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Smart transformation: a guide to migrating to SAP S/4HANA

VINCI ENERGIES

This e-book aims to show you how and why it's worth choosing a comprehensive enterprise management solution, SAP S/4HANA.

Its implementation should be handled by the professional team at Axians.

Migrating to modern SAP systems paves the way for greater data utilization, automation of key processes, and increased operational resilience. Whether we're talking about financial management, supply chain management, customer experience, or human resources, a modern SAP environment supports companies in achieving tangible results: reduced costs, improved planning, faster response to change, and fuller utilization of team potential.

As part of these efforts, SAP is providing a set of tools to support business processes in the form of SAP Business AI. It currently offers over 230 AI scenarios, with plans to increase this number to 400 by the end of 2025. This broad portfolio of AI solutions enables faster achievement of goals in every area of a company's operations.

SAP solutions offer more than just access to innovations that help companies increase productivity and efficiency. SAP S/4HANA, for example, also allows for the transfer of some costs and responsibilities to the system provider, including maintenance, updates, and infrastructure.

A cloud solution can be implemented faster, making the IT environment more scalable.

Time is of the essence, as ERP system implementation – depending on the size of the organization – takes an average of 9 to 15 months.

Therefore, it is crucial that the implementation is carried out by an experienced company that comprehensively manages the entire process – from resource analysis, business needs, and goals to the final launch of the SAP system.

Axians is certainly such a partner.

Axians Serbia, as a SAP certified partner, has over 20 years of experience in implementing SAP solutions with all necessary customizations for its numerous customers - in Serbia and Adriatic region.

At the same time, thanks to its membership in a global network, the company's consultants have access to the best international implementation practices. This has led to the development of a number of practical solutions that enable the effective implementation of the entire process, minimizing the risk of encountering difficulties on the way to achieving the assumed goals.

The many benefits of implementing ERP in the SAP cloud

In today's world, the boundaries between what was once considered impossible and what is now within reach have blurred or significantly shifted. Progress in fields such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and cloud computing have made solutions that once seemed futuristic become everyday reality. Especially when these technologies are combined into a single solution that knows no geographical boundaries in the exchange of information, services, and innovation.

Therefore, before we proceed to a detailed analysis of the migration process to a cloud - based ERP system – from needs analysis to opportunities assessment – it's worth asking ourselves a key question: Why are we doing this? Companies that decide to move from on-premise models to cloud solutions are most often guided by three main motivations*:

35%

Convenience – 35% of respondents indicate the ability to access data and services from anywhere.

34%

Savings – 34% of companies notice lower operating costs.

33%

Flexibility – 33% emphasize the ease of adapting and updating solutions, and 32% emphasize better support for remote and hybrid work.

SAP offers a cloud-based ERP system that enables effective enterprise management from anywhere in the world. This is not only possible but also easy thanks to comprehensive, modular solutions utilizing advanced analytics and artificial intelligence.

One of the greatest advantages of SAP ERP software is access to a perfectly tailored environment that supports business management and all operations in one place, and most importantly, helps implement a digital transformation strategy.

What benefits does SAP S/4HANA offer?

A key advantage of the S/4HANA platform is its innovative in-memory data processing technology. This enables faster access to information and, as a result, accelerates system performance. The system allows for easy expansion with a range of complementary business applications without interfering with the core system. Applications such as SAP Success Factors for HR process management and SAP BI for business data analysis are accessed from a single interface.

This shortens the time required for user onboarding and allows the platform to be quickly adapted to the specific needs of the organization. Additionally, it is possible to build personalized applications thanks to easy-to-use design solutions available in the SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP).

BTP leverages the latest technologies – such as machine learning and blockchain – to increase team efficiency and accelerate time to value.

A key benefit of using SAP S/4HANA is improved data analysis. Thanks to advanced tools, companies can analyze large amounts of information faster, plan for future events, and identify trends. This is crucial when making strategic decisions within the company or solving specific business problems.
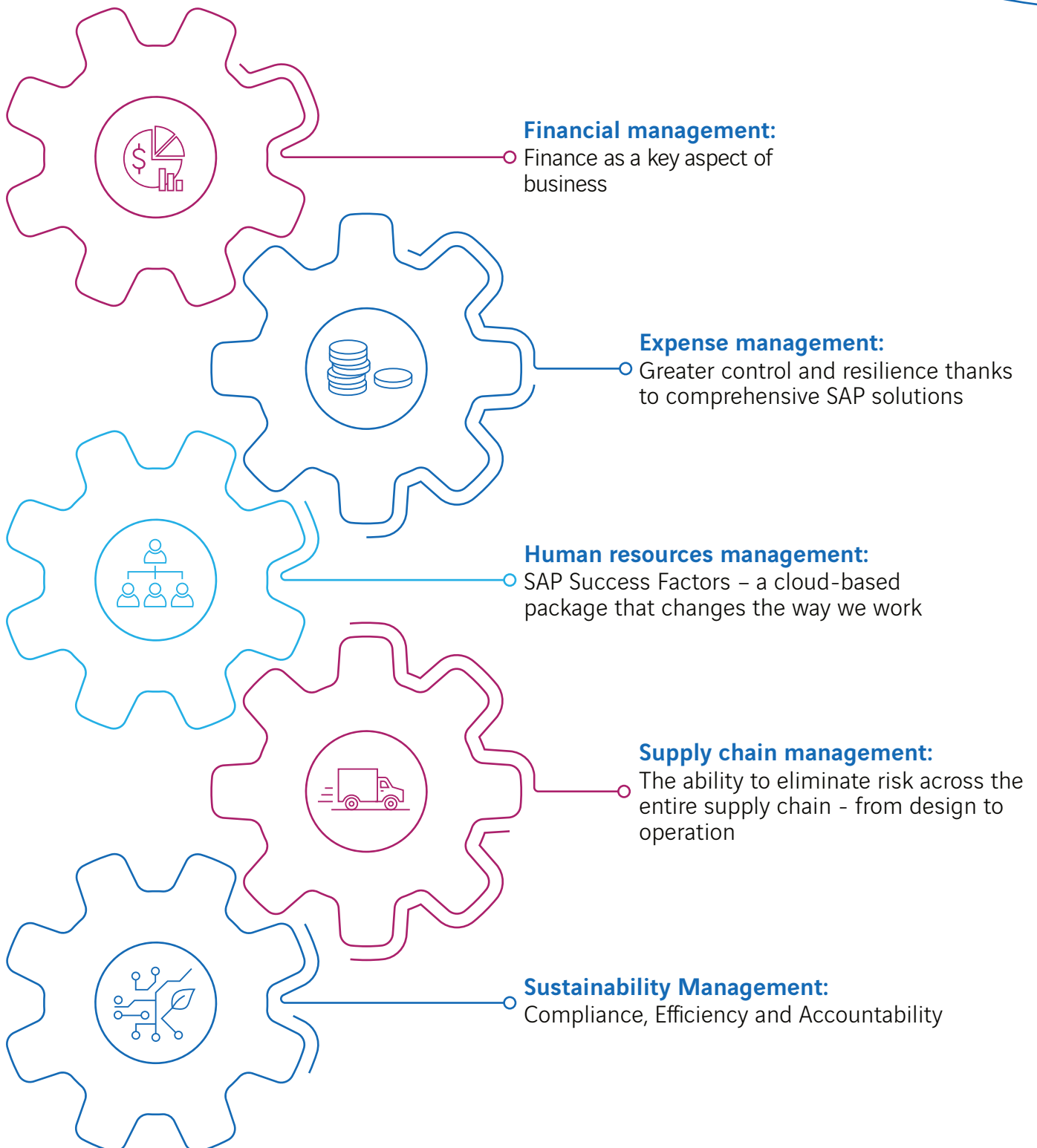
Cloud application integration in the areas of financial, expenditure, human resources, supply chain, and sustainable development management creates new opportunities for optimization and increased efficiency.

For example, SAP S/4HANA, by integrating plans and information within a comprehensive financial management system, allows for better budget control, profitability analysis, and shorter accounting period closing times.

Furthermore, the system's flexibility allows for easy adaptation of solutions to modern business models without the need for large IT infrastructure investments, which also contributes to environmental protection. In turn, in supply chain management, real-time data availability and analysis enable better demand forecasting, effective inventory management, and optimization of logistics processes, which translates into cost reduction and increased customer satisfaction.

Migrating to SAP Cloud ERP not only supports daily operations but also lays the foundation for implementing long-term business strategies – a strategy that, on the one hand, is resistant to change, and on the other, flexibly responds to it. It is a gateway to a world that combines modern technologies, operational efficiency, and sustainable development, opening the way for companies to innovate and become more competitive.

One system,
Many possibilities

Financial management:
Finance as a key aspect of business

Expense management:
Greater control and resilience thanks to comprehensive SAP solutions

Human resources management:
SAP Success Factors – a cloud-based package that changes the way we work

Supply chain management:
The ability to eliminate risk across the entire supply chain - from design to operation

Sustainability Management:
Compliance, Efficiency and Accountability

CASE STUDY

Swisslion Takovo

Design approach used:
Lift and Shift Migration to SAP S/4HANA Private Cloud

Customer:

Swisslion is a multinational food and beverage producer with operations across Southeast Europe. With a diverse portfolio of confectionery, beverages, and processed food products, the company requires a highly reliable and scalable ERP backbone to support complex production, distribution, and sales activities.

Project Goal:

The idea was to move the existing SAP S/4HANA system to SAP Private Cloud Edition (PCE) – ensuring uninterrupted business operations with minimal downtime and zero data loss during the migration. The initiative was supposed to leverage managed infrastructure to provide improved scalability and enhanced security.

Finally, the project should have prepared the IT landscape to support future digital-transformation initiatives.

Implementation:

1. Lift and Shift migration of the entire S/4HANA system landscape to SAP Private Cloud.
2. Technical migration executed without major changes to business processes or custom developments.
3. Validation of data consistency and integration points with external systems.
4. Performance testing and security hardening in the new cloud environment.
5. Go-live executed with controlled downtime and detailed cut-over planning.

Description:

The Lift and Shift migration enabled Swisslion to transition its existing SAP S/4HANA system into SAP Private Cloud Edition without altering core processes. This low-risk approach provided Swisslion with improved system performance, operational efficiency, and scalability, ensuring a stable foundation for further digital initiatives and long-term business growth.

Results:

. Seamless migration with uninterrupted production and distribution processes.

Increased system availability and scalability through SAP Private Cloud infrastructure.

Optimized IT operations and reduced infrastructure maintenance costs.

A secure and future-ready ERP platform, opening possibilities for leveraging SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP) and inovation add-ons.

CASE STUDY

Bar - Kod

Reimplementation from SAP ECC to SAP S/4HANA with EWM

Customer:

Bar-Kod is a distribution and logistics company based in Podgorica, Montenegro. With over 20 years of experience, the company plays a key role in supplying retail chains and partners across the region. Continuous growth and an expanding product portfolio created the need for more advanced ERP and warehouse management solutions.

Project Goal:

To reimplement SAP ECC to SAP S/4HANA to establish a modern digital core. Also to introduce SAP Extended Warehouse Management (EWM) to improve warehouse operations, optimize picking, and integrate barcode scanning. It became necessary to ensure real-time visibility of inventory and warehouse processes; enabling scalability for future business expansion.

Implementation: The project was carried out using a Greenfield approach:

1. Business process analysis and redesign according to S/4HANA best practices.

2. Implementation of S/4HANA core modules (FI, CO, MM, SD, HR).

3. Deployment of SAP EWM for advanced warehouse management: bin structure, inbound/outbound processes, mobile device integration.

4. Data migration, end-user training, and phased go-live.

Results:

- Warehouse operations efficiency increased by ~25%.
- Picking errors reduced by over 40% with automated control.
- Real-time reporting on stock levels and warehouse utilization.
- Scalable ERP platform deployed on SAP S/4HANA Private Cloud, ensuring flexibility for future growth.

Description:

The project provided Bar-Kod with a complete digital transformation of its logistics and distribution operations. By combining S/4HANA and EWM, the company achieved process optimization, higher transparency, and improved customer service. The solution now serves as a foundation for long-term competitiveness in the Montenegrin and regional market.

How to optimally prepare for migration?

Migrating to SAP S/4HANA is one of the key moments in any organization's digital transformation journey. It's a decision that goes far beyond technological considerations - it concerns the company's future, its ability to adapt, grow, and respond to the changing business environment. Therefore, preparing for this change requires not only a good plan but, above all, a deep understanding of your own strategy, processes, and constraints.

The foundation of a successful migration is defining measurable business goals. Transformation cannot be an end in itself – it must deliver concrete benefits: operational, financial, and organizational. Companies that consider, already at the planning stage, which processes require improvement, which functions are critical for growth, and how the new system can support their market goals, have a much greater chance of fully utilizing the potential of SAP S/4HANA.

So it's worth asking yourself a few fundamental questions:

- Why do we want to migrate?

- What specific business and financial goals should we achieve?

- Which processes require optimization?

- How can the new system improve the quality of services provided   and the customer experience?

‾   What form, scope, and pace of migration should we adopt to best suit the specific needs of the organization?

Answering these questions is the starting point for conducting four key analyses that should precede any migration to SAP S/4HANA:

1. Analyzing the needs arising from the strategy and business architecture.This is the time to determine how the new solution can support the company's long-term goals and what limitations of current systems should be eliminated.

2. A preliminary ROI analysis allows you to understand where the new system can deliver tangible benefits – from process automation, through better analytics, to improved operational efficiency.

3. Choosing the form, scope, and pace of migration. The decision on the greenfield, brownfield, or bluefield approach, the order of module implementation, and the schedule of activities will have a significant impact on the entire course of the transformation.

4. Analysis of existing IT infrastructure and existing solutions. Assessing technology readiness, identifying assets suitable for migration, and reviewing security policies will help mitigate technical and legal risks.

All of these activities require competence, experience, and the ability to view the migration process from the perspective of the entire organization – both its technological and business layers. That's why it's so important to work with a partner who not only knows the SAP system inside and out, but can advise, design, and implement the transformation in a way tailored to the company's real needs. The Axians team supports clients in precisely this way – combining a strategic approach with practical experience, making migration not so much a challenge but an opportunity for a new stage of development.

Thoughtful preparation, a realistic ROI analysis, and the support of the right partner are the three pillars on which you can safely base your migration to SAP S/4HANA. Implementation completed this way not only increases operational efficiency but also prepares the organization for the next steps of the transformation – regardless of what the future holds.

Axians Serbia: your SAP implementation partner

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