IBM Information Server: Easing SAP implementations, migrations and instance consolidation

Highlights

■ *Helps to understand, map and integrate data from external systems into SAP® R/3® and SAP Business Suite applications*

■ *Assists smooth Safe Passage transitions from existing enterprise resource planning or customer relationship management systems to SAP Business Suite*

■ *Helps ensure that only high-quality information is loaded into SAP applications*

■ *Accommodates tight batch windows while handling the massive volumes of data typically found in enterprise systems*

■ *Makes it easy to visually design complex logic to load legacy information into SAP applications*

■ *Eases rationalizing of data across SAP instances to help reduce consolidation risk*

Information forms the core of SAP applications

For many companies, SAP applications act as a central nervous system, often managing a majority of the processes that keep the business running. At the heart of these applications is a complex web of information, coordinated and controlled across business lines, departments and divisions.

Because of this, the single most important factor when implementing, migrating to or consolidating SAP software is successful information integration. The higher the information integration competency of the IT team, the more likely it is that these projects will succeed.

To facilitate this competency, organizations need to undertake a repeatable process that begins with an understanding of the existing information landscape, progresses to cleansing and harmonizing the information, and culminates in integrating and moving it into the new SAP application. To reduce the time and cost of delivery, organizations need an information platform that accelerates and automates the data transfer process.

As a proven platform for helping companies with the complexities associated with SAP implementations, migrations and consolidations, IBM® Information Server provides a reliable, repeatable foundation for understanding, cleansing, integrating and delivering high-quality information from complex source environments into a new SAP solution.
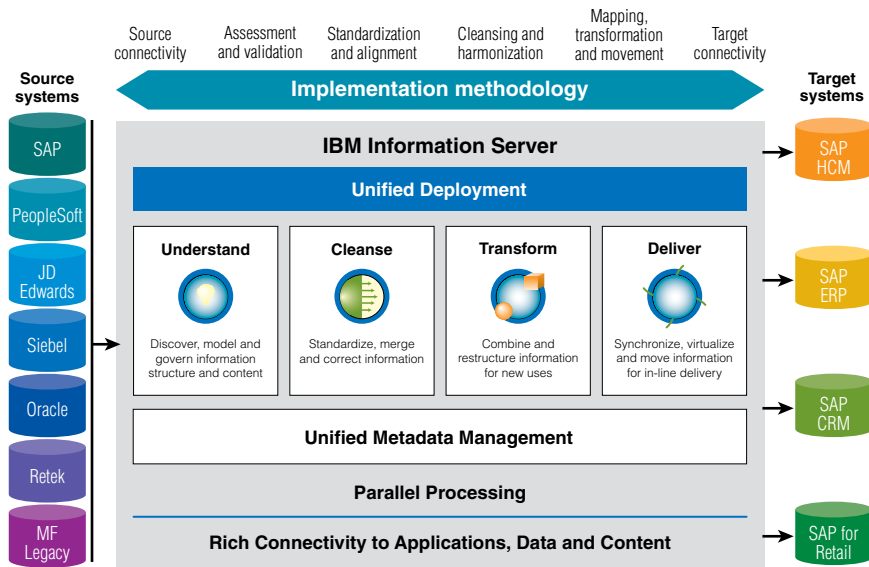
Figure 1. IBM Information Server supports a complete methodology and best practices for loading data from multiple systems into new or existing enterprise applications

SAP implementations require information integration discipline

A new SAP implementation—whether an entire application or individual modules—can be a costly and time-consuming project. As with any change in IT infrastructure, organizations undertake these projects because they believe the business benefits delivered by SAP solutions will outweigh the cost of implementation. It is absolutely critical to correctly load information into the new SAP environment from the beginning of the project—a mistake in the initial implementation can greatly impact the project's long-term value.

As businesses migrate to new SAP applications, various data, master data and business rules in existing systems must be understood, cleansed, transformed and delivered to the new system—even if the source systems are from a single vendor. IBM Information Server helps accelerate the time to value from enterprise application migrations and helps reduce the inherent risk of such a large project by removing data from the critical path of an application migration or consolidation.

IBM Information Server helps organizations to understand existing data sources, to cleanse, correct and standardize information, and to transform and load the data into a new or existing enterprise application (see Figure 1).

IBM Information Server also helps federate access to data, allowing customers to gain time and value from the data in multiple systems by allowing it to be accessed before the new system is fully deployed and the data physically consolidated or migrated.

This repeatable, automated process helps ensure that data is correctly loaded into a new SAP application at the outset. With IBM Information Server, clean, complete and de-duplicated data is loaded into the new system, and that information is harmonized and integrated into a single consolidated view that is optimized to help you run your business.

Regardless of the volume of information in source systems, IBM Information Server can quickly and reliably help enable a fresh view into SAP applications. IBM Information Server tracks the movement of information, providing metadata lineage that explains where information comes from and what happens to it as it moves through the enterprise.

A roadmap for Safe Passage

For companies that have standardized on other vendors' enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, SAP offers a Safe Passage program that provides an incentive to migrate to the SAP ERP application. As companies progress down this path, their information challenges are no less daunting.

Even if it is coming from a single source, data needs to be understood, cleansed and transformed into the view that best optimizes the value of an SAP investment.

IBM is a selected SAP partner for assisting in these migrations, providing methods, best practices and automation software to help companies perform these migrations quickly and painlessly, without the risks of alternative methods. IBM Information Server provides optimized connectivity to a multitude of ERP systems, allowing information to be analyzed, cleansed, integrated and delivered into a new SAP application.

Reducing the costs of multiple instances
It is common for companies to run and maintain multiple instances of SAP applications. This is often a natural result of mergers and acquisitions as well as separate departmental and divisional implementations. However, many companies are seeking to consolidate these multiple instances in order to reduce costs and improve the enterprise-wide view of SAP data. Some documented advantages of reducing the number of managed SAP instances include:

Standardized worldwide business processes

- *Up to 30 percent reduction of financial headcount*
- *Reduced Sarbanes-Oxley Act compliance costs*
- *Consistency across products and processes*
- *Better positioning to expand ERP functionality*

As much as 2/3 reduction in time to integrate acquisitions

Reduced order costs through single face to global customers

Change from regional to global organization

- *Reduced reaction time from months to days*
- *Up to 90 percent reduction in closing time*

20–45 percent reduction in ERP-related IT costs

Globally coordinated supply chain

- *Up to 50 percent reduction in raw materials inventory*
- *Reduced stockouts at distribution centers*
- *Reduction in purchasing staff of up to 25 percent*
- *Reduced transportation costs*
- *Reduced sales, VAT and inventory taxes*

The challenge of these instance reduction projects comes down to information complexity. Even when the source systems are several SAP R/3® applications, they are likely customized and not managed as a single instance. IBM Information Server helps remove the risk from such a large project by taking data off the critical path of a SAP system consolidation.

IBM Information Server helps organizations to understand existing data sources, to cleanse, correct and standardize information, and to transform and load the data into a new or existing SAP ERP or SAP R/3 solution. This same platform can be used to support master data integration initiatives, providing further value from the same investment.

A platform tailored for SAP software

IBM Information Server complements SAP R/3 and SAP Business Suite by helping customers graphically connect to complex heterogeneous operational data sources and create reusable mappings and transformations to convert the data into SAP software target objects. IBM Information Server supports complex data formats and facilitates loading non-SAP data into SAP R/3 and SAP Business Suite solutions through packaged connectivity to competing enterprise applications.

The IBM WebSphere® DataStage™ Pack for SAP R/3 provides graphical connectivity to SAP R/3 software that makes it easy to stream data into and out of SAP systems. The Pack adds SAP-certified integration to IBM Information Server and supports the latest version of SAP software.

IBM Information Server provides:

- *Simple, graphical and packaged extracting and loading of data into SAP software via business application programming interfaces*
- *Non-SAP metadata importing, including creation of InfoObjects, InfoSources, InfoPackages and source systems*
- *Scalable performance for increasing data volumes*
- *In-line data cleansing and de-duplication*
- *Unicode support*

Lowering project costs

Whenever information is integrated from disparate sources, a great deal of complexity is involved. Information from different systems is rarely aligned properly, and data quality and redundancy issues abound. Integrating external data sources into SAP applications poses many of the same challenges.

To ease information integration, IBM provides a complete methodology and best practices for implementing, migrating and consolidating SAP instances. This methodology is supported and automated by IBM Information Server, which provides a platform for understanding, cleansing, transforming and delivering information from across a heterogeneous IT landscape.
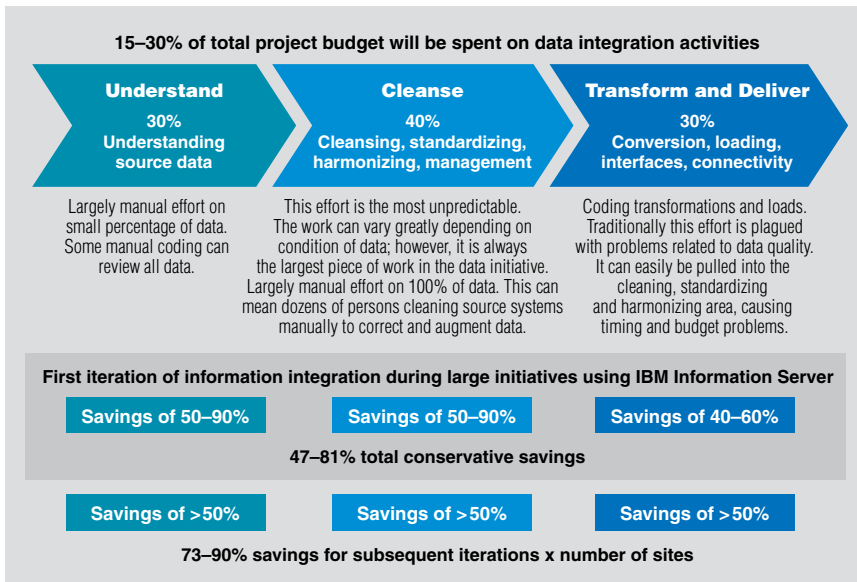
15–30% of total project budget will be spent on data integration activities

Understand	Cleanse	Transform and Deliver
30% Understanding source data	40% Cleansing, standardizing, harmonizing, management	30% Conversion, loading, interfaces, connectivity
Largely manual effort on small percentage of data. Some manual coding can review all data.	This effort is the most unpredictable. The work can vary greatly depending on condition of data; however, it is always the largest piece of work in the data initiative. Largely manual effort on 100% of data. This can mean dozens of persons cleaning source systems manually to correct and augment data.	Coding transformations and loads. Traditionally this effort is plagued with problems related to data quality. It can easily be pulled into the cleaning, standardizing and harmonizing area, causing timing and budget problems.

First iteration of information integration during large initiatives using IBM Information Server

Savings of 50–90%	Savings of 50–90%	Savings of 40–60%

47–81% total conservative savings

Savings of >50%	Savings of >50%	Savings of >50%

73–90% savings for subsequent iterations x number of sites

Figure 2. Information integration using IBM Information Server can lead to significant project savings

Rationalization, migration and consolidation projects start with understanding data sources by profiling source data, analyzing field contents and data structures, and providing integration recommendations. Next, it progresses to cleansing the data, standardizing and correcting data elements, and matching records across and within systems. From there, the data can be transformed and integrated into the SAP solution. All of this is done using a unified platform with visual tools that help enable collaboration across IT and business domains.

This approach mitigates a multitude of risks by providing an end-to-end infrastructure that helps enable the discovery of data quality issues early in the project life cycle. It also provides an automated process for system data integration and a scalable platform for extracting and loading data into SAP applications for interfaces based on both batch and real-time transactions.

By identifying and documenting unique data definitions, data quality

issues and business rules early in the project, implementation teams can more accurately design and configure the target application and provide accurate cleansing and data migration specifications for data consolidation and integration.

When organizations apply this approach to SAP implementations, they can experience project savings of up 81 percent versus hand-coded solutions (see Figure 2).

IBM Information Server delivers trusted information

Organizations face an information challenge beginning with locating information, getting it when it is needed in the form needed, and once it is found, discerning further insights from it. Information validity and control are additional concerns. The challenges only mount if businesses cannot ensure access to authoritative, consistent, timely and complete information.

IBM Information Server is a revolutionary new software platform that helps you derive more value from the complex, heterogeneous information spread across your systems. It enables your organization to integrate disparate data and deliver trusted information wherever and whenever needed, in line and in context, to specific people, applications and processes. It helps business and IT personnel collaborate to understand the meaning, structure and content of any type of information across any source. It provides breakthrough productivity and performance for cleansing, transforming and moving this information consistently and securely throughout the enterprise, so it can be accessed and used in new ways to drive innovation, increase operational efficiency and help lower risk.

For more information

To learn more about IBM Information Server, contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit **ibm.com**/software/data/integration

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TAKE BACK CONTROL WITH **Information Management**