, there are many justified concerns about this process, particularly regarding risk that need to be mitigated.

With the Reverse Greenfield Implementation, organizations running on SAP, will achieve a more efficient organization and IT landscape, better cash flow at every step of the implementation, and immediate feedback if a partial project disappoints or fails. During this

implementation phase we do recommend using SAP BTP as the main platform for customizations and optimisations, there are already many out of the box implementations that can fit within the custom scenarios, and when they do not, a lot of these solutions can be customize using BTP.

While using whitelisted API and other Services from SAP you can actually keep the customization running for multiple upgrades in S/4 HANA, until you want to use new features then you can migrate to a newer version this way you can lower the cost of ownership for your custom applications and needs that gives a company ist complete edge.

The moral of the story is when you can organize and structure your organization in the IT part, it can help become your organization an industry leader.

This book tells the story of Falcally Automotive Inc. on its journey toward SAP® S/4HANA migration. We aim to offer organizations an alternative path beyond the ECC landscape, and we hope this book will serve as a valuable guide in that journey.

Falcally Automotive is a fictional company, made by Nitin Antoon, but its challenges, potential savings, and even greater potential efficiency gains are very real.

Enjoy the story (or go directly to the appendix where the Reverse Greenfield Implementation is explained).

Thanks,
Nitin, Jim, Jaideep

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Chapter 1: The Memo

It was a typical start to the day at Falcally Automotive Inc.'s headquarters. Employees hurried through the busy hallways, holding their cup of coffee and greeting one another.

Michael, the IT Director, discovered a memo from the C-suite waiting in his in-box when he arrived at his desk.
Subject: IT Modernization and S/4HANA Migration Needed Immediately

The subject line leapt out at him, demanding attention. He immediately opened the memo and read:

"To All Falcally Automotive Inc. IT Employees,
It is difficult to ignore the fact that our current IT infrastructure specifically, our SAP landscape is falling behind in the rapidly changing digital age. Our outdated methods are a major hindrance to our progress at a time when efficiency, innovation, and agility are crucial. The market shows that our competitors are bringing new products to market much more quickly than we are.

We must immediately embark on a mission to update our IT environment. To do this, we must migrate to S/4HANA, the next-generation ERP system. This will enable us to transform our business processes and usher in the era of enterprise technology.

For our organization to survive and thrive, this journey is not optional it is a strategic necessity. Migrating to S/4HANA will offer many benefits, including improved decision-making capabilities, real-time analytics, streamlined processes, and greater efficiency.

Many system integrators have approached us in the past, but few presented compelling business cases. However, we recognize that this endeavour will be challenging. It will require careful planning, unwavering commitment, and the combined efforts of every function and division in our company. Everyone from Finance to Human Resources, from IT experts to business analysts will play a crucial role in this transformation.

There fore, I am assigning each department head the responsibility of working together to develop a detailed strategy that outlines the steps required for the S/4HANA migration.

This strategy should include:

- An assessment of our current IT infrastructure
- A financial analysis
- A migration process roadmap
- An implementation schedule that aligns with SAP's deadline for the end of ECC6 support by 2027

In addition, I implore each employee to fully support this program and provide their knowledge and assistance as needed. We will succeed together, with tenacity, fortitude, and a common goal: a more promising future

for Falcally Automotive Inc. through digital empowerment, we are embarking on this adventure. We must view this challenge as an opportunity and seize it as a chance to re-imagine our company for the digital era. Regards,
The members of the C-suite.
CEO, Falcally Automotive Inc."

As Michael finished reading, a palpable sense of urgency filled the air. The challenge had been laid before them, and the fate of Falcally Automotive Inc. hung in the balance. It was time to modernize, innovate, and embrace the future with unwavering resolve.

Chapter 1: Discussion Questions

1. Should Falcally's management view the **S/4HANA** migrations as a **strategic initiative** or an IT upgrade, and what should they do to become more **competitive and agile**?
2. What are some organizational challenges and potential benefits that Falcally can anticipate during and after the migration?
3. Why do you think that assessing **the current IT infrastructure can** be viewed as a critical first step, and what factors should be considered when **building a roadmap** for the migration?
4. Do you think that the written memo does a good job of stating and communicating the **leadership priorities**? If you were Michel, how would you lead the IT team through this transformation?
5. Given the earnestness of the situation, what steps should Falcally Automotive take for successful digital transformation?

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nitin Antoon

Enterprise Cloud Architect & Author

Nitin Antoon is an Enterprise Cloud Architect with deep expertise in modernizing large-scale IT landscapes. With over a decade of experience, he has helped global enterprises—across aviation, manufacturing, and consumer goods—transition from legacy systems to agile, cloud-native architectures. Nitin specializes in SAP cloud landscapes, integration design, and enterprise AI, having worked on complex cloud transformations for Fortune 500 clients.

He is the lead author of *From Legacy to Innovation*, a forward-looking guide that explores how enterprises can evolve into intelligent, digital-first organizations. He also authored the Fiction novel *Meera of Karmana*, a historical fantasy.

As a known advocate for cloud innovation and accessible education, Nitin frequently collaborates with clients and partners across Europe, Asia, and North America. His background in enterprise systems, open-source technologies, and digital strategy makes him a sought-after advisor.

Highlights

- Former Chief Architect at a global consulting firm.
- Expert in SAP BTP, cloud-native development, and event-driven architecture with 10+ years of experience.
- Passionate about making digital transformation accessible and impactful.

Jim Hamilton

Former IT Executive, General Motors | Educator & Mentor

Jim Hamilton is a former Information Technology Executive at General Motors, where he spearheaded IT-enabled business transformation initiatives during some of the company's most pivotal years. Over his 25-year tenure at GM, Jim's teams successfully delivered major SAP projects across Finance, Customer Care & Aftersales, Sales & Marketing, and Global Purchasing & Supply Chain. He was responsible for all systems managing vehicle billing, pricing, incentives, and revenue collections globally. Jim's teams have executed both greenfield and bluefield S/4-based transformations, including Central Finance and Order-to-Cash.

After retiring from GM, Jim transitioned into education and mentorship. He is currently a visiting faculty member at Grand Valley State University's Seidman College of Business, where he brings invaluable real-world experience to classrooms focused on business systems and strategy. Jim is dedicated to bridging the gap between academia and industry. He actively mentors future leaders and serves on advisory boards that promote education in business IT.

Highlights

- Former IT Executive at GM with global leadership experience
- Expert in SAP for digital transformation
- Visiting faculty at GVSU, teaching practical business skills
- Advocate for student engagement and industry collaboration

Dr. Jaideep Motwani

Professor of Management, GVSU

Dr. Jaideep Motwani is Professor and Chair of Management at Grand Valley State University, where he has been a leader in business education for over three decades. With a Ph.D. in Operations Management, he has published more than 175 peer-reviewed papers and co-authored 17 books, becoming a global authority on total quality management, lean systems, supply chain, and service operations.

Known for his dynamic teaching and mentorship, Dr. Motwani integrates academic rigor with real-world business relevance. He has been recognized among the most influential scholars in technology and operations management and has earned several awards for outstanding teaching and research.

His passion lies in helping organizations and students improve systems, processes, and decision-making. Through his consulting work, editorial board service, and international speaking engagements, he remains deeply engaged in advancing management thought and practice.

Highlights

- 30+ years teaching and leadership at GVSU
- Leading scholar in quality, lean, and tech-enabled operations
- Global consultant and speaker on business improvement
- Recognized for lifetime scholarly impact and educational excellence

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