



Tackle Change in Your SAP Landscape

5 Winning Strategies for Managing Innovative Technologies



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Innovative technologies, such as SAP HANA, predictive analytics tools, and mobile and cloud solutions, have the potential to fundamentally transform businesses and offer unparalleled competitive advantages for CIOs willing to embrace them. But with IT landscapes that can include more than 20 enterprise systems — not all of which are SAP systems — CIOs are often challenged to figure out how to help the business take advantage of these new technologies while smoothly navigating the resulting changes.

When new solutions are introduced into the existing system landscape, organizations can experience business disruption, production outages, and delays and rework, which can result in high costs and project failure. Fortunately, there are proven strategies that can help institutionalize the process of introducing innovative technologies on an ongoing basis to minimize the risk of disruption.

1. Recognize That Managing Risk Requires Testing

New technologies and system changes must be fully tested before they are brought into production. When organizations do not conduct adequate testing, they introduce significant technology and process risk into the enterprise. Despite this risk, the reality is that testing is often shortchanged for a variety of reasons:

- Project deadlines squeeze the time available for systems testing and validation
- Budget pressures reduce the spending available for testing
- Reliance on manual testing, rather than automated testing, limits the range and quality of testing

In addition, the complexity of testing has grown dramatically. In the case of mobile business apps, for example, if you have to run 10 business processes on eight devices and operating systems, you would need 80 process tests to gain confidence in business process execution. The amount of work this requires can be

truly daunting. But with test automation in place, these complexities become easier to manage in a cost-effective way.

2. Take an End-to-End Approach

To further minimize the risk of business disruption as changes are introduced into your enterprise application landscape, IT must ensure that their teams understand what critical business processes are affected, what geographic and line-of-business variations of these business processes exist and need to be considered, and what business data drives those variations.

Here, it's important to take an end-to-end approach. Too often, teams only consider a business process as far as its application boundaries. In large companies, typical business processes span both SAP and non-SAP systems, and quality execution requires that the links between applications work as well as the applications themselves.

In addition, subject matter experts from different functional areas of the company, like sales and marketing, HR, and logistics, should be engaged in the change validation process in a way that is not unduly burdensome for them or for their business.

Introducing innovative technology can be a complex process for CIOs and IT departments. Fortunately, there are proven strategies that can help institutionalize this process to minimize the risk of disruption.

Drivers of Change in SAP Environments

There are a number of reasons why companies must make changes in their SAP environments, including:

- SAP upgrades and new installations, such as SAP HANA, mobility solutions, or other enterprise applications
- Mergers and organizational changes, like spinoffs and internal reorganizations with resulting system impacts
- Data center and technology consolidations, such as the consolidation of multiple SAP instances
- IT expense reduction initiatives
- Quality assurance programs

3. Quickly Capture Business Processes

To manage changes, end-to-end business processes must be well documented. Keep in mind that using Microsoft Word or Excel for this documentation is not sufficient since the documents and spreadsheets they create are unstructured, can be subject to interpretation, may lack specificity, and can require a great deal of time and effort to produce.

A smart approach is for subject matter experts to use a solution like Worksoft Certify to capture their business processes in a reusable database by “walking through” the SAP applications that they normally use to do their work. As they walk through the business process, they can also see what data is used in the underlying SAP systems for the transactions that they are performing.

Once business processes are captured in the database, you’ll gain a number of new capabilities. First and foremost, you can use the captured information to create automated functional tests for your critical business processes. The data collected as part of the walkthrough can be driven through these tests to cover important variations for geographies, sites, and business units. The results of the functional tests and screen captures can be used to automatically generate process documentation that is useful for compliance, audit, training, and other purposes. Captured business processes can also be turned into realistic load tests that ensure high system performance under real-world conditions.

Additionally, Worksoft Certify makes maintenance and updates simpler. As business processes or applications change, subject matter experts can update the capture by inserting the changes at points in the business process where they apply. There is no need to redo the whole business process. Changes can be added at any point in the sequence of steps and can be extensive, if required. This results in significant time and cost savings for new technology deployments or updates.

4. Set Up Test Automation for Critical Business Processes

Innovation becomes a lot simpler if the push of a button verifies that 80% of your core business processes and their variations will function correctly before and after new technology is introduced. This ability lets project teams focus on what’s important to the business, rather than spending project cycles on manual testing to ensure that nothing has broken. While manual testing will always have its place, using it alone can be slow,

expensive, or incomplete, whereas high levels of automation can drive cost savings, staff efficiency, and around-the-clock quality assurance.

First-generation, script-based automation tools have proven to be fragile and unable to keep up with high-change environments. Fortunately, modern test automation solutions, like Worksoft Certify, are designed to address these problems and are already delivering high levels of automation for global companies. Worksoft Certify provides:

1. **Simplicity:** The solution is designed to be simple enough for business subject matter experts, yet offers the sophistication desired by even the most advanced IT users.
2. **Speed:** It delivers results in a matter of days, providing a rapid return (and thus motivation to continue the testing).
3. **Resilience:** Worksoft Certify allows users to easily make changes as applications and business processes change.
4. **Completeness:** It comprehensively covers all SAP and non-SAP applications that are typically present in any modern SAP landscape.

5. Institutionalize a Center of Excellence

Large enterprises are embracing the concept of establishing a center of excellence and putting teams in place with a charter to accelerate the deployment of innovative technology and ensure the quality of business processes and the systems that support them. Typically, these centers are housed within an IT or quality organization and managed as a budgeted line item. For many companies, this is a radical departure from the past when business process testing and quality assurance were managed on a one-off project basis — or not managed at all.

Successfully Introduce Innovation

Introducing innovative technology can be a complex process for CIOs and IT departments. Using solutions to perform automated testing and capture business processes, taking an end-to-end approach, and establishing a center of excellence can be key strategies for success. Visit www.worksoft.com or email info@worksoft.com to learn more. ■