

# **Enterprise Integration for SAP**

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RESEARCH PARTNER



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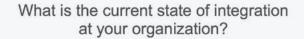


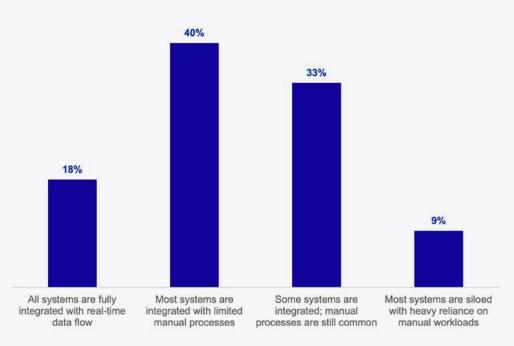


Enterprise integration is essential in the digital business era. Expectations around digital and self-service experiences are driving the need for seamless, enterprise-wide integration across multiple systems, whether they are SAP or non-SAP. Access to the data that moves through critical applications and platforms is key to building data-driven strategies and collaborative workspaces.

To identify the key factors, strategies, expectations, challenges, and technologies driving enterprise integration strategies, SAPinsider conducted a survey of community members across multiple industries, locations, and roles from May to August 2025. Respondents revealed that while many organizations are on the path to integrating their systems in a cohesive and automated manner, only one-fifth have achieved integration at a level where all systems are fully integrated with real-time data flow.







While less than one in five have a fully integrated landscape, few respondents to our survey (9%) are still working with almost entirely siloed systems. However, another third report that use of manual processes is still common with only some systems being fully integrated. The largest group, 40%, has most systems integrated with limited manual processes.

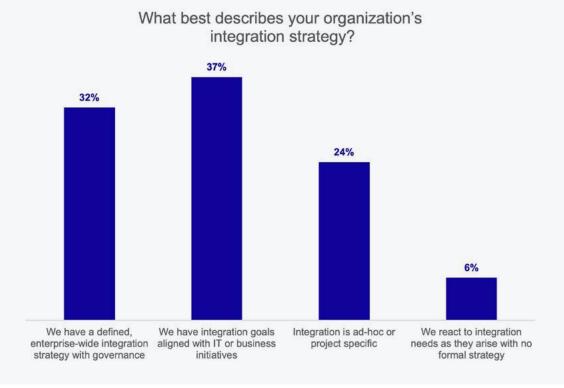
With manual integration still common or heavily relied upon in 42% of respondents' organizations, there are many organizations struggling to unify the information flowing through their systems. Lack of data integration and requests for IT to create manual workaround processes result in poor communication across departments, delayed decision-making, and a lack of insight into the business for executives.

18%

of respondents have all systems fully integrated with real-time data flow.

Delayed and less-informed decisions made by those organizations with data silos put them at a disadvantage. They could be falling behind in their ability to react to shifts in their markets, customer expectations, employment trends, supply chain disruptions, and more. Respondent organizations that are fully integrated or have largely eliminated manual processes will benefit from improved access to their organizational data, resulting in faster decision-making and more accurate insights.

There is an intention to improve among many organizations that have not yet transitioned to fully integrated environments. Over two-thirds of respondents in our survey reported that their organization has either alignment across departments when it comes to integration strategy or a defined, enterprise-wide integration strategy with governance.



An umbrella integration strategy encourages consistency across systems and processes and allows for governance of data flows that help alleviate security, compliance, and access concerns. Those organizations that integrate systems in a reactive or ad-hoc manner are providing inconsistent experiences to their end users. Without an overarching governance strategy, they will encounter challenges in protecting data in transit and reporting to meet regulatory requirements.

Those respondents (37%) who have integration goals aligned with IT or business initiatives are on the right track. Collaboration across departments is key, but ultimately, to achieve the level of integration maturity necessary for success in the digital business

32%

of respondents have a defined, enterprise-wide integration strategy with governance.

era, they require broader strategies with governance to ensure safe and accurate access to information across systems.

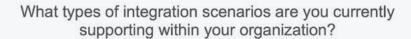
That is especially important as organizations are increasingly working with IT landscapes that feature SAP applications alongside third-party applications. Only 17% of those surveyed indicated that they deploy predominantly SAP solutions, while more than half use a core of SAP solutions with select third-party applications. Another quarter of respondents are either deploying agnostic, best-of-breed applications or have multiple ERPs with select third-party tools.

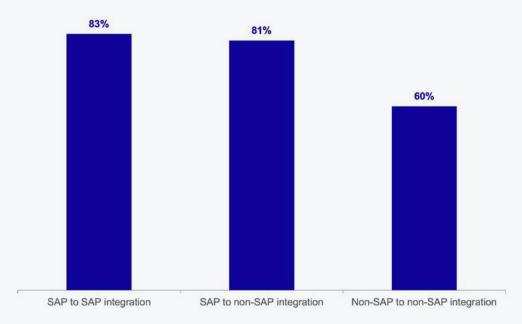
#### **A Complicated Integration Landscape**

On average, respondents' organizations are attempting to integrate 36 different applications with SAP solutions. That underscores the importance of an enterprise-wide integration strategy, given the numerous touchpoints and potential points of data exposure.

To achieve these 36 integrations, respondents are utilizing more than four integration tools on average. For the most part, they are using a combination of both SAP and non-SAP integration tools. Approximately one-quarter of respondents are utilizing an integration platform to connect to non-SAP artificial intelligence (AI) solutions. The diversity of tools is necessary as nearly every respondent supports both SAP and non-SAP integration scenarios.

#### FIGURE 3





It comes as no surprise that SAP customers are supporting integrations that involve SAP. However, with most respondents running a core of SAP solutions and select third-party applications, or taking a best-of-breed approach, this means that even a majority of our respondents are supporting non-SAP-to-non-SAP integrations. This highlights the need for integration platforms that are vendor-agnostic and support the connection of not only SAP applications to non-SAP applications but also facilitate integrations even when no SAP application is involved.

These increasingly vendor-diverse application sets are also creating hybrid IT landscapes at most respondents' organizations, with nearly four-fifths needing to support cloud-to-on-premise integration with their integration tools. Despite the accelerating adoption of hybrid environments, a significant proportion of respondents continue to support on-premise-to-on-premise integration (70%) as well as cloud-to-cloud integration (68%).

Looking specifically at cloudbased Al tools, just over a quarter of respondents indicated a need for integration with on-premise data sources with SAP Al offerings, while just under a quarter said they must support connecting on-premise data sources to non-SAP tools.

SAP is the most common integration solution provider among our respondents, a trend likely driven by those still using SAP Process Integration and SAP Process Orchestration (PI/PO), followed by Microsoft and ServiceNow. This points to a need to integrate with commonly used non-SAP applications. Among pure integration vendors, Mulesoft and Boomi were the most cited. Integration solutions from data and analytics vendors such as Qlik were also among the top tools currently in use.



It's common to use SAP S/4HANA adoption as a catalyst for wide-scale business transformation, and the same can be said for transforming integration strategies and technologies. A plurality (39%) of respondents' organizations in our survey are currently running SAP S/4HANA, with another quarter in the process of moving or planning to move to SAP S/4HANA by 2027.

Completing the SAP ERP transition is a primary concern for many SAP customers, and this concern has increased as the end of mainstream maintenance for legacy SAP systems and early SAP S/4HANA versions approaches. Given the focus on SAP S/4HANA, it follows that just over half of the respondents report that their SAP S/4HANA plans have impacted their organization's integration strategy.







"Best-of-breed is the new standard, and it's not SAP only anymore"

SAP TEAM MEMBER AT AN OPTICAL MANUFACTURER

#### **Facing the Biggest Integration Challenges**

With numerous integrations to be made and multiple options for integration tools, respondents' organizations face numerous challenges as they strive to create a scenario where their information flows seamlessly from application to application and is easily accessible and reportable, supporting swift decision-making. While that is the biggest challenge SAPinsiders are facing when it comes to integration, it's not the only one. As they build out their integration strategies, organizations must address difficulties in managing security and compliance, a lack of expertise in creating and maintaining integrations, a lack of standards in SAP instances across the enterprise, and connecting with legacy databases and integrations.

Those integration challenges won't go away; they will evolve. As organizations mature their integration capabilities, they will look to integrate with Al applications and development tools. Without a top-down focus, a stable of integration tools can be just as large as the list of applications themselves. One respondent whose company uses over 20 integration tools said that it was "because there's no big picture, long-term strategy, and no discipline to prioritize what should be primary integration tools."

The ongoing challenge of connecting systems emphasizes the need for enterprise-wide strategies and governance, as well as scalable and flexible integration platforms. **51%** 

of respondents report that their SAP S/4HANA plans have impacted their integration strategy and investments.

#### **Next Steps**

Our research reveals that SAPinsiders should apply the following key steps related to their enterprise integration plans:

- Take stock of your integration landscape and identify what's needed. When building an enterprise-wide integration strategy, first assess the existing integrations in place, identify the applications that need integration, and determine where SAP-to-SAP, SAP-to-non-SAP, or non-SAP-to-non-SAP integrations are required. Additionally, consider whether these integrations will be on-premise-to-cloud, cloud-to-cloud, or on-premise to on-premise.
- Align your SAP S/4HANA and enterprise integration strategies. An ERP migration can lead to
  significant changes in an organization, and most don't want to make that investment without seeing
  improvements across the business. When evaluating how SAP S/4HANA might impact or improve
  your processes, also consider its potential impact on your broader integration strategy.
- Explore Integration Platforms that support multiple vendors and hybrid scenarios. More integration tools mean more to manage for IT. Modern integration platforms are designed to facilitate the connection of apps across vendors, data sources, and hosting locations.

#### CHAPTER 1

# **Integration Maturity Assessment**

We asked respondents a series of questions to get an understanding of the maturity level of their integration strategies and processes. Those questions were then used to generate a maturity score out of 100. The average maturity score was 70, which indicates that most organizations we surveyed have at least begun the process of building a cohesive integration strategy.

Respondents were split into three groups based on maturity scores: Beginning, Emerging, and Leading. Leaders represent respondents who scored 81 or above. Emerging is defined as scores between 51 and 80, while Beginning organizations are those that scored 50 and below.

# **Leading Organizations Reap the Benefits of Cohesive Strategies**

Organizations are considered more mature as they build enterprise-wide integration strategies that feature collaboration between departments. Integration maturity also means having most or all systems fully integrated with real-time data flow and limited or no reliance on manual processes.

Each maturity group saw levels of technology adoption, challenges, and strategy characteristics that progress as integration maturity rises. For example, respondents in the leading groups are most likely to be already using SAP S/4HANA.

Those in the beginning stage of integration maturity are more frequently using custom code and manual integrations for data sources. As organizations mature into the emerging and leading levels, they adopt data lakes, data warehouses, and middleware integrations, while decreasing or eliminating the use of custom and manual solutions.







"Access to real-time, accurate, and comprehensive data from various systems empowers decision-makers to make informed choices and respond quickly to market changes and opportunities."

SAP PRACTICE DIRECTOR IN THE SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

#### **Characteristics of Maturity Groups**

BEGINNING	EMERGING	LEADING
0.00.0/41.4.1.4.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.	0.40.0/41.40.4	0.40.0/41/41/4
<ul> <li>SAP S/4HANA adoption in progress</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>SAP S/4HANA adoption in progress</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>SAP S/4HANA more commonly in use</li> </ul>
, · · <b>3</b> · · ·	, · · <b>3</b> · · ·	,
<ul> <li>More reliant on custom code and manual data integrations</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Custom code and manual data integrations still prevalent</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Utilizing data lakes/data warehouses and middleware</li> </ul>
and mandardata integrations	along with data lakes/data	data integrations
<ul> <li>Integration strategy</li> </ul>	warehouses and middleware	
somewhat meeting organizational needs	data integrations	<ul> <li>Integration strategy mostly meeting organizational needs</li> </ul>
organizational needs	<ul> <li>Integration strategy evolving,</li> </ul>	meeting organizational needs
Security and compliance a	meeting more organizational	Focused on business     Allaharation and integrations
major roadblock to executing integration strategy	needs	collaboration and integrating  Al data sources, no longer
-	<ul> <li>Legacy system integration</li> </ul>	facing security and compliance
<ul> <li>Individual project teams frequently driving integration</li> </ul>	challenges with security and compliance still a concern	challenges
strategy, rare for overarching	for some	• Tech leaders and C-Suite
leadership	D:	driving integration strategy
	<ul> <li>Director-level and below driving integration strategy, still</li> </ul>	
	some project-level leadership	

Security and compliance also become less of a challenge as organizations mature, likely due to the creation of enterprise-wide integration strategies that incorporate security and compliance standards, along with increased executive sponsorship. As organizations mature, their challenges change. Those in the emerging stage are still building their security and compliance capabilities, but also face challenges in integrating legacy systems. Leading organizations have moved beyond these challenges and are now focused on meeting the demands of the business and integrating Al data sources.

Integration maturity includes overarching integration strategies. As organizations mature, strategy is increasingly driven by leadership and C-Suite roles, rather than individual project teams or middle managers.

Leading organizations are seeing benefits from their integration maturity. They feature more automation, advanced technology, enhanced access to data across the enterprise, improved security and compliance, and greater consistency in data and access. Ultimately, this means that their integration strategies are, for the most part, meeting their needs and freeing them up to focus on emerging technologies, such as AI.

#### CHAPTER 2

# Factors Impacting Enterprise Integration Strategy

Enterprise integration strategies are largely driven by an internal demand from the business for seamless and flexible business processes. This is far and away the top driver among our respondents, doubling the prevalence of the next driver, which is connectivity to Al applications, data sources, and business processes.

Such a dominant driving factor in the data emphasizes the value of integrating systems and the impact it has on the day-to-day work of those in lines of business. Those on the business side are aware of the difficulties when their systems don't talk to each other. They grow tired of requesting custom reports from IT and are hoping for more self-service and automation in their workflows. Integration is the foundation for those goals, and the business is demanding that their systems work together to make their jobs easier.

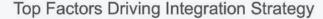
This suggests that building a business case for enterprise-wide integration should be easier than for other technology projects, as the voices requesting investment are coming from departments that aren't traditionally viewed as cost centers but rather as revenue generators.

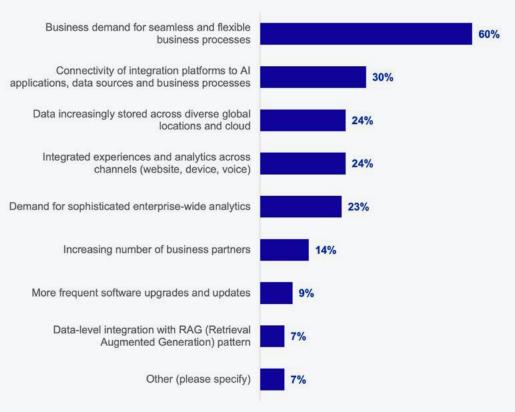
Beyond vocal lines of businesses, other top driving factors largely include the themes of Al data, and analytics. 60%

Reported that business demand for seamless and flexible business processes is a top factor driving enterprise integration strategy









After the top driver, the next three most common factors impacting integration strategy include supporting Al development, supporting diverse data locations, and cloud repositories. There's also a desire for integrated experiences and analytics across channels, a demand that is likely coming at least in part from the lines of business. Finally, the ideal of sophisticated enterprise-wide analytics is driving many organizations to build out their enterprise integration strategies.

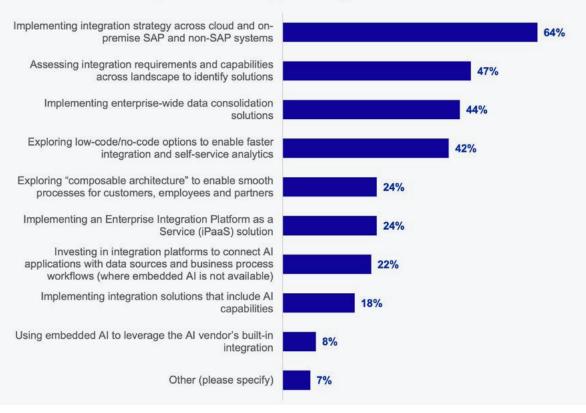
As part of the integration needs resulting from internal and external drivers, 64% of respondents to our survey have taken the action of implementing an integration strategy across cloud, on-premise, and non-SAP systems. This is an important step in achieving the seamless and flexible business processes that are in demand, as integration strategies tend to be more impactful and beneficial when they consider all the necessary integrations across the business, rather than building integrations on an ad hoc or reactive basis.

Leading up to the implementation of those strategies, respondent organizations are also assessing integration requirements and capabilities across their technology landscapes to identify potential solutions.

64%

of respondents are implementing an integration strategy across cloud and on-premise and non-SAP systems.





Beyond assessment and strategy, 44% of respondents are also implementing enterprise-wide data consolidation solutions in an effort to create consistent data experiences and bring together information from disparate sources. In the name of efficiency, 42% of those surveyed are exploring low-code/no-code options to enable faster integration and self-service analytics. That's a good way to put some of the integration and functionality that the business is asking for into their own hands.

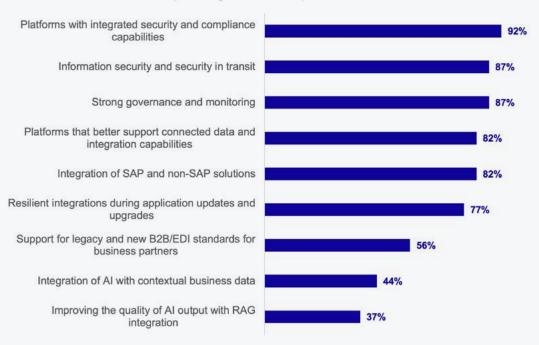
The lack of actions around AI taken by most respondents suggests that incorporating AI into integration plans and processes is not a priority this year. In our integration maturity analysis, we found that the most mature organizations are identifying AI enablement as one of their top challenges, so even those that are ahead are still trying to figure out how to integrate AI into their strategies.

As organizations take actions to support their integration needs, they have requirements they expect to see as a result. For most organizations, these requirements primarily focus on security, governance, and compliance. The top integration strategy requirement, cited by 92% of our survey respondents as important or very important, is platforms with integrated security and compliance capabilities. This was followed closely by the requirement for information security and security in transit.

**42%** 

of those surveyed are exploring low-code/no-code options to enable faster integration and self-service analytics

#### Top Integration Requirements



Strong governance and monitoring was also a top requirement for nearly all respondents. Integration capabilities themselves then followed, with more than four-fifths of respondents requiring platforms that better support connected data and integration capabilities, and integration of SAP and non-SAP solutions.

It's telling that organizations are typically finding the security, compliance, and governance of the data moving through their systems to be more important than capabilities that integrate the data. That points back to how security and compliance are the top challenges for those beginning their integration journeys. Putting in place effective security around integrations is an important hurdle to clear on the path to mature integration strategies and capabilities.

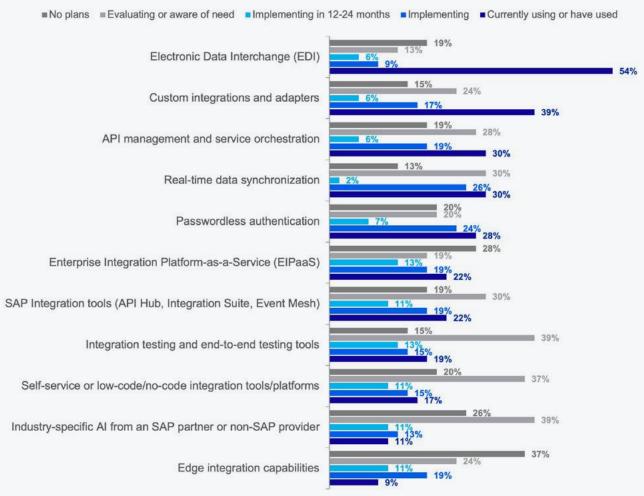
92%

of respondents
cite platforms with
integrated security
and compliance
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requirement.

The top drivers, actions, and requirements encompassing enterprise integration strategies at our respondents' organizations are influencing the technologies they are adopting. The most common integration technology used is Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), which is currently used or has been used by 54% of respondents. EDI is an older integration tool with decades of history, so most larger organizations will have used the technology at some point in their integration strategies.

Custom integrations and adapters are being used by 39% of respondents 'organizations. When broken down by maturity groups, 31% of leading respondents' organizations report using or having used custom integrations and adapters, compared to 42% of emerging and beginning organizations.





More advanced technologies, such as API management and service orchestration, real-time data synchronization, and passwordless authentication, are in use at just under a third of organizations. Platforms and suites of tools, such as Enterprise Integration Platform-as-a-Service (EIPaaS) and SAP's integration toolset, are in use at just over one-fifth of respondents' organizations.

There is expected to be an increase in the use of SAP integration tools in the coming years, as 30% of those surveyed are evaluating these technologies or are aware of the need for them.

Technologies that exhibit low adoption but high awareness, include self-service or low-code/ no-code integration tools and platforms, as well as industry-specific Al solutions from SAP partners and non-SAP providers. Edge integration capabilities are deployed at just 9% of respondents' organizations, and 37% of respondents have no plans to implement them at this time.

Strategy is clearly ahead of technology adoption when it comes to enterprise integration at SAPinsider member organizations. Most organizations have begun the process of identifying their areas of need and building integration strategies, but they are still relying on older integration tools that aren't designed for enterprise-wide integration.

#### **Key Takeaways**

When it comes to equipping organizations with the capabilities to support enterprise-wide integration effectively, consider the following:

- Integration is a team effort. Align with the business to create integrations that match workflows. Supporting the needs of end-users will ultimately determine whether or not integrations are successful. The right integrations will eliminate the need for manual report requests, allowing end users and executives to gain insight without requiring frequent IT intervention. Ensure that end users and executives are included in developing a comprehensive integration strategy.
- Security and compliance should be addressed early in integration strategies. The organizations with the most mature integration are no longer concerned about the security of their data and compliance with regulations because those were addressed early in their broad integration strategies with plans for governance.
- Cloud-based integration platforms aren't just for cloud-based applications. Cloud-based integration platforms are low on the adoption curve currently, but they can be used to connect more than just cloud-to-cloud scenarios. Most organizations are building integrations in hybrid scenarios, and integration platforms can help enable an enterprise-wide strategy across applications hosted on-premise and in the cloud.





"The challenge is to get proper governance in place, including guidelines on how to do the development, as the tools typically allow several ways of solving the same issue. New tools don't necessarily mean better, more reliable, and faster integrations if they are not correctly used."

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECT IN THE RETAIL SECTOR

#### CHAPTER 3

# Recommendations and Required Actions

The need for integration is only going to grow as organizations introduce more applications into their IT landscape and move to support emerging technologies like Al. Organizations are putting significant effort into integration projects, with most working to build encompassing strategies that focus on integrating SAP and non-SAP applications and data, as well as cloud and on-premise tools.

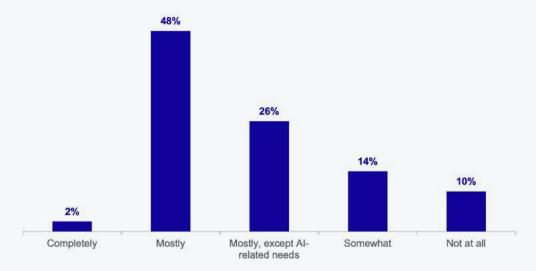
The organizations leading the way on enterprise integration are seeing collaboration between integration teams and lines of business, aligning workflows with dataflows.

They are setting themselves up to be quicker to make critical decisions and quicker to react to disruptive market shifts. Integration leaders are also better set up to take advantage of emerging Al and data tools that rely on data from disparate systems across different vendors and deployment scenarios.

However, even the leading organizations still aren't completely meeting their organization's integration needs—just 2% of respondents report that to be the case. Most still have work to do, and AI is creating another set of requirements.

#### FIGURE 9

### How well is your current integration strategy meeting your organization's needs?



The need for integration platforms, not just point-to-point integration tools, is growing. That aligns with the need for enterprise-wide integration strategies. Organizations can no longer approach connecting their critical systems on an ad-hoc or reactive basis. To succeed in the era of Al-powered digital business, they need the governance and technologies to support a unified vision for integration.

This survey also revealed:

- Among enterprise systems at respondents' organizations, HR systems are most commonly built on only cloud-based underlying data repositories (49%), with another 18% utilizing both on-premise and cloud-based data repositories for HR systems.
- ERP systems are still predominantly using on-premise underlying data repositories, with 44% of respondents using on-premise data repositories only for ERP, and another 29% using both cloud and on-premise.
- Data lakes and data warehouses are the most-cited approach to data integration (64%) followed closely by middleware integration (62%).

#### **Required Actions**

Based on the survey responses, organizations should consider the following when building their enterprise integration strategy for SAP:

- Don't wait for a significant technology project to create and implement an integration strategy. While major investments like SAP S/4HANA can have significant impacts on integration efforts, organizations should not just be waiting around for a major project to build an enterprise-wide strategy. Take the time now to explore your integration scenarios, communicate with the business, and build a plan and culture that values integration. Identify where integration automation can provide quick wins and create value in the eyes of line-of-business leaders and executives, setting the stage for approval of investment in the skills and technologies that will support enterprise-wide integration. The organizations that have the greatest integration maturity have these strategies in place and have moved beyond project-based and ad-hoc integrations.
- **High-level executives should own integration strategy.** While it has been traditional for integration to be managed by project leaders or implemented on an ad-hoc basis, those approaches that are most meeting the integration needs of their organizations feature strategies that are led by tech executives and C-suite leaders. This could be the CIO, CTO, or even CEO. Integration is important enough to be led from a high level, with directives and governance that touch all departments.
- Make integration an ongoing effort, not a one-time fix. Integration needs will never end. The
  demands of the business will evolve, with new requirements for reports and insights that necessitate
  additional integrations. New applications and technologies will emerge that need to integrate with
  your existing landscape. Even those with leading integration strategies still are not completely
  meeting the needs of their organizations. An effective integration strategy should be continuous,
  scalable, and flexible to accommodate the growth of a business and its evolving IT landscape.



### DART STRATEGY AND NEEDS FOR ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION



- Business demand for seamless and flexible business processes (60%)
- · Connectivity of integration platforms to Al applications, data sources and business processes (30%)
- Data increasingly stored across diverse global locations and cloud (24%)
- · Integrated experiences and analytics across channels (website, device, voice) (24%



- · Implementing integration strategy across cloud and on-premise SAP and non-SAP systems (64%)
- · Assessing integration requirements and capabilities across landscape to identify solutions (47%)
- Implementing enterprise-wide data consolidation solutions (44%)
- · Exploring low-code/no-code options to enable faster integration and selfservice analytics (42%)



- Information security and security in transit (65%
- Platforms with integrated security and compliance capabilities (63%)
- Strong governance and monitoring (52%)
- Integration of SAP and non-SAP solutions (47%)



- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) (54%)
- Custom integrations and adapters (39%)
- API management and service orchestration (30%)
- Real-time data synchronization (30%)
- Passwordless authentication (28%)
- Enterprise Integration Platform-as-a-Service (EIPaaS) (22%)
- SAP Integration tools (API Hub, Integration Suite, Event Mesh) (22%)

#### **APPENDIX**

## THE DART™ METHODOLOGY

SAPinsider has rewritten the rules of research to provide actionable deliverables from its fact-based approach. The DART methodology serves as the very foundation on which SAPinsider educates end users to act, creates market awareness, drives demand, empowers sales forces, and validates return on investments. It is no wonder that organizations worldwide turn to SAPinsider for research with results.

#### The DART methodology provides practical insights, including:

DRIVERS	These are macro-level events that are affecting an organization. They can be both external and internal, and they require the implementation of strategic plans, people, processes, and systems.
ACTIONS	These are strategies that companies can implement to address the effects of drivers on the business. These are the integration of people, processes, and technology. These should be business-based actions first, but they should fully leverage technology-enabled solutions to be relevant for our focus.
REQUIREMENTS	These are business and process-level requirements that support the strategies.  These tend to be end-to-end for a business process.
TECHNOLOGY	These are technology and systems-related requirements that enable the business requirements and support the company's overall strategies. The requirements must consider the current technology architecture and provide for the adoption of new and innovative technology-enabled capabilities.

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