



# CONA SERVICES TRANSFORMS TO A **MORE DYNAMIC SUPPLY CHAIN**

Capgemini supports the build  
of a best-in-class solution



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SERVICES LLC  
A COCA-COLA SYSTEM IT SERVICES COMPANY

CONA Services is a specialized IT company built by and for the largest Coca-Cola bottlers in North America. It provides a Platform-as-a-Service model for its core solutions, covering back office, supply chain, customer, commercial, data, and analytics. The company also provides value-added services around system utilization and targeted innovation. It is a small, talented team with a lot of passion and a straightforward purpose: to unlock technology to deliver value to bottlers.

“Our bottlers are all individual companies and even though they run the same common-core business model, they all have unique variations that set them up to be successful in their local markets,” explains Brett Findley, CEO, CONA Services. “The challenge is to design, build, and scale systems for those

core common capabilities that they use together, but allow the flexibility to uniquely tailor them for their business model when needed.

“We also need to have a service model that allows them to move and adapt to change at the rate they can absorb, because they innovate at different rates. This is not an easy task, but with a customer mindset and a strong culture of collaboration, we have been able to do this successfully and have proven it over and over again.”



## Addressing supply-chain challenges

Like many companies, CONA Services faced a number of supply-chain challenges and changes. Restricted supplies of aluminum and of cans plus a labor shortage impacted out-of-stocks and inventory conditions, and at the same time the company was reducing its SKU portfolio.

CONA Services started looking for a supply-chain solution that could smooth and optimize its inventory flow in the face of these challenges. After an exhaustive selection process, it chose Blue Yonder for its improved user experience and greater visibility into supply-chain details and to raise confidence in the system.

Capgemini became involved once CONA Services assessed the challenges of integrating Blue Yonder into its existing SAP architecture. Capgemini provided essential skills in project management, methodology execution, project resources, and technology specialists for both the build and deploy phases.

“The Blue Yonder project has actually been a difficult, challenging implementation to complete,” says Findley. “We brought Capgemini in mid-way through the project to complete and manage the updated deployment plan in a cost-efficient manner while ensuring successful go-lives for all of our bottlers with minimal impact.”



## Moving to Blue Yonder

CONA Services implemented demand, supply, sales and operations planning, transportation management, and production planning modules from Blue Yonder. This integrated approach across systems that had to exchange information required a meticulous deployment methodology.

“We focused on the core build and foundation but the first wave did present a number of challenges,” says Baron Jordan, Chief Product Officer, Supply Chain, CONA Services. “We learned from it and modified our approach. We expanded the time and resources allotted because the additional investment would bring a more valuable solution to our bottlers.”

Beyond a new system, the implementation brought new data models and integration technology, all with a steep learning curve.

“We really had to leverage our partnerships and bring in expertise from outside of CONA,” Jordan explains. “We had to have rigorous and lengthy testing because the huge amounts of data that we process to produce our forecasts and our supply and production plans necessitates a tremendous amount of integration and data analysis.”



## Improving the bottler experience

The second phase of the project shifted towards the bottler experience with the deployment and go-lives. Change management was critical, so CONA Services could ensure bottlers felt confidence in the system.

During the implementation, CONA Services opted for a parallel testing approach that would run the legacy operation in tandem with the new system until the business was confident enough to unplug the old system. The approach minimized risk and reduced the stress of the ultimate go-live, since everyone understood the outcomes based on the prior weeks of testing.

“Blue Yonder is considered the best-in-class supply-chain planning solution and we are very pleased to bring this to our bottlers,” says Jordan. “The bottlers responded to the changes very positively. A solution this complex does not come about overnight. It takes time. We have been able to provide positive outcomes by structuring a program with appropriate time, testing, and training.”



## Delivering a dynamic supply-chain environment

The move to Blue Yonder is already improving the supply chain.

“One of the first comments has been the user experience,” says Jordan. “The visibility into the system is a significant improvement. We are already seeing efficiencies in areas like transportation management. We are able to plan our loads in a more automated fashion to reduce the amount of time our bottlers need to spend modifying loads and can instead focus on more value-added activities.”

Blue Yonder’s algorithms and mathematical processes mean improved outcomes, better inventory positions, and overall higher confidence in the supply-positions that the system produces. The enterprise supply-planning application provides the opportunity to dial-in and optimize inventory positions both for direct store as well as non-trade with a level of specificity that has not been possible before.

The next stage will be enhanced reporting and KPIs. CONA Services is working with Snowflake, a business-intelligence partner, to better understand the data. The team is also investigating raw-materials planning and modifications to the user experience and efficiency that would allow bottlers to plan in the transportation and sequencing areas.

“The implementation of this kind of system requires an immense amount of data, thousands of steps of program logic,” Jordan explains. “It takes commitment from multiple resources during the day, nighttime, and weekends to be meticulous and to hone and harden the system. Capgemini has been there the entire way. The stability, confidence, and reliability of our new system is due in large part to the services of Capgemini.”

“One of the key elements to our success with CONA Services is the level of mutual trust we share between our organizations,” says Paul Freudenburg, Vice President, Capgemini. “We have worked very hard to instill a One Team culture to deliver sustainable business outcomes, while elevating our team members to meet challenges head-on. As a result, we have achieved a strategic partnership to successfully win and deliver some of the more complex programs, like this initiative covering the Blue Yonder implementation.”

Now many other bottlers in the Coca-Cola system are moving to the Blue Yonder solution, including those in Latin America, Europe, and Asia.

“Our approach and our partners ensured the majority of our end users actually experienced a very smooth transition,” says Findley. “And now we find ourselves with a best-in-class solution with all of our bottlers live, and we are focusing our attention on how to extract the maximum value from our new asset.”

*“Since the inception of CONA Services, Capgemini’s been our largest service provider. Through the collaboration and partnership we have with Capgemini and with Blue Yonder, we are able to successfully manage the early deployments and then build a repeatable model that works really, really well.”*



**- Brett Findley**  
CEO, CONA Services





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