Four ways SAP BTP helps you 'keep a clean core' on SAP ECC

No two SAP customers are the same. Not surprisingly, variation in business processes, industry alignment and competitive differentiation has led to a prevalence of custom ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming) code across sites using SAP.

Reports from the SAP customer base suggest that anywhere from 67%[1] to 91%[2] of SAP systems include process variants implemented as custom ABAP code. Many sites, or customers, rely on custom ABAP code as the "secret sauce" for their SAP Enterprise Central Component (ECC). This is especially so where custom ABAP code is used as the "glue" to bind the gap between an SAP standard process and the customer's specific business requirements.

However, the technical debt, or complexity, associated with maintaining and updating custom ABAP code is becoming an unsustainable proposition for many SAP ECC customers. Customisations add technical debt to the core, which prevents adoption of agile practices and limits organisations' ability to adopt new business models.
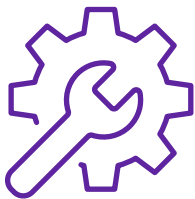
The principle of "keeping a clean core" essentially means keeping the core SAP system as standard as possible and developing customisations outside of the core. Although it is not always possible, this approach lowers risk, complexity and the overall technical debt associated with system upgrades and migrations.

While the concept of a clean core is often associated with SAP S/4HANA, it's equally and arguably more important for customers on SAP ECC because of the costs and effort required to upgrade to S/4HANA.

SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP) supports keeping the core SAP system as standard as possible. The platform is available to all SAP customers looking to accelerate their digital transformation journey. SAP BTP provides foundational capabilities to support on-premises, hybrid and cloud scenarios, offering flexibility and choice to drive agility and speed of delivery.

Regardless of where you are on your journey to a digital business, SAP BTP can help you to future-proof, innovate and grow, in the following four ways:

1 Extend and customise for the future

SAP ECC customers who require custom business logic and the development of new functionality need not be left behind. SAP BTP can serve as an extension platform for SAP ECC (just as it does for SAP S/4HANA): New functionality can be hosted (commonly referred to as a side-by-side extension) on SAP BTP instead of being embedded directly into the ECC system. This approach isolates custom development from the core ECC system, keeping the core clean while enabling new functionality to be ready for any future move to SAP S/4HANA.

1 "SAP Customers Discuss Custom Code Management in New Study", Leah Alibangbang, InsideSAP, March 2023: https://insidesap.com/sap-customers-discuss-custom-code-management-in-new-study

2 "ASUG Research: 91% Of Users Rely On SAP Custom Code", Irit Gillath, Pillir, August 2021: https://www.pillir.io/edgeucation-center/blog/asug-research-91-of-users-rely-on-sap-custom-code

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2 Integrate and unify the IT landscape

SAP BTP's integration capabilities connect the core SAP ECC systems with out-of-the-box extensions pre-built on SAP BTP as well as on non-SAP solutions. Data and processes can move seamlessly between ECC and the BTP-based extensions, without adding complexity into the core system to unify and connect the entire IT landscape.

3 Innovate quickly with the latest technologies

With SAP BTP, all SAP customers have access to advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, IoT and blockchain. SAP BTP also supports DevOps and continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD). This allows businesses to be flexible and adapt their business processes quickly in response to a changing competitive landscape. It also helps SAP ECC customers to accelerate development of innovative and mobile applications to stay ahead of the competition without modifying the core.

4 Brace for upgrade impact

The move to S/4HANA not only involves technical migration but also business process re-engineering. SAP BTP provides a range of tools and services to help deliver a smooth transition from SAP ECC to SAP S/4HANA: planning and assessment tools for detailed systems analysis to help identify potential challenges, data migration tools and services, and testing and validation tools that support the upgrade process while minimising disruption to business operations.

Most importantly, SAP BTP helps simplify future migration to SAP S/4HANA by serving as a robust extension and integration platform. Businesses using the platform are able to "keep a clean core", isolating customisations and extensions outside the core while leveraging the latest innovative technologies — ensuring that these companies do not get left behind on the path to the intelligent digital enterprise.

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Why DXC Technology for SAP BTP?

DXC Technology is an SAP Platinum Partner with a strong history of modernising businesses and driving innovation. As a trusted advisor, we adopt a holistic view of your business, drawing on our expertise and experience to execute strategies that are practicable and directly aligned to your business priorities.

With proven best practices and extensive project experience, DXC Practice for SAP is the safe hands that help you simplify IT, modernise applications, reimagine processes and accelerate your business transformation while realising the total value of your SAP investment.

To find out how DXC Technology can get you up and running fast with existing templates and agile approaches for SAP BTP that will help you keep a clean core, contact the team today at **sap.apac@dxc.com**.

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