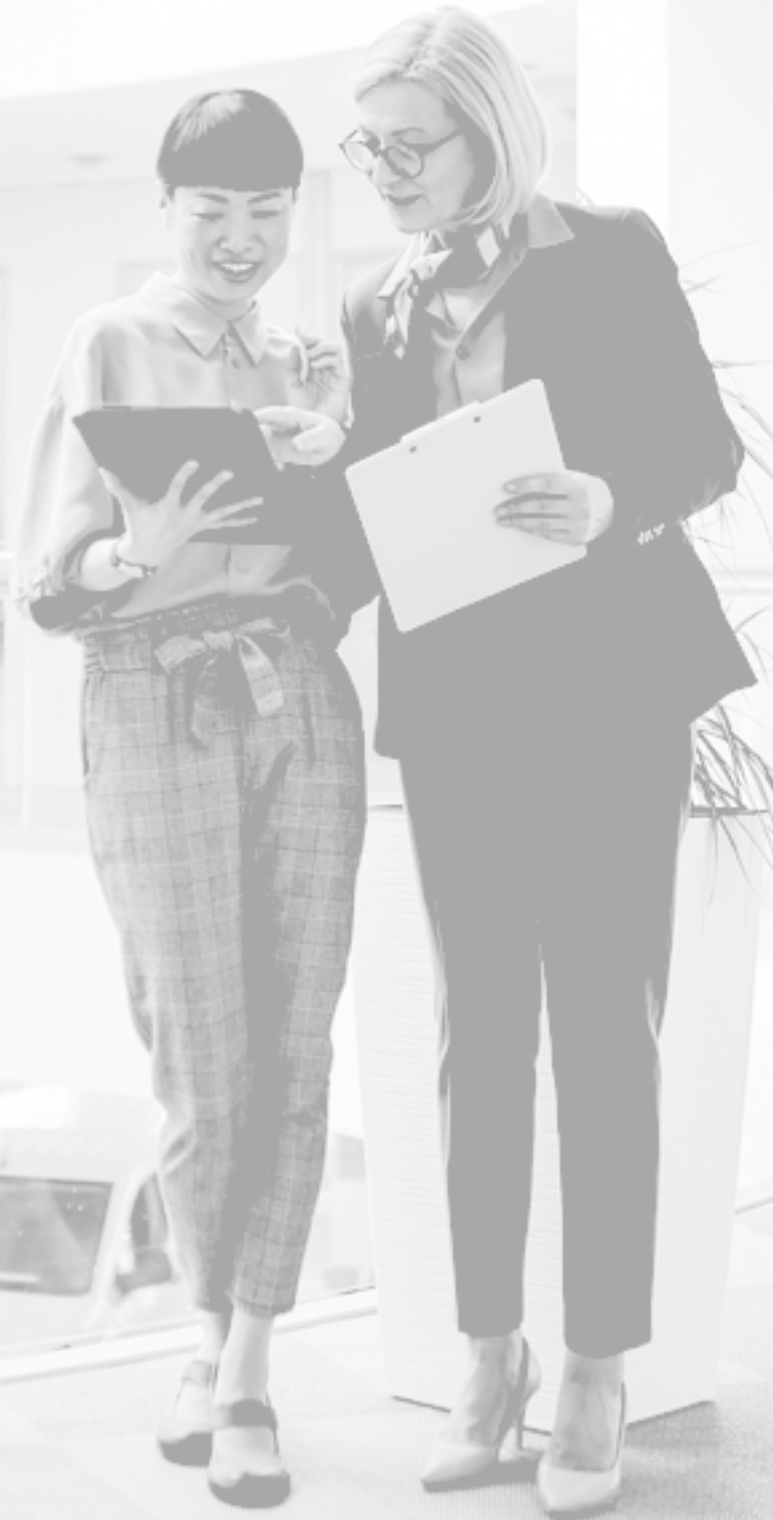


2025

SAP

TRENDS



As we move into 2025, SAP continues to evolve in response to shifting business models, rising expectations for a superior user experience, an accelerated push toward AI-driven innovation, and a need to keep up with an increasingly complex and digital landscape. Clients are expecting SAP to not just act as a software provider, but also a strategic partner capable of delivering agility, compliance, resilience, and insight through its solutions.

With all that is going on in the world today, SAP is responding with some bold changes – reimagining its business model, embedding AI across its portfolio, and enhancing its suite of tools to meet the growing demand for smarter, more connected enterprises.

In the report below, our [team of SAP experts](#) highlights five trends in the SAP world that reflect that larger transformation. From advancements in Business AI to improvements in user adoption and experience, SAP is doubling down on solutions that help businesses future-proof their operations and enable long-term success.

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1

TRANSITIONING FROM ECC TO S/4HANA: THE TIME IS NOW

SAP will continue to put focus on shifting customers to the cloud and incentivizing mid-market customers to [transition from ECC to S/4HANA](#). The [SAP Private Cloud ERP Package](#) (new [RISE offering](#)) and [GROW offerings](#) are becoming the primary path to the cloud and S/4HANA for those still maintaining on-premise ECC solutions. The GROW path allows a clean start for companies that can move to a complete SaaS ERP solution with a “Clean Core” option that significantly reduces customizations and code maintenance.

[We saw in 2024](#) that SAP is pushing a shift toward a clean core, whether it's [Public \(GROW with SAP\)](#) or [Private Cloud \(RISE with SAP\)](#). This helps reduce costs and speeds up companies' ability to innovate and adapt. Perhaps the largest drivers for moving to S/4 and the Cloud is the upcoming support cliff, when [SAP Business Suite 7.0](#) mainstream maintenance ends in 2027.

2025 is the year to understand and plan for maintenance changes or migration options for an older SAP solution. If you haven't already started [your upgrade](#), please reach out to our team [sooner rather than later](#), so that we can help evaluate your options and [prepare you for the transition](#).



2 ENABLING INTELLIGENT WORKFLOWS WITH BUSINESS AI

In 2025, SAP is taking a more practical approach to SAP Business AI: delivering tangible value across business functions. SAP is embedding intelligence directly into the tools and workflows that customers already use. There's a greater emphasis on domain-specific AI [that supports real business](#) tasks and distinct business needs instead of general-purpose models.

At the center of [SAP's AI strategy is Joule](#), an AI assistant integrated across SAP applications that continues to expand in functionality and reach. [Joule enables natural language interaction](#), allowing users to ask questions and pull insights from data without switching tools. Its capabilities are being extended to work across a broader range of industries and roles in 2025, leveraging Joule agents that can be embedded within different platforms and solutions to help users get more done with less effort.

SAP is also integrating acquired technologies like LeanIX and Signavio to strengthen its AI-driven transformation capabilities. LeanIX strengthens enterprise architecture management, helping organizations manage complex IT landscapes and aligning decisions with their business goals. Similarly, Signavio delivers powerful process intelligence that helps identify and act on areas for improvement. Both LeanIX and Signavio represent a more connected, insight-driven approach to AI-enabled enterprise transformation.

Another key enabler is [SAP Business Data Cloud](#), which provides Joule with a consistent, trusted data foundation across both SAP and non-SAP systems. This unified data layer allows AI agents to access more complete and contextual information to improve the relevancy and accuracy of any recommendations provided. SAP shifting toward more autonomous, “agentic AI” is enabling more intelligent workflows that proactively identify and solve business challenges. While agentic AI is in early stages, it has potential to revolutionize business process automation in finance (*automated AP and AR processing*), supply chain (*forecasting, inventory planning, and route optimization*), lead-to-cash (*customer-specific sales and pricing strategies and automated customer support*), and more.

SAP Business AI is transforming how companies access and act on data by delivering real-time insights in a more consumable manner, making it faster and easier to move from information gathering to decision making. For business leaders tired of “waiting for data,” this shift unlocks a new level of agility and clarity.



As global tax and data privacy regulations become more complex, finance and compliance teams are recognizing the growing (and increasingly vital) need to integrate tax strategies into their ERP transformation initiatives. [Tax requirements are quickly evolving](#), varying by country, region, and industry, which adds new layers of compliance and reporting that must be built directly into core systems. We are seeing clients struggle with this task while also navigating the growing pressure to [manage data privacy responsibly and transparently](#).

Regulations like Global Data Privacy Regulation (GDPR) and California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) continue to shape expectations around data handling, requiring clear governance policies and tools to inform customers about how their data is collected, used, or shared. Countries are also introducing (or expanding) electronic invoicing mandates, like Nota Fiscal in Brazil. Germany, Italy, and Spain are also requiring real-time invoice submissions B2B and B2G transactions, and France and Poland enforce similar e-invoicing requirements in 2026.

Meeting these increasingly complex requirements calls for specialized technology, like tax engines, which can accurately calculate rates in real time or systems that can tag and store invoices to meet local laws. One way that SAP supports this is through its [SAP Global Tax Management](#) solution, which integrates with leading third-party providers like Avalara, Sovos, Thomson Reuters, and Vertex, to streamline and simplify compliance with tax calculation and reporting.

Insights from the [SAPInsider 2024 Tax Technology Innovation and Automation](#) survey further reinforced the importance of tying tax strategy to larger ERP transformation efforts.

Key takeaways from the survey include:

- ERP transformations provide an opportunity for organizations to obtain better agility in managing tax and regulatory obligations.
- Tax teams must be involved in any business transformation initiatives to ensure their processes align with evolving business and regulatory requirements.
- Developing a digital tax strategy with enterprise transformation is crucial to enable tax innovation and automation of compliance efforts.

The velocity at which global tax and regulatory requirements are changing continues to accelerate, and SAP is responding just as fast. For companies undergoing ERP transformations, staying ahead means rethinking tax strategies in step with this constant flux.

4 PRIORITIZING USER ADOPTION AND EXPERIENCE

Enhanced user experience and greater user adoption continue to be high priorities – and SAP is making steady progress in this area. The Fiori interface has evolved into a more intuitive, app-like environment that feels familiar with what users see on their phone and mobile devices. This shift, combined with a stronger focus on in-the-moment learning, delivers a less complicated user experience and builds a self-service mentality within the user community.

Tools like SAP Enable Now and [WalkMe](#) are helping to make this shift possible. Instead of relying on lengthy manuals or giant slide decks, companies are creating interactive guides, in the form of short videos and simulations, to support users within their flow of work. These assets are easier to update and faster to deploy, meaning training content can be created quickly and shared immediately. For companies using a [learning management system \(LMS\)](#), this content can also be integrated directly, which makes training easier to manage across platforms and systems.

Another powerful [feature of SAP Enable Now](#) and WalkMe are the options for community feedback; users can request, create, or improve content through their training site, giving them a voice in the learning process. Engaging users this way [increases adoption](#) and also serves to verify the materials are being accessed and used. We've seen clients build libraries of user-created walkthrough videos with tips and tricks for repetitive or complex tasks, which not only builds confidence in the user but fosters a more self-sufficient user base too.

Initial user adoption and ongoing productivity and engagement are crucial for long-term, sustained success. Training content today is much different than it was 5, 10, or 15 years ago. Users want content that is easier to consume, more tailored, and on demand, and SAP is keeping up with those needs. Tools like Enable Now and WalkMe are enabling users to spend less time learning the SAP solution and more time applying its capabilities to understand and run their business.



SAP ANALYTICS CLOUD

SAP continues to invest heavily in capabilities that allow customers to unlock the full value of their data. Those capabilities span both analytics and data architecture. At the front end, [SAP Analytics Cloud \(SAC\)](#) combines business intelligence, planning, and predictive analytics into a single integrated platform. Recent updates for SAC have focused on improving usability and insight delivery, through richer data visualizations, more flexible dashboards, stronger self-service tools, and other features that allow users to explore and share insights on their own terms.

For enterprise planning, SAC has introduced Compass, which allows users (who may not have deep statistical expertise) to model uncertainty and forecast outcomes using Monte Carlo simulation. SAC also supports more robust scenario modeling and deeper Excel integration, allowing users to simulate “what-if” situations across multiple variables and dimensions, improving strategic decision-making and ensuring real-time access to accurate, trusted data. These upgrades allow for more agile, collaborative planning that empowers organizations to adapt faster.

SAP DATASPHERE

As companies continue to face a growing challenge in managing fragmented data spread across multiple systems, SAP offers an appealing resolution: SAP Datasphere, a solution that acts as the foundation of its business data fabric approach. This enables organizations to connect diverse data sources (both SAP and non-SAP) while preserving the business semantics and [governance rules](#) inherent in each system.

To build on Datasphere’s strengths in data integration and business-context-rich modeling, SAP introduced automatic semantic knowledge graphs, which turn structured and unstructured data into meaningful relationships, enriched with business context from SAP applications like S/4HANA. This is a recent development, enabling organizations to harness generative AI more effectively, supporting complex, open-ended queries through tools like Joule.

Additionally, SAP Datasphere now supports enhanced semantic onboarding, extending beyond SAP S/4HANA and BW/4HANA to include SAP HANA Cloud and SAP data products. This allows seamless



import of calculation views while preserving rich semantic context (*think hierarchies, measures, units, etc.*) to ensure full alignment across systems. These updates also unlock new AI use cases through integration with SAP HANA Cloud's vector engine, enabling capabilities like retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), similarity search, recommendations, and classification, all within a [governed data environment](#).

SAP BUSINESS DATA CLOUD

SAP recently introduced SAP Business Data Cloud, a fully managed SaaS solution designed to unify and govern all SAP data while seamlessly integrating with third-party sources. When an SAP Datasphere tenant is part of a Business Data Cloud formation, it gains immediate connectivity to the SAP Datasphere catalog and benefits from streamlined data product access across the entire environment. Administrators can use the SAP Business Data Cloud Cockpit to deploy pre-packaged insight apps and activate data packages that surface curated data products within Datasphere. Meanwhile, modelers can easily install these data products into their own spaces to accelerate data access, modeling, and analytics in one governed, business-friendly data landscape.

SAP recently [announced the integration of Databricks](#) as a key component of SAP Business Data Cloud, marking a major step toward open data collaboration. This integration allows customers to seamlessly access and analyze SAP and Databricks data together without moving or duplicating it, [preserving governance and context](#). Organizations can leverage the power of Databricks' AI and machine learning (ML) capabilities, alongside trusted SAP data, accelerating innovation, improving analytics, and enabling unified decision-making across their enterprise data landscape.

Reviewing and analyzing business data in SAP is becoming more intuitive. By leveraging SAP's data tools, businesses can aggregate and share consumable data across their organization faster and with greater confidence, enabling leaders to make informed decisions much sooner.



LOOKING AHEAD

The five trends above highlight how SAP continues to adapt its offerings to better meet the needs of today's businesses across the life sciences, consumer products, and retail industries. From rethinking its business models to investing in business-ready AI, SAP is making practical shifts that reflect where its customers are headed, helping companies not only keep pace with today's challenges but also better plan for the future.

As organizations look to [get more value from their SAP investments](#), staying aligned with these developments will be key to making informed decisions and building a stronger, scalable foundation for future growth. If you'd like to chat about any of these trends or other challenges and opportunities in the SAP landscape, our [team of SAP experts](#) can help.

ABOUT CLARKSTON CONSULTING

Businesses across life sciences, consumer products, and retail industries partner with Clarkston Consulting to enhance strategic decision-making, improve operational efficiencies, implement new technologies, and promote business growth and market diversification. Leveraging deep functional and industry expertise, our people discover, design, and deliver solutions that fit your business, your goals, and your future. At Clarkston, your purpose is our purpose.

For more information about how we can help your company, [please contact us](#).

