



Conquering the Challenge of Global SAP Implementations: SAP Rollout Strategies and Best Practices

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Abstract:

Implementing SAP on a global scale presents many challenges and issues that require careful planning and preparation. This whitepaper provides strategies and best practices on how to proactively manage challenges that arise for an international SAP project. It also evaluates various approaches to template development plans and rollout strategies. This whitepaper is a hands-on guide, based on real-life lessons learned, that IT and business leaders can use to achieve successful international SAP implementations.

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Situation

A decision to employ a new enterprise system such as mySAP.com is strategic and can have a very high impact on a company and all its international subsidiaries. A major part of the respective companies' business success depends on the smooth, efficient and productive operation of this new system. The journey to implement takes a considerable amount of time and resources and is typically a multi-step process. Multinational or globally operating companies face significant additional complexity during the implementation of a mySAP.com-based enterprise solution in their headquarters and international operations.

This process is planned in several phases which are sequentially or concurrently executed, creating on-going change. Consequently, an international SAP project becomes a somewhat moving target which must be anchored to milestones. Along the way, mixed and constantly changing situations must also be managed.

For example, the corporate headquarters of a German based automotive tier 1 supplier may be live already with Finance and Logistics modules of SAP R/3. The corporation is in the process of implementing Supply Chain Optimization based on SAP's APO Product, Business Information Warehouse and mySAP.com Workplace. At the same time, its U.S. subsidiary is running an older legacy IT system. The business conditions are changing and the U.S. subsidiary may be facing increased competition, new customer requirements and the need to enter new markets. These markets, however, require up-to-date information technology that enables international collaboration, faster and more efficient processing of orders, and better means of communication. To compete, the U.S. subsidiary must implement SAP. To unfold SAP's rich functionality and enable the organization to collaborate with headquarters and other international parts of the company, a coherent strategy and rollout plan are required right at the beginning. This plan must take the entire picture into consideration. Otherwise, the project risks incompatibility with existing corporate systems, poorly designed business processes, and lack of user acceptance, and possibly even project failure.

Senior management needs to make a decision about the entire rollout strategy at the outset of the international or global project. Doing so avoids issues that stem from a step-by-step implementation approach. This strategic commitment must be promoted throughout the entire organization, and—due to the length of time it can take to implement SAP—it must be reconfirmed by senior management periodically.

During the global project planning exercise and when SAP is about to be implemented in international locations, a number of issues and challenges come up, which require careful planning and preparation. These issues circle around three main areas:

- Business process integration
- Common data standards
- System infrastructure

However, in addition to the above issues, other, more hidden issues become apparent that concern organizational and human factors of the project. Effective change management and cross-cultural integration is required to ensure project success.

The issues are interdependent and complex, and at times they uncover conflicting goals within the project. Decisions must be made on several levels to achieve the most productive collaboration and full integration between a company's headquarters and the business units in question.

In spite of the issues, such challenges are not unmanageable. Companies that proactively manage the challenges that arise from an international SAP deployment plan are likely to dramatically improve the odds of attaining their strategic goals and unfold the full power of mySAP.com on a true enterprise level.

This white paper identifies the most common issues that arise when manufacturing companies implement the SAP system in their international subsidiaries and operations.

Options for Implementation: Global Rollout Strategies

Developing a comprehensive global rollout strategy is a sophisticated exercise that will lead to a highly individualized plan, which can take several years to complete. The project management team and steering committee must make strategy development its highest priority.

In general, there are three potential approaches for implementing SAP globally:

1. Implementing individual projects
2. Creating a centrally developed implementation template with local rollouts
3. Rolling out projects based on productive implementations

Each of the above approaches presents its own set of advantages and challenges / risks (described below). Combining the above strategies may be the ideal strategy, in particular at larger organizations with different business units / divisions and wide-spread global operations. For example, an organization could start an implementation for a particular business unit using a centrally developed template for one region, which is then used for subsequent rollouts within the first continent. For the next region, the project team develops a new template with subsequent rollouts within the continent, followed by additional rollouts of other regions, based on a productive system.

Rollout strategies can be complex and will depend on overall corporate factors as well as individual or-organization factors. The development of a rollout strategy aims to minimize implementation risk and cost, while maximizing early business benefits and fast return-on-investment (ROI). A set of decision criteria should be developed for evaluation and should be summarized in a scorecard.

The sequence of the rollouts must carefully balance the mix of functional scope of each line of business with regional coverage and related risks and benefits. General decision factors include the following:

Overall corporate factors:

- Business case and critical success factors that determine priorities and expected cost savings by consolidating different systems across certain organizational units or groups of companies.
- Strategic importance of certain markets and lines of business and the need to update processes and technology for those markets or lines.

- Desired integrated visibility of information throughout different parts of the organizations and simplification of consolidation efforts and times.

Site-specific factors:

- Expected business benefit
- Complexity of business processes
- Degree of individual business process requirements (e.g., from specific operations or unique products)
- Expected degree of additional complexity due to language, currency and time zone requirements
- Legacy system landscape maintainability or vulnerability
- New customer requirements that demand new technology
- Degree of organizational strength (e.g., clear defined processes, adequate project team coverage, etc.)
- Readiness for new SAP System, degree of expected support and resistance on management and end user levels
- Degree of expected required business process reengineering
- Available support organization to maintain the live system

The following tables highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the main implementation strategies for global projects:

1. Individual Projects

Each company implements independently	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Optimal' solution for each company • Optimal consideration of country specific requirements • No central coordination necessary • Less or no resistance in the companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wheel is invented twice (at least) • Business process integration is significantly more difficult or impossible due to incompatible solutions. • Consolidation of the report system is more difficult • Risk of different technology platform and release levels

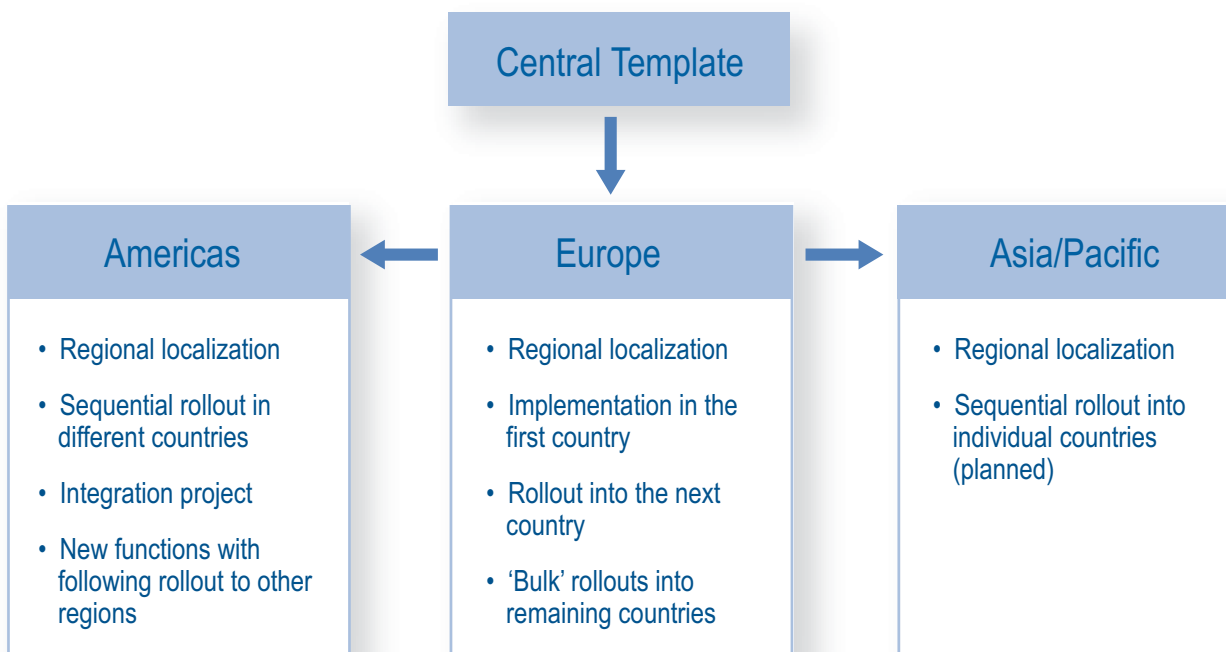
2. Global Template Development with Local Rollouts

Centrally developed template rollout	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent, uniform processes and functions • Single, central development cost • Lower maintenance cost • Leverage full integration benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of all requirements in one template more difficult • No optimal support of country specific requests • Political resistance • Individual localization requires compatibility with global standards

3. Rollout Based on Productive SAP Instance

Productive environment rollout	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template tested in real application environment • Consistent, uniform processes and functions • Single, central development cost • Lower maintenance cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above average consideration of the specific type/manner of the first company • In maintenance, same coordination expenditure as template solution • Risk of non-reversible configuration, due to lack of global considerations during first implementation

Example of a global rollout



Local Rollout Considerations

Following a global template definition, regional / local rollouts require careful planning and preparation in various areas. Below are major rollout issues to consider. They are applicable for each region, country and individual location:

Local Functionality / Customization

- Each country is a legal entity; therefore, local G/L and local fiduciary financial reporting need to be considered.
- Local tax issues
- Payroll integration
- HR integration
- Local currency
- Local language - may be required on some local documents such as shipping papers and invoices
- Mandatory local customs / practices to be supported
- Local shipping documentation required – are special documents required?
- Local modifications from “Global Template” require configuration, testing and approval

Local Organization Considerations

- Need to identify who will perform which process roles at each site
- This, in turn, will drive SAP profiles, security, and training material design
- This will also have some impact on hardware front-end devices – how many devices are needed, and where will they be located within the facility?
- This will drive who needs to be trained in which new procedures and roles
- How will training be conducted at the rollout and for on-going support?
- Who is ultimately responsible at the local site, and at what level?
- How will local help desk chores be addressed? Will they be application-based or technology-based?

- Is a local “super user” to be identified as a first point of contact?

Local Site Hardware / Equipment / Wiring

- PC acquisition and installation
- Printer acquisition and installation
- LAN and server installation
- Data communication circuit acquisition and installation
- Dial back-up hardware installation
- Scanners / label printers / scanner servers – acquisition and installation

Go-Live / Cut-Over Planning

- Conduct end user training
- Clean up local data before load and/or conversion
- Identify person responsible and timetable for data that is to be manually loaded
- Identify person responsible for data conversion from legacy applications
- Verify loaded and converted data
- Coordinate, conduct, and load physical inventory counts
- Develop project team support model
- Monitor on-site support of first few days of new operation
- Review first fiscal period close support
- Create contingency strategy

Implementation Methodology

The rollout strategy that is selected (see previous pages) determines the implementation project methodology to be used, as each strategy has its individual requirements for planning and executing the project (i.e., a series of subprojects).

Strategy 1:

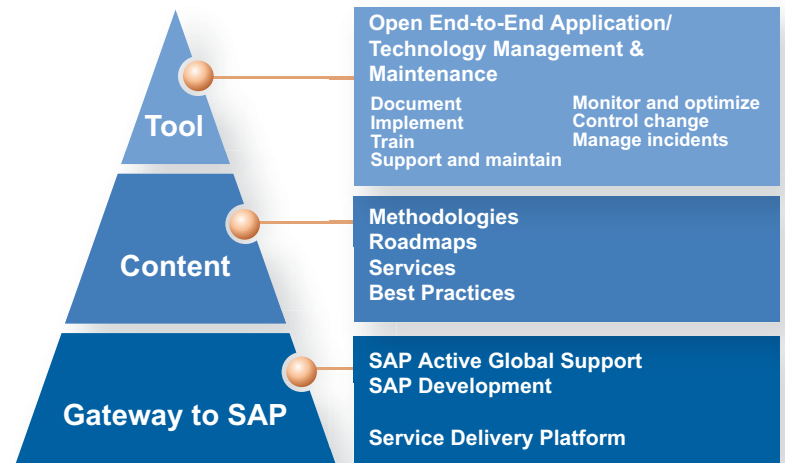
An 'individual project' implementation calls for stand alone methodologies that may be used independently in each implementing organization. While it is generally possible to utilize different methodologies (e.g., the standard for IT projects in the companies in question), it is highly recommended to use the same methodology throughout the entire organization. For SAP projects the methodology to be used is AcceleratedSAP or ASAP. Individual ASAP tool-set installations and project documentation environments may be established at each implementing organization. ASAP has been proven a suitable implementation methodology and tool-set for implementing SAP hundreds of times.

Using the same methodology throughout the organization may offer other benefits, such as lowering administrative requirements of the tool and enabling the sharing of lessons learned throughout the company. Individual organizations within a company should synchronize their implementation efforts to enable integration and to minimize potential conflicts while taking advantage of SAP's global system functionality where touch-points between organizations exit.

Global AcceleratedSAP Methodology



SAP Solutions Manager - Overview



Strategy 2:

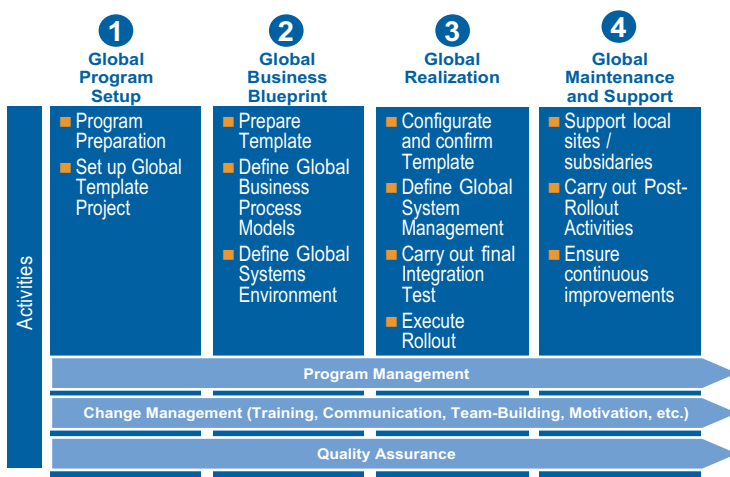
A 'global template with local rollouts' strategy approaches the global implementation and use of SAP in a much more coherent fashion. This methodology needs to accommodate the overall planning phase, the template development phase, pilot implementation phase, and a series of subsequent rollout projects.

SAP has developed 'GlobalASAP' as a methodology and tool-set to implement SAP according to strategy 2. It incorporates and takes advantage of the 'standard ASAP' to be used in the realization phase as local rollout roadmap. ASAP and the GlobalASAP implementation methodology is part of the SAP Solutions Manager. SAP Solutions Manager is SAP's new framework that offers specialized functionality to better implement and operate the SAP Solution. For example, it offers a platform for implementing scenarios from the mySAP Business Suite. For operating the solution, SAP Solutions Manager provides functionality to monitor systems and processes. Furthermore, it provides a support desk for the handling of messages and transports. Other examples include functionality for e-Learning Management, for Upgrades, for Changes Request Management, and interaction with SAP Support.

Strategy 3:

A 'rollout based on productive SAP instance' methodology addresses implementing SAP not as one single large project, but as separate major sequential phases, more in a wave pattern. While subsequent projects are typically carried out individually, there is an overall approach that attempts to take advantage of already configured and available proven, company individual functionality. Relevant configuration is taken from the footprint that has been implemented in prior installations of SAP, now already live in parts of the organization i.e. the headquarters. Thus subsequent later implementations should base their project methodology on the methodology used earlier. Ideally 'Standard ASAP' is used and the entire project documentation can be made available, provided that the project language is compatible. This approach will shorten business process definition times, documentation efforts, and training material development. It will also help uncover potential inconsistencies early and ensure that required localization is integrated with the production system.

Global ASAP Phases



SAP Organization Structure

Underlying the SAP system is the organizational structure, a set of elements and objects to be configured in the system. Much like a backbone, it defines the shape of the solution and sets the framework of available functionality. The SAP organization structure, along with the functional configuration, becomes a unique design—the fingerprint of the company's individual SAP solution.

The definition of the suitable SAP organizational structure is fundamental for the degree of integration and functionality that can be accomplished. Its design will either enable or limit true global collaboration with other parts of the organization, as well as with global customers and vendors.

The design of the SAP organization structure impacts various elements, including the following:

- Available SAP functionality
- Basic & master data: creation and maintenance effort required
- Integration of business processes
- Degree of automation of business processes
- Openness for future corporate restructuring efforts required to adjust for:
 - Additional implementation phases
 - Mergers
 - Acquisitions
 - Downsizing
 - Outsourcing
 - Extension or movement of production and services to other countries
- Company-wide reporting and controlling
- Company-wide planning
- Company-wide procurement
- Flexibility with changes
- User authorizations and security concepts

To create the enterprise structure in the SAP system, the project team must be familiar with the interaction between the R/3 structure elements, including the following:

- business processes
- all international organizational units of the enterprise
- integration points

The team needs also to understand the organizational units of the R/3 system, along with the associated fixed rules and the ways they can be used.

Business Process Integration

The different international units of the organization need and want collaboration between themselves internally and with their customers and vendors. True collaboration requires true integration and the definition of processes that enable creating, managing, sharing and reusing information and data. International data standards need to be defined. This, however, is driven by the required degree of collaboration and business process integration for each functional area. The standardization exercise enforces strategic and tactical decisions on the future international common business processes. Changes to processes are almost always required for the sake of commonality, integration and 'one face to the customer' at the expense of individualism, away from the respective individual processes that have developed over the years and which are so familiar to users. Effective change management plays a pivotal role in this reengineering process.

The business process blueprint directly drives the system configuration (e.g., which sales order types are to be used under which scenario, how pricing and output determination are to be set-up in the system, etc.). The blueprint also impacts the creation and maintenance of common master data significantly. Another key element is the system landscape and technical infrastructure.

Functional areas that are subject to business process integration include the following:

Supply Chain:

- Overall global product planning process—central globally vs. continental vs. local
- Product replenishment strategy
- Methods of goods delivery between the international companies
- Inter-company billing and invoicing
- Customer specific production from central competence center vs. local service center
- Procurement strategy: corporate group-wide purchasing, company specific purchasing, plant specific purchasing
- Global purchasing for certain goods vs. local or a combination of global and local
- Continental purchasing and local execution of deliveries
- International procurement pricing strategy

Sales:

- Inter-company sales process: direct delivery, from stock or customer-specific request
- Handling of international customers—partner role definition
- Means of goods delivery to the customer
- International pricing strategy
- Subsequent business processes: consignment, repairs, returns, debit/credit note

Financial Integration

Requirements for financial integration are largely driven by legal, statutory requirements of the respective country, as well as by company specific financial consolidation and reporting requirements. The SAP organization structure set-up (see previous pages) has a significant impact on available functionality and integration within the SAP system.

Financial and controlling considerations include the following:

Finance:

- Chart of accounts design (CoA): definition of operating CoA vs. group CoA vs. country CoA.
- Methods of external reporting (e.g., according to US-GAAP vs. German HGB vs. International IAS)
- Use of ledgers: separate vs. linked vs. parallel
- Elimination of sales revenues originating from business transactions within the corporate group
- Local tax laws and international implications
- Inventory evaluation laws
- Annual reporting requirements
- Archiving requirements
- Authorizations

Consolidation:

- Consolidation for external group reporting
- Management consolidation of business areas and profit centers
- Various data categories, including actual data, budgets, forecast
- Enterprise key figures, calculation at various levels
- Selection of appropriate tools for automated consolidation
- Definition of compatible profit center structures

Controlling:

- Common controlling structures
- Product related group-wide results and budget planning
- Customer related group-wide results and budget planning
- Decision regarding common approach of costing-based profitability analysis and international profit center accounting

Common Data Standards

Today's businesses are headed toward globalization with a magnitude which is unprecedented. In addition, the advent of the use of the internet in business means geographical separations and time zones are no longer the barriers that they used to be. With no common standards, each entity within the organization may have its own data format with no way of correlating the information. For example, a company could have the same material existing as different part numbers in its various manufacturing facilities and could still miss customer due dates because there is no way to correlate the two material numbers.

Another challenge is the different dimensional systems (metric MKS vs. English FPS) used across the world. This has a major impact on material classification based on characteristics which are measured in different dimensional systems (such as centimeters instead of inches) across the organization. This would effect material searches and would lead to having more than one material number for the same component.

Moving toward a global data maintenance philosophy with common standards is certainly a step in the right direction and is fundamental to enabling true integration and collaboration.

The following should be taken into consideration for global data management:

- Data structures and fields should have the same meaning between the different organizational locations
- Some company specific values are linked at the client level (e.g., payment terms, price list) and may require specific authorization protection.
- Numbering system consistency and compatibility.
- Synchronized maintenance of global customers, vendors and products.
- Processes should be in place for common data setup and maintenance.

In today's new economy, timely and accurate information is the most critical weapon and data is its key component. Lack of common data standards within an organization will lead to poor flow of information within areas such as customer service and the supply chain and could limit the company from being a global player.

Numbering Systems

It is very important to use a consistent / global numbering system throughout the organization. A decision to do otherwise is very difficult to change at a later stage once live with the SAP system. The numbering system philosophy is a critical element and it impacts the following:

- Functionality for SAP system integration
- Consistency of master data
- Productivity in using the system
- Number of errors
 - Example: No reinventing of same / similar materials
 - Managing groups of materials more efficiently
- Flexibility for changes in the lifecycle of master data (such as revisions or discontinuations)
- Long-term openness of numbering ranges (avoid burst)
- Reporting / controlling
- SAP user authorizations
- Non-SAP / subsystem integration

An SAP implementation is an excellent opportunity to move away from intelligent numbering systems. The intelligent numbering system in a typical organization is something which was developed over time by individuals who didn't realize its overall impact. In many cases, these systems were created and extended step-by-step to circumvent the limitations of the existing information system. In an international environment, often individual organizations within a company use different numbering systems. At least on the touch points of data integration and business process collaboration, they need to be synchronized.

Some of the problems with intelligent numbering systems are:

1. Number logic must be known by all users:
2. Field length (numbers can 'burst')
3. Numbering system not consistent across the organization
4. No clear search result

It is recommended to change current intelligent numbering to internal numbering and move 'intelligence' into relevant SAP fields, possibly to the classification system. The classification system is a standard SAP vehicle available throughout the system and can provide the global 'umbrella function'.

Changing a corporate numbering system goes way beyond SAP. It means making adjustments, reconfiguration, and reprogramming in all kinds of systems connected to SAP, such as interfaces, subsystems, reports etc.

In addition, since existing numbering systems have grown over along time and are deeply rooted into the organization, its users are very used to it and may object to changing it. Thus again, specifically targeted change management activities are necessary to facilitate the transition to a new numbering system.

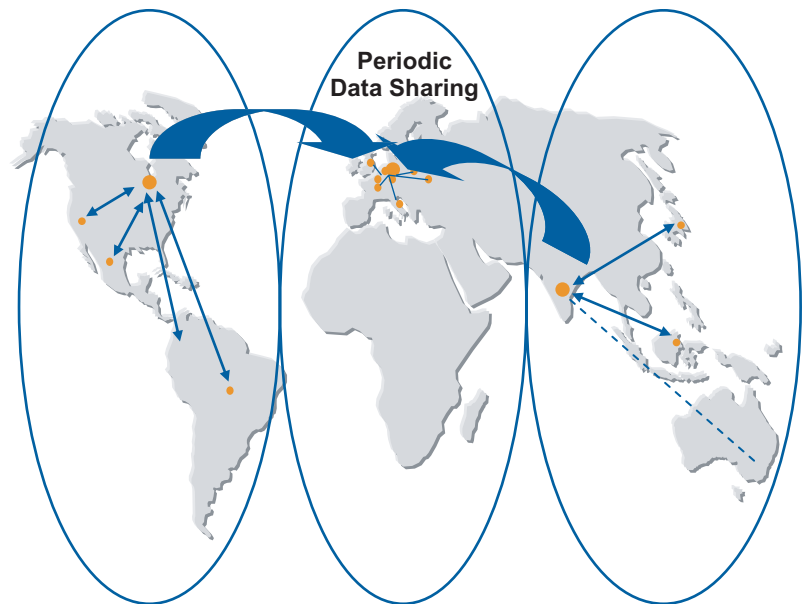
Technical Infrastructure / System Landscape

The global technical infrastructure and system landscape is the foundation for an SAP solution. A globally operating organization which is planning to implement SAP must develop an infrastructure that satisfies all international user communities' requirements, while ensuring maximum system reliability and performance at minimum cost.

Centralized vs. Decentralized System

A key question is if the organization should opt for a centralized or a decentralized system infrastructure. In a highly centralized solution, the entire system is physically located in one very large datacenter location, ideally on one single SAP instance and SAP client. In a highly decentralized solution, each single international unit or subsidiary of the organization maintains its own physical SAP system. The company must decide if it should implement one or the other, or some "middle of the road" solution (i.e., moderately decentralized solution). There are virtually no limits on the degree of centralization or decentralization you can employ with SAP. At the same time, there is no single correct answer for every company. It is an individual decision and should be driven by the company's individual business needs, operating requirements, and culture. A major consideration are the business process tradeoffs and cost tradeoffs associated with each approach. The above discussions on required integration and collaboration and on the organizational strength and data requirements of the global operating company determine the decision criteria.

Example: Moderate Decentralization – “Continental” Approach



Another important issue is the support infrastructure of future systems. For example, a moderately decentralized system requires a competence center approach per regional data center to cover different time zones. This is in contrast to having one central competence center and help desk at the central / headquarters location, which would be required to operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Alternatives include the option to use external specialized support consulting for application management or hosting via an application service provider (ASP) who specializes in SAP environments.

Additional pure technical considerations play a significant role, as well. The highest degree of technical integration can be accomplished in a highly centralized system within the same SAP client, but focusing only on technology leaves the least room for individual solutions designed per subsidiary. On the other hand, a highly decentralized system landscape presents the highest challenges in terms of establishing required connectivity and consistency for desired integration of data and business processes. Data redundancy and frequent data exchanges between the individual SAP systems using sophisticated technology are the result.

The following tables highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the main implementation strategies for global projects:

1. Individual Projects

Centralized	Attribute	Decentralized
Single Point of Potential Hardware Failure	Single Point of Potential Hardware Failure	Hardware Data Center Exposure is Spread
Increased Focus On Disaster Avoidance / Recovery		Workload Can Further Spread Across Hardware
Least Total Investment In Processing Hardware		Higher Total Hardware Investment
Highest Data Communication Costs	Data Communications	Lesser Data Communication Costs (Tightly Coupled Can Be High, However)
Least Complex	System Administration	More Complex
Least Flexible	SAP Flexibility	Greatest Flexibility – Supports Multiple Releases
Least Flexible	Business Process Flexibility	Greatest Flexibility
Scalable, highest WAN dependency	System Performance	Highest performance, best scalable

Application Link Enabling (ALE)

SAP offers a standard functionality for decentralized, distributed processing, called Application Link Enabling (ALE). ALE is a set of SAP processes and tools that allow applications on different systems to be linked together. They can be different SAP systems on different release levels or they can be SAP systems which are linked to non-SAP systems.

Application link enabling (ALE) is comprised of functionality and tools that address the following:

- Application interfaces
- Interfaces between SAP systems is Release independent
- Services
 - Object synchronization
 - Consistency checks
 - Monitoring
 - Error handling
- Interfaces between SAP systems is (limited) release independent

Benefits of using ALE include the following:

- Provides improved flexibility
 - Systems can be upgraded independently of each other
- Provides reduced data communication costs
 - Doesn't require real time high-speed connection
- Can independently support specific applications that have special needs (e.g., high security / high-availability applications)
- Spreads workload to potentially improve performance
- Reduces exposure to single hardware failure

Disadvantages of using ALE include the following:

- Much - but not all - SAP functionality is supported in standard SAP
- Administration costs of decentralized systems are higher than for a single, central system
- Greater reliance on internal controls and Disciplines for data Standards than in a single, central system

The type of data and frequency of linkage have a major impact. For example, financial period-end data are fairly simple to synchronize. However, real time cross-system data validations and updates add more complexity and sensitivity to the process. In general, "synchronous" implies more complex technical issues than "asynchronous".

Technical Planning

In addition to the issues above related to global system infrastructure issues, more typical system planning issues need to be considered in the plan as well.

Technical considerations include the following:

- Hardware
 - Sizing, evaluation, installation, upgrades, maintenance
 - Disk storage
 - Data back-up devices
- Technical software issues
 - SAP release levels
 - Database releases (e.g., Oracle)
 - Operating system (e.g., Unix)

- Data communications
 - LAN
 - WAN (of particular importance in international environments)
 - TCP / IP
- Scheduling and executing "transports" - CTS between SAP instances and SAP clients
- Performance tuning
 - SAP, database, operating system, hardware, data communication
- System upgrades
 - SAP, database, operating system, hardware
- Troubleshooting and hot pack installation procedures
- 24 x 7 computer operations / technical support
- Help desk for users
- Disaster avoidance / disaster recovery / security
 - Secure / protected data center environment
 - Disaster recovery plan and/or secondary data center
 - File back-ups with off-site storage
 - Data archiving
 - SAP security administration – system access control
 - Fire walls for hardware access control

Change Management

Any SAP implementation brings change to organizations and more importantly to the people who work in these organizations. The magnitude of the change is determined by the impact of the new SAP technology to the system users and the new ways to do business for the employees. Many parts of the organization are effected and mostly the change process is very rapid and—in many cases—unknown and unexpected. While SAP projects represent a positive change, the perceptions of the people affected can be quite different. Thus, an SAP implementation requires active management of the change process throughout the project and beyond to ensure that the new solution is fully accepted and adopted by the people using it. This can ensure that the expected productivity gains and job satisfaction will actually be achieved.

In general, the categories of change requiring the greatest management are the following:

- Leadership Alignment
- Organizational Impact
- Internal Communication
- Project Team
- Training
- External Communication

International Implementations present a whole set of 'other' change management issues in addition to the traditional issues. Foremost are the issues of independence and cultural diversity. Subsidiaries may fear a larger influence from headquarters on the way the business is done locally. In the past, due to lack of integration with other parts of the organization, legacy systems left significant room for individual definition of information processing and business process design. SAP enforces the need to find agreement and common approaches on points that cross the local boundaries, such as international purchasing. To achieve true integration, high coordination efforts are required between the different organizational units. An example is the definition of a common chart of accounts to be used in the future, which may trigger a significant amount of redesign discussions.

At the same time there is a risk of ignoring local needs for the sake of integration and common processes, which may result in rejection of the new system by the local user community.

Other international implementation issues include the following:

- Cultural differences in general may lead to disagreement about the project itself (e.g., the project plan), about the decision making process for common issues, and about the degree of coordination each unit considers appropriate
- Communication between different parts of the organization is more difficult due to different languages and different cultural communication standards.
- Different organizational hierarchy standards require different design of responsibilities.
- Shifting responsibilities between headquarters and subsidiaries for common data maintenance and definition of standards.

Summary

International implementations can be complex, expensive and risky. Understanding the implications, issues and potential problems is mandatory to avoid failure. Success is only possible if a coherent strategy is developed, understood and agreed upon by senior company management, carried through by middle management, and accepted by end users. Early resolution of relevant issues will keep the project on track and avoid expensive redesign of conflicting business processes and the associated SAP system configurations.

What to do?

When planning to implement an international SAP Solution, it is fundamental to the success that headquarters, local subsidiaries and all other parts of a company organization impacted by the project are aware of the issues and challenges raised in this paper. CIBER Novasoft has designed specific workshops to address these challenges early in the process and to develop a common understanding about the issues and approach. During a CIBER Novasoft Global Implementation Strategy Workshop, an individually required course of action is developed and agreed upon. For example Organizations may form a task force, with representatives from each of the company's international units to followup on relevant issues and required decisions. Such decisions may result in significant preparations work required before the next SAP go-live, i.e. the redesign of common data within SAP, data cleansing in legacy systems or detailed common process definitions cross-company business units. CIBER Novasoft consultants are available to facilitate these activities from early planning to go-live support.

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Joerg Rohde is Vice President of the US SAP Practice of CIBER Novasoft. He joined CIBER in 2004, through the acquisition of Novasoft, a leading, international SAP Consulting Services centric organization, where he managed US Operations. Prior to Novasoft, Mr. Rohde held leadership positions at SAP Labs related to product development for SAP's advanced manufacturing applications and at Price Waterhouse Coopers, building PWC's US West Coast SAP Practice.

Following his education in Germany with a BS/MS degree in Supply Chain Management and Information Systems, Mr. Rohde looks back to more than 16 years of experience in SAP implementation management. He led several major SAP implementations and helped companies develop and manage global SAP rollout strategies. His clients include leading European and US based multinational & globally operating organizations, such as IBM, Intel, Hewlett Packard, Lear Automotive, 3Com, Moen and DHL.



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