

## How SAP Customers Can Beat the 'Post-Deployment Blues'

Brian Zrimsek, Derek Prior

SAP customers can overcome challenges related to application support, performance, upgrade and expansion by taking several key post-implementation steps.

## ANALYSIS

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SAP customers will face several significant decisions after deployment — a time when application support, performance, upgrades and expansion become considerations. Here, Gartner provides guidance to help SAP customers through these post-implementation stages.

### **SAP Post-Implementation Support**

Developing and deploying a robust organization that is capable of supporting evolving SAP implementations is a complex process. To succeed, you need a combination of structure, process, knowledge and people. Competence centers are the recognized best practice for this SAP post-implementation support. The current model, however, is centered on enterprise resource planning (ERP) and, therefore, is not fully suitable for today's more-complex SAP application environments. The competence center model must evolve to support business processes, application integration, application architecture and more (see "SAP Competence Centers: Not Just for ERP Anymore").

Once the competence center is in place, SAP customers should use it to deliver a best-practice, "post-go-live" support model that leverages business management, business "superusers," the central IT help desk and the IT infrastructure. To make this integrated support model work, enterprises must integrate all of the involved entities through highly effective processes for problem resolution and change management of current SAP applications (see "How to Get the Best Support for Your SAP Implementation")

### **Monitoring the Performance of the Production Environment**

SAP has invested heavily in technologies such as its Computing Center Management System and Solution Manager to help its customers manage the SAP infrastructure. However, enterprises are often undecided on whether SAP tools alone are adequate or whether they need third-party tools, especially for a large, complex mix of SAP and non-SAP environments. Gartner's evaluation of the SAP performance management tool market can help enterprises choose the right vendor to meet their specific requirements (see "SAP Performance Management: Make an Informed Choice").

SAP customers frequently need to understand the practical scalability limits of their chosen infrastructure platform. This task, however, can be difficult, because SAP application benchmark results and the diversity of SAP benchmark types change regularly. See "Who Sets the Pace in the SAP Performance 'Olympics'?" for guidance on interpreting and applying these benchmarks to your SAP production system.

### **Upgrading SAP ERP**

Just when you've reached a steady state of post-implementation with a well-supported, stable, tuned system, questions related to upgrades emerge. Typical questions are:

- Should we upgrade? If so, to what version?
- How can the costs be justified?
- Who has done it before?

Generally speaking, keeping up with SAP product releases is a wise strategy. However, you shouldn't upgrade only because SAP launches a new product. SAP customers must examine the many aspects of an upgrade scenario (see "Upgrading Your ERP Isn't a Simple Decision").

Once the decision to upgrade is justified, SAP customers need to determine if they should move to 4.6C or R/3 Enterprise. If they choose R/3 Enterprise, they need to decide whether they should upgrade the licensing to mySAP ERP. In most cases, SAP customers should favor R/3 Enterprise as an application destination and evaluate the licensing options that come with mySAP ERP (see "SAP ERP Upgrades: Seeking SAP's Next Vintage Release").

After a specific destination is determined, enterprises must plan and justify the upgrade project. SAP upgrades can take many shapes (see "No Two ERP Upgrades Are the Same") and can be difficult to justify (see "Justifying an ERP Upgrade? Take a Longer View"). Carefully plan your upgrade, considering multiple dimensions of change, to get a true view of potential benefits. In some cases, benefits may be difficult to quantify. Our Dow Corning case study provides an example of a successful SAP upgrade (see "World-Class SAP Upgrades: Proving It Can Be Done").

### Expanding Beyond ERP

Another common issue for SAP ERP customers is the expansion of the SAP application functionality past traditional ERP. CRM is an increasingly popular topic, and SAP customers typically require assistance from an external service provider during the deployment. When selecting a service provider for mySAP CRM, customers need to consider some important issues (see "Integrated Teams Are an Edge in mySAP CRM Deployments" and "It's Crucial to Verify Your ESPs' References").

### Features

"SAP Competence Centers: Not Just for ERP Anymore" — Broaden the scope of your SAP competence center to support end-to-end business processes, application integration, analytics and enterprise architecture. **By Brian Zrimsek and Derek Prior**

"SAP ERP Upgrades: Seeking SAP's Next Vintage Release" — Assess the benefits, costs and risks of your SAP upgrade decision, as well as any hidden dependencies on third-party tools. **By Brian Zrimsek, Yvonne Genovese and Derek Prior**

"Integrated Teams Are an Edge in mySAP CRM Deployments" — Leverage external service providers when planning mySAP CRM implementations. **By Beth Eisenfeld, Ed Thompson and Alexa Bona**

This research is part of a set of related research pieces. See "Navigating SAP's Product and Technology Layers " for an overview.

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