DataTechnology

UNLOCK THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF YOUR SAP DATA.

The problem with legacy systems for real-time, informed decision-making

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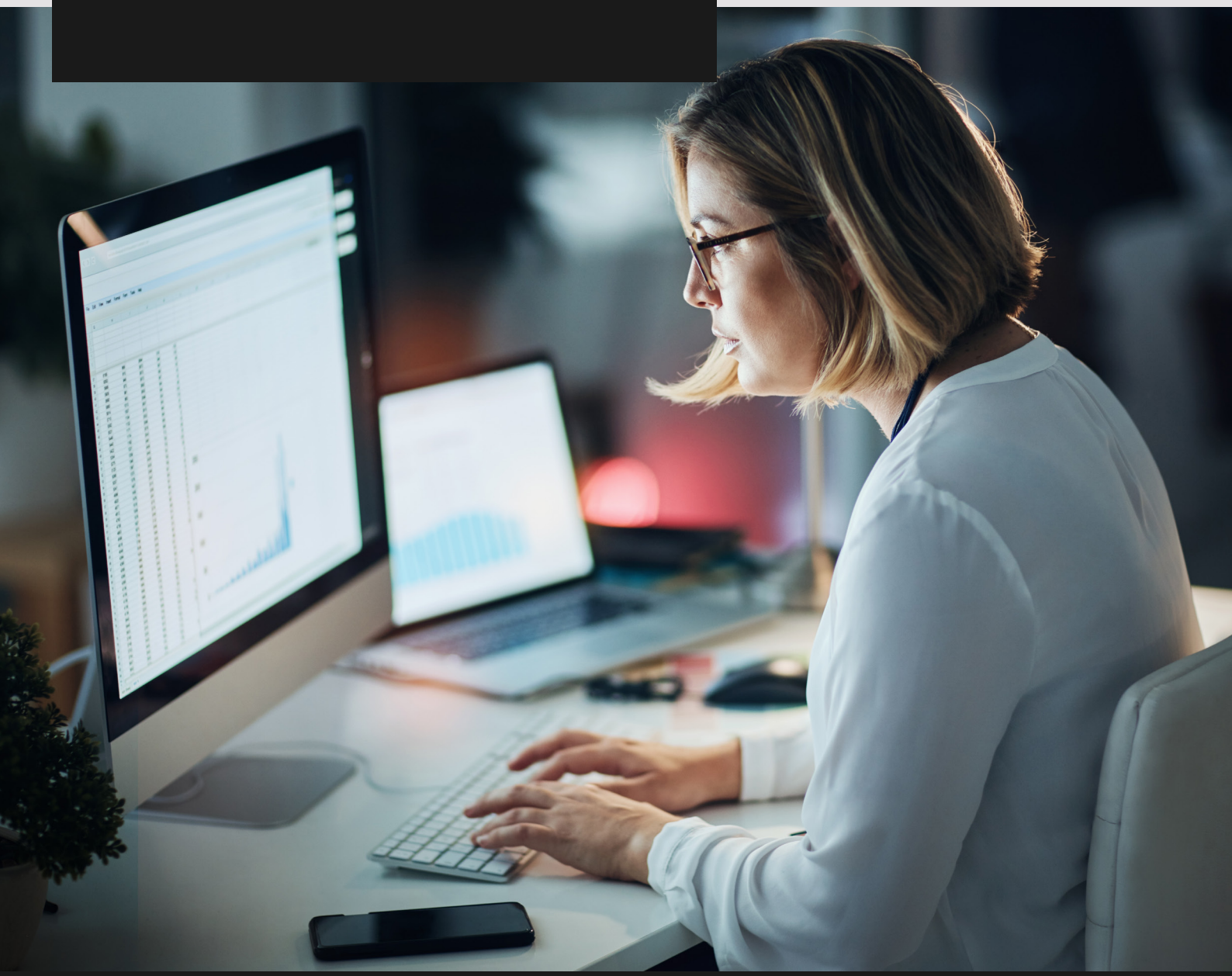
INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-evolving digital world, businesses increasingly recognise the need to modernise their data platforms to stay competitive. Maximising SAP data is vital for improving supply chains, modernising finance, and empowering employees with better analytics.

With SAP ECC becoming obsolete, many organisations must plan for the future and decide whether to use SAP's cloud solutions or alternative Data Platform hyperscalers like Microsoft, AWS, Google, Snowflake or Databricks. While challenging, this offers a chance to build scalable, resilient infrastructures that support long-term business goals.



WHY MODERNISE YOUR DATA PLATFORM?

The benefits of moving to the cloud are clear. Legacy systems can't compete with modern platforms that offer enhanced performance, scalability, and faster processing. Modern solutions also address evolving demands for compliance, security, and reliability, minimising the need for substantial infrastructure investments. This approach leads to cost savings and ensures your technology remains future-proof.

Businesses are also seeking innovative uses for their SAP data to remain agile and competitive, integrating advanced analytics and AI to gain insights and streamline operations. For instance:

SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMISATION

Access to SAP data enables real-time tracking of inventory, suppliers, and shipments. This improves supply chain operations, reduces lead times, and allows quicker responses to disruptions.

FINANCIAL PROCESS AUTOMATION

Better SAP financial data access automates accounts payable and receivable, reducing errors and improving cash flow management.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Enhanced data access impacts HR processes, helping manage talent and track employee performance more effectively, fostering a more productive workforce.

To implement such initiatives, businesses need fast access to reliable SAP and other business-critical data for real-time decision-making and a data-driven culture.

THE PATH FORWARD

Migrating to the cloud is crucial, especially with the end of SAP ECC support around the corner in 2027. Organisations moving to S/4HANA, SAP's latest ERP suite, must consider how best to manage their SAP data and choose the most suitable data warehousing, ingestion, and analytics tools.

Key considerations include computational elasticity, data integration, unstructured data support, and the ability to share data externally via APIs. Unfortunately, SAP's cloud solutions often lack in areas like computational elasticity, data variety, and integration with non-SAP systems. They also come with high costs and limited self-service capabilities, making them less competitive than cloud-native alternatives.

A key consideration for many organisations today is the use of low or zero-code environments, which enable more agile deployment, expansion, and maintenance of data platforms.

To fully realise the potential of SAP data, businesses must take a strategic approach to cloud migration and data platform modernisation. Moving to cloud-based solutions like AWS, Azure, or Snowflake offers unparalleled flexibility, scalability, and advanced analytics capabilities. Additionally, there is an advantage in avoiding reliance on a single provider across the data value chain by selecting best-in-breed technologies that ensure both top performance and seamless interoperability. But where do you start?

Considering a migration with multiple new technologies, combining data across legacy systems and getting buy in and adoption across the organisation can be daunting. Before a migration, organisations need a comprehensive data strategy that aligns with their business goals.

That's why, at Data Technology, we collaborate with our partners to create a clear roadmap for success. By following a well-defined process, our clients ensure they're not just migrating their data but also maximising its value. The following seven steps outline how we help organisations modernise their data platforms and unlock the full potential of their SAP data.

SEVEN STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SAP MIGRATION.

- Many people talk about unlocking the value in your SAP data, **but what does that mean in practice?**
- What will you be able to do at the end of the process that you can't do today, **and how is it done?**

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR GOALS

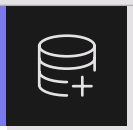
IDENTIFY BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS AND ALIGN YOUR ORGANISATION FOR CHANGE

HOW? Start by considering your business objective and what would improve your operations. For example:

- Are you looking for faster, more ubiquitous access to SAP data across your organisation?
- Where are the data silos across your business and how can these be broken down?
- Are there advanced analytics capabilities you are looking to introduce to help streamline business operations?
- Do you want to blend SAP data with other non-SAP data sources (e.g. IoT, CRM data etc.) to unlock additional insights?
- Are there predefined SAP use cases, like order-to -cash or inventory management, that you need to quickly migrate to the cloud?

Why? Data offers endless possibilities, but setting clear goals will help focus efforts, avoid wasted resources, and deliver measurable outcomes. A small proof-of-value project can help test your approach and iron out any issues early on.

STEP 2: BUILD DATA LITERACY ACROSS YOUR ORGANISATION

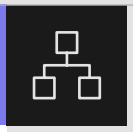


GET PEOPLE EXCITED ABOUT DATA

HOW? Consider who will work with data and tackle any data literacy gaps early on in the project. Whether it's a specialised data team or general users across departments like operations, finance, and IT. Engage with team leaders to identify their needs and share what they can achieve with improved data.

WHY? Understanding users' skill levels is crucial to designing an effective data project. Getting buy-in from the start also helps foster a data-driven culture and ensures smoother adoption down the line.

STEP 3: DEVELOP YOUR DATA ARCHITECTURE



LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR SAP DATA STRATEGY

HOW? Evaluate SAP data quality and consistency while planning an ingestion process from a structured or unstructured data lake to a structured data warehouse. The following steps will help maintain data integrity and streamline the workflow:

- Data Quality Assessment and Profiling
- Define Ingestion Strategy
- Data Transformation and Cleansing
- Data Warehouse Structuring and Loading
- Post-Ingestion Quality Checks and Validation
- Ongoing Data Quality Monitoring

WHY? Quality data is critical for meaningful insights. Whether you need real-time or batch processing depends on your business needs—real-time for tasks like delivery scheduling, while batch processing may suit historical trend analysis.

STEP 4: CHOOSING THE RIGHT CLOUD PLATFORM

DESIGN YOUR PLATFORM ARCHITECTURE

HOW? Select a cloud provider that gives you the best opportunity to achieve your business goals, whether it's AWS, Azure, or Google Cloud. Compare their data warehousing tools and ensure they comply with your industry's security and privacy standards.

WHY? Cloud providers offer sophisticated data tools, and as a result, can be costly. Choosing the right one involves balancing your project's scope with your data volume and security requirements. A trusted data strategy partner can help simplify this process.

STEP 5: DEPLOY THE SOLUTION

ENSURE READINESS WITH A DEVELOPMENTAL TEST

HOW? Test your solution in a developmental environment before going live. The results of this experiment should guide you on whether you need external support or if your in-house team can handle its full deployment.

WHY? Given the shortage of cloud and data specialists, external support can be worth the cost. Ensure you involve end-users in testing and address their feedback before full production deployment.

STEP 6: PRIORITISE SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

MAINTAIN DATA GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

HOW? Keep an inventory of your data assets and monitor how data flows between systems. This visibility helps anticipate how changes in one area might affect others.

WHY? A well-maintained data catalogue promotes consistency and compliance across the organisation, making it easier for teams to understand and work with data.

STEP 7: MONITOR AND OPTIMISE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE

ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND REFINE YOUR INFRASTRUCTURE

HOW? Regularly review your data architecture to check security and access permissions, especially as you add new data sources.

WHY? Ongoing optimisation ensures that your data continues to deliver insights and value while staying compliant with regulations.

AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES' DATA MODERNISATION JOURNEY.

AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES

CASE STUDY

OVERVIEW

Aggregate Industries, part of Holcim Group, is embarking on a comprehensive data modernisation initiative as a critical component of its business systems transformation. The initiative aligns with Holcim's broader strategic priorities of sustainability and AI adoption, underpinned by a commitment to clean, actionable data and cutting-edge technology.

CHALLENGES AND DRIVERS

01 Transformation Imperative:

- Modernising business systems to integrate finance, CRM and procurement solutions into an SAP system globally by 2026.
- Preparing data for AI-driven projects, such as truck scheduling and dynamic pricing models.
- Addressing the need for pristine data to ensure smooth migration to SAP now and in the future.
- Removing reliance of key reporting capabilities embedded within legacy platforms such J.D. Edwards.

02 Data Challenges:

- Decades of accumulated data requiring cleansing and governance.
- A cultural shift needed to view data as a strategic asset.
- Balancing business ownership of data cleansing with minimising the burden on operational teams.

03 Technology Gaps:

- Disparate, legacy systems with different approaches across regions.
- Limitations of in-house resources and capabilities with dependency on external partners like Data Technology for mapping, cleansing, and process optimisation.

SOLUTIONS AND PROGRESS

01 Leveraging Qlik and AWS:

- The UK's investment in Qlik and AWS has provided autonomy and cost-efficiency by reducing SAP license requirements.
- Data lakes on AWS enable scalability and accessibility, with Qlik serving as a foundational ingestion and analytics tool.
- The UK's approach has influenced Holcim globally, demonstrating the value of integrating data outside the SAP ecosystem.

02 Sustainability and AI Alignment:

- Aligning the data strategy with Holcim's sustainability goals, including carbon footprint reduction and reporting, Aggregate Industries has already positioned itself as the industry leader in carbon footprint transparency.
- Supporting AI initiatives like ready-mix truck scheduling and pricing optimisation, requiring clean and well-structured data.

03 Key Partnerships and Processes:

- Appointing a "Data Czar" to oversee data governance and champion cultural change.
- Collaborating with Data Technology to map, cleanse, and automate data processes, reducing manual workloads and accelerating timelines.
- Potential future use of tools such as Qlik's Talend solution to streamline and industrialise data cleaning and governance at scale.

RESULTS AND FUTURE GOALS

Pristine Data by 2027: Preparing for SAP S/4HANA migration by ensuring clean, structured, and actionable data.

Sustainability-Driven Reporting: Embedding carbon evaluation metrics within data analytics to meet sustainability targets and reduce costs.

Global Scalability: Building a robust data backbone with Qlik and AWS, setting the standard for Holcim's operations worldwide.

DATA TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE

As a trusted partner, Data Technology collaborated on data strategy, implemented best-in-class technologies, streamlined processes, and provided invaluable expertise. With our support, Aggregate Industries has been able to accelerate data cleansing, enhance governance, and shorten project timelines, empowering the business to focus on strategic priorities and **drive long-term innovation.**

ABOUT DATA TECHNOLOGY

With over 30 years of experience, particularly in SAP data, Data Technology partners with leading cloud providers like Microsoft, AWS, and Google to ensure seamless data transformations for every type of organisation.

We help businesses:

- Break down data silos and streamline collection.
- Build analytics and predictive capabilities to optimise workflows.
- Implement world-class governance, security, and compliance.

Our bespoke solutions reduce deployment costs and improve overall efficiency, enabling near-real-time data ingestion and cutting data replication time by over 90%.

Let us guide you through your data transformation journey. Speak with our experts.

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