Dr. George W. Anderson

Sams Teach Yourself

SAP

in 24 Hours
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About the Author

Dr. George W. Anderson and his family reside in Houston, Texas. An SAP consultant for 13 years and IT professional for 25, he has had the privilege of working on countless SAP implementations, upgrades, migrations, and other enterprise projects. George is a certified SAP Technical Consultant, SAP NetWeaver '04 OS/DB Migration Consultant, PMI PMP, MCSE, MBA, and recent PhD. He loves to write and share with others through books, journal articles, conference sessions, and more. At Microsoft, he provides thought leadership and strategic direction around next-generation platforms and architectures for SAP and other Line of Business (LOB) applications. He also holds a seat as one of several technical editors for the SAP Professional Journal. When not spending time with his family, friends, and extended church family, he enjoys blogging on Microsoft’s TechNet site (http://wwwblogs.technet.com/b/lobapps/), playing guitar, studying the Bible, trying new steakhouses, and hearing from his readers. Catch him at his best after midnight at george.anderson@microsoft.com.
Dedication

To my beautiful and encouraging wife Michelle, my three amazing kids, my friend Fazil Osman who worked with and inspired me to write my first SAP book, my friend Raymond Smith who helped me with this most recent book, and finally to all my little helpers (you know who you are!), this book is dedicated to you.

Acknowledgments

When I started my SAP career in 1997, I never would have dreamed I’d be where I am today. I’ve always been a hard worker, sure. But this book and everything else I’ve achieved really have little to do with me at all. My favorite book says I can do nothing worthwhile apart from God. On the other hand, I can do everything through the One who gives me strength. When I put my faith in these words a decade ago, my life changed. My successes multiplied, but they are His. My family grew larger and closer; they are a blessing from Him. And my work and hobbies evolved and converged in a way I never could have foreseen; they are an awesome gift from Him. So as I sit here thinking about who to acknowledge for making this book possible, I can’t help but point to Jesus and say, “Thank You.”
We Want to Hear from You!

As the reader of this book, you are our most important critic and commentator. We value your opinion and want to know what we’re doing right, what we could do better, what areas you’d like to see us publish in, and any other words of wisdom you’re willing to pass our way.

You can email or write me directly to let me know what you did or didn’t like about this book—as well as what we can do to make our books stronger.

Please note that I cannot help you with technical problems related to the topic of this book, and that due to the high volume of mail I receive, I might not be able to reply to every message.

When you write, please be sure to include this book’s title and author as well as your name and phone or email address. I will carefully review your comments and share them with the author and editors who worked on the book.

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Introduction

When I was asked to update *Sams Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours*, I was completely thrilled. Seriously! The world of SAP and our world in general have gone through major upheavals in the last few years, and I was excited to share with SAPlings and veterans alike just how much had changed. In the same way, I was anxious to realign and simplify this book in the way that Danielle Larocca, the original Teach Yourself SAP author, had done. She did a magnificent job targeting business users and technical readers at the exclusion of everyone else you tend to find on an SAP project. I’ve tried to reapply some of that same focus here, which should also (not coincidentally) tackle some of the concerns my readers expressed. And, I wanted to address additional concerns vocalized by my readers related to consistency, eliminating repetition, providing better figures, and more. So thank you for picking up the latest and yes, best ever, edition of *Sams Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours*. I am confident you’ll find it well worth your investment.

In the name of simplification, I have reorganized and revamped the material into five easy-to-consume sections. Part I naturally kicks off with an introduction to all the basics, followed by Part II, which covers SAP’s business applications and components. In this way, the stage is set for us to explore SAP from a business user perspective (Part III) and then from an IT professional’s perspective (Part IV). With all your newfound knowledge and focus, and in response to comments from many readers over the last five years, Part V concludes with an extensive section devoted to helping you develop a career in SAP.

Along the way, I cover what matters most to SAP newcomers. For the business users, I go beyond simply setting up access to SAP and customizing your user interface, and I walk you through actual business transactions. Together, we explore what it means to create sales orders, update employee personnel records, and more. I ground you in how SAP users are assigned roles and provided authorization to execute transactions related to those roles. We explore mega business processes like “Order to Cash” and how that breaks down into specific SAP business transactions. And we go into detailed reporting and query processes executed not only from SAP itself but through other commonly used business productivity tools like Microsoft SharePoint, Adobe Forms, and more. In this way, prospective SAP business users can really get a taste of a day-in-the-life-of an SAP end user.

For my technical readers, I’ve done something new and completely overdue. In the last five years, I’ve received no less than a hundred emails from newbies interested in installing a “demo” version of SAP. So yes, in this latest Teach Yourself SAP we briefly walk through not only a real technical installation together, step-by-step, but also locate and install SAP’s very own freeware. In the past, SAP called this MiniSAP. Today it’s
simply called the Trial version of SAP. And it will significantly change how you apply what we learn together in these 400+ pages. For example, you should be able to walk away with the hands-on ability to fundamentally administer, tune, maintain, and monitor an SAP system just like SAP IT professionals do in the real world. Together we will also look at what it means to prepare for technical upgrades and manage an SAP project. And by covering SAP technology from several different perspectives including cutting edge insight related to SAP and cloud computing, more experienced technical readers will be even better positioned to make a difference at work.

In the end, you have only invested 24 hours inside the pages of this book, reading and walking through exercises. But armed with new insight and awareness, I bet you’ll never look at SAP the same way again. You’ll be that rare person who embodies a bit of business know-how as well as technical proficiency. You’ll understand the basics of what it means to implement and run SAP. And you’ll be on your way to transforming your part of the world.

Thank you again for adding this latest book to your library,

SAP?

SAP has come a long way since the first edition of this book was published in the 1990s. From a one-product company to a global software powerhouse creating a suite of applications and technologies used by the majority of big companies around the world, SAP’s stable of contemporary business solutions is unparalleled. Even in the wake of economic meltdowns and global shifts in how technology is procured and deployed, the company and its products remain models of both evolution and revolution.

But what is SAP? Unlike familiar office desktop applications like Microsoft Word and Excel used by individuals to perform individual work, SAP’s applications are business applications. These are used by individuals to run an entire firm’s financial systems, manage warehouse and distribution facilities, figure out how to sell products faster, process payroll for the company, and more. It is this company-wide scope of SAP systems that makes them not only complex but critical today to businesses around the world. But these software systems cost millions of dollars and thousands of hours to implement and maintain, and they require knowledgeable technical teams and well-trained business users to get the most out of such an incredibly high investment. That’s where this 4th edition of *Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours* will be useful, providing the fundamental knowledge needed by IT professionals and business users alike to understand, support, and begin to use SAP.
What’s Covered

This book covers everything you need to become well acquainted with the core SAP products and components that are often collectively referred to simply as SAP. Though this is a beginner’s book, it’s provides the most well-rounded and current outlook on SAP today. As a career SAP professional, I’ve made sure this book reflects the real-world. I share what you need to know, understand, and do. This latest edition is more focused than earlier editions and targets the two largest audiences of those interested in learning about SAP: business users and IT professionals. Readers will appreciate how the book is arranged around these two very different types of skill sets and interests.

And by providing an overview to each area coupled with actionable steps or guidance, this is the most useful and “teachable” Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours yet.

The book begins with the basics and by introducing terminology regarding SAP and its business applications, technology underpinnings, and project implementation considerations. From there begins the process of carefully building on your newfound knowledge to piece together the complex world of SAP. The pace of the book is designed to provide a solid foundation up front so you can grasp the more advanced topics covered in later hours. In this way, even a novice will quickly understand what it means to plan for, deploy, and use SAP. With this understanding, you’ll also begin to appreciate the roles that so many people play with regard to an implementation project—how executive leadership, project management, business applications, technical deployment, and the application’s business users all come together to create and use SAP end-to-end.

The first several chapters establish a better foundation than past editions, bringing readers up to speed before breaking matters down into areas targeted at business users or IT professionals. The book is also organized more clearly by chapter or “hour,” making it even easier for readers interested in a particular subject area to quickly locate material most interesting to them. And like the previous edition, each chapter concludes with a real-world case study enabling readers to put their new-found knowledge to the test.

What’s Really New

Beyond important structural changes and a clear focus on business users and IT professional, this latest edition of Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours includes much new content such as:

- Updates related to new products, capabilities, and terminology
- Coverage of hot technologies like Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Software as a Service (SaaS)
- An hour dedicated to cloud computing both from SAP’s point of view and from the view of many SAP infrastructure partners and hosting providers
An hour dedicated to SAP security fundamentals like roles and authorizations

Coverage of easy access methods using SharePoint and Adobe

Improved real-world SAP project implementation guidance

Streamlined content related to systems management, monitoring, and tuning performed by thousands of SAP Basis professionals day in and day out

Better and broader treatment related to career guidance

An appendix containing SAP-specific acronyms and common terms

To give you a sense of how SAP businesses work with SAP at their desks every day, the book also includes real-world step-by-step instructions for running many common SAP business transactions. These are the same transactions or business processes tens of thousands of users around the world execute in the name of “running the business.”

Finally, I have also taken the liberty of pointing you not only to readily accessible resources on the Web but also back to previous editions of this book. My coauthors and I in the 2nd and 3rd editions, for example, provided some deep dives into areas that in hindsight were overkill for many but still hold much value even today for those of you interested in more detail. This has allowed me to eliminate some of the too-technical material in favor of greater and broader coverage aimed at true beginners.

Who Should Read This Book

This book is for people new to SAP as well as people interested in filling in some of their own SAP knowledge gaps. For example, reading SAP’s perspectives on cloud computing outlined in Hour 19 or looking through some of the new underlying technologies mentioned throughout Hour 3, would probably be beneficial to even an experienced SAP professional. However, I have really focused this latest edition on new business users and technology professionals. Sure, if you’re an executive or a Project Manager tasked with implementing or upgrading SAP, there’s some good and easy-to-find guidance in these pages. Worst case, such a reader might go through Hours 1, 4, 5, and 15 and pass the book on to a novice business user or technical support professional. But the bulk of the material is geared toward business users and technology professionals with little to no knowledge of SAP and a desire to go beyond the introductory fluff floating across the Web.

All told, this latest edition of Sams Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours serves as an excellent way to jumpstart into SAP. From all of us at Sams, we hope you enjoy this read. More importantly, we hope this material helps you an opportunity to put what you’ve learned in the fourth edition of Sams Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours into action!
Conventions Used in This Book

Each hour starts with “What You’ll Learn in This Hour,” which includes a brief list of bulleted points highlighting the hour’s contents. A summary concluding each hour provides a brief bit of insight reflecting what you as the reader should have learned along the way.

In each hour, any text that you type will appear as bold monospace, whereas text that appears on your screen is presented in monospace type.

It will look like this to mimic the way text looks on your screen.

Finally, the following icons introduce other pertinent information used in the book:

By the Way presents interesting pieces of information related to the surrounding discussion.

Did You Know? offers advice or teaches an easier way to do something.

Watch Out! advises you about potential problems and helps you steer clear of disaster.
In this first hour, we set the stage by introducing the software company SAP and reviewing its history. Then we explore SAP’s application legacy and unique collection of acronyms. In this way, we can begin to speak the same language. We wrap up the hour outlining SAP’s current technologies and applications.

Overview of SAP: The Company

A beginner’s guide to SAP is incomplete without a quick look at how the company evolved to its dominant leadership position today. Headquartered in Walldorf, Germany, SAP is the largest enterprise applications provider and one of the largest software companies worldwide. Although SAP and its enterprise competitors are all distinctly different from one another, they are markedly similar as well. Most provide enterprise-class business software, business intelligence and data warehousing solutions, software for small and medium-sized businesses, platforms for web and application development, integration software to tie computer systems together, various cloud computing offerings, and so on. Each competitor helps sustain SAP, too; SAP counts Oracle as its largest database vendor, for example, and Microsoft provides SAP’s most popular operating systems in both the data center and in the office. IBM is SAP’s largest consulting partner, and both Microsoft and IBM provide business intelligence solutions used by SAP’s applications.
SAP was founded nearly 40 years ago in Mannheim, Germany, by a group of former IBM engineers with a singular vision: to develop a software package that married a company’s diverse business functions together. The idea was to help companies replace 10 or 15 different business applications—such as financial systems (running accounts payables and receivables), warehousing applications, production planning solutions, plant maintenance systems, and so on—with a single integrated system. Even better, these former IBMers wanted to create a system that embodied all the best practices that various types of businesses and industries had to offer. In the process, it was envisioned that this new software package would minimize a great deal of complexity and provide businesses with more real-time computing capabilities. This vision became real when Systems, Applications, and Products in Data Processing (SAP), or in German Systemanalyse und Programmentwicklung, opened its doors in 1972. Those of us working in the SAP ecosystem have long referred to the company and its products interchangeably using a single word best spelled out as S-A-P (ess aye pea), not sap.

SAP’s goal from day one was to change the world, and the company continues to deliver on that goal today. Beyond their initial vision, the company’s leaders created a multilingual and multinational platform capable of easily changing to accommodate new business process standards and techniques. Today, SAP is used by more than a million business users working for more than 100,000 customers across 120 countries. Its 50,000 employees and 2,000 SAP implementation and support partners are busy building and implementing software in 40 different languages and 50 currencies. Finally, all of these SAP business solutions are running on more than 20 different kinds of computing platforms.

To this last point, SAP revolutionized the technology foundation for enterprise applications. They purposefully broke away from the monolithic mainframe-based technology models prevalent in business applications in the 1960s and 1970s. Instead, SAP architected its software solutions to run on a variety of different hardware platforms, operating systems, and database releases. Through this flexibility and openness, SAP in turn gave its customers flexibility and choice. Such a revolutionary departure from the norm created a tipping point in enterprise business software development and delivery that helped propel SAP to the forefront of IT and business circles by the early 1990s. In less than 20 years after they opened their doors, SAP was not only Europe’s top software vendor but was giving IBM and others a serious challenge in the enterprise marketplace.

New entrants to the enterprise software field also grew popular during the 1990s, including Baan, Oracle Corporation, PeopleSoft, and JD Edwards. Soon afterward, smaller players began gaining ground, as well, including Great Plains and Navision. Although still widespread, mainframe applications had simply grown too burdensome and expensive for many firms, and the enterprise software industry jumped at the chance to replace those aging legacy systems. IT organizations in companies around the world were just as anxious, finding it easier and cheaper to support a growing number of standardized hardware platforms.
In the same way that new enterprise software companies were gaining traction, new databases from vendors such as Oracle, Sybase, and Informix offered attractive alternatives to the old mainframe IMS and DB2 offerings. And new operating systems helped create low-cost mission-critical computing platforms for these new databases and applications. By the mid-1990s, when SAP began supporting the Microsoft Windows operating system and SQL Server databases, followed soon afterward by the Linux operating system, SAP’s place in the enterprise software market was firmly planted—the company’s founders had completely delivered on their vision of a multinational, multilingual business solution capable of running on diverse platforms operated and maintained by equally diverse IT organizations. SAP had not only grown into a multi-billion-dollar company by that time, but had indeed succeeded in changing the world.

**SAP Business Applications or Components**

From a business applications software perspective, SAP is nearly all things to nearly all businesses. SAP’s application software foundation is built on the concepts of specialization and integration. Each software component or application within the SAP family of products and services meets a particular need, facilitating day-to-day financial and resource management (SAP Enterprise Resource Planning, or ERP), addressing product lifecycle planning requirements (SAP Product Lifecycle Management, or PLM), supporting internal company procurement (SAP Supplier Relationship Management, or SRM), interconnecting different systems to ease integration headaches (SAP NetWeaver Process Integration, or SAP NetWeaver PI), enabling customer relationship management (SAP Customer Relationship Management, or CRM), and so on. Divided by SAP into the SAP Business Suite (comprising all the business applications) and SAP NetWeaver (components of which essentially enable the SAP Business Suite, like a portal product, development tools, and business intelligence tools), all of these products and more are explained in subsequent hours of this book; suffice it to say here that there are many SAP applications or components, many products, and therefore many potential SAP solutions that can be assembled and customized for most any business.

**SAP Components, Modules, and Transactions**

Before we get too far along, it’s important to understand the differences between SAP components, modules, and transactions. SAP uses the term components interchangeably with the term business application, and most of the time this latter term is shortened to application. On the other hand, SAP modules provide specific functionality within a component. The Finance module, Production Planning module, and the Materials Management module are good self-explanatory examples. These individual SAP modules combine to create the SAP ERP component. It is within a particular module that a company’s business processes are configured and put together.
Business processes are also called *business scenarios*. A good example is order-to-cash. It comprises many different *transactions*, from writing up sales orders in the system to managing purchase requisitions and purchase orders, “picking” inventory to be sold, creating a delivery, and invoicing the customer for the order. Each transaction is like a step in a process (step one, step two, and so on). When all these transactions are executed in the right order, a business process like order-to-cash is completed. Many times, these transactions are all part of the same module. In other cases, a business process might require transactions to be run in several different modules, maybe even from several different components (see Figure 1.1).

**Cross-Application Business Processes**

The fact that SAP’s transactions can be combined helps create broad and capable platforms for conducting business. In this way, SAP allows companies to obtain greater visibility into their sales, supply chain, and manufacturing trends, or to allow new methods of entering or tracking such trends (to maximize revenue and profit) by extending business processes in several different directions. A good example again is order-to-cash, which is essentially a “back office” accounting process. By combining multiple SAP applications, a company can create a more capable extended version of this business process, something called a *cross-application process*, *mega process*, or *extended business process*.

Our simple order-to-cash process can become much more powerful in this way. For example, we might initiate our process through SAP’s Enterprise Portal, which allows a broad base of a company’s users or even its partners and suppliers to access the company’s SAP system using a simple browser. Once in the system, the user might “punch through” to SAP ERP to actually place an order. Through the business logic enabled at the business process level, control might be passed to the SAP CRM application to determine a particular customer’s buying preferences or history. CRM’s business logic might then direct or influence the business process in a particular way, perhaps to help the salesperson increase the customer’s order size or affect the order’s gross margin.
Next, SAP’s Supply Chain Management (SCM) system might be accessed to revise a supply chain planning process for a set of potential orders, looking to optimize profitability as the system seeks to balance the needs of many different customers with the organization’s access to materials, people, and other resources. SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse might next be queried to pull historical data related to the customer’s credit history, financial terms, and sales patterns within a particular geography or during a particular season. After these details are analyzed, the extended business process might turn control over to SAP’s Crystal Solutions to create company-internal reports. Simultaneously, SAP ERP or SAP NetWeaver Portal might be used to drive and track the pick-list process, order fulfillment and shipping process, and finally the accounts receivables processes to conclude the overall business process.

**SAP Industry Solutions**

Beyond enabling broad-based business processes, SAP is also well known for reflecting industry best practices in their software. By adopting SAP best practices rather than inventing their own, companies can more efficiently and effectively serve their customers, constituents, and other stakeholders. This is a big reason why SAP has been so successful: SAP stays abreast of many different industries, making it easy for companies in those industries to not only adopt SAP’s software but that industry’s best practices as well.

SAP’s industry solutions were historically (and today are still loosely) divided into three areas: Manufacturing, Service Industries, and Financial/Public Services. There are actually 24 different groups of industries, such as Aerospace & Defense, Automotive, Banking, Chemicals, Consumer Products, Engineering, Construction, & Operations, Healthcare, Higher Education & Research, High Tech, Insurance, Media, Mill Products, Mining, Public Sector, Retail, Telecommunications, Utilities, and more. These groups in turn are represented by 40 specific industries. For the complete list, point your browser to www.sap.com/usa/sme/whysap/industries/index.epx or just search “SAP industry solutions” from your favorite search engine. One of the nice things about these industry solutions is that they are simply “installed” atop SAP’s other products; the Oil & Gas industry solution, for example, is installed on top of SAP ERP.

**Connecting the Dots**

As touched on earlier, applications such as SAP ERP can be broken down into many different modules. A module’s discrete functionality addresses a specific business function (which again is composed of many specific business transactions). Individually, each module is used to manage a business area or functional area for which a particular department may be responsible. Prior to extending a line of credit, for instance, a company’s Accounts Receivables group may run a business transaction using the Finance module of SAP ERP to check a customer’s credit and on-time payment history.
Likewise, the Shipping department will regularly run a business transaction in the Materials Management module to check inventories at a particular warehouse. Other departments may be responsible for managing payables, real estate, sales estimates, budgeting, and so on. Together, all the various departments in the company work together to do the business of the company, using SAP across the board. In this way, the company benefits from a great amount of consistency between departments while giving the company’s management the high-level visibility it needs to make all the strategic decisions necessary to keep the business in good shape.

Do you see a common thread? SAP’s products are used to satisfy the needs of enterprises, big and small, enabling them to tend to the business of running the business. SAP’s software products are all about the “big picture”—about conducting business by connecting people, resources, and processes around the globe. SAP and its enterprise application competitors—Oracle, Microsoft, NetSuite, and several others—enable this capability on a grand scale, integrating many otherwise discrete functions under a single umbrella.

The SAP Client Concept

We need to look at one more concept before we think about what it means to actually run SAP. In the world of SAP, the term client has special meaning. Clients are essentially self-contained business entities or units within each SAP system; using a web browser or one of SAP’s special user interfaces, you log in to a client in SAP to actually access and use the system. Each system—SAP ERP, CRM, SCM, and so on—has a unique system-specific client you log in to. Contemporary organizations thus have multiple production clients (one production client per SAP component). And each component contains several nonproduction clients, as well. These are used to develop and test the business functionality that will one day be put into the production client and handed over to the company’s end users.

A client has its own separate master records and own set of “tables” (which we cover in detail in Hour 3, “SAP Technology Basics”). The best way to grasp this might be to think about a really large company like ExxonMobil, General Motors, or Honeywell. Within each of these large multinational organizations, for example, you might have three or more other companies or business units. Each SAP client might be tied to a different business unit; really big companies might have two or even three production clients for a single SAP component like ERP. For example, the company might structure its clients around discrete business groups (Chevrolet, Cadillac, and GMC) or by geography (Americas, Europe, and Asia). In this way, a Chevrolet business user might log in to the Chevy client to do her work, whereas business users over at Cadillac log in to the Caddy client on the same SAP system and do their work. In the end, the results can be easily rolled up so that the multinational organization as a whole can easily report on its cross-company financial status, inventory levels, and so on.
When you go to log in to SAP, you choose the specific client you want to log in to. Each one is assigned a unique three-digit number, which you are required to know and type in at login time. This makes it easy to distinguish between clients. A programmer developing the SAP system might log in to client 100 to do some programming, client 200 in another system to review and test new business logic, and client 500 in yet another system to check out the new training system where his code is being used to teach others how to use SAP. In the same way, an end user might log in to client 300 in the production system to do his day-to-day work and occasionally client 200 in a test system to check on the status of new functionality he requested be developed for production.

So just remember this: In the SAP world, the term client can mean several things, including an individual PC or workstation. For our purposes here, however, we try to use client in the manner used by SAP—to describe a logically discrete or separate business entity within an SAP system—and try to avoid using this term to describe PCs or workstations.

Running SAP

What does it mean to “run SAP?” Historically, to run SAP meant that the SAP application R/3 was installed and used by business users. For years, the SAP R/3 application was synonymous with SAP. They were one and the same, and to say you ran SAP was the same thing as saying you ran R/3. R/3 was SAP’s first true client/server-based online transaction processing (OLTP) system—a system that by its very nature satisfied day-to-day transactional needs like you’ve read about this hour. Like its mainframe predecessor R/2, within R/3 was a number of business modules, such as Finance, Logistics, Human Resource Management, Warehouse Management, and more. SAP ERP is the successor to R/3.

So today when you hear people say they are running SAP, be sure to ask them what that really means in their specific case—with so many different products and solutions out there bearing the SAP label, it’s not a good idea to assume anything. Sure, SAP’s most popular product remains ERP. However, a lot of older SAP R/3 systems are still running, and even more SAP SCM, CRM, PLM, and SRM systems are out there.

Summary

This hour introduced you to the world of SAP. You gained an understanding of SAP’s history and some of the specific business application and technology terms used in the world of SAP. (Until you become more comfortable with SAP’s vernacular, feel free to turn to Appendix B, “SAP Acronyms and Common Terms,” for quick reminders). When all is said and done, remember that the real work done by SAP is done by its components or applications; this has little to do with technology, but rather involves business
processes that have been specifically configured for a company. Business processes are often industry-unique. Fortunately, SAP’s large number of industry solutions helps companies implement industry best practices. Also keep in mind that business processes are nothing more than individual SAP business transactions strung together to get the actual work done of running a business. Transactions are associated with specific modules, but business processes may consist of transactions from different modules. Cross-application or mega business processes consist of transactions spanning multiple modules and even multiple SAP components. We are now ready to turn our attention in Hour 2, “SAP Business Basics,” to the core business fundamentals behind SAP. First, though, let’s take a look at the following case study.

**Case Study: Hour 1**

This case study winds its way through each hour and is designed to help you review and synthesize what you have learned and to help you to think ahead as you seek to put your knowledge into practice. You can find the answers posed by the questions related to this case study in Appendix A, “Case Study Answers.”

**Situation**

MNC Inc., or simply MNC, is a large multinational mining and manufacturing company with operations in 20 countries. Its customers are located around the world. Although MNC is a fictional amalgamation of many real-world companies that use SAP, the challenges it faces are relevant to those faced by contemporary organizations today. Ongoing financial transparency issues, lack of supply chain visibility, and recent concerns with falling worldwide sales and lost market opportunities have re-emphasized to the MNC executive board its need to replace its collection of old business systems with a single well-integrated business application. The board is particularly concerned with the firm’s requirement to address multiple languages and currencies; with 100,000 Microsoft Windows-based users spread out across 500 different offices and other sites, the board is also concerned with how it can possibly connect its diverse user community to a single application. By walking the board through the following questions, your task is to help the MNC leadership team understand SAP’s capabilities and how the firm should proceed.
Questions

1. Outside of SAP, which enterprise software companies should MNC also consider investigating?

2. Which SAP components or products would the board be most interested in first learning about?

3. Does SAP offer an industry solution that might prove especially useful to MNC? Explain.

4. Given the great number of employees (and therefore potential SAP end users) that MNC employs, what are some key technology infrastructure considerations the board should address early on?

5. Will language and currency support issues be a problem for SAP?
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