

EBOOK

SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR A BETTER SAP EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

BUILDING A DIGITAL TOMORROW TODAY: AN SAP JOURNEY

It's difficult to imagine how businesses operated decades ago – before CRM, before ecommerce, before Facebook and social media. Oracle and Microsoft were in their heyday.

Computing power was limited, and architecture called for separate systems to move data. IT had to report on and plan for each system. To maximize performance, central IT hubs ran discrete systems concurrently. That was just the way things were.

Flash forward to today: Enterprise-level platforms have significantly evolved. They're powerful. And their potential is seemingly limitless. Direct in-memory queries provide numerous options for real-time transactions. Traditional caches, indices and tables have been replaced by dynamic, visually sophisticated dashboards. To realize the promise of big data, the computing power behind those dashboards needs to continually increase and, for some, it may need to double annually.

Leveraging these platforms is like learning how to ride a bike – it's straightforward, but not so simple if you've never done it before.

Many companies today are trying to bridge two realities: what's possible with big data and what their current systems can handle. Fear of failure is all too real. Which kind of talent is needed? Which investment level is realistic? What will it take, exactly, to get to a point where cruising along seems effortless?

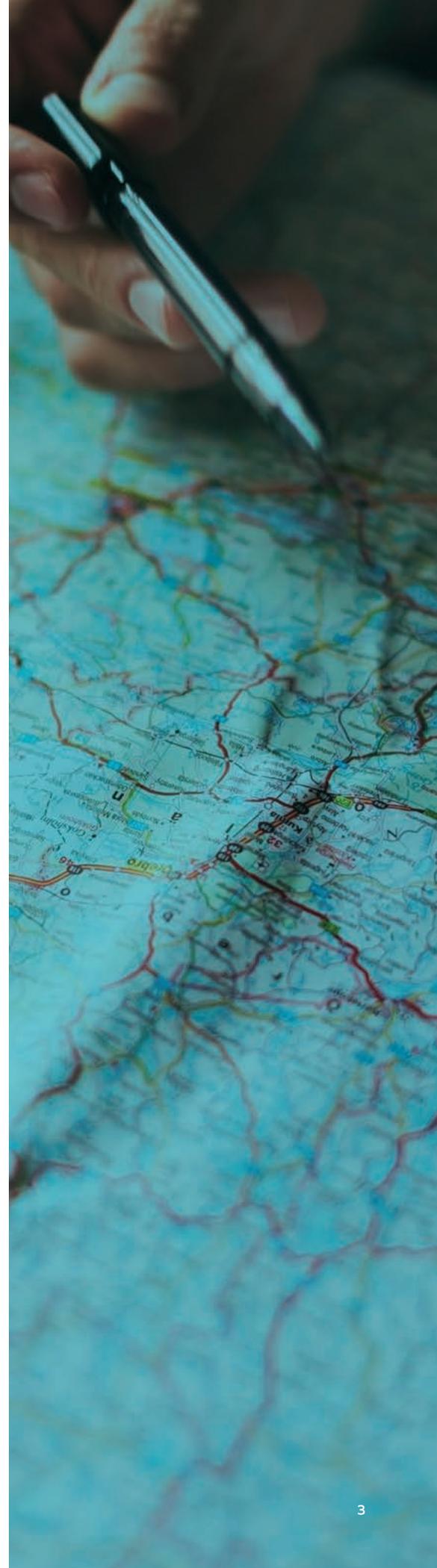
You should be prepared for a wobbly start and some bumps and bruises along the way. Having someone by your side, though, will help smooth out the uncertainties and keep you on course.

With practical guidance and a bit of encouragement, the wheels will start to turn, and you'll realize you're steering your own course.

Whether your SAP journey is only beginning – maybe you're just trying to get data from point A to point B – or has turned into a winding, uphill path to cutting-edge data capabilities, you need to carefully consider the lay of the land.

Once you've evaluated your landscape, you'll be able to better navigate to your desired destination.

To simplify your journey, map it out.



CHAPTER 1

SAP HANA

PREPARE NOW FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC CLOUD

SAP is going full speed ahead to advance its HANA platform and S4 HANA application. While users currently benefit from running SAP solutions on other databases, that perk has an expiration date.

[By 2025, users will need to run all SAP programs on the HANA database.](#) This is an invitation to update applications and experience the power of all SAP parts working together in harmony. SAP users operating on other databases will need to migrate to keep systems current, and that entails significant planning.

Take pride in adopting S4 HANA.

By embracing this new technology, you'll have first access to the "customer chasm" and an opportunity to benefit from bleeding-edge data insights. But an immediate move isn't for everyone. For some companies, migration makes sense right now; for others, the transition will need to be more gradual.

Even if you're planning a gradual adoption, SAP HANA migration is an approaching train that should already be visible on your horizon. If you run SAP software, the question isn't whether you'll make the shift to this database, it's when.

When should you make the move? What are the short- and long-term benefits of implementing SAP S4 HANA?

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE FACTORS YOU'LL NEED TO CONSIDER

1. ALIGN MIGRATION TIMING WITH ANTICIPATED IT UPDATES

It's logical to consider migrating to SAP HANA when your business needs to make infrastructure updates anyway. A compelling future event is a chance for IT leaders to kill two birds with one stone, and SAP HANA should be part of your overarching infrastructure strategy.

For some, the event will be a merger: M&A is a key trigger for re-evaluating overall IT infrastructure. There are advantages to sticking with SAP, too: As many as eight out of every

10 transactions related to a material change touch an SAP product at some stage. In the modern enterprise, data is always in motion.

If you're deciding to consolidate systems, SAP should be a strong contender. You'll need to work with trusted partners to negotiate service agreement exits and support your IT team for data extraction and infrastructure carve-outs.

Migrations and system integrations create valuable opportunities to improve user experience. Consider merging dashboards and reporting structures, then updating the general business view of information.

2. PREPARE NOW FOR RICH, FAST ANALYTICS

There's a lot of work to be done prior to migrating to SAP HANA. Companies that have been using SAP ECC for years will be familiar with this "pre-HANA" journey. Many have never cleansed, properly archived or evaluated custom processes. When companies get too lax on their updates, letting their systems run on outdated versions of SAP for years (or even decades), it increases the amount of preparatory work required before migration to HANA. However painful it may be, it's time to begin taking the necessary steps to get back into HANA compliance and ahead of the game.

Think of it this way: Your systems may be larger than they need to be now because of outdated programming, excessive tables and optional formatting like relational tabular databases. You may also benefit from evaluating bespoke systems to make sure no hard coding exists. When you pay by size in the cloud, it makes sense to consolidate, update and streamline, using the assessment phase as an opportunity to reorganize your entire infrastructure and get it ready for the cloud.

The last thing you want is a database that slows everything down. Taking a moment to pause now will help you realize your future goals in the cloud.

3. GET UNCOMFORTABLE WITH WHAT'S COMFORTABLE

Business as usual for your IT team may be difficult to change overnight. If you're an Oracle® or Microsoft® shop today, your DBAs are accustomed to a certain language and system architecture.

But with SAP changes in store, companies should consider what kind of talent they'll need to meet business goals. At this juncture, outsourcing is a valuable option for your team. Experts can competently manage your SAP environment from end to end – from migration all the way

to maintenance. Stay tuned as open-source SAP becomes more accessible to developers. Much could change before the 2025 support shift occurs, and having experts on hand to keep you apprised of your options will help you extract the most value from SAP.

4. EXPECT AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS FROM SAP IN THE CLOUD

From a design perspective, SAP still needs improvements before it can be the most cloud-friendly option on the market. But with constant improvements to the platform, this is something you can look forward to in future iterations as you begin to migrate to S4 HANA.

In the meantime, you'll be getting your underlying data in tip-top shape for the move from SAP database to running in the cloud.

5. PLAN FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE WITH DATA ANALYTICS

Big box brands such as Under Armour are sharing data to fuel a new ordering model built on in-memory platforms and real-time analytics. Companies are pooling event-based and social data to create a new universe of interactions that speak to the modern consumer in entirely new ways. S4 HANA is the platform that delivers this real-time information to your enterprise.

Consider the prize on the other side. Take, for example, a televised tennis match sponsored by a major athletic apparel company. With predictive analytics, the company can anticipate the outcome of the competition and serve up custom data to spectators who match specific interest profiles and have engaged with online content, all while the match is live.

For company stakeholders – from business to marketing to IT – this scenario is a testament to the future of data.

For the average midmarket company, however, this is still a lofty goal.

For some companies, it's not yet practical to make a multimillion-dollar investment in real-time analytics. The difference between real-time reports and hour-by-hour or daily reports may not be enough of a value driver to warrant the cost of an S4 HANA project. And that's before considering how to execute it with existing bandwidth and team support.

In the end, the decision to migrate needs to make financial sense.

SAP is continually developing and refining S4 HANA. Some say it will never be ready, but what's available now is a game changer for companies that are able to harness its power. For other companies, the SAP HANA database alone provides access to finance and logistics tools that run simply and well; it's their way of tapping into SAP's competitive promise.

With a different way of processing that's both user-friendly and intuitive, SAP HANA will put you on the road to S4, and you'll be on your way to improved use of your data.



THE MOVE LOOMS: WHAT SKILLS WILL YOU NEED FOR THE JOURNEY THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TODAY?

1. FOCUSED APPROACH IS A MUST

This may seem like a soft skill, but it's increasingly important for developers to have a UX background. We're already seeing a shift from process-based design to user-based design. Companies should focus on bringing in talent with a sophisticated understanding of user experience. Delivering better experiences will allow more users to benefit from the platform.

2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

It's especially important to hire people with multiple SAP upgrades under their belt so they'll know what to expect when new updates are required.

3. ABAP PROGRAMMING IS STILL FRONT AND CENTER IN SAP S4 HANA

Despite tools that make it easier to navigate platforms like SAP Basis without knowledge of ABAP, this foundational SAP language is critical for the cloud. Expect ABAP programmers to be as in demand as ever in the coming years.

4. CONFIGURATION EXPERTS WILL BE NEEDED TO GET THE JOB DONE

Expect continued market demand for business-savvy configuration experts who can modify S4 HANA systems for customers using new guided procedures. This is especially important for companies that require a customized environment given their individual needs.

5. TEAMS SHOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPORT PAAS INITIATIVES

HANA Cloud Platform (HCP) extensions will be important for future development because they enable Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) to take hold. PaaS allows third-party vendors to create generic apps that meet customer needs without massive customization. A company equipped with web development capabilities should have the required skills to develop or extend interfaces on SAP.

CHAPTER 2

SAP DATA MANAGEMENT

SIMPLIFYING SAP DATA COLLECTION, VALIDATION AND MOVEMENT

In this day and age, SAP should just work – or so we think. In a digital world, it's easy to take ERP capabilities for granted, and companies often sign on thinking they'll be able to hit the ground running.

And it's certainly possible to start fast, but the effort will be counterproductive if the data humming through the system is overly messy and rife with errors. Mastering data management is easier said than done, thanks to the volumes of data that circulate in modern enterprises.

Whether you're providing functional or technical support, there's an art to navigating today's ERP systems and keeping data clean and systems running smoothly. That's not always the most efficient task for in-house employees, who have many other responsibilities. External experts can provide valuable help. When you shift the burden of data management to a third party, you're in turn setting up your data – the lifeblood of your company – for custom care. A little TLC is in order, with close attention to your data's trajectories, from customer to website to business user to database, and everywhere in between.

How can you expect more from your data with SAP? Get to the heart of what's possible by making sure your data is properly managed. To put data integrity at the center of operations, keep these tips in mind:

1. DRIVE BUSINESS WITH DATA AUTOMATION

Anything that is still being uploaded or extracted manually leaves room for human error – and the process can be painfully labor-intensive. This might not be an issue at first, but it will become problematic as you scale applications in the cloud. What can be automated now saves time and energy later, and it will create the continuity required for a strong data management foundation.

2. LIVE BY THE ADAGE, “GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT”

SAP’s slogan may be “Run Simple,” but SAP runs first and foremost on data. As any administrator would agree, a system’s output is only as good as its input. The data that enters an SAP platform must be accurate and properly formatted. Otherwise, it will be of little value down the line when processes are simplified and become truly powerful en route to improving business outcomes.

3. MAKE DATA A STRENGTH, NOT A CONSTRAINT

Tons of data objects are needed to make your business work. When reviewing them, ask yourself: “Is data accuracy a strength or a constraint for us?” In other words, is the quality of your data holding you back, or does it give you the confidence to take business analysis to the next level? Data accuracy is paramount to success. Without the right processes in place, you’ll end up spending more money with minimal impact. A proper data management audit and system cleanse will reduce costs while uncovering opportunities to raise service levels and unlock the value of your big data investments.

4. UNDERSTAND YOUR DATA MANAGEMENT TAX

Think of the cost of poor data management as a tax penalty: For every percentage point below perfect accuracy, you pay a price. When data integrity suffers, results slip: A shipment arrives late or not at all. You’ll always give up something – and it’s up to you to work toward 100 percent accuracy.

5. STRIVE FOR EFFICIENCY AND REPEATABILITY

Data automation makes instant improvements to processes, reducing errors and enabling greater consistency. And when processes are repeatable, they provide a clear audit trail, helping with compliance.

WINNING WITH WINSHUTTLE: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EXCEL AND SAP

Properly managing data is a critical element of successfully running an ERP system. Too many companies see data management as an obstacle instead of a strength. Winshuttle provides a set of tools that empowers users to manage data, making businesses more efficient and ensuring a clean system.

1. EASILY EXTRACT AND UPLOAD DATA FROM SAP

Data is the language of your business system. It’s what makes the system run. Data is constantly extracted, analyzed, corrected and re-uploaded to fine-tune the system.

This continual push-pull of data between business users and distinct systems requires data integrity. Ensuring that data is consistent as it enters and leaves SAP requires properly exchanging information across the enterprise.

That way, you’re comparing apples to apples and running your business the right way. No other business tool today is as effective as Winshuttle at extracting and uploading data.



2. ABAP TRAINING ISN'T NECESSARY

Winshuttle is simple to use. Business analysts unfamiliar with SAP programming are empowered to do more with data because they can record transactions in SAP and then map that script to Excel. The intuitive nature of the product puts tools previously reserved for developers in the hands of everyday users.

3. LINK TRANSACTIONS EFFORTLESSLY

Logically connected transactions can be linked in a process chain. These chains tell the story of your business processes, connecting the dots from start to finish and ensuring that no steps are overlooked. There is no limit to the number of chains that can be linked and run in sequence.

The most successful Winshuttle users take advantage of this fact and build multi-transaction scripts to ensure that all steps in a process chain are completed in the same way, every time.

4. PUBLISH SCRIPTS INTO TEMPLATES

Winshuttle enables users to directly publish Excel files into scripts. The scripts are then accessible through a Winshuttle add-in within Excel. This allows users to update, email, share and work on the files without having to remember the location of the script they're working to populate.

When it's time to act on the file, the script is already present and the data can be uploaded directly from Excel. Having data rules embedded directly into scripts allows for simple automation, bringing your business closer to more scalable operational processes. This is particularly important for complex processes, such as those used in the supply chain industry.

5. ACCESS CENTRAL TEMPLATE STORAGE

In the world of data, organization is key. Developing a long-term strategy for script and template storage means never having to ask, "Where did I save that?" A good process will group all files in one place and have users thanking IT – and saving themselves many headaches along the way.

6. DOWNLOAD AND UPLOAD FROM A SINGLE TEMPLATE

Winshuttle allows both query scripts and transaction scripts to be saved in a single Excel document. That means users can download information from SAP, make changes to data and upload in real time – all from a single Excel file.

7. ACHIEVE GREATER DATA ACCURACY WITH COMMITTED AND DISCIPLINED USE

Are your business rules complex? Building that logic into Winshuttle scripts ensures that your business rules are followed every time, across all users.

8. LEVERAGE YOUR TEAM'S FAMILIARITY WITH EXCEL

What's every business analyst's best friend? If you answered LOOKUP, you're only a few steps away from mastering other tools that enhance the sophistication of any master data management strategy. After an easy setup, users can make the leap from everyday experiences with Excel to richer results and optimal business outcomes for SAP data.

9. AUTOMATE QUERIES

Transactions send data into SAP and queries pull data from SAP. Queries can be automated to run at scheduled times and linked to achieve ABAP-like results without a single line of code.

10. AVOID DATA ERRORS FROM MANUAL ENTRY

Data entry for digital businesses takes place across many touchpoints – with too many opportunities for error to count. Automation allows for greater peace of mind, because you're confident in the accuracy of what's being captured, shared and packaged.

CHAPTER 3

SAP BASIS

MAKING THE MODERN ENTERPRISE RUN WITH THE RIGHT ERP

At the end of the day, SAP Basis must add value for the business user, and that means data needs to be shored up within ERP systems so analysts can make sense of it. An ERP won't be much use if the data that surfaces cannot be interpreted for business insight.

When ERP systems are leveraged properly, business users will be that much more empowered to see the informational forest through the trees. It's up to IT to make that possible, by choosing the right platforms and support teams to bridge the gap between raw data and improved business outcomes.

Understanding SAP Basis best practices will help you elevate the institutional thinking that determines how data is applied to real-world scenarios across your enterprise.

What guiding ERP principles should form the FOUNDATION of the modern enterprise?

1. BUILD A STRONG FUTURE BY STARTING WITH A SOLID FOUNDATION

An expertly architected technical foundation is key to unlocking the full potential of your SAP environment. From high performance to high availability, strong foundations enable future success.

2. ROI IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF EVERY SUCCESSFUL ERP PROCESS

Architecting a platform that adheres to well-defined standards enables you to reduce long-term costs by improving the supportability of your SAP environment. While SAP aims to “run simple,” a poorly executed environment can make it anything but that. Sticking to key architectural guidelines and best practices helps to ensure that all the technical details are nailed down. This helps you focus on the more strategic – and profitable – aspects of running SAP.

3. FIND A TRUE ERP PARTNER

A true ERP partner understands that the importance of SAP stretches far beyond the world of IT. SAP is a cornerstone application in every organization that runs it. Downtime and poor performance are not theoretical. When production systems crash or environment performance slows, there is a very real impact on the bottom line.

4. ASSEMBLE A TEAM THAT UNDERSTANDS YOUR BUSINESS

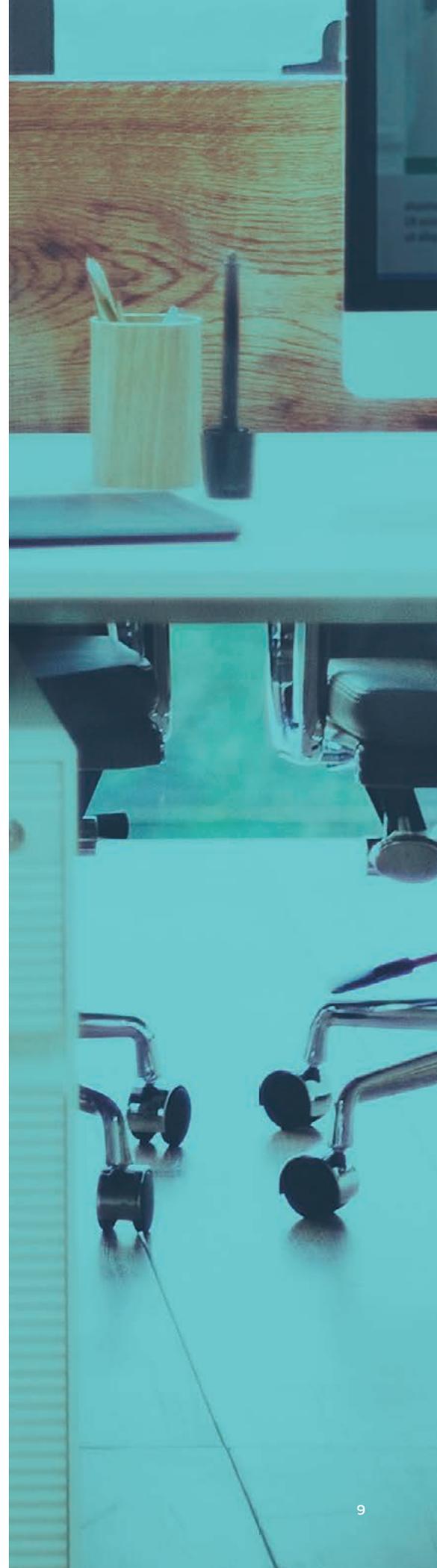
It’s simply not enough to understand the technical underpinnings of SAP. In order to realize the full value of SAP, your provider needs to be deeply involved in your company’s processes and planning.

The current direction of SAP is very different than it was in the past, with HANA and the cloud now front and center. By understanding your business goals and objectives, we can help guide you to a successful future with SAP.

5. PUT YOUR TRUST IN EXPERIENCE

In real estate, the old adage is: Location, location, location. Something similar could be said of SAP Basis support: Experience, experience, experience.

Bringing together a broad cross-section of industry and SAP product support expertise is critical for your long-term success. To help realize the full potential of your SAP environment, your partner should have experience with many product lines and processes.



CHAPTER 4

SECURITY WITH SAP

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUTSOURCING

Years ago, Sarbanes-Oxley made security a hot topic. In the past few years, data breaches have again brought security to the forefront.

No IT leader wants to risk exposing sensitive business data. Every system vulnerability must be addressed, and in many cases, internal threats are at least as dangerous as external ones. This mandate is not unique to SAP.

Though SAP software offers the right tools to stay compliant and protect data, your system is only as secure as the processes you set up to execute security best practices day in and day out.

These days, you can't afford to have IT struggling with security execution. You must have systems in place that segregate duties, control access and manage passwords. Security has become so important that security outsourcing is nearly ubiquitous.

This element of IT requires deep expertise, which is why it's usually entrusted to specialists with enough resources to keep security processes fresh.

When it comes to [security outsourcing](#) with SAP, what should companies keep in mind? The following advice comes straight from the experts:

1. IMPLEMENT ACCESS CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

A comprehensive overview of user access, roles and permissions can prevent violations and help properly segregate duties. For most companies, whether public or privately owned, this sufficiently protects against unwarranted or excessive internal access.

2. SUCCESSFUL AUDITS SAVE TIME AND EFFORT

You don't want your internal staff spending time overseeing auditors.

Instead, leverage expert SAP security resources and implement practices from the Sarbanes-Oxley guidelines. This can be your go-to resource for working through complicated, sometimes confusing access issues.

3. PARTNER WITH THIRD PARTIES TO AUTOMATE A FORMAL SAP SECURITY PLAN

To formulate an SAP security plan, you'll need to implement tools that can review all user access and help distinguish between excessive access and necessary, job-appropriate access. This type of analysis requires years of experience in an SAP security environment; it's hard to hard to retain that kind of expertise in-house.

A managed security firm with the right techniques and processes can provide businesses with the kind of overarching security view that enables smooth operations and appropriate employee access and privileges.

4. DEMAND BROAD SAP SECURITY APPLICATION EXPERTISE

SAP security for S4 HANA comes in multiple flavors, including Business Warehouse, Business Intelligence, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Business Objects and Java Stack. You have a big advantage when a single provider can offer all of this SAP security knowledge.

That reduces costs by eliminating the need for additional support, consolidating requests for SAP access and greatly simplifying complex, business-critical security processes.

5. FIND PARTNERS ADEPT AT HANDLING THE EVOLVING SAP LANDSCAPE AND NEW SECURITY OFFERINGS

Keeping up with new-and-improved SAP security solutions is paramount to success. To ensure that their SAP environments are secure and protected, companies must answer two questions:

1. **Is my business protected externally?**
2. **Is my business protected internally?**

SAP security offers solutions for both, and its advanced tools generate an overview of user access for all applications, whether specific to SAP or external. Teaming up with a company that can help formulate a comprehensive data security plan should be a primary concern. Outsourced talent needs to be up to the challenge of preparing for any possible security scenario.

CLOSING REMARKS

A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITIES

MAKING THE MOVE FOR OPERATIONAL PEACE OF MIND

Time waits for no one. Companies that have realized the benefits of SAP are building their digital business on the platform right now. That investment is a bet that SAP will keep things humming simply, smoothly and securely well into the future.

It's important to let infrastructure evolve as the platforms and environments that keep the wheels turning also evolve.

Like the gears of a machine or the engine of a car, every part directly or indirectly propels every other part. Companies may be at different stages in the journey, but taking the next step is what matters.

It might be a small step: upgrades, data cleansing, maintenance. It might be a major step: moving to a public cloud or adding in-memory data platforms for real-time analytics. Either way, the act of looking, thinking and moving ahead is a commitment to the future of your system.

Every journey begins with a single step. Are you in motion?

ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace, the #1 managed cloud company, helps businesses tap the power of cloud computing without the complexity and cost of managing it on their own. Rackspace engineers deliver specialized expertise, easy-to-use tools, and Fanatical Support® for leading technologies developed by AWS, Google, Microsoft, OpenStack, VMware and others. The company serves customers in 150 countries, including more than half of the FORTUNE 100. Rackspace is a leader in the 2017 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Public Cloud Infrastructure Managed Service Providers, Worldwide, and has been honored by Fortune, Forbes and others as one of the best companies to work for.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com or call us at **1-844-768-0221**.

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