

A consultancy becomes the client



Company:

cbs Corporate Business Solutions

Industry:

Software and IT consulting

Products:

Consulting services for digital end-to end processes based on SAP solutions

Number of employees:

1,700 (2025)

Turnover:

316 million euros (2025)

Headquarter:

Heidelberg, Germany

Website:

www.cbs-consulting.com

CHALLENGES

- Legacy tools and fragmented workflows. A recruiting system shared with internal HR. Requirements and candidate data scattered across email threads and parallel systems.
- An atypical process poorly served by the market. Project-based recruiting across freelancers, agencies and consulting partners, including the life cycle that standard hiring platforms ignore.
- A strategic ambition beyond tooling. A foundation for an end-to-end process from sourcing to invoicing in S/4HANA, built in phases.

SOLUTIONS

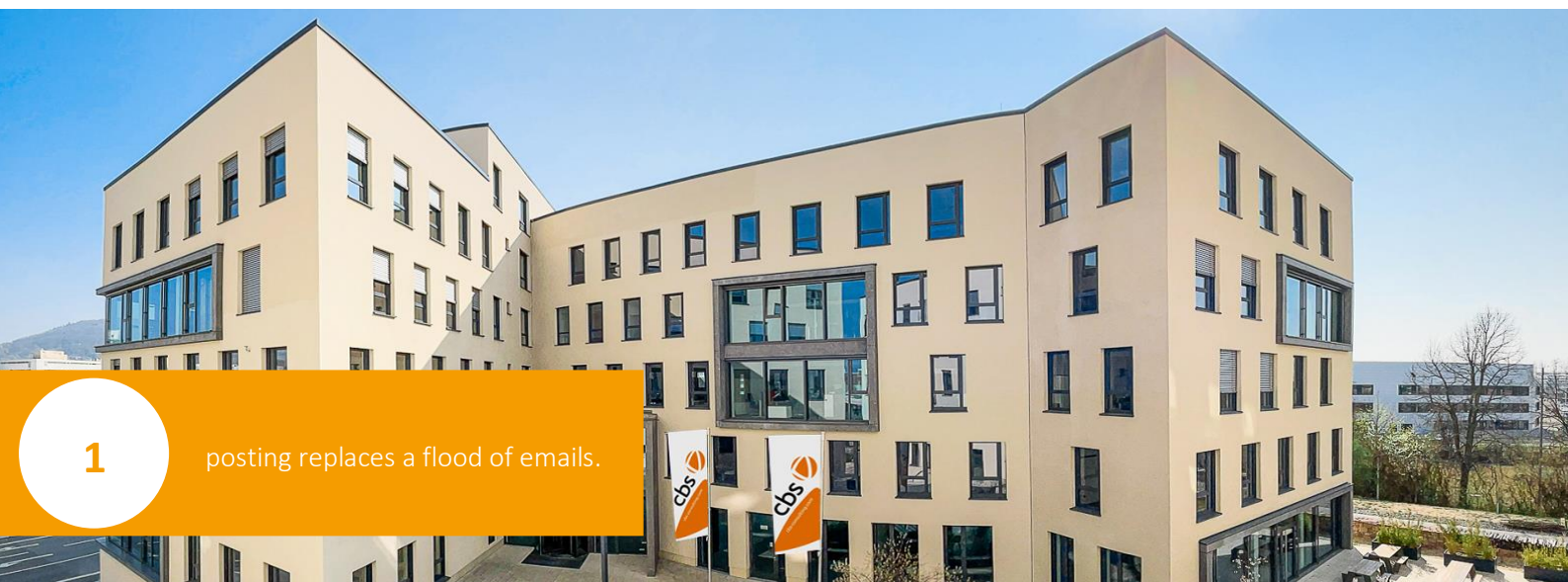
- SAP Fieldglass for core recruiting. Postings, supplier communication, candidate data and shortlisting in one system, one object per role.
- Scope with intent. Phase one tightly focused on the recruiting process that drives most of cbs' partner business. Time recording and full S/4HANA integration for PR and PO parked for phase two.
- A partnership built for the long run. apsolut involved from pre-sales to go-live, and still refining the solution in flight.

ADVANTAGES

- One source of truth per role. Requirement, commercials, candidates, qualifications and shortlist in a single posting. Email floods replaced by one structured object.
- A tool that fits the process. Project-based recruiting finally supported end to end, including the life cycle that begins after the contract is signed.
- A foundation that scales. Phase one live and running. Phase two ready to build on solid ground, whenever the surrounding environment is.

WHY APSOLUT?

- Number one in spend management
- SAP consultants to SAP consultants
- Honest scope, not hero scope





Built for the life cycle, not the hire: Standard recruiting platforms end when the contract is signed. For an SAP consultancy, the work only begins there.

How cbs brought structure to its own external workforce — with a little help from apsolut

"We always choose number ones."

Frank Martin Bayer, Head of Partner Management at cbs Corporate Business Solutions, has a way of summing things up. In this case, he was explaining why a Heidelberg-based SAP consultancy, one whose client list reads like a who's who of global market leaders, had chosen SAP Fieldglass to manage its own external workforce. The unusual part? For once, cbs was not the one giving the advice. It was taking it, from a consultancy whose client list reads rather similarly: apsolut.

cbs does not run an external workforce in the usual sense. Every freelancer, agency contractor and consulting partner the firm brings on board is there for one reason: to deliver on a customer project, in an area where cbs either lacks capacity or deliberately relies on specialist partners. Three partner types, hundreds of project contexts, one recruiting tool shared with internal HR, and a growing sense that it no longer fit. Something had to give.

The selection process was anything but a foregone conclusion. cbs drew up a long list, shortlisted candidates, compared SAP Fieldglass against a range of alternative platforms. Bayer, with fifteen years of SAP sales experience behind him, went in expecting price to decide — and expecting SAP, the most expensive option, to lose on that basis.

It did not. The integration logic won: Fieldglass was the only option built to integrate seamlessly with the existing S/4HANA and SuccessFactors landscape. And cbs, in the business of telling clients to stay close to SAP standard, found itself having to follow its own advice.

The choice of implementation partner was more clear-cut. "Number one in spend management. We always choose number ones," says Bayer. cbs had found its match.

apsolut had been involved well before go-live, through the pre-sales phase and into the design workshops. Implementation itself started in September 2023 with a firm deadline: October, in time for the next wave of contracts. The interesting part was not the timeline. It was the starting point.

Most Fieldglass implementations follow a familiar pattern: contingent sourcing, time capture, SOW, invoicing, end to end. cbs fits almost none of it. The bulk of its business runs on project-based recruiting, with consultants who are often known quantities, assigned to new engagements rather than sourced from scratch.

Rather than force the standard process onto a non-standard case, apsolut and cbs cut the scope with intent. Phase one: core recruiting in Fieldglass, built on the Contingent Workforce module. Time recording and full S/4HANA integration for purchase requisitions and purchase orders: parked for phase two, to be picked up when the surrounding environment was ready.

More than two years on, the decision has aged well. CVs that once arrived as an email flood from half a dozen suppliers now sit in one place: the Fieldglass posting. Requirement, commercials, candidates, qualifications, shortlist. One object, one process, one source of truth per role. For a team managing hundreds of open requirements in parallel, that is the difference between managing a process and chasing one.

The deeper validation came from Oliver Göler von Ravensburg, Senior Recruiter in Partner Management at cbs. "Project-based recruiting is not something the standard recruiting platforms are built for," he observes. "They are made for hiring permanent staff. What makes Fieldglass different is that there is a life cycle after the contract is signed — and that is exactly what we need."

The journey is not over. Phase two — PR and PO creation, time recording, full integration with S/4HANA — is on the roadmap, to be picked up when the surrounding environment is ready. In the meantime, cbs and apsolut keep refining the solution in flight: smaller adjustments, smarter approvals, fewer clicks. Go-live was never the destination. It was the starting line.