



FIVE INSIDER TIPS FOR A SMOOTH SAP® SUCCESSFACTORS® TALENT HYBRID INTEGRATION



These days, a lot of companies find themselves in the same boat. They know they need to move their human resources processes fully to the cloud, but they also need to do it at their own pace—in a way that won't cost too much or disrupt day-to-day operations.

An increasingly common scenario is for a company to already have an on-premise SAP® ERP system in place for its core HR processes, such as payroll, and also have the cloud-based SAP® SuccessFactors® in place for talent management processes such as recruiting.

Before completely giving up the familiar and trusted on-premise ERP solution in favor of a pure cloud-based solution like Employee Central, many companies are opting for a hybrid model. This requires that data be integrated between the on-premise ERP environment and SuccessFactors.

Enter the SuccessFactors Talent Hybrid Integration—a series of service packages that let organizations achieve that data integration much more quickly than they otherwise could. This solution packages up the most standard integrations to reduce development time.

It also allows for the bidirectional flow of information between the on-premise environment and the cloud-based one. For example, compensation information from an on-premise environment can be pushed to the cloud, while job candidate information gathered in the cloud can be populated into the on-premise environment. The bidirectional aspect of the solution can be used for onboarding, compensation, and LMSs, among other things.



TIME SAVER #1

Start your integration project by focusing first on what fields you want to transfer. For many data types, SAP delivers a standard extractor program to generate the expected file format. SAP also provides a number of standard web service definitions, so there's usually no need to hunt down a WSDL file in order to connect to SuccessFactors.

Unfortunately, a move to the hybrid model is not yet a truly out-of-the-box endeavor. The SuccessFactors Talent Hybrid solution can eliminate about 80% of development work, but there will still usually be about a 20% gap to close in order to achieve true data integration. Here are our top tips on integrating data between an on-premise SAP ERP environment and a cloud-based SuccessFactors one.





Tips

1. Make sure you have the right expertise in place. One of the most significant factors to integration success is ensuring you have access to the right expertise. Whether you're moving just one or multiple HR processes to the cloud, it's essential that the people involved have a significant amount of SAP experience—including integrating data between an SAP ERP environment and SuccessFactors as well as HR ABAP programming expertise. Not very many internal IT teams have significant experience with HR ABAP programming practices; therefore, you should strongly consider working with an experienced provider.

2. Plan on a significant amount of configuration, development, and testing work. That 20% gap we mentioned earlier is typically made up of a few things: configuration work, mapping work, and the implementation of various Business Add-Ins (BADIs) as well as Enhancements. (Enhancements are a specialized form of SAP development designed to prevent the need for more drastic modifications.) SAP has done a good job of building a framework, but even with an automated approach, achieving true integration usually requires specialized ABAP development. Be sure to allow for enough time to test the integrations as well.

3. Understand your middleware scenario. Middleware is the software that sits between your on-premise SAP ERP environment and external systems, such as non-SAP or cloud-based environments. This middleware is typically one of two types. Almost 90% of organizations that already have an existing on-premise SAP ERP environment have Process Integration (PI) middleware. If you already have PI middleware in place, it usually makes sense to stay with that. The other kind of middleware is HANA Cloud Integration (HCI), which is SAP's cloud-based middleware. If you don't yet have PI or other middleware in place, check out HCI. It's rapidly becoming SAP's go-to solution.

4. Ask SAP to match your current landscape in the cloud. One of the most common integration challenges is that a company's on-premise environment doesn't match the cloud-based one. Organizations with on-premise environments typically have three standard computing environments: a development environment or "dev," a QA environment or "test," and a production environment. SAP SuccessFactors, on the other hand, typically has just two environments: a test environment and a production environment. This mismatch can lead to data integrity problems, so many companies now ask SAP to give them a dev environment in the cloud as well, so all three environments match.



TIME SAVER #2

Once you've identified which fields you want to transfer, work with an experienced SAP programmer to determine which ones may require advanced customization. Such data types often include extended employee information as well as job functions and families. BADI and Enhancement development skills are an absolute must for this part of the project.

5. Plan your path to the cloud carefully. If you're planning on transitioning everything over to Employee Central, you're not going to be able to use many of the integrations available in the SuccessFactors Talent Hybrid solution. That's because when moving to Employee Central, the task is one of data migration, not data integration. SAP does provide some tools for full cloud migrations, and they will no doubt become more robust in years to come. To bridge the gap, many companies create five-to-seven-year roadmaps for moving fully to Employee Central. If your in-house systems are fairly big and established, it can be good to take this kind of gradual approach.



GP Strategies is an SAP Partner and an experienced provider of SuccessFactors Talent Hybrid Integrations. We're happy to answer your questions. Contact us at HTSSales@gpstrategies.com to see how we can help you in your journey to the cloud.

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