



dimension
data

latest thinking

Why you need SAP S/4 HANA and how deploying it is not as hard as you think

By Chris Dippenaar

Director, Cloud Services
Britehouse, A Division of Dimension Data

You've been hearing the hype for some time now and are finally considering moving to S/4 HANA. There are a myriad of great new features and capabilities. But there are also practical reasons since for starters, SAP announced they will not support SAP ECC post 2025. In addition, ECC is old software. And don't take offense to that. It's great and was used extensively in the digital transformation era.

An era in which we enabled our products and services to be accessible to our end customers anywhere, any time, on any device. But we've moved to the next era: an era where organisations will derive sustainable advantage from knowledge and service based activities that leverage intellectual assets.

In the intelligent enterprise era, data generated at the front line is presented as information in the digital boardroom. The equipment used to create, move, distribute, and sell products and services are harvested from vital structured data, and transformed into information.

This is, in turn, added to from a plethora of inter-dependent structured and unstructured data sources and ultimately, made available

as information to help make the next crucial business decision. Presented on your connected device.

In the intelligent enterprise era, your business will work differently:

- Consumer attitudes might change and affect the way you market or sell because of one tweet.
- A competitor might launch a product or service and it sets the world alight cutting into your market share.
- A political decision in a foreign market affects your scarce resource supplier.
- Waste caused by wait times within a process costs money, raises your carbon footprint and causes people to question your environmental protection promises.
- Reacting to a weather forecast proactively could limit losses and damages.

There are many more examples of where a change in the business environment demands a reaction. Change is happening at breakneck speed, getting faster every day. Possibly this is because we have more things which can change. More importantly though, there is data instantly available about the change. If you miss the opportunity to react to the change, it is likely your business will suffer.

If you are still pondering digital transformation, or you missed out entirely, all is not lost. You can move directly into the intelligent enterprise era. S/4 HANA as an ERP is the first step. The in-memory technology allows instant, real-time insights for informed decision making. It brings reinvented, simplified processes, which allow for increased throughput and speed of transactional processing. SAP also introduce the Fiori user-interface alongside it, which provides a highly intuitive and satisfactory user experience on a large array of devices.

Together with SAP Data Hub and SAP Cloud Platform, S/4 HANA forms the digital platform. Once a digital platform is established for your business, you can build on this to create differentiating extensions, integrate machine learning, artificial intelligence, and other intelligent technologies as well as manage data from multiple sources. You can also adopt other SAP best of breed, rich functionality and high usability applications to further improve customer experience, people engagement and many other business functions.

The more vendors there are in the environment, the more complex the management becomes.
The solution is to use IT assets.

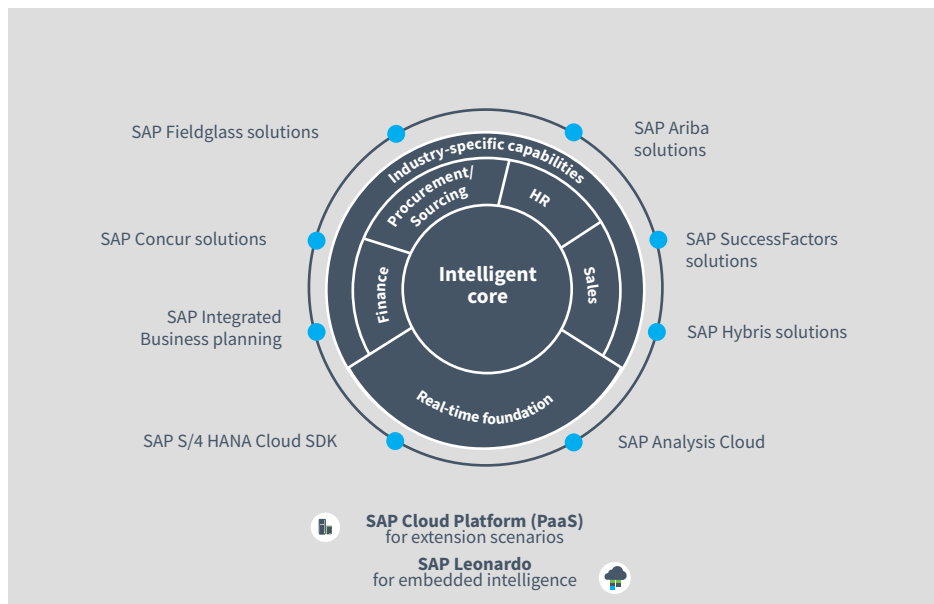
The picture below gives a graphical representation of the digital core surrounded by industry specific solutions, integrated SAP applications, SAP Cloud Platform to build customer specific extensions and SAP Leonardo to build customer specific intelligence solutions in machine learning, artificial intelligence and others.

If you are not in that position to maintain your own setup, you should look at a cloud deployment. There are 3 general choices when looking at deploy S/4 HANA in the cloud:

- S/4 HANA public cloud
- S/4 HANA single tenant edition (STE)
- S/4 HANA private cloud

If you do not have a current SAP ECC installation our recommendation is very straight forward. In this case we recommend you move directly to S/4 HANA Public Cloud and take advantage of the intelligent enterprise capability and extensibility offered by SAP.

With S/4 HANA public cloud the software you rely on to manage your business-critical operations is 100% managed by SAP. As a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) cloud provider, SAP provides the software and the hardware. They define, purchase, setup, and manage the versions and systems that make up the environment. All you need to do is populate the data. Software updates and patches are automatically pushed to all public cloud installations hosting any number of SAP customers at a release cycle defined and controlled by SAP. Configuration and extension frameworks are tightly controlled to remain specific to a customer. With the SAP Public Cloud, you have the option of consuming not only the ERP suite but also customer experience, people engagement, network and spend management, manufacturing and supply chain solutions.



Deployable in the cloud or on-premise, SAP S/4 HANA is built to drive instant value for your business with a singular objective: simplicity. S/4HANA moves away from the transactional system that merely recorded data toward giving end users active decision support in real time on data from internal and external sources.

Deployable in the cloud or on-premise. Simple choice, right?

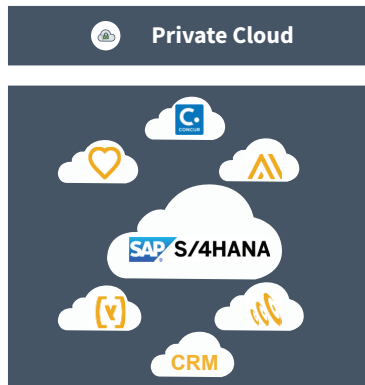
The decision for on-premise is relatively easy: you have a complex business with a significant investment in infrastructure that can be leveraged for new S/4HANA deployments. How can you determine this? A trusted advisor can help you determine if your infrastructure can support the new environment. Another option is to check the SAP website for TDI compliant hardware. If your servers, storage and networking devices are on the TDI list, then you can deploy production HANA on it. In addition to determining if your infrastructure is capable, you may also want to maintain an autonomous environment which allows you to customise, modify, extend, and upgrade SAP when and how you want. And of course, you have to have the financial resources to justify such a strategy.

What's the difference and which one should you choose?

The three dimensions of scope, governance and flexibility will guide the decision as you consider the customisation requirements of your environment. As a spectrum of choices, S/4 HANA Private Cloud provides the most pronounced leniency for each and S/4 HANA Public Cloud the least.



Below is a picture of operating an entire SAP landscape in the public cloud.



An S/4 HANA STE (single tenant edition) cloud deployment means the software you rely on to manage your business-critical operations is 100% managed by SAP as the cloud provider. Just as in the public cloud option, SAP provides the software and the hardware. The difference with STE is the software updates are not automatically pushed to all STE cloud installations. The release cycle is defined by SAP but controlled by the customer, within limits. As a customer, you must accept the update within a period of 12 months. Therefore, you must organise your resources to go through a regression testing cycle and accept the upgrade within this timeframe.

If you opt for a S/4 HANA private cloud deployment, you can migrate from on-premise hardware to an SAP private cloud. Again, as the cloud provider SAP provides the hardware. With a private cloud, the software is either sold to you outright or rolled into your private cloud subscription. As with STE, the software updates are not automatically pushed to all private cloud installations. The release cycle is defined by SAP but controlled by the customer. Once you accept the upgrade, you must organise your resources to go through a regression testing cycle and accept the upgrade on completion.

The more vendors there are in the environment, the more complex the management becomes.
The solution is to use IT assets.

Both S/4 HANA STE and S/4 HANA private cloud is delivered by SAP through the HANA Enterprise Cloud product, HEC in short. Dimension Data with Britehouse is one of a handful of global HEC Premium Partners of SAP to deliver these deployment options. Both S/4 HANA STE and S/4 HANA private cloud puts your SAP solution in a hybrid state between private and public cloud solutions and Dimension Data with Britehouse has the capability to deliver in such a hybrid IT state.

Alternatively, if you are a business which has a highly customised SAP installation and want to reuse the IP invested over time, choose S/4 HANA private cloud. With this solution, you can migrate your existing installation as is. Keep in mind that some limitations still do exist with a private cloud: most notably that limited combinations of operating system and database are supported and within a period of 12 months of deployment at least one application must move to Suite on HANA. Once you have migrated and operations of your private cloud are stable, you can then embark on the migration path from ECC to S/4 HANA.



If you are new to SAP or have an installation which is not highly customised, consider going directly to S/4 HANA public cloud. This deployment option offers the lowest total cost of ownership and a predictable expenditure with its subscription model. S/4 HANA STE is the deployment option to consider if you want more flexibility on when to deploy upgrades. One downside for both options is there is no migration path if you have an existing SAP installation. But you can still migrate master data and configure processes to suit your needs. Most significantly, time to value is reduced to weeks since it's a relatively standard deployment.

Both these options work well together, placing your critical business applications in a hybrid state and you would need a partner such as Dimension Data and Britehouse to help manage and maintain it.

