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DSAG Annual Congress 2025

Cloud, AI, and data: Transformation requires balance, transparency, and trust

- **Stability in transformation**
- **Artificial intelligence on the rise**
- **Harmonized data as a basis**

Walldorf, September 16, 2025 – Many companies and organizations need to reconcile the continuous changes in an increasingly complex, dynamic, and uncertain environment with their own needs. The use of SAP also plays a decisive role in this. The software manufacturer is consistently realigning itself and, with its new Business Suite, has set out a holistic vision for future SAP and IT architectures in the cloud. Such a transformation requires a balance between stability and speed. It is important to examine where ballast is still being dragged into the cloud and how a targeted clean core approach can free up new resources. The German-speaking SAP User Group (DSAG) will focus on these topics at the DSAG Annual Congress from September 16 to 18, 2025, in Bremen under the motto “The Art of Balance. Is it all about the balloons?”

From DSAG's perspective, the cloud is the right way forward, but it is challenging. According to the latest [DSAG Investment Report](#), many DSAG members see great potential, but need a sustainable strategy that combines stability and progress. For many companies and organizations, the journey into the “new” SAP cloud world still begins with SAP ECC or the “old” Business Suite – and in some cases with S/4HANA On-Premises. From DSAG's perspective, cloud ERP should be understood as encompassing both the private cloud and the public cloud. The path to the private cloud should also be used for a clean core approach. “For cloud transformation to succeed, you need a consistent and harmonized architecture, uniform operating models, clear migration paths, and transparent licensing and discount models that can be scaled up and down,” says Jens Hungershausen, DSAG Chair-



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man of the Board. SAP is taking responsibility here with the promise of lower transformation costs, faster tangible added value, greater agility, and continuous innovation. But for companies to actually take this path, it must become clearer why the switch to the “new” SAP world is worthwhile. Planning security is a keyword here.

Cloud transformation: Between stability and pressure to innovate

The new SAP Business Suite now provides a holistic vision for future IT architectures in the cloud. To realize her full potential, Cloud ERP, Business AI, and the Business Data Cloud must work together on the Business Technology Platform. To accelerate cloud adoption, SAP plans to offer preconfigured package solutions based on SAP Business Suite that are directly integrated into SAP Build. Business AI is an umbrella term for the integration of artificial intelligence into SAP solutions, either directly integrated or via Joule Copilot, which accesses so-called AI agents as an interface. The Business Data Cloud, in turn, serves as a central data platform for harmonizing, managing, and analyzing SAP and non-SAP data. Ultimately, the Business Technology Platform forms the foundation for the new SAP world.

According to the latest Investment Report 2025, 51 percent of respondents still use SAP ERP or the “old” Business Suite. 42 percent use S/4HANA on-premises, 33 percent use S/4HANA in the private cloud, and 13 percent use it in the public cloud. This shows that the trend toward the cloud is continuing and that support for the S/4HANA cloud strategy is growing. However, SAP's pace is not realistic for all companies. “We at DSAG expect room for maneuver – for example, in the design of individual roadmaps. Companies need planning and investment security, fair terms and conditions, transparent licensing models, and clarity about planned functionalities,” says Hungershausen. In addition, the use of different licensing models in SAP Cloud ERP Public and Private Edition leads to additional complexity, especially in two-tier scenarios. DSAG expects greater convergence in this area. That is why DSAG is calling for a standardized and open operating model that encompasses both the public and private cloud. This would help companies to operate hybrid scenarios efficiently and minimize investment risks.



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Consistent, harmonized architecture and uniform operating models are necessary for the successful implementation of this target vision. SAP offers transformation incentives and migration paths. From DSAG's perspective, flexible licensing and discount models are also needed to make the switch attractive and easy for customers. To support the adoption process, SAP points to the interaction of tools such as Signavio, LeanIX, and supporting methodologies.

Hybrid as the new normal – but not without a plan

From DSAG's perspective, the cloud is the future. However, for many customers, there is still a long way to go, which is why the near future will be hybrid. Artificial intelligence will play an increasingly important role, but it does not necessarily have to be tied to cloud solutions. SAP needs to provide even stronger support for the general adoption process. From DSAG's perspective, this requires good communication, transparent roadmaps, fair pricing and licensing models, and openly available innovations. Ultimately, the use of AI must also “pay off” for companies – only then does it offer real added value.

Licensing models and cloud costs must become more transparent

Even though the switch to the new SAP world is worthwhile, DSAG believes that SAP should provide more information about the added value of the transformation. "Companies need clarity about how flexibly the new Business Suite can map their industry-specific and individual requirements. This familiar flexibility from the 'old' SAP world must also be reflected here," says Hungershausen. At the same time, it must be ensured that the new Business Suite can be seamlessly integrated into existing overall architectures or connected to other architectures and that investment security is guaranteed.

Artificial intelligence at the heart of the new SAP world

Artificial intelligence is inseparable from both the new Business Suite and the cloud in general. Many AI-supported functions are only available in the cloud. The DSAG Investment Report 2025 showed that 68 percent of respondents generally consider



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AI to be highly or moderately relevant. And 48 percent saw very high or high potential benefits from AI in the SAP solution portfolio. In addition, 45 percent plan to give AI very high or high consideration in their investments.

By the end of 2024, SAP had made over 130 AI use cases available to customers, more than originally planned. At SAPPHIRE 2025, SAP announced over 400 AI applications by the end of 2025 – a strong indicator of further expansion. “We welcome the fact that SAP is providing powerful AI capabilities based on large amounts of business data stored in SAP and non-SAP systems to address the challenges of our time,” said Hungershausen.

From DSAG's perspective, AI must also be accessible to on-premises customers, regardless of existing cloud contracts. Equally important is transparency about where AI is used in SAP solutions and what data it is based on. It must also be clearly communicated how AI can be used in existing SAP landscapes and what costs are involved.

Security clearly in first place

Since AI systems are proven to process large amounts of data, high standards for data protection and data security are a must. According to the 2025 Investment Report, security is clearly in first place among the overarching topics. 92 percent of the companies surveyed assigned high or medium relevance to this topic. “The Business Data Cloud forms the new data foundation – but the decisive factor is how sustainable it really is. This requires reliable data products, modular insight apps, a fully usable platform that can also be accessed via partner solutions such as Databricks, and a clear and understandable licensing model (e.g., for capacity units),” summarizes Hungershausen.

Cybersecurity refers to the protection of networks, devices, applications, systems, and data from cyberattacks. The threat situation in cyberspace is highly dynamic and, not least due to AI, is a continuous, complex, and challenging task. Companies and organizations urgently need to address this issue. It is important to protect both the cloud infrastructure and AI applications from attacks – not least because



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artificial intelligence can work in both directions, i.e., it can prevent damage, but it can also cause it. From DSAG's point of view, SAP is well aware of the importance of cybersecurity and certifies that its security measures in the cloud comply with the highest standards – which DSAG very much welcomes. Security requirements should be taken into account as early as the development stage of solutions – key-word: security by design. And for companies, basic IT protection in accordance with established standards such as ISO 27001 or NIS2 is mandatory.

DSAG messages at a glance

Striking a balance between stability and the pressure to innovate remains an ongoing challenge. There are a few key points that should be taken into account.

- Clear migration paths and consistent architectures for SAP cloud transformation
- Fair and transparent licensing and discount models – including on-premises customers
- Open platforms (e.g., for partner solutions such as Databricks)
- Scope for individual roadmaps
- AI for all – regardless of cloud contracts
- Transparency in AI use: database, scenarios, costs
- “Security by design” in SAP development and basic IT protection in accordance with ISO 27001/NIS2
- Better communication on innovations, investment security, and long-term product strategy
- Uniform governance and data models to support compliance and auditability

It is important that SAP's strategy does not differ too much from the reality faced by customers and users. DSAG and SAP will ensure the necessary balance through close cooperation and continuous dialogue.



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On the [digital platform impulsant](#), interested parties can find all relevant content from the SAP and DSAG cosmos in a comprehensive and multimedia format.

About DSAG

The German-speaking SAP User Group (DSAG) is one of the most influential user associations in the world. More than 4,000 member companies form a strong network that extends from medium-sized companies to DAX corporations and across all economic sectors in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (DACH). Based on this reach, the industry association gains well-founded insights into the digital challenges in the DACH market. DSAG uses this knowledge advantage to represent the interests of SAP users and pave the way for digitalization for its members. For more information, visit: www.dsag.de, www.dsag.at, www.dsag-ev.ch

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