

# Fast, Easy, and Robust: Cognition Financial Moves to the Cloud with SAP Business ByDesign

**SAP** Business  
ByDesign™



  
Vision33

# ABOUT

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, Cognition Financial is a leading provider of finance solutions for college students and their families. Since 1991, over a million families pay for their education using Cognition Financial solutions.

cognition   
F I N A N C I A L





## Out With the Old

When Kevin Kerrigan joined Cognition Financial as CFO in 2019, the company was running Oracle Financials, hosted by a third-party organization with its own data center.

“It was implemented around 2005,” Kevin says. “My initial take when I got here was that we probably shouldn’t be on Oracle Financials anymore.”

Because it was an older product, upgrades and updates were challenging. Also, the connectivity between Oracle Financials and Microsoft applications was weakening, requiring workarounds like exporting information to text and importing the text to Excel.

Cognition Financial planned to evaluate new software, but the pandemic put them on hold. As lockdowns eased, the organization that hosted their Oracle Financials system closed its data center, accelerating Cognition Financial’s timeline to find new software.

## In with the New

"We were interested in a cloud-based solution for midsized enterprises," Kevin explains. "There are so many efficiencies to scale when you go to a cloud-based offering."

After demos of several solutions, Cognition Financial narrowed its choices to NetSuite and SAP Business ByDesign.

"Business ByDesign felt newer," Kevin notes. "It felt like it had been designed to cover areas of NetSuite that weren't operating as well as they could, which we liked. ByDesign was also more cost competitive."

SAP Business ByDesign is an easy-to-use cloud enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution for small and midsized enterprises. Business ByDesign adapts to how organizations do business—not the other way around. Various solution extensions empower organizations to scale the solution as they grow, and quarterly updates run behind the scenes without disrupting operations.

### Transparency Results in Partnership

Next on Cognition Financial's to-do list was finding the right SAP Business ByDesign implementation partner. The decision was easy after a call with Vision33, an ERP planning, design, and implementation expert.

"Right off the bat, Vision33 was a perfect fit for us," Kevin says. "We liked their proposal. They were very transparent about how they incur hours. It was very professional."

With the partnership solidified, Vision33 quickly assigned a dedicated project team to meet Cognition Financial's timeline to move off Oracle Financials and onto SAP Business ByDesign.

"Once we met the team, everything just came together," Kevin says. "I saw the Vision33 commitment to where we were going, and that felt good. They said, 'We'll do everything we can to get you guys live.' It wasn't a traditional implementation, but the team prioritized it. The support was fantastic."

Vision33 focused on Cognition Financial's immediate needs with Business ByDesign—paying bills and reconciling cash—and the company went live in December 2022. And because Business ByDesign is a cloud solution, Cognition Financial's IT team didn't need to be involved in the project.



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# The Perfect ERP Fit

The system is still new, but Kevin and his team are building a robust financial package at their own pace.

Because Cognition Financial uses spreadsheets for internal reporting, Business ByDesign's native connectivity with Excel is a significant benefit.

"It's easy to manage data," Kevin says. "You can have a reporting structure where you drag data into column or row fields and see if it populates in a way that's useful to you. That's fantastic stuff we didn't have before. And being able to do that in Excel is great."

Customization is a major SAP Business ByDesign benefit. Although Cognition Financial is a private company, it operates like a bank—so using a standard chart of accounts is difficult. Business ByDesign enables Cognition Financial to enjoy a custom chart of accounts.

As Cognition Financial continues to configure SAP Business ByDesign to its needs, Kevin and his team are happy with their modern ERP solution.

"The promise of Business ByDesign was that it would be easier to use, and people are already seeing that," Kevin notes. "They

appreciate how simple it is to get into and that they can use it from their phones."

Business ByDesign's licensing structure is another attractive feature. One user-based license grants full functionality, so Kevin and his team can explore the system at their convenience, using only the features they need.

As Cognition Financial moves forward with its powerful, easy-to-use ERP solution, SAP Partner Vision33 will provide ongoing world-class support.

"I have only positive things to say about the Vision33 team," Kevin concludes. "The way they operate is transparent, direct, and honest."



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Vision33 ([www.vision33.com](http://www.vision33.com)) helps growing companies deliver on the promise of technology through enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions, including SAP Business One and Sage Intacct, automation, and integration solutions. Vision33 has the people, processes, and technology to help businesses solve everyday challenges and seize new opportunities for growth and transformation. With proprietary solutions such as iDocuments and Saltbox, Vision33 helps businesses leverage the right transformative technology for their digital transformation journeys.

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