

SAP Transformation

Expert Exchange

Executive summary
September 9, 2025

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Overview

The inaugural Kyndryl SAP Transformation Expert Exchange brought together technology leaders from across industries to discuss the multifaceted challenges and opportunities associated with their enterprise transformations. Participants shared their experiences and strategic insights on migrating to modern SAP platforms, navigating complex licensing models, and leveraging transformations to achieve broader business objectives.

Host

Michael Bradshaw
SVP and Global Practice Leader,
Applications, Data and AI, Kyndryl

Key topics

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Making the business case for RISE with SAP

- “Many executives are asking where the business case is for moving to RISE with SAP, but few have clear answers.” Justifying the financial investment required to adopt RISE with SAP is a primary concern for many organizations.
- Several participants found that a bottoms-up strategy focused solely on projected cost savings didn’t resonate with business executives. Instead, a top-down perspective that emphasized simplification and standardization gained greater traction with leadership.
- Participants highlighted that successful SAP implementations hinge on aligning business and IT strategies. Achieving this requires meticulous planning, strong organisational change management (OCM), and strategic coordination across the C-suite. These initiatives involve technical, business, and human complexities that, if not properly managed, can lead to delays, disruptions, and increased costs.
- One organization chose to implement SAP Cloud ERP Private first to ensure operational stability and continuity before transitioning to RISE with SAP. This sequencing enabled greater agility and accelerated the core transformation phase.
- When planning to modernize its 25-year-old system, one state government agency adopted a “Business System Transformation” approach. The strategy – which started with a revised operating model and extensive value stream mapping – ensured solutions met business needs rather than being dictated by a specific vendor’s offering.

“If you are going to go into a modern SAP system, it's as much a business transformation as an IT transformation.”

– SAP Transformation Expert
Exchange Member

Cloud ERP migration is a strategic catalyst for modern enterprises

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Establishing data as the core asset

- Data is the lifeblood of enterprise IT, so data management and governance should be a priority for any system transformation. Several executives stressed that regardless of which platform organizations choose, gaining control of enterprise data is the most crucial facet of transformation. Robust data management and governance processes help ensure future resilience.
- Focusing on data enables organizations to prepare for emerging technologies, such as agentic and generative AI, regardless of how enterprise software evolves in the coming years.
- One executive recounted that their transformation journey prioritized getting their “arms around our data, managing and governing it, and having an enterprise governance process in place with all of the functions to do that” rather than concentrating solely on the SAP implementation.
- A management- and governance-driven approach helps organizations determine what data to retain within the new SAP system and what to migrate or manage externally. This process lays the foundation for a future-proof data strategy.

“But the one thing that I would encourage you all to think about as you're doing this and thinking about the future is, what are you doing to really get your arms around your enterprise data, right? Because that's really the most important topic.”

**— Michael Bradshaw,
SVP and Global Practice Leader,
Applications, Data and AI, Kyndryl**

Navigating the business, human and technical challenges of SAP Transformation

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Change and employee reskilling

- The shift to SAP Cloud ERP demands new skills, stronger test automation, and cultural transformation across IT and business teams. SAP modernization, like all transformations, involves technical and cultural change. Employees who will be using the technology need to understand why the company is making changes and how they will impact workers and the business.
- One executive noted that transformation leaders had to get the organization to think about a “process owner and a process end-to-end view” and increase value stream mapping exercises with employees to illustrate the benefits of change.
- Another participant emphasized the importance of collaborating with procurement teams when designing change management plans for SAP Ariba integration.
- Still, another leader recommended taking a conscious approach to SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) adoption so teams can learn and refine the skills needed to use the system effectively. The same executive advised customers to anticipate future challenges that will require “stronger test automation with some other skills and structure.”

“But I think that you need to take the big picture and understand exactly what is the willingness of your Procurement team and organization also to adapt and change.”

**— SAP Transformation Expert
Exchange Member**

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The Expert Exchange is hosted by Kyndryl, Inc. Please contact Clay Caldwell for additional questions about Kyndryl or our approach to SAP transformation.

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