

Reading Sample

In this chapter, you'll explore different ways to identify business use cases for SAP BTP. You'll learn about the types of common innovations, see how to identify gaps in your business processes using SAP Activate, and consider your extensibility options.



"Identifying Use Cases"



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SAP Business Technology Platform: An Introduction

570 Pages, 2022, \$79.95 ISBN 978-1-4932-2201-8



www.sap-press.com/5440

Chapter 11

Identifying Use Cases

SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) offers a range of different capabilities that we've discussed in previous chapters. We also discussed the architectural principles and patterns that are common across SAP BTP applications. Now it's time to go deeper into how SAP BTP is leveraged. In this chapter, we'll look at some use case patterns that will help you identify use cases in your landscape.

The \$900 sophisticated coffee maker is hissing fumes. The southwest corner of this 10,000 square foot facility is slowly but strongly getting engrossed with the aroma of the finest Brazilian coffee beans. It's a quarter past eight in the morning. Allan, the IT director of Rocking Gas Corporation, is restlessly waiting for his espresso. He has a meeting with Brian, the CTO, in 15 minutes. The email last night had already set the tone. Brian summoned the core steering committee for this urgent meeting to gauge the progress of the digital transformation projects that are led by Allan. One of the key points that surely will be strongly pitched is regarding the value propositions of all the software licenses that were procured in the past few months. Brian is keenly observant of return on investment and value outcomes of his IT investments. Among the different licenses procured, Rocking Gas has also procured SAP BTP in the preceding quarter. Allan personally pursued the SAP BTP adoption as he is well aligned with SAP's overall cloud strategy. Allan knows very well the capabilities of SAP BTP and would like to introduce this new platform within the company's IT landscape more frequently. However, in past months, he hasn't been able to convince line of business (LoB) owners to explore the possibilities. Most of the team members were trying to play it safe. Now, Allan needs to give an explanation of why SAP BTP was underused in its landscape and what can be done to unleash its power to get the best out of the product.

In this chapter, we'll discover the typical use case patterns that customers like Rocking Gas or others can leverage with SAP BTP. We'll then discuss typical business gaps with the SAP Activate methodology and your extensibility options.

11.1 Types of Innovation

In the following sections, we'll discuss different areas where business problems can be solved by SAP BTP. SAP BTP provides an open innovation platform that is virtually only limited by your imagination and how you leverage the platform to bring value to your

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use cases. To ignite your imagination and for the ease of understanding, we'll describe the following use case patterns:

- Extending functionality
- Extending reach
- Process innovation
- Process automation
- Cross-product workflow
- Cross-functional business processes
- Machine learning
- Internet of Things (IoT)

Note

We're in no way stating that these types of innovation use cases are the only possibilities in SAP BTP. Instead, we're focusing on the most popular and trending use cases.

11.1.1 Extending Functionality

For many SAP customers like Rocking Gas, SAP ERP or SAP S/4HANA is at the core of their IT landscape managing the enterprise. SAP with its traditional on-premise products gave full flexibility to its customers. Once licenses were procured, customers were virtually free to modify any line of code in the software codebase. SAP has given this immense flexibility for decades. Customers enjoyed this freedom and took the opportunity to shape their business processes as they wished. This high degree of flexibility of course came at a cost. Even though there are certain guidelines and best practices in place, many customers sporadically built their own custom logic to fulfill their business needs. Often these custom implementations aren't well thought out and are too deeply integrated to the core business functionalities. We've seen many customers who didn't explore all the power of standard functionalities offered by SAP in its regular codebase and instead embarked in developing a custom program using the traditional ABAP language. As a result, there has been free-range use of Z programs, custom tables, and user exits. While this gives end customers a lot of flexibility and ease in modifying the core, upgrading SAP to a newer version has become a monumental task. Often, we've seen customers need to take additional attention and budget for an upgrade project. These upgrade projects sometimes go on for months, adding to the total cost of ownership (TCO).

Over the past decade, the software industry has seen a dramatic revolution in innovation. While more and more software companies are coming up with cutting-edge innovations in their products, missing vital upgrades or delaying upgrades is often causing insurmountable costs to customers. As a result, competitors might have gained a vital

edge in this super-competitive market. Cloud-based software as a service (SaaS) products are probably the ultimate solution for this issue. In a pure SaaS world, customers are going to use SAP's standard codebase. In this ideal world, upgrades won't be handled by the customers, but instead managed by SAP, reducing the customer's upgrade cost drastically. This improves speed and agility and enables customers to adapt to market trends. However, with this option, there is limited flexibility to enhance the standard functionality.

SAP has catered to the enterprise needs of more than 400,000 customers worldwide for the past half century. Many have industry-specific solutions. Though SAP has offered a wide range of products in the enterprise core and via industry solutions based on extensive research and continuous innovation, it's often very common that each customer has differentiating processes. While one of the primary benefits of adapting cloud software is to adapt to the standard best practices, you ought to have unique processes that make your business special. These are the invaluable functional enhancements that customers won't let go. While on the one hand, for developers, SAP is putting stricter governance on customization and making options to modify the core fairly limited, on the other hand, for businesses, these differentiating processes are the ones that separate them from their competition. So, we need to find a way to fit these differentiating processes in after the fit-to-standard exercise.

Figure 11.1 shows the concept of extending functionality. This can be achieved by inapp, side-by-side, and hybrid methods, which we'll discuss further in Section 11.3.

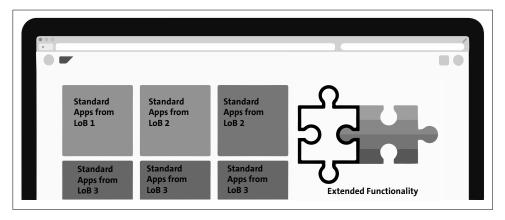


Figure 11.1 Extensibility Concept

During the fit-to-standard analysis, customers might identify add-on functionalities that are required for a business process and aren't exactly covered in the standard software. In such cases, you need to extend the functionality of an application or process. Typically, you start by identifying the functional scope needed here. This might require a user interface (UI) extension, a process extension, or integrating other LoB solutions. Depending on the use case, you may need to adapt an in-app, a side-by-side, or a hybrid

approach. Because the in-app scope is fairly limited, more often we see scenarios requiring a side-by-side extension to be built. A detailed decision matrix will be discussed on whether to go for in-app versus side-by-side extensions in later sections. However, here we'll highlight some of the prominent use case examples of extending functionality using SAP BTP:

■ Industry-specific need

There are standard apps that provide a generic industry-standard solution. However, for a specific industry, you need to add certain fields or logic. This may not be very simple, and the change can't be managed by key user extensibility (which we'll cover in Section 11.3.1). In such cases, there might be a need to modify the existing standard app in combination with an add-on process that is implemented in SAP BTP. It's even possible to create a whole new app using SAP BTP, which has the industry-specific add-on functionality without changing the standard functionality.

Customer benefit

Many times, organizations try to use add-on functionalities to make business dealings easier with a specific customer segment. The vital information required to provide the functionality may not be present in the core data model. SAP BTP is the place where you should build the add-on data model, model the add-on process, and deliver the add-on functionality. For example, let's say a company wants to capture geographic location and the corresponding COVID-19 risk data, along with each door-to-door delivery for their products. The traditional enterprise core may not have the necessary data model to fit in COVID-19 risk and geographic information for each customer. Here, you can extend the data model for customers to capture this peripheral data and keep that data in SAP BTP.

■ Government regulations

Many times, country-specific regulations and rules influence the business process. In such cases, if the organization is using a global template for the whole company and wants to make a specific solution for a country-specific app, this can be done via SAP BTP. Browser settings or call routing might be intuitively tracked to redirect to the country-specific app where it's required to have country-specific regulatory steps. Suppose a company is operating in Latin America. There are certain regulatory norms on financial reporting for Latin American countries. SAP BTP provides standard content for integration with such government authorities so that you need not worry about these additional regulatory requirements.

Compliance and standards

Though SAP has a wide coverage of various compliance and standards across the world, there might be specific compliance or standards that the customer organization needs to adhere to and that the standard applications aren't fully complying with. In such cases, you can extend the functionality in SAP BTP to comply with these standards. For example, any company operating in the European Union has to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). SAP BTP is compliant with GDPR, so you need not worry about putting out any additional effort to achieve compliance.

11.1.2 Extending Reach

The modern world is complex. With wide internet coverage across the world, mobile network connectivity, social media, and IoT, we have unprecedented network growth. We've spread a multiplanetary network across our solar system that can send communications in matter of a blip. More than 7 billion people on this planet are connected for their day-to-day work. Through smartphones and 5G connectivity, we've seen exponential growth of connectivity between humans and machine users. Fifty years ago, when SAP started its journey, there was barely any email communication across the world. Today, more than 3 billion people are connected over social media and sharing the moments of their lives every second, not only via text messages but also with a relentless infinite stream of media information flow.

Accordingly, the extent of business has dramatically changed over the past decade. Companies are no longer relying on conventional intercompany message exchanges such as Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), supply chains are managed via sophisticated business networks such as SAP Business Network, and business partners are collaborating and negotiating contracts over more interactive social media style platforms. Over the past decade with the growth of the internet and the progress of cloud technologies, we've seen newer offerings from SAP and dramatic improvements over SAP's architecture. From the monolithic architecture-based SAP R/2 to the three-tier SAP R/3 to the highly scalable, agile, microservice-based, cloud-native modern software service offerings, SAP has evolved a lot.

Figure 11.2 shows the extending reach concept. As you can see, the core functionality is extended to different channels, such as the internet and mobile devices.

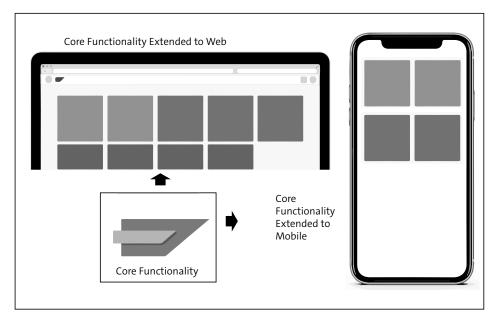


Figure 11.2 Extending Reach

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Because SAP BTP is offered on the cloud, its reach is wide and far extending. First, the platform is on the open internet. So, connecting to the world, be it business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), or business-to-government (B2G), can be executed with extreme ease. No more difficult network system management, network zone management or complex firewall rules are necessary. You've got an open, secured platform on the public cloud to interact B2B, B2C, and B2G. Let's explore the typical use case patterns when a business wants to extend its reach:

■ Adding channels

Many times, businesses want to simply add different channels to increase reach to their business. For this case, it's not necessary to enhance the core functionality. For example, an organization uses a time sheet application that lets its employees fill in times every week. Traditionally, the SAP time sheet would be used via Transaction CATSXT. This was good for in-house employees who are working well within the office network, but there could be other employees who aren't working within the corporate network, so a web interface would be more useful. SAP Fiori apps can be used via SAP BTP central launchpad in such cases. Again, this can further be extended to mobile or tablet devices for employees who are working in the field.

■ Providing collaborative platform

Collaborative platforms such as SAP Jam or Microsoft Teams are gaining popularity in business every day. There are growing trends to provide platforms to your business partners to exchange ideas, negotiate contracts, and engage in real-time collaboration to grow business. SAP Work Zone on SAP BTP is a perfect solution that provides such services. You can use SAP Work Zone to bring in a nice intuitive digital experience that provides secured role-based access to various business partners. This can be a platform for exchanging notes and documents, doing transactions, viewing critical analytics, and managing cross-business workflow.

■ Internal versus external user base

We've seen many use cases where a business wants to expose part of its core business functionality to some wider external users. These users many not be part of this core organization, such as contractors, suppliers, customers, or any third party. SAP BTP provides a nice segregation between your core and the external-facing layer. This is where the two-layered architecture comes into play. External users can use vital information and do critical business transactions using various channels such as the SAP Launchpad service, SAP Work Zone, or mobile devices using SAP Mobile Services or even interact with artificial intelligence (AI) conversational bots built on SAP Conversational AI.

■ Extending to government service

Government regulations are part of business, and businesses need to comply with such requirements all the time. In the past, we've seen businesses develop custom solutions to comply and integrate with such government data interchange. With SAP BTP business services, you can leverage many standards that help organizations with their B2G interactions.

■ Online and offline scenarios

There are certain critical situations where certain users may not be able to get online access to the system. A typical example is a plant shop floor with hazardous materials where there are restrictions on connectivity and networks. In the past, either a manually intensive process needed to take place to record business data in such situations, or, in some cases, costly compliant devices needed to be installed. With SAP BTP mobile development kits (MDKs), you can now build business apps with offline support in a matter of a few days.

11.1.3 Process Innovation

Consider a brick-and-mortar grocery shop that used to have two employees. It was the norm for all customers to stop by the shop for retail groceries. The two employees who supported the business were receiving a fixed salary. The shop was open Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. Usually, local customers couldn't get any service outside this stipulated time. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, customers couldn't reach such shops, resulting in a sharp decline in their business. Within a month, this small vendor opened a door-to-door service serving the neighborhood for an extended range of time. On demand, the business process was remodeled almost overnight. There are additional employees now who are working on a commission basis for a wider time range, and they have employed one employee to handle phone call requests in the store and one employee to manage inventory.

This example emphasizes the need for flexibility and agility to do business in the fluid world of today. This situation is no different for Fortune 500 companies.

SAP BTP really comes in handy in such situations where managing complex business processes have never been easier. The following lists some of the typical use case scenario patterns:

■ Defining a process model

Customers can use business process intelligence tools such as SAP Signavio to model business processes. SAP Signavio is a powerful tool with which you can define the end-to-end business processes by using and all-in-one business process management journey. These process models are purely driven by business requirements. At this stage, the customer may not identify which part of the process is covered by standard development and which part requires custom development.

Using process templates

SAP BTP's process flexibility capability is part of SAP Intelligent Business Process Management (SAP Intelligent BPM) suite. This service offers standard business processes out of the box that can easily be adopted and modified according to business needs. Thus, it's not always required to build processes from scratch; rather, you can quickly modify and adopt a standard process.

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■ New process outside core

Sometimes you may have an innovative process that isn't related to your core business process. You may need new edge solutions such as machine learning or augmented reality for such processes. SAP BTP can be your innovation platform in this case. You can leverage machine learning foundation from an SAP BTP AI service or even leverage a host of AI-driven business services such as document classification, document extraction, and so on to define and manage your process.

■ Process integration

Often, you'll find the need to integrate your innovative process with some of the established processes in the core. Integration to this core process is the key here to succeed to bring in the overall value to business. In certain cases, SAP BTP offers SAP Integration Suite. At the heart of SAP Integration Suite, you'll find the Cloud Integration capability that provides a means to connect, map, and orchestrate message-based process flows. You can use a host of standard adapters to connect a wide range of solutions. If needed, you can develop your own adapter as well. For all practical purposes, however, Cloud Integration does provide a robust framework and wide range of adapters that are adequately sufficient for most scenarios.

11.1.4 Process Automation

Let's recall a famous scene from *Modern Times*, a silent film from the 1930s by Charlie Chaplin. The worker in the assembly line was twisting the bolts, perhaps a million times a day. Perhaps those scenes were a reality during the early 20th century. However, during the fourth industrial revolution, we've seen robots replacing human labors for repetitive tasks. Now if you go to any modern-day shop floor, you'll hardly find people twisting bolts in an assembly line. Major car manufacturers and heavy industries have put sophisticated robots to do such hazardous and repetitive tasks. Human effort, however, is leveraged in what they do best—design and innovation.

Robotic process automation (RPA) is providing the same value proposition today as the industrial robots provided to the production assembly line. Imagine in your day-to-day office work how many repetitive tasks you must do. Perhaps you're a procurement manager, and you need to find the best price of various commodity goods required in your organization. You need to go to various websites and collect price listings, carefully examine various criteria, and find the best match. Or suppose you're a car salesman. Every day, the dealership provides the list of cars arriving in the lot, and you need to put the car specs, price, offers, and margins in the system and provide a detailed daily report on sales and inventory balances to your sales manager. This is just a glimpse. In the real world, there are many repetitive tasks we have to do in our daily life, which perhaps don't make the best productive use of our potential. You can argue that we have APIs and other sophisticated means to integrate applications, and targeted business applications help business users ease laborious processes to execute their

tasks. However, in reality, we still need to click, copy, and paste in a repetitive fashion too many times every day.

Figure 11.3 shows the value proposition of intelligent processes that assist business users, help adapt processes, and automate processes.

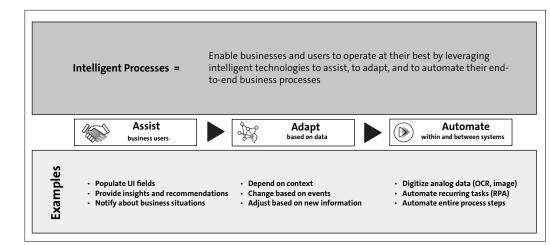


Figure 11.3 Process Intelligence

SAP Intelligent Robotic Process Automation (SAP Intelligent RPA) is aligned with its intelligent process strategy. Broadly, SAP Intelligent RPA accelerates the digital transformation of business processes by automatically replicating tedious actions that have no added value. It offers the following modes:

■ Attended mode

RPA can be semiautomated where the robot interacts with the user to execute the tasks. In such scenarios, the bot executes certain tasks but may need human assistance or guidance. This scenario is also referred to as robotic desktop automation. Typically, the scenarios covered in this type of RPA include screen scraping, website or GUI-based applications, and so on in which bots co-work with human users.

■ Unattended mode

In this RPA mode, the bot is completely doing the task on its own, maybe in background in such cases. These processes are often scheduled, highly scalable, and use APIs and script tasks.

Figure 11.4 shows the different components of SAP Intelligent RPA. SAP Intelligent RPA has an agent typically installed in a local computer. You need to design the process flow in the designer that is hosted on the cloud. The automated process can be orchestrated based on your process design and can use the agent for local processing.

SAP BTP provides a full-scale, full-range service with SAP Intelligent RPA. Through this service, you can train bots to do the repetitive tasks, manage environments, and even

integrate the automated bot processes to other SAP BTP services. For example, you can initiate an automated bot-based process from within a chat interaction via SAP Conversational AI. Again, it's very possible to integrate other SAP BTP services in a bot-based process flow. For example, an unattended bot may be checking incoming email requests and then sending the email body to the SAP BTP machine learning service to do text extraction. If the bot finds a request to quote, then it calls an API via SAP BTP API management to get quote information from SAP Customer Experience, saves the record on SAP BTP's SAP HANA Cloud service, and sends an email notification to the requester.

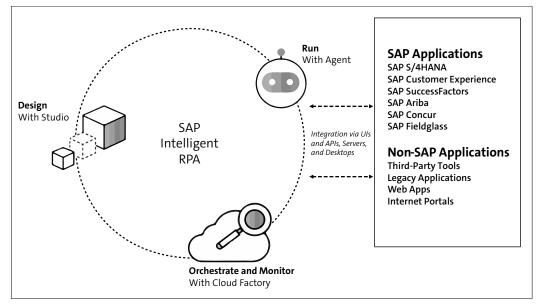


Figure 11.4 Components of SAP Intelligent RPA

11.1.5 Cross-Product Workflow

Over the past several years, enterprise applications have become more complex. The extent and functionality coverage has increased. As a result, enterprises are relying on specialized LoB solutions more and more, which is resulting in a distributed architecture. For example, when your organization was small, you could have managed all your core business operations, such as customer experience, sales and distribution, procurement, production, human resource management, and finance, all in a single core system (e.g., SAP ERP). Now, as your organization is growing and extending wide in functionality and reach, you may want to distribute certain specialized operations to specialized LoB solutions. For example, you're now managing HR operations in SAP SuccessFactors, customer engagement is via SAP Customer Experience, supply chain via SAP Ariba, travel operations by SAP Concur, and the list goes on. However, at the heart of the entire landscape, you still need some core solution such as SAP ERP or SAP

S/4HANA to manage your core business operations and processes. In a modern-day enterprise, this kind of distributed landscape is more common. Often, we see processes that touch multiple LoB solutions. This is where a cross-application/cross-product workflow comes into the picture.

Figure 11.5 depicts the concept of a cross-product workflow. One workflow may touch different business objects from different LoB solutions.

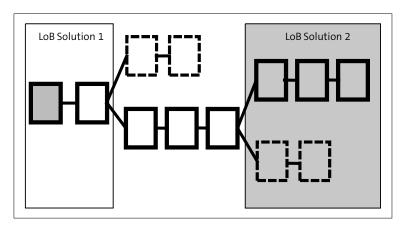


Figure 11.5 Cross-Product Workflow

In many SAP implementations, different LoB-centric solution teams work in silos. They are more focused on their respective areas and try to provide solutions to the enterprise in their own way. This is where enterprise architects and project management should step in to see the bigger picture. It's now more necessary to bring in the integration questions earlier in the implementation cycle. This is where you need to bring in a wider view to see the overall picture rather than looking deep into one LoB-centric solution. For example, we've seen enterprises implementing SAP SuccessFactors, SAP S/4HANA, and SAP Concur in three different projects with three different teams. Often, there is no or little harmonization between these project teams. This results in some blind spots for your enterprise. We've seen enterprises investing in these projects in silos for too long and going into narrower objectives. Because you're not viewing the solution from the perspective of the entire organization, it's very common to miss out on opportunities.

Another pitfall here is the tendency to focus on existing workflows. In a centralized system, you may have some existing workflow cutting across different business objects or audiences. In a to-be world, you need to see the overall scenario in the enterprise before you decide on how to go with such a workflow. For example, you may have a travel approval workflow built on SAP Business Workflow in SAP ERP. Your organization is embarking on an SAP S/4HANA transformation journey, and you want to reimplement the workflow now in SAP S/4HANA. However, before you jump onto the technical nitty-gritty of how to reimplement this workflow within SAP S/4HANA, check out

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whether the travel operations are still going to be done entirely within SAP S/4HANA or whether SAP Concur is being implemented by another project team that may need to be integrated in the near future. If the entire solution is now distributed over multiple products (here, SAP S/4HANA and SAP Concur), it would probably make more sense to use a cross-product workflow.

To help with this process, SAP BTP comes with scalable, flexible, full-scale workflow management that is based on open-source technologies, as shown in Figure 11.6. SAP Workflow Management provides not only a flexible suite to manage your workflow but also a solution to manage business rules, which are vital inputs on how the workflow will behave contextually. In addition, it comes with a process visibility dashboard that shows real-time information on how the workflow instances are behaving. You can show intuitive information based on key performance indicators (KPIs) to plug in to vital business statistics that will drive your actions through the workflow. In addition, an integrated inbox called the My Inbox app is part of the suite that manages all your workflow tasks in a more modern and innovative UX. The tile-based UX for process visibility shows your KPIs, provides analytics, and helps you manage the overall process flow across your enterprise.

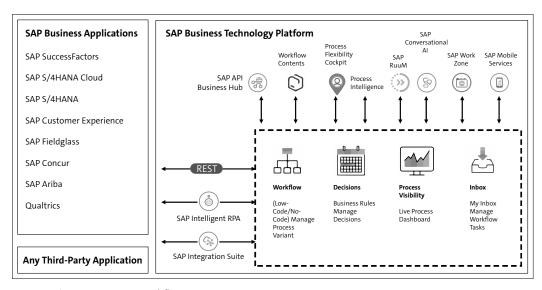


Figure 11.6 SAP Workflow Management

Certainly, you'll discover many possibilities in SAP Workflow Management that were far into your imagination in a traditional workflow world. As Figure 11.6 shows, SAP Workflow Management offers different capabilities such as workflow, business rules, process visibility, and the My Inbox app that can be integrated into your SAP BTP launchpad to centrally manage all tasks and KPIs. This workflow sits in the middle of your landscape and connects processes across different LoB solutions.

11.1.6 Cross-Functional Business Processes

When the horizon of your enterprise expands, the functionalities and end-to-end processes can barely be catered to by one product or solution. Often, we see complex process flows such as procure to pay or quote to invoice spanning multiple systems—simply because in a modern distributed landscape, you have specialized LoB solutions spanning landscapes that cut across various parts of the processes.

Let's consider, for example, an organization managing the procure-to-pay process. In the past, if you had a simple core system, you would probably be content with SAP's procurement and finance modules. You would manage your vendors, prepare contracts, place a purchase order, manage inbound delivery, and eventually do the due diligence on financials by managing accounts payables. However, more possibilities are now on the table. Your competitors are negotiating with vendors to get lower prices and better quality every day, eventually increasing profit margin and outperforming your organization. So, the extent of the procure-to-pay process doesn't start from vendor onboarding anymore; you probably need a better platform to negotiate contracts with vendors, provide ease in collaboration, and offer a guided buying procedure. For all these cutting-edge business processes, SAP offers SAP Ariba functionalities. However, now even if you move your procurement process to SAP Ariba, you still need financials reporting to the core. As a result, the process is now extended across your ERP core (SAP ERP or SAP S/4HANA) and SAP Ariba.

As we've seen, end-to-end business processes may span different LoB solutions, which is known as cross-functional business processes, as shown in Figure 11.7.

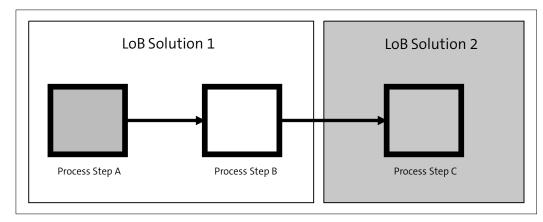


Figure 11.7 Cross-Functional Business Process

Cross-functional business processes have the following requirements:

Domain model

Cross-functional business processes must be integrated across the products. SAP BTP provides a one domain model for the standard business objects for such end-to-end

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processes. In addition, it provides SAP Graph to explore the details of the domain model that can be leveraged to integrate these systems seamlessly.

■ Integration need

Though SAP provides one domain model for most critical business objects and entities, and is expanding fast in this area, you may encounter various scenarios where you need specialized integration, custom mapping, and message orchestration. In these cases, the Cloud Integration capability comes in handy. The Cloud Integration capability provides full swing capabilities to integrate different systems on an application-to-application (A2A) or B2B integration.

■ Cross-LoB functionality

There might be scenarios where a business is innovating some process that requires integration between two processes in two different LoBs. For example, suppose you're trying to make an agile approval process for your purchase requisitions. Apparently, this process is tied up to procure to pay, and it may seem that all the necessary business entities are present in SAP S/4HANA itself. But in a distributed land-scape, you may have the vendor information from SAP S/4HANA, product catalog coming from SAP Ariba, and organizational hierarchy from SAP SuccessFactors. In such cases, you typically need a common platform where you'll build your business logic and give users a place to operate. SAP BTP is the right place as it provides a cross-product workflow and SAP BTP launchpad that integrates the inbox, analytics, and vital KPIs in one place. You can manage all business users via the Identity Authentication service and give them role-based access to perform their business operations.

11.1.7 Machine Learning

AI is now part and parcel of our daily lives. When we see movie recommendations from Netflix based on our likes or dislikes, auto complete in our email applications, and driverless autopilot in action on the streets, we're getting service from AI. Every like or reaction to your Facebook post is fed back to contribute to shaping your personalized content.

Machine learning is the backbone of AI. Instead of the traditional approach where we used to tell computers the algorithm to compute data, it's the reverse here. We feed in real data to come up with mathematical models that are best fit to see patterns or trends or to solve a particular problem. So, we start with data and arrive at an algorithm that best addresses the pattern of the problem. This is immensely useful for business use cases. We're now seeing scenarios where, based on sales history data, we can predict the sales forecast more accurately, use regression algorithms to find patterns on commodity price trends, and apply clustering algorithms to better group customer segmentations. These are just the tip of the iceberg. Implications of machine learning algorithms in business processes are deep and far reaching.

Figure 11.8 shows the type of machine learning and typical example use cases. It shows the typical classification of different machine learning algorithms. Broadly, we can classify machine learning algorithms into four categories:

Supervised learning

In this type of machine learning, the machine learning algorithm maps an input to an output based on some example input-output (I/O) pairs. In other words, it has labels. Here are a few examples:

- Regression algorithms can be used for prediction or trend analysis, for example, to determine future sales volume or trends of a product popularity.
- Classification algorithms can be used to classify cases, for example, to determine
 whether a purchasing transaction is a fraudulent one based on time, amount,
 location, and so on.

Unsupervised learning

For unsupervised learning, no labels are provided as input. Various popular clustering algorithms are used such as Random Forest, K Nearest Means, and so on. These types of algorithms are helpful to customer segmentation, for example.

Semisupervised learning

In this type of machine learning algorithms, some sets of data are provided with label inputs and other sets of data can use that input to cluster the other broader examples.

■ Reinforced learning

This type of machine learning algorithm is more popular for self-learning autopilot and game programming where the model learns and improves itself based on the reward.

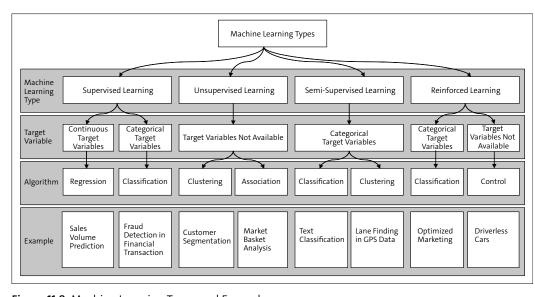


Figure 11.8 Machine Learning Types and Examples

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SAP has already invested heavily in research, developing algorithms, and providing fine-tuned business services that leverage full-scale machine learning. There are primarily three ways SAP offers machine learning and AI capabilities:

■ Embedded

Many machine learning algorithms are now embedded in standard functionalities of SAP products. For example, the automatic account reconciliation functionality in SAP S/4HANA uses machine learning, as does SAP Concur to extract vital information out of scanned receipts and automatically post the information in the expense report. It's beyond the scope of this book to discuss the extent of these embedded intelligent applications, but we want to emphasize that within SAP products, there is already a large machine learning footprint.

■ As a service

SAP also provides the platform and services to build, modify, and leverage machine learning—based business functionalities in the form of services. This is exactly where SAP BTP comes into the picture. You may have scenarios where you need to classify documents or extract vital information from scanned documents. SAP AI Business Services provides you standard functionality to extract the most commonly used fields from a list of business documents, such as invoices. You might have to spend months to develop such an algorithm that is fine-tuned for your scenario. With SAP AI Business Services, you can do this in just a few hours. It delivers preconfigured machine learning models, allows you to train the models based on your data, and then provides an inference layer API so that you can consume the result based on an open architecture.

■ Developing platform

Often the primary challenge to develop meaningful and effective machine learning models isn't the skill set or understanding of mathematical models, but instead finding good data. A lot of data is required to develop and train models, and the quality of the data must be maintained. For example, for an image recognition problem, you may need to feed the machine learning algorithm with thousands of sample training images with consistent resolution and size. Often resizing and cleansing the data in the right format is a challenge. Again, it's not always good to have all positive use cases to train a model. You need to have a good mix of various data to avoid overfitting problems. Yet we need a platform to try and experiment with various machine learning algorithms to play around and see which is best suited. The platform needs to provide robust capabilities like large-scale data ingestion, data cleansing to maintain quality, and flexibility to explore new paths and find the best one.

SAP BTP provides all these capabilities with SAP Data Intelligence, where you can do data ingestion from various data sources, merge and wrangle data, cleanse accord-

ing to need and maintain high quality, and have a flexible framework to use Jupyter

Notebook to experiment with machine learning algorithms such as deep learning, convolutional neural networks, and so on. In addition, SAP Data Intelligence provides the means to publish the inference layer of the developed model via APIs so that you can easily consume the outcomes from your business applications.

11.1.8 Internet of Things

They say the first industrial revolution was the use of steam engines in industries, reducing manual mechanical labor. The second revolution was powered by electricity and scientific progress. The third revolution emerged with unprecedented progress in computer science and telecommunications. We're now at a stage to embark into the fourth industrial revolution powered by IoT. The internet, a network of networks, was originally meant to connect people with other people. Of course, these communications were possible by means of machines. There is a host of electronic equipment that made the internet possible. The fundamental shift of thought in IoT is that communication is initiated and received between machines.

Figure 11.9 shows the different stages of industrial revolution: mechanical, electrical, automation, and IoT.

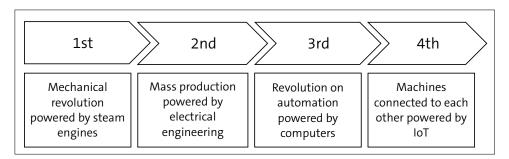


Figure 11.9 Stages of Industrial Revolution

During the past decade, we've seen many sporadic solutions to connect industrial machineries to computer systems, including efforts to integrate machine statistics to feed into SAP Manufacturing Integration and Intelligence (SAP MII) solutions. However, what IoT brings into the industry is vaster and wider. This isn't only limited to specific mechanical devices or specific industries. IoT is based on certain industry standards. Manufacturers from consumer goods to retail to heavy industries everywhere are trying to set these standards, and machine-to-machine communication protocols are standardized. This results in wider possibilities to provide a platform that enables customers across various industries to bring in digital twins (the digital replica of a physical machine or object that has similar characteristics as the physical object). Unlike previous solutions to address specific problems, IoT demands a wider platform

11 Identifying Use Cases 11.2 Identify Business Gaps

that enables customers to manage devices, process messages, and handle a wide variety of low-level edge protocols.

SAP BTP provides SAP Internet of Things (SAP IoT), which fulfills all these needs. Broadly, SAP IoT provides the following:

■ Digital twin model

You can model a digital twin of your device in SAP IoT to help identify performance, emulate features, and model control behaviors.

■ IoT-driven event response

SAP IoT provides out-of-the-box support for various edge protocols (the low-level protocols for machine-to-machine communication) to support various industry standards. The SAP Edge Services platform supports various protocols such as Constrained Application Protocol (CoAP), File, Modbus, Message Queuing Telemetry Transport (MQTT), Open Platform Communications United Architecture (OPU CA), representational transfer (REST), SigFox, and Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP).

■ Auto ID-based smart sensing

Identify things in real time using smart sensing and integrate them into core business processes.

■ IoT data lake

SAP IoT provides a robust, state-of-the-art, customer-managed data lake solution to manage multitier time series data.

■ IoT-empowered business process

Reimagine your business process to explore possibilities by incorporating IoT data. For example, large agricultural farms are now using various sensory data such as soil moisture, water level, ambient temperature and so on to control watering plants in the farm fields. Drone images are being used in combination with machine learning to recognize color patterns of crop fields to understand the growth of crops in specific fields.

IoT analytics

You can use the SAP BTP cockpit to get standard views on devices and message behaviors. In addition, these vital statistics again can be conglomerated with other business data to provide more insights using SAP Analytics Cloud.

11.2 Identify Business Gaps

As SAP is focusing more offerings on cloud-based software, more and more functionalities are becoming standard. In addition, systems are upgraded to the latest and greatest to match up with all the latest innovations more easily. At least, that's the intention. However, we know SAP landscapes for customers aren't so simple. There are modifications and key differentiating processes that may not be possible to cover within the standard functionality. Unlike traditional project management methodologies, in SAP S/4HANA and SAP S/4HANA Cloud projects, we rely on the SAP Activate methodology, which emphasizes a *fit-to-standard* approach.

Figure 11.10 shows the significance of the fit-to-standard exercise in a typical SAP S/4HANA project where the SAP Activate methodology is followed. We discover the initial scope in the discover phase, and the business-driven configuration occurs in the prepare phase. In the explore phase, the fit-to-standard workshop tries to map the business processes and fit it to the standard delivered processes; as a result, a configuration backlog in produced. In the realize phase, these backlogs drive the necessary configuration and development needs. One of the primary deliverables for the fit-to-standard workshop is configuration backlogs and integration and extension requirements. This results in a list of identified functional gaps that translates into interface and extension requirements.

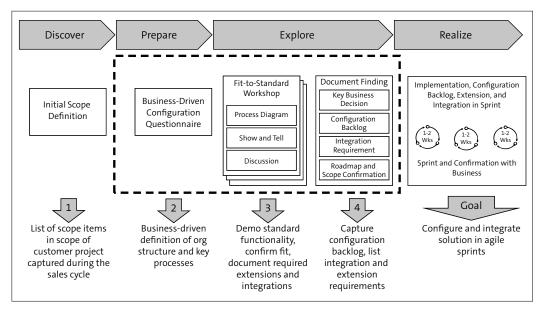


Figure 11.10 SAP Activate Methodology and Fit-to-Standard Exercise

On a broad level, the overall approach to implementation projects has changed. Figure 11.11 shows the difference in development approaches between past SAP ERP and SAP S/4HANA implementations and modern SAP S/4HANA implementations. As you can see, in the past, you have a license for the ERP system, and it's installed on-premise. As a result, customers have full freedom to modify the ERP from core code. Typically, these enhancements are very tightly coupled with the core solution. The downside is

that this tightly coupled enhancement often breaks the upgrade path. Of course, developers enjoyed the homogeneous technical landscape where virtually the entire project was executed on the ABAP platform. For many implementations, this is confined within a few homogeneous solutions such as SAP ERP, SAP Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM), SAP Human Capital Management (SAP HCM), and so on. However, there was a trade-off with scalability. We needed sophisticated custom solutions and ingenuity to scale a solution. Overall, the TCO for the solution and solution upgrade was much higher.

In modern SAP S/4HANA implementations, the approach is quite different. After the fitto-standard workshop, we're now able to understand the functional gaps. These functional gaps are often listed in key design documents (KDDs). Then one functional gap may translate to one or multiple collections of interfaces and extensions. There are welldefined methodologies to identify and approach these extensions and classify them to be implemented via an in-app, side-by-side, or hybrid approach (see Section 11.3). The side-by-side extensions are loosely coupled to the core solution based on a stable contract to whitelisted APIs. Side-by-side extensibility gives flexibility in terms of a wide range of technology choice. You can leverage the full potential of open-source technologies to implement such extensions. As SAP BTP-based side-by-side extensions are cloud based, these are inherently scalable. SAP BTP provides first-class tooling such as SAP Web IDE, SAP Business Application Studio, or Eclipse for ABAP Development Tools (ADT) that developers can leverage to quickly build SAP applications. So, for this modern approach, there are shorter sprint cycles to manage projects, and value-based outcomes come in shorter cycles. We've discussed the DevOps practice and value of continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD) in Chapter 10. Efficient DevOps and CI/CD practices help in such implementations and provide quicker time to value.

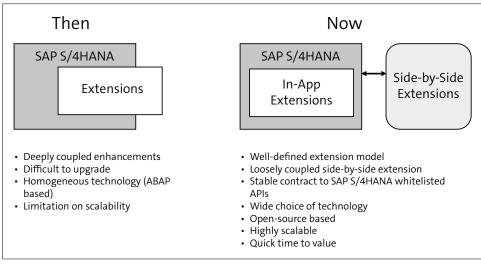


Figure 11.11 Approach to Extensions

11.3 Extensibility Concept

Unlike the traditional enhancement options such as user exits, enhancement spots, and so on, SAP S/4HANA suggests doing the functional enhancements by extensions. There are primarily two techniques that we follow to extend a SaaS solution, which we'll discuss and compare in the following sections.

11.3.1 In-App Extensions

SaaS solutions are typically delivered in the cloud, so they share a codebase between different tenants. When you get a subscription to a SaaS solution, you don't have full control over the codebase. In addition, the SaaS provider can't provide full customization specific to your needs as one specific customization may contradict others. So, SaaS products provide a controlled mechanism to implement some part of an extension. There are provisions to extend the data models. In addition, there are specific points in the UX where you can plug in extensions. For example, SAP SuccessFactors provides the Metadata Framework (MDF) to enhance the data model. In addition, you can add custom tiles and pages in SAP SuccessFactors apps.

SAP S/4HANA provides certain mechanisms that allow power users to enhance the data model, build custom logic, and build the UI on top of it. This is called *key user extensibility*. Figure 11.12 gives some more insights on different in-app extension mechanisms that SAP S/4HANA provides.

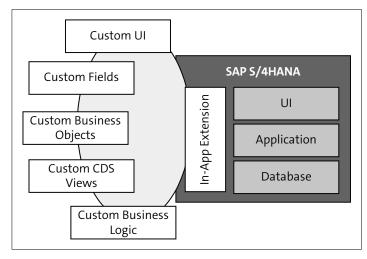


Figure 11.12 SAP S/4HANA In-App Extension Mechanisms

Key user extensibility mechanisms can be categorized under the following, as shown in Figure 11.12:

■ UI adaptation

Figure 11.13 shows UI adaptation possibilities by key users in an SAP S/4HANA system. When you click the **Adapt UI** option, you can do the following:

- Hide fields in a form or table and hide groups and areas.
- Rename labels.
- Add fields to the UI from the field repository.
- Move form fields to UI groups.
- Combine or split fields.
- Define new filters or variants.

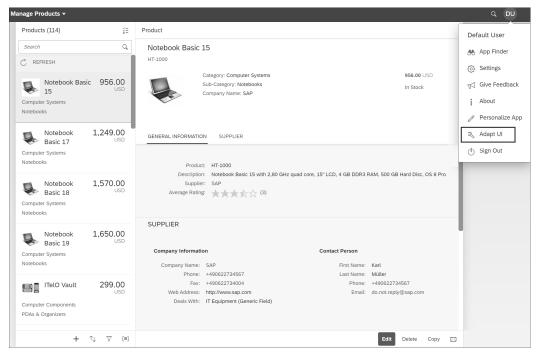


Figure 11.13 UI Adaptation Options by Key Users

■ Custom fields and tables

Figure 11.14 shows the Custom Fields and Logic app, where you can create custom fields in SAP S/4HANA. The following options are available:

- Create and edit custom fields.
- Delete existing custom fields.
- Manage usage of custom fields.
- Define associations.
- Extend CDS views and OData services.

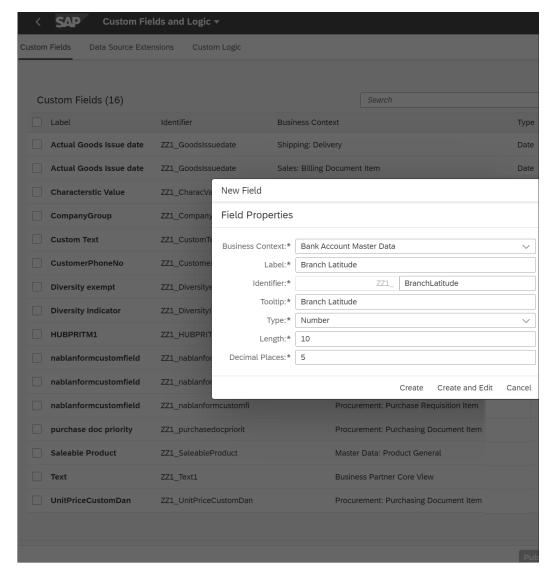


Figure 11.14 Custom Fields App

Custom analytics and forms

Figure 11.15 shows the Manage KPIs and Reports app in SAP S/4HANA. Key users can define KPIs using this app. It's your primary app for creating all analytical applications using KPIs, reports, stories, and so on. Created applications can be launched directly from the SAP Fiori launchpad. The following options are available:

- Modify SAP-delivered KPIs.
- Define drilldowns.
- Apply filters.

- Save filtered analyses.
- Define association between KPIs
- Define custom forms and manage output types.

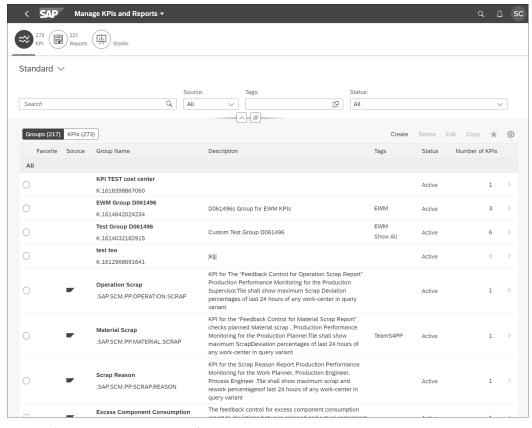


Figure 11.15 Manage KPIs and Reports App

■ Custom business objects

Figure 11.16 shows the Custom Business Object app that gives you the opportunity to create custom business objects in SAP S/4HANA. The Custom Business Object app lets you create your own business objects, add custom fields to existing business objects, create CDS data models, and so on. The following options are available:

- Create your own business objects.
- Add fields to business objects.

- Create CDS views and OData services.
- Define field type associations.
- Create multiple subnodes for business objects.

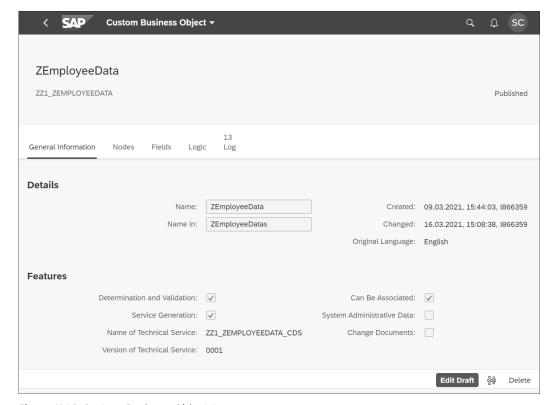


Figure 11.16 Custom Business Object App

■ Custom business logic

Figure 11.17 shows the Custom Fields and Logic app. In this example, you can see how custom business logic is implemented. You can think of this as conceptually the same as business add-ins (BAdIs) where you can write custom business logic by plugging in the standard business object behaviors. The following options are available:

- Build your custom logic.
- Easily explore APIs.
- Perform syntax checks.
- Limit to restricted ABAP.

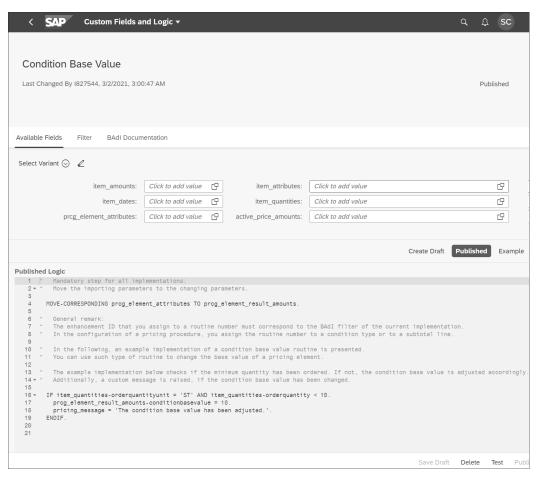


Figure 11.17 Custom Fields and Logic App

Overall, in-app extensions provide a way to infuse critical custom logic within the core SAP S/4HANA functionality. Even though in-app options are fairly limited, using these options is the future-proof way to integrate custom logic within the core functionality. Figure 11.18 depicts how these in-app extension technologies are well integrated with standard SAP functionality, providing powerful extensibility options while keeping the core clean. The shaded parts are SAP standard deliverable objects. The unshaded parts are the custom UI, custom business objects, UI adaptation, and so on that let you make in-app enhancements.

However, there are limitations on how much you can achieve with in-app extensions. When you look at an extension request, you should try to check if this is possible within the in-app extensibility framework. When the extension requirements are fairly simple, you can accommodate this to the in-app framework. However, more complex requirements demand more complex development that can't be realized by power users only. In such cases, developers are required to build applications.

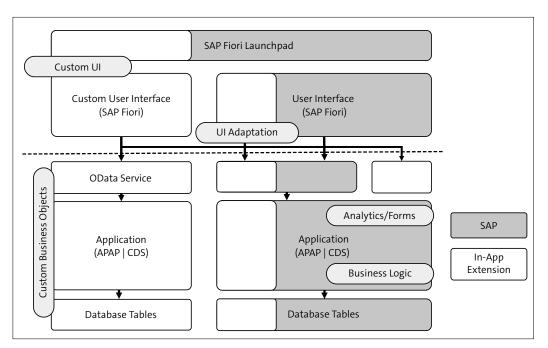


Figure 11.18 In-App Options in SAP S/4HANA

Figure 11.19 shows the limitation of key user extensibility. If the business requirement is to implement more complex logic, then you need to use side-by-side extensibility where developer-intensive work is necessary as opposed to key user extensibility where power business users can manage the extensions. We'll discuss these extensions next.

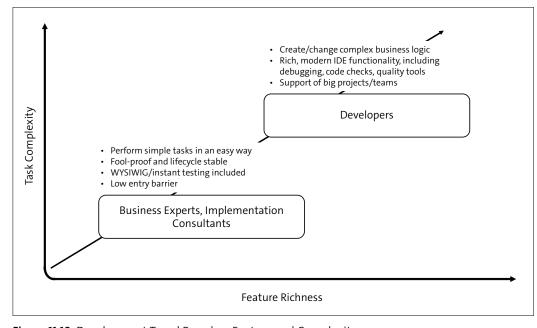


Figure 11.19 Development Trend Based on Feature and Complexity

11.3.2 Side-by-Side Extensibility

Side-by-side extensibility covers the bulk of scenarios that can't be accommodated with in-app extensions. This is where SAP BTP comes in handy to implement these loosely coupled extensibility techniques. Side-by-side extensions open up the door of possibilities. Unlike in-app, you have a wide choice of UI technologies runtimes, programming languages, programming models, databases, and architecture styles that can be leveraged in side-by-side extension (see Figure 11.20).

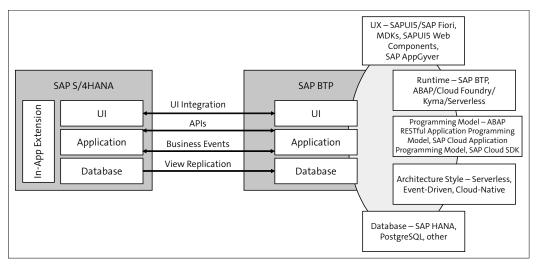


Figure 11.20 Side-by-Side Extensibility Mechanisms

For side-by-side extensibility, different services from SAP Extension Suite are leveraged. Typically, we have to take care of the core data model extension, which can result in custom tables, views, or complex persistent objects such as unstructured data. SAP Extension Suite supports a host of relational and in-memory database solutions for structured data and an ObjectStore for unstructured data that can be flexibly integrated to underlying hyperscaler offerings. We discussed these options in detail in Chapter 7.

While developing the core application, SAP BTP provides you different choices of runtimes. We've already covered details of these runtimes and decision metrics on which one suits which type of extension in Chapter 5.

Similarly, SAP BTP provides flexibility of programming model and language choice. For example, SAP Cloud Application Programming Model can be implemented using Node.js or Java, while the ABAP RESTful application programming model relies on ABAP RESTful programming. In addition, you can build apps using available Cloud Foundry runtimes such as Python or Go. While building cloud-native apps, SAP BTP gives you the choice of having a Kubernetes-based Kyma runtime that is highly scalable and flexible, and you can use virtually any language and runtime using containers.

For UI technologies, you also have different choices. You can either follow SAPUI5-based development or use SAP Fiori elements if your design adheres to SAP Fiori principles.

Additionally, you have MDK web version and low code/no code (LC/NC) platforms such as SAP AppGyver to build apps quickly and easily.

11.3.3 In-App versus Side-by-Side Extensibility

We often hear the buzzword phrase: keep the core clean. Fundamentally, keeping the core clean means that you shouldn't do extensive modifications to the core standard solution so that your overall solution is jeopardized when upgrading in the future. We'll discuss some more details to help understand this concept.

Figure 11.21 shows the dos and don'ts for keeping the core clean. These are some general recommendations and guidelines that should be followed during an implementation. It shows a comparative review of a traditional extension approach versus a modern extensibility approach where you rely on whitelisted BAdIs, APIs, events, and virtual data models, unlike the traditional approach of core modification, user includes, direct database writes, dynamic calls, implicit enhancement spots, code generation, and so on.

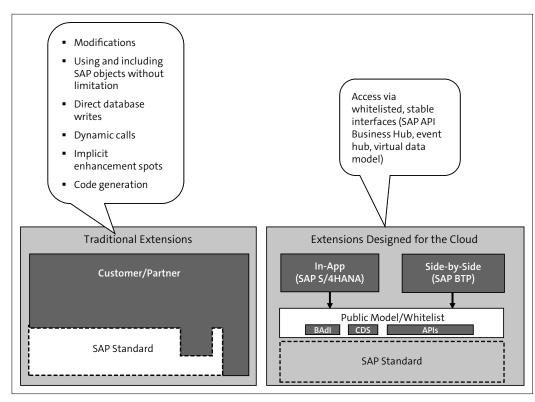


Figure 11.21 Keep the Core Clean: The Right Approach

During implementation cycles, we often encounter questions on what a litmus test is to check whether we're following the right guidelines to keep the core clean. Figure 11.22 provides a clean core index that serves as this litmus test. Applying zero modification

is the goal. However, in most cases, that's not practical. You need to take it case by case and go through these checks step by step.

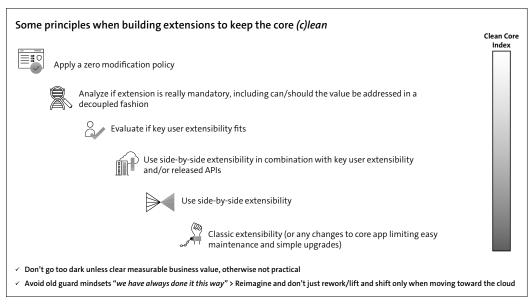


Figure 11.22 Litmus Meter to Keep the Core Clean

One of the key questions that we face commonly is whether to develop an in-app versus side-by-side extension. The previous two sections already described in detail the possibilities with an in-app framework. One rule of thumb is to check first whether the requirement can be met by the in-app limitations. If not, then you need to think of side-by-side extensions. The matrix shown in Figure 11.23 provides a high-level guideline on the scope horizon for in-app extensions and where the horizon is extended for side-by-side extensions. It shows what type of use cases are best fit for in-app extensions and what type of developments are best fit for side-by-side extensions.

SAP S/4HANA provides business configurations that are similar to traditional SAP IMG. On top of this, SAP S/4HANA gives some degree of flexibility for power users in terms of UI adaptation and individual terminology definition. The next level of extensions can be achieved using custom UIs, custom business objects, custom business logic, and so on, which falls under the in-app framework itself. Beyond this, when you need to build a complete custom business process or extend the reach of the app to a wider audience, you need to build a complete custom app. Then, you're gradually entering the domain of side-by-side extensions.

Notice that in certain scenarios, you can even use combinations of these two different techniques to create a hybrid approach. There are many scenarios where you'd need to add an in-app extension point to kick off or integrate a process, but then the majority of the extension is built using the side-by-side technique.

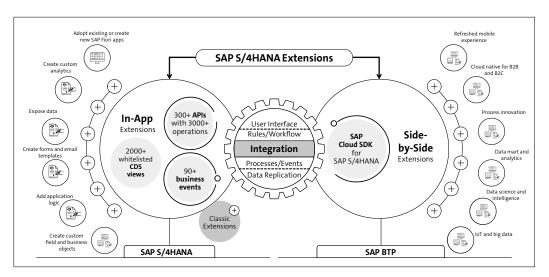


Figure 11.23 In-App versus Side-by-Side Scope Spectrum

Let's consider a few hybrid examples. First, Figure 11.24 shows the technique where both in-app and side-by-side extensibility frameworks are in action. In this example, core OData is built using an in-app extension, and the main extension is built using SAP Cloud Application Programming Model and SAP Cloud SDK side-by-side extensions.

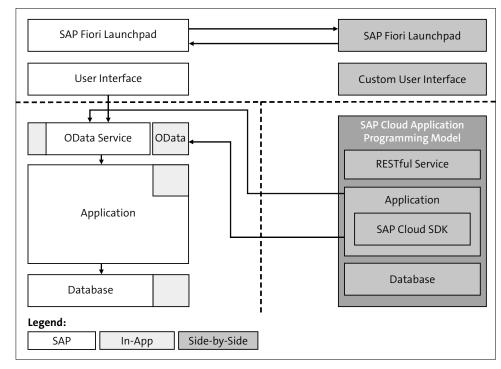


Figure 11.24 Side-by-Side Extension Using SAP Cloud Application Programming Model and Custom SAPUI5

11 Identifying Use Cases 11.3 Extensibility Concept

Here we're developing a custom OData service by exposing a custom business object as a service. Then we need to do the necessary configurations for communication arrangements and connectivity setup. Again, we can use custom business logic to drive custom logic for this custom business object. On the SAP BTP side, we must use the destination service to manage the connectivity to SAP S/4HANA. We can either use SAP Cloud Application Programming Model to call this OData via SAP Destination service or combine the SAP Cloud SDK framework to make type safe calls to the SAP S/4HANA backend.

Note

Usually, different backends carry different semantics and syntax of business objects. *Type safe* means SAP Cloud SDK provides a virtual abstraction layer to harmonize this syntax so that, as a programmer, you need not handle low-level syntax.

Ultimately, we need to build a service on top of this that will provide the harmonized service layer on top of this data model, comprising custom data entities stored in SAP BTP databases (e.g., SAP HANA) as well as entities that ingest data from the OData services via SAP Cloud SDK. From the UX standpoint, the service will provide access to the entities seamlessly. If you have UX requirements where you need to develop a custom UI far from SAP Fiori design principles, you can develop the UI as a separate app and consume the service exposed from the SAP Cloud Application Programming Model layer. This extension app then can be integrated to the SAP Fiori launchpad.

Figure 11.25 shows another hybrid example where the core OData is built using an inapp extension. Then, a side-by-side approach is taken using the ABAP RESTful application programming model. We can consume remote function call (RFC) or Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) services as well using the service consumption model.

As you can see, the side-by-side part can be done using the ABAP RESTful application programming model. Unlike the previous example, here the ABAP RESTful application programming model is providing the service layer. So, SAP BTP provides a flexible framework by which you may choose different programming models and runtimes to realize the service layer.

Similarly, you could use the UX layer by annotation-based SAP Fiori elements or another UI framework.

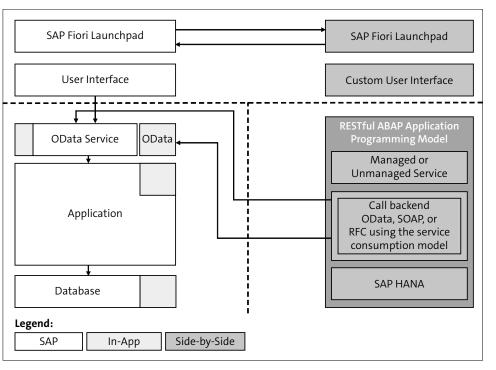


Figure 11.25 Side-by-Side Extensions Using the ABAP RESTful Application Programming Model

11.3.4 Mapping Development Objects

A bulk of SAP S/4HANA implementation projects start from a migration path. For most customers, there might be some version of an ERP core system already existing, and the most common scenario starts with a baseline existing solution. This section addresses, on a high level, the different techniques that can be adapted to identify the right candidates that should be implemented outside the core to keep the core clean and which SAP BTP services can be leveraged to achieve similar functionality using side-by-side extensibility. We'll walk through the various reports, interface, conversion, enhancements, forms, and workflow (RICEFW) objects.

Note

In an implementation, side-by-side isn't the default path. You have to judge case by case to see what the right candidates are. There are many scenarios where you should first try to fit the solution to in-app extensibility.

Custom Code Analysis

In a typical project where the existing system already has a lot of custom code, you need to migrate the custom code to the new to-be landscape. One of the pitfalls in migrating as is, without thinking deeply, is the tendency to do the same thing in the same way. SAP S/4HANA isn't only the natural successor of your ERP system; it also comes with new possibilities. And coupled with SAP BTP, you can do even more in SAP S/4HANA to build custom solutions in an upgrade-safe way. So, the first thing you should do is analyze the existing code. Table 11.1 shows a comparative review on the various capabilities of different tools available for custom code analysis.

	Custom Code Migration App	Remote ABAP Test Cockpit (ATC) with SAP GUI	Custom Code Migration App in SAP BTP
Required System	Central ATC check system (SAP S/4HANA release 1809 and up)	Central ATC check system (Basis 7.52)	SAP BTP, ABAP environment
System Location	Customer landscape	Customer landscape	SAP BTP
Remote Connectivity	Through RFC	Through RFC	Through RFC and the cloud connector
Analyze SAP S/4HANA Findings	Yes	Yes	Yes
Simplification Infor- mation in ATC Results	Yes	Yes	Yes
Filter Results by Scope and Quick Fix Availability	Yes	No	Yes
Define Custom Code Migration Scope Based on Usage Data	Yes	No	Yes
Remove Custom Code during System Conver- sion Using Software Update Manager	Yes	No	Yes

Table 11.1 Comparison of Capabilities of Different Options for Custom Code Analysis

Reports

In a traditional SAP system, you might have reports such as list reports, ABAP List Viewer (ALV) reports, and so on. In the SAP S/4HANA world, where SAP Fiori-based UX

is widely accepted, these traditional SAP GUI-based reports are generally outdated. Unlike the traditional requirements of view-only reports, we're now far more capable of delivering more feature-rich functionalities in reports. We can visualize the reports in more intuitive and interactive ways with engaging graphics, interactive charts, and drilldowns. In addition, you can embed analytical intelligence in the reports, which leads to turning insight into action.

Let's say you have a traditional material aging report in combination with open purchase order information so that you can tally the stock aging and corresponding turnaround time for a material procurement. You traditionally may have an ALV report that is capable of sorting data by highest stock aging or filtering by a material group or supplier. However, if you want to see the purchasing and stock trend of a material, you may need to look for other reporting tools such as SAP BusinessObjects Business Intelligence (SAP BusinessObjects BI). Again, if you would like to take some action, such as notify a supplier for a high demand material, you need to go out of this report and use some other tools or transactions to accomplish the same. Now we have wide range of possibilities with different SAP BTP offerings. If you'd like to simply get more insight and analytics, and the report is more drilldown in nature, SAP Analytics Cloud is the right solution. You can certainly add highly interactive and intuitive drilldown charts and even offer some insight to action through SAP Analytics Cloud.

However, if you think SAP Analytics Cloud is a bit farfetched for your scenario, you can build the interactive reports and in-line insight to action with embedded micro charts using SAPUI5 SAP Fiori elements. With the SAP BTP, ABAP environment, you can now build cutting-edge SAP Fiori elements apps with all these capabilities with far less coding using SAP Fiori elements annotations. Of course, if the UX requirements don't fit the SAP Fiori design guidelines, there is an option to customize in a freestyle approach using SAPUI5 development. The primary solution approach can be laid out in the following way:

■ Think of whitelisting

Before jumping onto custom development, check out the whitelisted APIs available for the related data object. You can refer to the SAP API Business Hub (https://api.sap.com/) for whitelisted APIs.

■ Modularize core data

Instead of traditional report programs, try to modularize the custom logic in RFC function modules, or via custom CDS. This way, the code will be reusable, streamlined, and manageable.

■ Expose service

Expose the data via OData services. This can be done in either the traditional way of using Transactions SEGW and /IWFND/MAINT_SERVICE or simply by using OData annotations in your CDS view.

■ Provide the UX

Next, use the OData in the UX layer. This layer can be realized using SAP BTP in the following ways:

- If this is just the UX layer, and you have all the data prepared in the SAP S/4HANA layer already, a simple SAPUI5-based application can be developed.
- If this application layer needs more server-side logic, integration, enhancement, data conglomeration, reconciliation, and so on, then either the SAP BTP, ABAP environment can be used with the ABAP RESTful application programming model or SAP Cloud Application Programming Model can be used with open-source Java or the Node.js framework.
- If the report is embedded with a wider analytics story, then broader platforms such as SAP Analytics Cloud can be used where the exposed OData can be used as the data source to provide cutting-edge analytics reports and stories.

Interface

Interfaces are integral parts of any SAP implementation. Traditionally, you have Application Link Enabling (ALE)/IDoc, RFCs, or proxies to interact with middleware, which eventually enables data to be exposed or ingested, and processes to be integrated across different solutions. SAP BTP provides a host of services that support these traditional interface techniques and provides modern solutions:

■ Message-based integration

It's always recommended to use the standard mechanisms such as whitelisted APIs (OData, SOAP), IDocs, and so on to build interfaces. Middleware tools such as SAP Process Integration or the Cloud Integration capability of the SAP Integration Suite can be leveraged to build full-fledged message-based integrations.

Connectivity

SAP Process Integration/SAP Process Orchestration and the Cloud Integration capability support a wide range of different adapters for different protocols such as HTTP, File, OData, MQ, IDoc, and more. Apart from this, you can now use the Open Connectors capability, which provides out-of-the-box standard connectors for 1,000+ industry-specific connectors. You can find the full list of connectors at http://s-prs.co/v544032.

■ Event-based integration

In addition to the standard communication scenarios that support APIs, IDocs and so on, a new breed of real-time integration opportunity is now emerging with SAP BTP. SAP is now embedding business events within the core. This means that, if you want to send a notification to an external party in real time at the time of occurrence of a business event, for example, then you can leverage the corresponding business event to trigger this interface. A detailed discussion of event-driven architecture and how SAP Event Mesh helps orchestrate these scenarios was provided in Chapter 10.

■ API management

Traditionally, the message broker is the most commonly found integration pattern where middleware does the message mediation, mapping, and routing. Unlike the message broker pattern, the other emerging pattern prevailing in the industry is the API Management capability. Often, we have enterprises with diversified landscapes in need of a common set of API strategies to expose, govern, and monetize functionalities within intracompany or intercompany interactions. API Management comes with full-scale capabilities of API management, throughput control, throttling, implementing security policies, and governing API usages.

Custom interfaces

There might be requirements to develop custom interfaces, which typically were fulfilled by extending an IDoc or developing a core custom RFC. In a situation in which keeping the core clean is the buzzword, you need to be careful when jumping on such developments. Instead, you should explore other possibilities. For example, if you need to build a data model for these custom interfaces, you might check if this can fit into in-app framework. If not, then you might need to build a side-by-side extension using the ABAP RESTful application programming model in the SAP BTP, ABAP environment, or using SAP Cloud Application Programming Model in SAP HANA Cloud, while letting the middleware handle the bulk of the custom logic. With SAP BTP and additional core capabilities such as the event bus, CDS, and so on, you now have far more different capabilities that can be leveraged to achieve such scenarios.

Conversion

Typically, conversion is one area where we don't see greater involvement of side-by-side extensions. Usually, SAP products provide inherent tooling for system conversion. For example, SAP S/4HANA comes with a set of system conversion tools such as Silent Data Migration Infrastructure (SDMI), or SAP SuccessFactors provides the Data Upload tool, which provides rich functionality to do data migration and conversion during project implementation. However, in some unusual circumstances, you might find some of the SAP BTP services handy to provide custom solutions to custom conversion requirements:

■ Spreadsheet upload

This is a very common scenario in which you need to upload data from a spreadsheet. If this is a simple spreadsheet upload with a limited number of rows, and you need to view and scrutinize the uploaded data before posting, then a SAPUI5-based SAP Fiori app can be built.

■ Automation

If the scenario demands more repetitive tasks, such as similar spreadsheets uploaded frequently, and the steps are fairly mechanized, then you may opt for SAP Intelligent RPA to handle these tasks.

11 Identifying Use Cases 11.4 Summary

Enhancement

Enhancement is probably the most critical piece where SAP Extension Suite can be leveraged. We discussed in-app and side-by-side extensions in detail in the previous sections. However, one primary mindset in the development approach is to keep the litmus test shown earlier in Figure 11.22. When designing an enhancement, the sequence should be prioritized to ensure that the principle of keeping the core clean isn't breached. Even though in a previous section, we mentioned in-app and side-by-side extensibility techniques, for most practical purposes, we have to adopt a hybrid approach—where necessary development is done close to the core using an in-app extension to ensure integrity of the enhancement to the core solution, but we also use the freedom of the side-by-side extension.

Forms

In a traditional SAP ERP landscape, you have full freedom to create forms and customize them. In SAP S/4HANA, SAP gives you some in-app capabilities to customize form and output management. Using the Maintain Form Template app in SAP S/4HANA, you can get the list of available form templates, download them, and optionally customize them. You can use Adobe LiveCycle Designer to view the data source and fields or customize forms. These customizations are limited to adding logos, adding footer text, making layout changes, adding custom fields, and so on. However, there might be scenarios where you need deeper customization such as building a form based on a custom data source or merging the output from multiple data sources; in those cases, the only way is to rely on a side-by-side extension.

To develop a side-by-side development for forms, you need the following SAP BTP services:

■ SAP Forms service by Adobe

This service lets you print and generate interactive forms using Adobe Document Services (ADS). You can call the forms service using REST APIs. Using REST APIs, you can store templates in the service via the template store feature.

■ SAP BTP business rules

In addition to the core forms services, you can combine complex business rules for certain custom fields using the SAP BTP-based rules service.

■ UX

Eventually, these custom forms can be called via REST services. However, the entry point of the application could be managed via a custom SAPUI5 app.

Workflow

Within your enterprise core, many business processes demand workflows. Traditionally, we used to have different functional areas such as sales and distribution, procurement, production planning, and materials management tightly integrated in a single

enterprise core, that is, SAP ERP. In such a tightly integrated environment, many of your end-to-end business processes start and end within the horizon of SAP ERP itself. Even in the SAP S/4HANA world, there might be many business processes that are still close to the core, and the entire horizon of the scope of the process is limited to the boundary of SAP S/4HANA. In such cases, the traditional workflow development is still valid.

However, in this dynamic market where enterprises are competing every day with newer innovations, a more diverse, LoB-specific solution landscape is more common. In such diverse and distributed landscapes, you won't have the end-to-end process confined in a single box as in SAP ERP. Often, we see business processes spanning different LoB solutions. For example, the HR data and organization structure comes from SAP SuccessFactors, the core finance is in SAP S/4HANA, and procurement is driven out of SAP Ariba. This diversity might include other LoB solutions from non-SAP vendors as well. In such scenarios, you need to think of cross-product workflows (refer to Section 11.1.5). We're seeing immense benefits in providing such cross-product workflows that not only integrate different solutions via a process chain but also keep vital business statistics that provide the nervous system of your business.

SAP Workflow Management is the solution here. Often, we see project teams that have limited vision confined within their own work area. This might cause a silo where individual LoB solutions might build redundant heterogeneous workflow solutions. While many of the SAP and non-SAP LoB solutions provide workflow solutions within their scope, one thing is necessary to keep in mind: these LoB-specific workflows can't build the bridge between different LoB solutions. So, one idea to nurture is to step back and look at the bigger picture. During the scoping exercise, if you try to find the bigger process chain, you'll often find a better way to solve business problems in a more integrated way. SAP Workflow Management not only provides a lean flexible workflow engine but also a business rules service where business users can define and maintain business rules. Additionally, SAP Workflow Management provides an easily configurable process visibility dashboard that shows the KPI overviews, workflow status, stages, and drilldown reports. This dashboard is the main cockpit from where you can get the overview of the entire cross-product workflow scenarios.

In addition, the My Inbox app is integrated into the SAP BTP launchpad and SAP Work Zone, which provides a single stop to manage all your workflow tasks. With the modern SAPUI5 and forms capabilities, My Inbox app provides a flexible, intuitive, and appealing UX for your task management.

11.4 Summary

In this chapter, we explored how SAP BTP can be leveraged in different business scenarios. We aimed to describe the scenarios in a more generic way so that you can relate

them to your scenarios and finding matching patterns. Though the application of SAP BTP is no way limited to these patterns only, these are certainly some of the most common scenarios. Hopefully this will give leaders like Allan from Rocking Gas good ideas on use case patterns, guiding principles, and some of the core value propositions of SAP BTP in their respective business scenarios.

In the next chapters, we'll dive into more specific business problems and see how you can leverage SAP BTP to solve them. We'll start with how to manage multiple SAP systems via extensions and integrations in the next chapter.

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SAP Business Technology Platform: An Introduction

570 Pages, 2022, \$79.95 ISBN 978-1-4932-2201-8



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