

Modernizing Around SAP Without Touching the Core

How to Accelerate Innovation Without
Compromising System Stability

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Executive Summary

SAP landscapes have long formed the digital backbone of large enterprises — offering scale, reliability, and control. But in today's fast-moving environment, these same systems can become bottlenecks to innovation.

The challenge

how do you modernize fast, innovate at scale, and integrate new technologies — without destabilizing your core SAP systems?

This whitepaper provides a **strategic roadmap** for modernization that enables agility while respecting SAP's clean-core philosophy. Whether through **SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP)** or through **loosely coupled independent applications**, enterprises can modernize on their terms.

You'll learn how to evaluate options, balance cost and control, and stay ready for tomorrow's business needs — from **AI integration** to **ESG reporting**.



Addressing Key Modernization Questions

Category	Question	Answer / Insight
General	What licensing factors should I watch for when integrating third-party apps?	Licensing depends on app design — tightly integrated apps may trigger SAP Indirect/Digital Access models, while API-connected independent apps often offer more flexibility. Evaluate impact on existing licenses carefully.
General	BTP or independent apps — what's better?	SAP BTP offers integrated lifecycle management, seamless upgrades, and tighter security. Independent apps offer freedom in hosting, costs, and tech stacks. A hybrid approach often delivers optimal results.
General	Why does BTP matter?	BTP enables enterprises to innovate quickly — from app development and integration to analytics and automation — all while maintaining compatibility with the SAP roadmap.



General

What does BTP support?

CAP/RAP development models, Integration Suite, HANA Cloud, AI/ML tools, business workflow, mobile enablement, event-driven architecture, and identity management.

General

Will ECC support extend beyond 2030?

As of now, mainstream support ends in 2027, and extended support ends in 2030. Enterprises should plan accordingly — don't wait to start modernization.

Strategic Considerations

No:	Question	Answer / Insight
01	How do I decide which legacy apps to modernize first?	Focus on apps with the greatest business value, user friction, or technical debt. Look for processes that impact speed, agility, or customer experience.
02	What KPIs should I track?	Key metrics include: Time-to-Change, TCO Reduction, Business User NPS, App Adoption Rate, and Integration Downtime. These help demonstrate modernization impact.



03 How do I build a modernization business case before a full S/4HANA migration?

Showcase wins in areas like mobile UX, automation, and legacy app consolidation. Highlight how these efforts reduce SAP GUI dependence and build cloud-readiness.

04 What ROI can I expect?

Most modernization efforts see ROI within 12–24 months — especially in automation, workflow, and user interface upgrades. Agile rollouts accelerate value realization.

Technical & Execution Considerations

No:	Question	Answer / Insight
05	Can BTP connect to non-SAP platforms?	Yes. SAP's Integration Suite supports Salesforce, Workday, Oracle, and more. Alternatively, you can use middleware like MuleSoft, Boomi, or custom APIs.
06	How do I ensure security and compliance?	Adopt Zero Trust, role-based access, and multi-layer encryption. Use SAP IAS or external identity providers. Enable audit trails and monitor API usage.



07**What's ABAP Cloud's role?**

ABAP Cloud supports side-by-side extensibility, allowing businesses to build SAP-native enhancements without violating clean-core principles.

08**Are BTP platform updates disruptive?**

No — updates are typically seamless. However, best practices include maintaining version control, continuous testing, and having rollback plans.

Change Management & Operations

No:**Question****Answer / Insight****09****How do I manage user transition from legacy to modern interfaces?**

Create a change champion network. Start with pilot rollouts focused on UX. Offer guided onboarding with digital adoption platforms and provide training in business language.

10**What are the common pitfalls and how to avoid them?**

Resistance to change, unclear integration boundaries, and lack of skills. Solutions: executive sponsorship, phased adoption, hybrid integration patterns, and upskilling programs.



Future-Readiness & Sustainability

No:	Question	Answer / Insight
11	How does this help with AI-readiness?	Decoupled, modern architectures allow you to plug in AI services more easily — whether from SAP BTP AI Core or external platforms. Event-driven models and clean data make AI integration more powerful.
12	Can this support ESG and sustainability reporting?	Yes. Modern architectures expose operational data to sustainability dashboards (e.g., SAP Sustainability Control Tower), helping organizations track emissions, energy use, and regulatory compliance in real time.



This approach empowers businesses to:



Mitigate risk

by keeping the SAP core clean and stable



Accelerate innovation

through low-code/no-code and microservices



Prepare for the future

with scalable, AI-ready architectures



Drive adoption

with user-centric design and guided onboarding



Ensure compliance

with centralized governance and security

You don't need to choose between modernization and stability.
You can have both.



Unlock the Future — Without Breaking What Works

Modernization no longer requires a full-blown transformation to S/4HANA upfront.

The most successful enterprises are innovating around SAP, adopting agile modernization strategies that respect the integrity of the core while enabling experimentation, speed, and scalability.

By leveraging SAP BTP or integrating independent apps via APIs, organizations can roll out modern solutions — mobile UIs, automation tools, AI use cases, and more — without disrupting SAP's mission-critical functions.



Modernizing Around SAP — At a Glance

Key Focus	Your Advantage
Keep SAP Core Untouched	Maintain stability and compliance while modernizing outside the core.
Use SAP BTP or Independent Paths	Choose between native BTP tools or flexible external applications — or combine both.
Prioritize High-Impact Modernization	Start with apps causing friction or legacy drag. Show fast wins.
Integrate Seamlessly	Connect SAP and non-SAP systems via APIs, BTP Integration Suite, or middleware.
Secure & Govern Effectively	Apply Zero Trust principles, encryption, and centralized identity management.
Be Future-Ready	Build AI-ready, scalable apps with clean architectures.
Drive Sustainability	Enable ESG and sustainability dashboards with real-time data exposure.



Ready to Begin Your Modernization Journey?

Whether you're just starting to evaluate your options or already have pilot projects underway, the time to act is now.

Talk to our SAP modernization experts

Let us help you map your unique modernization path — aligned to your priorities, timelines, and budgets.

Contact Details

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