

S/4 transformation without pre-projects? Yes, please.

Pre-Projects Bye Bye!

Many SAP customers shy away from the SAP S/4 Hana transformation because of the supposedly necessary preliminary projects. However, with the right approach to app lifecycle, data, and system management, these preliminary projects can prove to be redundant.

By Thomas Failer, Data Migration International

SAP customers only have four years left to migrate their current SAP system and application landscape to the new S/4 generation without having to pay additional maintenance fees. And yet they hesitate! One of the main reasons for this—as conversations with SAP users have shown time and again—is that customers fear not just the transformation itself, but rather all the additional work involved in pre-projects. These include in particular:

Archiving: Many SAP customers are sitting on mountains of legacy data. As the Hana database still runs on increasingly expensive working memory, customers want to reduce the amount of data as much as possible before the transformation.

New GL: Many companies think they can save time by introducing the new general ledger (GL) first. After all, the new SAP general ledger has been around since ECC 6.0. However, it is a must in the S/4 world.

Hana: Others implement SAP Hana before turning their attention to applications. By splitting the transformation

into a data project and an application project, they hope for a less complex project overall, but are under no illusion that this is a purely technical project that has little to no benefit in itself.

New BO: The Hana database generally requires a different data structure. In addition, the new business object (BO) business partner (BP) combines the previous customer and supplier BOs. Many SAP customers therefore consider it necessary to adapt the structure of their customer and supplier data before migrating to the new BO.

Data cleansing: Many SAP customers, quite rightly, want to use the transformation to cleanse their data of any errors and duplicates. After all, the conversion to S/4 is a central component of their future strategy, for which the following applies: no digitization without data quality.

Old data is a blind spot

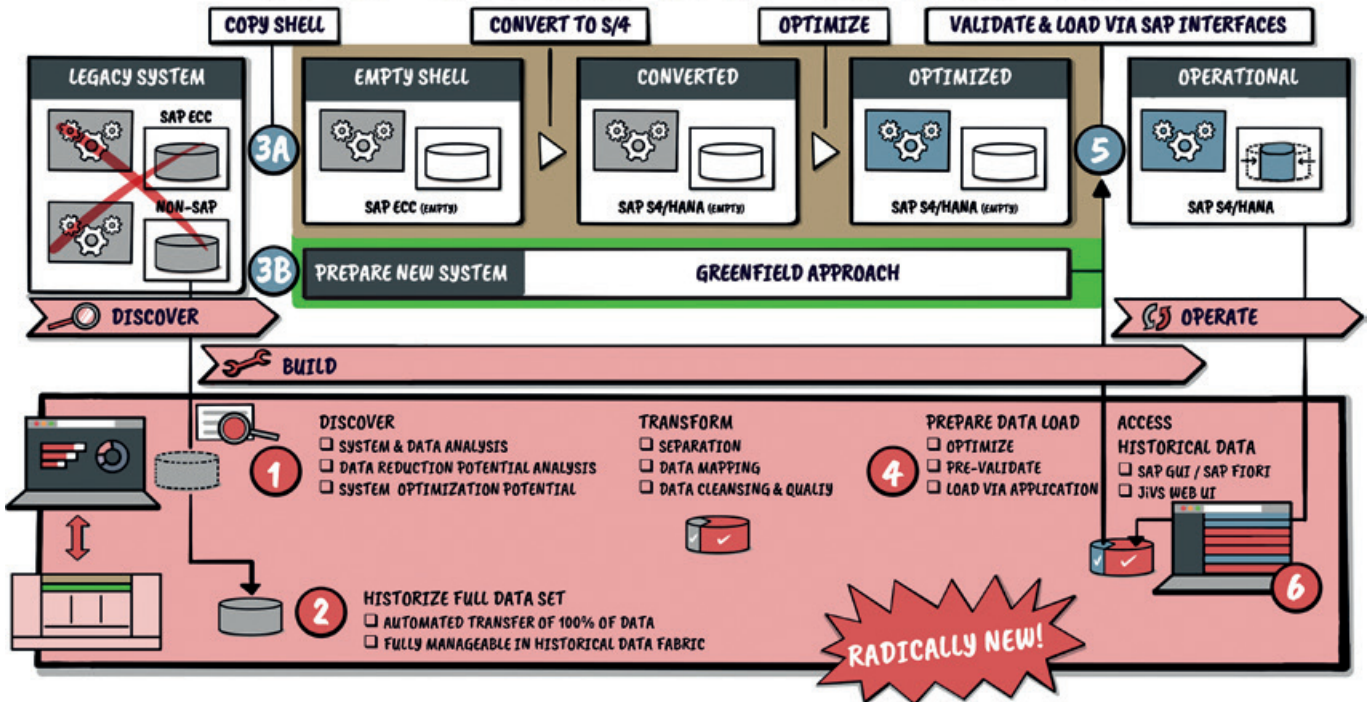
Just to avoid any misunderstandings: the concerns underlying preliminary projects are entirely justified. And yet they are un-

able to solve a fundamental problem: what should companies do with the legacy data and systems once the transformation is complete? This is a blind spot that is neglected all too often, not least because the project teams entrusted with the transformation are not (and do not have to be) interested in it.

It almost seems as if many SAP customers have resigned themselves to continuing to operate their legacy systems and storing their legacy data in archives after moving to the S/4 world. Notably, the structure of some of their data cannot be altered for decades due to legal reasons. This means that the legacy systems must also continue to run for the same amount of time, as they are needed to access and display the archived data.

Aside from the long-term additional expense, this approach harbors significant risks in terms of IT and legal security. Legacy systems that continue to run are generally no longer maintained, important security patches are no longer installed, and are more vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

ONE CLICK TRANSFORMATION APPROACH TO SAP S/4HANA – STEPS



S/4 transformation without pre-projects: managing the lifecycle of legacy data, applications, and systems at the touch of a button.

In addition, legislators are continually issuing new requirements. The provisions of the European General Data Protection Regulation and the new Swiss Data Protection Act, such as the possibility of deleting data at the individual data record level, can no longer be implemented in many legacy systems, or are only possible at great expense.

Furthermore, in this scenario, SAP users are largely or completely denied direct access to legacy data. This poses a non-negligible risk to productivity and quality assurance within the company. However, transforming all legacy data and migrating it to S/4 for this reason makes no sense, economically speaking.

Transformation without legacy

The aforementioned blind spot and the associated economic, security-related, and legal risks is what all pre-projects have in common. SAP customers should therefore consider adopting a radically new approach that not only solves these problems, but also makes the supposedly necessary projects redundant and eliminates their risks.

This approach consists of managing the complete lifecycle of legacy data separately, i.e. away from the legacy systems and applications, until its final and legally compliant deletion, as well as synchronizing it with the lifecycle management of the target applications and systems of an S/4 Hana solution.

This requires a platform on which all legacy data from SAP and non-SAP systems can be stored and deleted in a legally compliant manner. It must also offer options to further process the legacy data, such as its reduction, selection, optimization, and transformation via the Migration Cockpit and the application layer.

This platform is integrated with S/4 to automatically adapt legacy data on the fly to the new data structures, such as those of the business object BO, and to automatically display said legacy data in SAP Fiori.

This process is carried out as if the data had been created in S/4. This functionality is possible because all metadata meant be replaced within the SAP and non-SAP landscape is recorded and stored in a transformation cockpit at the click of a button.

In addition, every project step is documented, and the platform knows which legacy systems the companies can decommission and dispose of. All legacy data can be extracted from the ADK archives via the application layer at the click of a button and in a turbo process, making their information on the data and systems lifecycle available for other solutions in the area of application lifecycle management (ALM).

One platform for all

SAP customers do not have to worry about pre-projects, legacy problems, or tool confusion. A platform of this kind en-

ables SAP customers to kill three birds with one stone. First, the platform analyzes and manages the complete lifecycle of all legacy data. Secondly, it offers all the necessary functionalities for legally compliant storage and analysis, as well as a selective data transformation and migration. Thirdly, it solves once and for all the problem of legacy applications and systems during the transformation, and turns every brownfield project into a greenfield one.

SAP customers do not replace SAP's readiness check, which relates to processes and standards, but rather complement it as the core of a company-wide, intelligent data fabric. This way, the DMI solution as "one platform for everything" eliminates the complexity and confusion regarding tools that are otherwise typical for managing data. The platform that can shed light on the S/4 transformation blind spot at the click of a button, and can make pre-projects a thing of the past is called JiVS IMP.



Thomas Failer,
Founder and
Group CEO,
Data Migration
International