

George W. Anderson

**Fourth  
Edition**

Thoroughly Updated  
and Expanded,  
with Extensive New  
Coverage!

Sams **Teach Yourself**

# SAP

in **24**  
**Hours**

**SAMS**



Dr. George W. Anderson

Sams **Teach Yourself**

**SAP**

in **24**  
**Hours**



800 East 96th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46240 USA

## **Sams Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours**

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# Contents at a Glance

Introduction .....	1
--------------------	---

## Part I: Introduction to SAP

<b>HOURL 1</b> SAP Explained .....	7
<b>2</b> SAP Business Basics .....	17
<b>3</b> SAP Technology Basics .....	29
<b>4</b> SAP Project Basics .....	43

## PART II: SAP Applications and Components

<b>HOURL 5</b> Overview of SAP Applications and Components .....	53
<b>6</b> SAP NetWeaver: The Foundation for SAP .....	71
<b>7</b> SAP ERP: SAP's Core Product .....	85
<b>8</b> The SAP Business Suite and Other SAP Applications .....	103

## Part III: SAP for Business Users

<b>HOURL 9</b> A Business User's Perspective on Implementing SAP .....	117
<b>10</b> Logging On and Using SAP's User Interface .....	127
<b>11</b> SAP User Roles and Authorizations .....	147
<b>12</b> Using SAP to Do Your Job .....	157
<b>13</b> Reporting and Query Basics .....	175
<b>14</b> Extending SAP with Microsoft and Other Products .....	195

## Part IV: SAP for IT Professionals

<b>HOURL 15</b> A Project Manager's Perspective on Implementing SAP .....	215
<b>16</b> A Basis Professional's Perspective on SAP .....	231
<b>17</b> A Developer's Perspective on SAP .....	243
<b>18</b> SAP Technical Installation .....	257
<b>19</b> SAP and the Cloud .....	279
<b>20</b> SAP System Administration and Management .....	301
<b>21</b> SAP Enhancements, Upgrades, and More .....	317



**Part V: SAP Careers**

<b>HOUR 22</b> SAP Careers for the Business Professional .....	329
<b>23</b> SAP Careers for the IT Professional .....	343
<b>24</b> Other Resources and Closing Thoughts .....	353

**Part VI: Appendixes**

<b>A</b> Case Study Answers .....	367
<b>B</b> SAP Acronyms and Common Terms .....	381
Index .....	393

# Table of Contents

Introduction	1
<b>Part I: Introduction to SAP</b>	
<b>HOOR 1: SAP Explained</b>	<b>7</b>
Overview of SAP: The Company	7
SAP Business Applications or Components	9
The SAP Client Concept	12
Running SAP	13
<b>HOOR 2: SAP Business Basics</b>	<b>17</b>
Business Architecture and the Business Roadmap	17
ASAP and Business Blueprinting	21
The Business Perspective	22
Other Perspectives: Mapping Business Needs to SAP Applications	24
Combining the Four Perspectives	26
<b>HOOR 3: SAP Technology Basics</b>	<b>29</b>
SAP Technology 101: SAP Basis	29
SAP Hardware Basics	30
SAP-Supported Operating Systems	36
Database Basics for SAP	39
<b>HOOR 4: SAP Project Basics</b>	<b>43</b>
SAP Project Implementation Basics	43
SAP Realization: Resources and Timelines	44
Accessing Your New SAP Systems	47
Typical Day-to-Day Business Processes	48

**PART II: SAP Applications and Components**

<b>HOURL 5: Overview of SAP Applications and Components</b>	<b>53</b>
SAP Business Suite Components .....	53
SAP NetWeaver Components .....	57
Small and Medium Enterprises .....	58
SAP Business One .....	59
SAP Business ByDesign .....	61
SAP All-in-One .....	63
Selecting the “Best” SAP Solution .....	66
Choosing SAP SME Offerings over Business Suite .....	68
<b>HOURL 6: SAP NetWeaver: The Foundation for SAP</b>	<b>71</b>
A Brief History of SAP NetWeaver .....	71
The SAP NetWeaver Umbrella: Six Areas .....	73
Strategic Benefits of NetWeaver .....	78
SAP NetWeaver Building Blocks .....	79
Bringing It All Together .....	81
<b>HOURL 7: SAP ERP: SAP’s Core Product</b>	<b>85</b>
The Evolution of SAP ERP .....	86
SAP ERP Business Scenarios and Modules .....	86
<b>HOURL 8: The SAP Business Suite and Other SAP Applications</b>	<b>103</b>
SAP Innovations 2010 .....	103
SAP Supply Chain Management .....	104
SAP Customer Relationship Management .....	106
SAP PLM: A Platform for Product Management .....	108
SAP Supplier Relationship Management .....	110
SAP Manufacturing .....	112
SAP Service and Asset Management .....	113

## **Part III: SAP for Business Users**

<b>HOURL 9: A Business User's Perspective on Implementing SAP</b>	<b>117</b>
The Business User's Role .....	117
The SAP Project Lifecycle .....	120
<b>HOURL 10: Logging On and Using SAP's User Interface</b>	<b>127</b>
Logging On to Access SAP .....	127
SAPGUI Basics .....	131
Navigation Basics .....	132
Understanding and Using Fields .....	132
Display Fields .....	140
Screen Objects .....	140
Using the Windows Clipboard .....	143
<b>HOURL 11: SAP User Roles and Authorizations</b>	<b>147</b>
What Is SAP Security? .....	147
Overview of SAP Security .....	148
SAP Authorizations .....	151
<b>HOURL 12: Using SAP to Do Your Job</b>	<b>157</b>
Which SAP User Interface Is Best? .....	157
WinGUI Configuration and Tools .....	159
The Customizing of Local Layout Button .....	159
New Visual Design Selection .....	164
Clipboard Selection .....	165
Font Selection .....	166
Status Field's System Information Icon .....	166
Printing from SAP .....	167
Using Your SAPGUI .....	170
<b>HOURL 13: Reporting and Query Basics</b>	<b>175</b>
Reporting Tools .....	175
General Report Selection .....	177

**Sams Teach Yourself SAP in 24 Hours**

SAP Reporting Tools (SAP Query, InfoSet Query, Ad Hoc Query, and QuickViewer) .....	181
SAP Queries .....	187
Understanding the InfoSet (Ad Hoc) Query .....	190
Understanding the QuickViewer .....	191
<b>HOURL 14: Extending SAP with Microsoft and Other Products</b>	<b>195</b>
SAP Integration with Desktop Applications .....	195
SAP Assistant .....	196
Using %pc to Download Data .....	196
Integrating SAP with Office: Quick References .....	203
Integrating SAP with Microsoft SharePoint .....	205
Introduction to Microsoft Duet .....	207
Introduction to Duet Enterprise .....	208
Using OpenText with SAP .....	210
Using SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe .....	211
Integrating Microsoft Directory with SAP .....	212
 <b>Part IV: SAP for IT Professionals</b>	
 <b>HOURL 15: A Project Manager's Perspective on Implementing SAP</b>	<b>215</b>
SAP and the ASAP Methodology .....	215
The Project Management Office .....	220
Assembling the Project Team .....	222
SAP Project Leadership .....	224
Contemporary Tools and Methodologies .....	227
Project Closeout .....	227
 <b>HOURL 16: A Basis Professional's Perspective on SAP</b>	<b>231</b>
Shifting Focus: From Business to Technology .....	231
Installation Master Guides and SAP Notes .....	232
Setting the Stage: The SAP Landscape .....	233
Architecture and Sizing Considerations .....	233

SAP Technical Readiness and Security Considerations .....	236
Staffing and Operational Considerations .....	239
<b>HOURL 17: A Developer's Perspective on SAP</b>	<b>243</b>
Programming Tools .....	243
Developer and SAP Methodologies .....	246
Configuration and the SAP IMG .....	248
Different Views of the IMG .....	249
Additional IMG Fundamentals .....	251
<b>HOURL 18: SAP Technical Installation</b>	<b>257</b>
Installation Overview .....	257
SAP Installation Planning .....	258
Infrastructure Readiness .....	259
Performing a Real-World SAP Installation .....	261
Post-Installation Tasks .....	268
Installing the SAP Trial Version .....	269
Introducing SAP Single Sign-On .....	275
<b>HOURL 19: SAP and the Cloud</b>	<b>279</b>
Introduction to the Cloud .....	279
Cloud Consumer Perspective .....	282
Cloud Service Provider Perspective .....	284
Brief History of Computing and the Cloud .....	287
Bringing Together SAP and the Cloud .....	292
<b>HOURL 20: SAP System Administration and Management</b>	<b>301</b>
Administering SAP .....	301
Managing the SAP System .....	306
<b>HOURL 21: SAP Enhancements, Upgrades, and More</b>	<b>317</b>
Setting the Stage: Making Changes to SAP .....	317
Enhancement and Upgrade Terminology .....	318
More on SAP Upgrades .....	322
High-Level Project Planning .....	322

**Part V: SAP Careers**

<b>HOURL 22: SAP Careers for the Business Professional</b>	<b>329</b>
What Exactly Is an SAP Business Professional?	329
Where Do I Look?	330
More Details	334
Preparing for a Business Career in SAP	336
<b>HOURL 23: SAP Careers for the IT Professional</b>	<b>343</b>
SAP, Its Partners, and Its Customers	343
What Types of Opportunities Are Available?	345
Preparing for a Career in SAP	347
Working on the Intangibles	350
<b>HOURL 24: Other Resources and Closing Thoughts</b>	<b>353</b>
Professional Resources	353
Internet Resources	359
SAP Conferences	361
Employment and Career Opportunities	363
 <b>Part VI: Appendixes</b>	
<b>A</b> Case Study Answers	367
<b>B</b> SAP Acronyms and Common Terms	381
 Index	 393

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# 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 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 gives 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.

***By the  
Way***

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

***Did you  
Know?***

Watch Out! advises you about potential problems and helps you steer clear of disaster.

***Watch  
Out!***



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# Hour 1

## SAP Explained

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### ***What You'll Learn in This Hour:***

- ▶ An overview of the software company SAP
- ▶ SAP's business applications and industry solutions
- ▶ Components, modules, and transactions
- ▶ The SAP client concept
- ▶ What it means to run SAP

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.

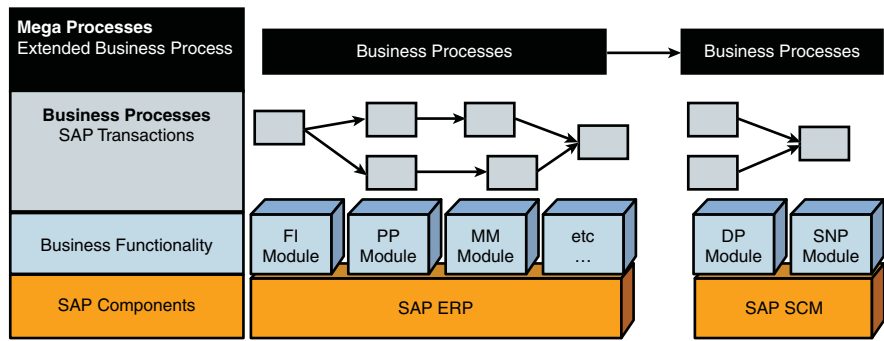
## SAP Components, Modules, and Transactions

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).

**FIGURE 1.1**

SAP components are made up of modules, which in turn comprise transactions used to execute business processes.



## 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](http://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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# Index

## Symbols

%pc, downloading data, 196

## A

ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming) WebAS (Web Application Server), 71, 244-245  
architecture, 234  
SAP authorizations, 152-153  
sizing, 234  
ABAP List Processing, 176  
ABAP Query, 176. *See also* SAP Query  
ABAP stacks, system logs, 303  
Accelerated SAP. *See* ASAP (Accelerated SAP)  
access process, 48

access strategies, end-users, 238-239  
accessing SAP, 47  
access process, 48  
with SAPGUI or fat client, 47  
with web browsers, 47-48  
accounts, managing with SAPGUI, 170  
Active Directory (AD), integrating with SAP, 213-212  
activity-based costing, 90  
Actual End Date field, Status Information, 255  
Actual Start Date field, Status Information, 255  
Actual Work Days field, Status Information, 255  
AD (Active Directory), integrating with SAP, 213-212  
Ad Hoc Query, 181  
reporting tools, 176  
adaptability, BBD (Business ByDesign), 62

## administering SAP

### administering SAP, 301

- displaying logs and traces, 304-305
- monitoring application servers (SM51), 302
- reviewing Alert Monitor (RZ20), 305-306
- reviewing system logs (SM21), 303
- system status (SICK), 301
- workload distribution (SM50 and SM66), 302-303

### administration, 241

#### Adobe, SAP Interactive Forms, 211-212

#### Advanced Business Application Programming (ABAP), 71

#### advanced SAP queries, 189-190

#### AL08, 312-314

#### Alert Monitor, reviewing, 305-306

#### All-in-One, 63-64

- features of, 65-66
- functionality, 64-66
- Solution Centers, 65
- user experience, 66

#### AMD, server hardware vendors, 33

#### Americas' SAP Users' Group (ASUG), 355-356

#### APO, 105-106

#### application server load, 312-314

#### application servers (SM51), monitoring, 302

#### application toolbar, SAPGUI user interface, 131-132

### architecture, 233-234

- ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming) WebAS (Web Application Server), 234
- disaster recoverability, 235-236
- high availability (HA), 235
- infrastructure, 234-235
- Java Stack, 234

### Archiving solution, OpenText, 210

#### ASAP (Accelerated ASAP), 22, 216-217, 227

- business blueprint, 218
- final preparation, 219
- go-live and support, 220
- project preparation, 217-218
- realization, 218-219
- run phase, 220

#### ASAP methodology, 246

- implementation development phases, 246
  - business blueprint phase, 247
- configuration phase, 247
- project preparation, 246-247
- Run SAP roadmaps, 248
- testing, final preparation, go-live, 247-248

#### assembling project teams, 222-224

#### assigning InfoSets to query groups, 187

#### ASUG (Americas' SAP Users Group), 355-356

### authorization profiles, SAP authorizations, 151-152

#### Automatic Tabbing (AutoTAB), 163

## B

### balancing the books, business processes, 49-50

### batch job management, 308

### BBD (Business ByDesign), 61-62

- adaptability, 62
- features of, 62-63
- functionality, 62-63
- hosting, 63
- implementing, 62
- SAP and clouds, 296
- SAP partner challenges, 63

### best SAP solutions, selecting, 67

- business process complexity, 68
- cost, 67
- features of, 67
- functionality, 67
- hosted versus on-premises, 67-68
- number of employees, 68

### BI (Business Intelligence), 82

### BPM (Business Process Management), 77-78

### BSPs (Business Server Pages), 205-206

### buffers, 314

**building blocks, NetWeaver, 79**  
     clients, 80-81  
     standalone engines, 80  
     systems with usage types, 80

**business acceptance testing, 123-124**

**business agility, 20-21**

**Business All-in-One, 65**

**business architecture, 17-18**  
**business blueprint phase, implementation development phases (ASAP methodology), 247**

**business blueprinting, 21-22**

**Business ByDesign. See BBD**

**business communications management, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 56**

**business concerns, 19**

**Business Intelligence (BI), 82**

**Business One, 59-60**

    development of, 61  
     features of, 60-61  
     functionality, 60  
     implementing, 61  
     SDK (software development kit). *See* SDK (software development kit)

**business perspectives**

    combining, 26  
     functional perspective, 24  
     project implementation perspective, 25-26  
     stakeholders, 23  
     support from SAP technologies, 22-23  
     technical perspective, 25

**business process complexity, selecting best SAP solutions, 68**

**Business Process Management, SAP NetWeaver, 58**

**business processes**

    balancing the books, 49-50  
     cross-application business processes, 10-11  
     performing employee self-service functions, 49  
     selling from stock, 50-51

**business professionals. See SAP business professionals**

**business roadmaps, 17-18**

**business scenarios, 10**

**Business Server Pages. See BSPs (Business Server Pages)**

**Business Suite versus SME, 68-69**

**business teams, 45**

**business transactions, posting in A/P (SAPGUI), 171**

**business users**

    functional configuration specialists, 119  
     power users, 119-120  
     role of, 117-118  
     row leaders, 118-119

**Business Warehouse (BW), 82**

**BW Expert, 358**

## C

**calculated fields, 190**

**canceling all data entered on a screen, 137-138**

**CAPEX (capital expenditures), 31**

**capital expenditures (CAPEX), 31**

**career opportunities, 363**

    ITtoolbox, 364  
     SAP-Resources.com, 363-364  
     Softwarejobs.com, 364

**careers**

    business professionals. *See* SAP business professionals  
     IT professionals.  
     *See* IT professionals

**cash management, 91**

**change management, 337**

**changing sales orders, SAPGUI, 170**

**check boxes, screen objects, 141-142**

**clients, 12-13**

    NetWeaver, 80-81

**client/server architectures, cloud computing, 288-289**

**Clipboard, 143**

    copying unselectable data, 144  
     moving and copying data, 144

**Clipboard selection, Customizing button, 165-166**

**cloud computing, 282**

    history of, 287-288  
     client/server architectures, 288-289

**cloud computing**

- Enterprise SOA, 290-291
- SOA (service-oriented architecture), 289-290
- Web Application Server (WebAS), 289
- IaaS (Infrastructure of a Service), 284
- PaaS (Platforms for Service), 283-284
- SaaS (Software as a Service), 283
- cloud service providers, 284**
  - hosted private clouds, 285
  - hybrid clouds, 286-287
  - internal private clouds, 285
  - public clouds, 286
- cloud services, SAP and clouds, 295**
- cloud storage, 34-35**
- clouds, 279-280**
  - application holdouts, 281-282
  - benefits of, 280
  - first-mover cloud applications, 280-281
  - SAP, 295
    - bridging old and new worlds, 296
  - Business ByDesign, 296
  - cloud services, 295
  - future of, 298-299
  - hosting nonproduction systems in clouds, 297-298
  - real-world cloud scenarios, 296-297
  - scalability, 295
- Color Settings tab, Customizing button, 165**
- combining business perspectives, 26**
- communications planning, PMO (project management office), 222**
- company overview, 7-9**
- components, 9-10**
  - SAP NetWeaver, 57-58
- composition, NetWeaver, 58, 77**
- Composition Environment, NetWeaver, 245**
- conferences. See SAP conferences**
- configuration phase**
  - implementation development phases, ASAP methodology, 247
  - Implementation Guide (IMG), 248-249
- configuration specialists, 119**
- configuration teams, 45**
- configuring SAP Logon Pad, 127-128**
- content management, 349**
- Contextual Workflow, Duet Enterprise, 209**
- contingency plans, 20**
  - PMO (project management office), 222
- Controlling module, SAP ERP Financials, 89-90**
- copying**
  - data on Clipboard, 144
  - unselectable data to Clipboard, 144
- cost, selecting best SAP solutions, 67**
- cost accounting, 89-90**
- cost reduction, 19-20**
- cover sheets, Spool Request Attributes, 169**
- CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 9-10, 55-56, 106**
  - extending ERP, 106-107
  - industry-specific processes, 107-108
- CRM Expert, 359**
- cross-application business processes, 10-11**
- cursor position, Cursor tab (Local Layout button), 163**
- Cursor tab, Local Layout button, 162-163**
- cursor width, Cursor tab (Local Layout button), 163**
- Customer Relationship Management. See CRM (Customer Relationship Management)**
- Customizing button, 164**
  - Clipboard selection, 165-166
  - Color Settings tab, 165
  - Font selection, 166
  - General tab, 165
- customizing Local Layout button, 159-160**
  - Cursor tab, 162-163
  - Local Data tab, 163-164
  - Options tab, 160-162
  - Trace tab, 164

**D****data**

- copying on Clipboard, 144
- deleting (that is held or set on screens), 139-140
- editing in input fields, 136
- exporting SAP data to Microsoft Excel, 197
- moving, Clipboard, 144
- replicating, 138-140
- saving on screens, 138
- security considerations, 237-238

**data archiving, OpenText, 210**

**data teams, 46**

**database basics, 39**

- indexes, 40-41
- primers, 40
- structures, 40-41
- tables, 40-41

**database management, 307-308**

**database primers, 40**

**database server software**

**installation**

- Microsoft SQL Server, 262-263
- Oracle, 263

**databases, security**

**considerations, 237-238**

**datacenter teams, 240**

**DB02, 307-308**

**DBA (database administrator), 40**

**DBA Cockpit, 307-308**

**default values, printing from SAP, 169-170**

**deleting data that is held or set on screens, 139-140**

**Demand Planning application (APO), 106**

**desktop applications, integration, 195-196**

**developers, IT professionals, 349-350**

**development of Business One, 61**

**development teams, 45**

**dialog boxes, screen objects, 142-143**

**direct-attached storage, 34**

**disaster recoverability, 235-236**

**disk storage systems, 34**

**disk subsystem requirements, infrastructure review, 260**

**disk subsystems, security considerations, 237**

**display fields, 140**

**displaying**

- goods movements with SAPGUI, 171
- logs, 304-305
- traces, 304-305

**Document Access for SAP Solutions, OpenText, 210-211**

**documentation, IMG (Implementation Guide), 252-253**

**downloadable media, installation, 260-261**

**downloading, data with %pc, 196**

**Duet, 207-208**

**Duet Enterprise, 208**

- Contextual Workflow, 209
- Duet Profile, 209

**Duet Reporting, 209**

**Enterprise Collaboration, 208**

**Federated Search, 209**

**Duet Profile, Duet Enterprise, 209**

**Duet Reporting, Duet Enterprise, 209**

**DVDs, installation, 260-261**

**E**

**ECC (ERP Central Component), 73**

**editing data in input fields, 136**

**education, SAP business professionals, 338-339**

**EHPs, 319**

**EHS (environmental health and safety (EHS), 96**

**EIS (Executive Information System), reporting tools, 176-177**

**Employee Self-Service. See ESS**

**employee self-service functions, performing, 49**

**Employee tab, Status Information, 255**

**employment**

- ITtoolbox, 364
- SAP-Resources.com, 363-364
- Softwarejobs.com, 364

**ending sessions, 130**

**end-users, access strategies, 238-239**



## enhancements

enhancements, 318-319

project planning, 323-324

Enterprise Collaboration, Duet

Enterprise, 208

Enterprise Controlling module,

SAP ERP Financials, 90

Enterprise IMG, 250

Enterprise Resource Planning.

See SAP ERP

Enterprise SOA

cloud computing, 290-291

principles of, 291-292

environmental health and safety

(EHS), 96

E-Recruiting, 95

ERP (Enterprise Resource

Planning). See SAP ERP

ESS (SAP Employee

Self-Service), 93

ethics, SAP business

professionals, 340-341

executing reports, General Report

Selection, 177-178

Executive Information System

(EIS), reporting tools, 176-177

executive steering committee,

224-225

exporting

lists

to Microsoft Access,

204-205

to Microsoft Excel,

203-204

SAP data to Microsoft

Excel, 197

SAP Query reports to

Microsoft Excel, 204

Extended ECM for SAP solutions,

OpenText, 211

extending, ERP (Enterprise

Resource Planning), with CRM,

106-107

## F

fat client, accessing SAP, 47

Federated Search, 209

field entry validation, 137

fields, 132-133

calculated fields, 190

display fields, 140

input fields, 134-136

editing data, 136

required, 136-138

Insert mode, 134

Overwrite mode, 134

replicating data, 138-140

status fields, System

Information icon, 166-167

file systems, OS (operating

systems), 37-38

final preparation, implementation

development phases, ASAP

methodology, 247-248

Financial and Managerial

Accounting module, SAP ERP

Financials, 88-89

Financial Supply Chain

Management. See FSCM

(Financial Supply Chain

Management)

Financials Expert, 358

first-mover cloud applications,

cloud, 280-281

Font selection, Customizing

button, 166

form letters, creating in Microsoft

Word, 198-199, 204

foundation management,

NetWeaver, 73-74

Foundation Management, SAP

NetWeaver, 58

FSCM (Financial Supply Chain

Management), SAP ERP

Financials, 92

functional areas. See InfoSets.

functional

perspective, 24

functional project management,

335

functional row leaders, 118

functionality

All-in-One, 64, 65-66

BBD (Business ByDesign),

62-63

selecting best SAP

solutions, 67

funds management, 91

## G

General Properties, Spool

Request Attributes, 168

General Report Selection

executing reports, 177-178

lists, 181

searching for reports,

178-179

selection screens, 179

variants, 179

modifying, 179-180

**General Selection Tree, searching for reports, 178-179**

**General tab, Customizing button, 165**

**global query areas, 184-185**

**Global Trade Services. See GTS (Global Trade Services)**

**GlobalSAP, 227**

**go-live phase, implementation development phases (ASAP methodology), 247-248**

**goods movements**

displaying with SAPGUI, 171

posting for materials, SAPGUI, 171-172

**GRC (Governance, Risk, and Compliance), SAP ERP Financials, 88**

**GTS (Global Trade Services), 99**  
SAP ERP Financials, 91-92

## H

**HA (high availability), 235**

**hardware, 30-31**

servers, 31-32

cloud storage, 34-35

direct-attached storage, 34

disk storage systems, 34

network-attached storage, 34

SAPS (SAP Application Performance Standard), 32-33

server availability features, 33

server hardware vendors, 33

storage area networks, 34

storage system availability, 35-36

storage system performance, 35

**HCM (Human Capital Management), 92-94**

PA module, 94-96

**help, IMG (Implementation Guide), 252**

**high availability (HA), architecture, 235**

**history**

of cloud computing, 287-288

client/server architectures, 288-289

Enterprise SOA, 290-291

SOA (service-oriented architecture), 289-290

Web Application Server (WebAS), 289

of NetWeaver, 71-73

**Hold Data, 138**

**hosted private clouds, 285**

**hosted versus on-premises, 67-68**

**hosting**

BBD (Business ByDesign), 63

nonproduction systems in clouds, 297-298

site readiness, 236

**HR Expert, 359**

**HTML, SAPGUI, 158-159**

**hybrid clouds, 286-287**

**IaaS (Infrastructure of a Service), 30**

cloud computing, 284

SAP, 294-295

**IBM, server hardware vendors, 33**

**IMG (Implementation Guide)**

configuration phase, 248-249

documentation, 252-253

Enterprise IMG, 250

help, 252

Project IMG, 250

Reference IMG, 250

Release Notes, 255

Solution Manager, 251

Status Information, 253-255

Upgrade Customizing IMGs, 251

**implementation basics, 43-44**

business teams, 45

configuration teams, 45

data teams, 46

development teams, 45

integration teams, 45

other teams, 46

security teams, 46

technical teams, 46

test/QA teams, 45

## implementation development phases, ASAP methodology

### implementation development phases, ASAP methodology

- business blueprint phase, 247
- configuration phase, 247
- project preparation, 246-247
- Run SAP roadmaps, 248
- testing, final preparation, go-live, 247-248

### Implementation Guide (IMG). *See* IMG (Implementation Guide)

### implementing

- BBD (Business ByDesign), 62
- Business One, 61

### importing SAP into Microsoft Access, 200-201

### indexes, database basics, 40-41

### industry solutions, 11

### industry-specific processes, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 107-108

### information management, NetWeaver, 76

### Information Management, SAP NetWeaver, 58

### InfoSet Query, 190-191

- creating, 191

### InfoSets, 183

- assigning to query groups, 187
- creating new, 185-186

### infrastructure, installation, 259

- SAP infrastructure review, 259-260

### infrastructure architecture, 234-235

### Infrastructure as a Service, 284

### IaaS *See* input fields, 134-136

- editing data, 136
- required, 136-138

### Insert mode, fields, 134

### InsiderPROFILES Magazine, 357-358

### installation

- database server software installation
  - Microsoft SQL Server, 262-263
  - Oracle, 263
- DVDs and downloadable media, 260-261
- infrastructure, 259
  - SAP infrastructure review, 259-260
- operating system installation, 261-262
- overview, 257-258
- planning, 258-259
- post-installation tasks, 268-269
- prerequisite checklist, 262
- SAP software installation, 263
  - SAP Central Instance, 267-268
  - SAP Central Services Instance for ABAP (ASCS) installation, 264
  - SAP Central Services Instance (SCS) installation, 264-265
  - SAP Database Instance, 265-267
  - system variants, 263

### SAP trial version, 272-275

- acquiring, downloading, extracting, 270-271
- preparing for installation, 269-270

### installing Master Guides, 232-233

### integrating

- Microsoft Directory with SAP, 212
- SAP with SharePoint, 205
- SAP with SharePoint 2007, 205-207
- SAP with SharePoint 2010, 207

### integration

- SAP integration with desktop applications, 195-196
- SRM-to-PLM, benefits, 111

### integration teams, 45

### Intel, server hardware vendors, 33

### Interaction Center (IC) management support, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 55

### internal private clouds, 285

### IT professionals

- developers, 349-350
- jobs with SAP, 343-344
- jobs with SAP customers, 344-345
- jobs with SAP partners, 344
- platform administrators, 348-349
- preparing for careers in SAP
  - hardware/infrastructure specialists, 348

- leveraging existing
  - business experience, 347-348
- leveraging existing
  - technical expertise, 348
- right where you are, 347
- programmers, 349-350
- technical positions, 345-346
- technical project management, 346
- testers, 346
- trainers, 346
- working on intangibles, 350

**IT project management office (PMO), 240**

**ITtoolbox, employment, 364**

**iViews, NetWeaver Portal, 206-207**

## J

**Java, programming tools, 245**

**Java application servers, user authorizations, 153**

**Java Stack**

- architecture, 234
- sizing, 234

**Java stacks, system logs, 303**

**JavaGUI, 158**

**jobs, looking for, 330**

## K

**keyboards, navigation, 132**

## L

**landscapes, SAP, 233**

**language, logging on to access SAP, 129**

**Linux RPM, 262**

**lists**

- exporting
  - to Microsoft Access, 204-205
  - to Microsoft Excel, 203-204
- General Report Selection, 181

**load testing, 124**

**Local Data tab, Local Layout button, 163-164**

**Local Layout button, customizing, 159-160**

- Cursor tab, 162-163
- Local Data tab, 163-164
- Options tab, 160-162
- Trace tab, 164

**logging off of SAP, 130**

**logging on to access SAP, 127**

- clients, user IDs and language, 129
- configuring SAP logon pad, 127-128
- sessions, 129-130
  - creating, 130
  - ending, 130

**logs, displaying, 304-305**

## M

**management, 241**

**managing**

- accounts with SAPGUI, 170
- risk, 20
- SAP
  - application server load, 312-314
  - batch job management, 308
  - database management, 307-308
  - print management (SPAD), 308
  - SAP application server buffers, 314
  - SAP Computing Platform (ST06), 311-312
  - workload/performance management, 309-311

**Managing Your SAP Projects, 362**

**market risk management, 91**

**marketing support, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 55**

**master data row leaders, 118-119**

**Master Guides, installing, 232-233**

**matching and prototyping, project lifecycle, 122**

**Materials Management module, SAP ERP Operations, 97-98**

**Mendocino, 207-208**

**menu paths, performing tasks, 132**

## Messages, Options tab, Local Layout button

Messages, Options tab, Local Layout button, 161-162

### Microsoft Access

- exporting lists to, 204-205
- importing SAP, 200-201
- Report Wizard, 201-203

### Microsoft Duet, 207-208

### Microsoft Excel

- exporting
  - lists to, 203-204
  - SAP Query reports, 204
- importing SAP data to Microsoft Excel, 197

### Microsoft SharePoint 2007, integrating with SAP, 205-207

### Microsoft SharePoint 2010, 207

### integrating with SAP, 205

### Microsoft Silverlight, 207

### Microsoft SQL Server, database server software installation, 262-263

### Microsoft Word

- creating SAP form letters, 198-199
- form letters, 204

### Middleware, NetWeaver, 74-75

### middleware, SAP NetWeaver, 58

### migrations

- OS/DB migrations (operating system/database migrations), 321-322
- versus upgrades, 320-321

### mitigating risk, 20

### modifying variants, General Report Selection, 179-180

### modules, 9 -12

monitoring application servers (SM51), 302

MOSS (Microsoft Office SharePoint Server), 208

mouse, navigation, 132

moving data, Clipboard, 144

## N

### navigation

- with mouse and keyboard, 132
- performing tasks with menu paths, 132
- stopping transactions, 132

### NetWeaver, 71

- benefits of, 78-79
- BPM (Business Process Management), 77-78
- building blocks, 79
  - clients, 80-81
  - standalone engines, 80
  - systems with usage types, 80
- composition, 77
- foundation management, 73-74
- history of, 71-73
- information management, 76
- Middleware, 74-75
- team productivity, 76-77

### NetWeaver Composition

Environment, 245

### NetWeaver Developer Studio, 245

network infrastructure, 259

network-attached storage, 34

networking, SAP business professionals, 338

### networks

- infrastructure review, 260
- security considerations, 236-237

nonproduction systems, hosting in clouds, 297-298

number of employees, selecting best SAP solutions, 68

NWDS (NetWeaver Developer Studio), 245

## O

OLTP (online transaction processing) systems, 85

### online resources, 354-355

- SAP Fans, 360
- SAP FAQ, 360
- SAP ITtoolbox, 359-360
- SearchSAP.com, 360-361
- TechTarget, 360-361

Online Service System (OSS), 324

on-premises versus hosted, 67-68

### OpenText

- Archiving solution, 210
- data archiving, 210
- Document Access for SAP Solutions, 211
- Extended ECM for SAP solutions, 211

operating system installation, 261-262

## Production Planning and Control module, SAP ERP Operations

Operating System Monitor,  
311-312

operating systems (OS). See OS  
(operating systems).

operational expenditures  
(OPEX), 31

operational stabilization (run),  
125

operations, 241

OPEX (operational  
expenditures), 31

Options tab, Local Layout button,  
160-162

Oracle, database server software  
installation, 263

organizational management, PA  
module (SAP ERP HCM), 95

OS (operating systems), 36-37  
features of, 37  
SAP file systems, 37-38  
security considerations, 237

OS-based work processes, 38

OS/DB migrations (operating  
system/database migrations),  
321-322

OS-level profiles, 39

OSS (Online Service System), 324

output options, Spool Request  
Attributes, 169

overall SAP project manager, 226

overhead cost controlling, 90

Overwrite mode, fields, 134

## P

PA (Personnel Administration), 94

PA module, SAP ERP HCM  
(Human Capital Management),  
94-96

PaaS (Platforms for Service)  
cloud computing, 283-284  
SAP 293

partner challenges, BBD  
(Business ByDesign) and  
SAP, 63

partner channel management,  
CRM (Customer Relationship  
Management), 55-56

PD (Personnel Planning and  
development), 94

Percent Complete field, Status  
Information, 254

performing  
employee self-service  
functions, 49  
tasks with menu paths, 132

Personnel Administration, 94

Personnel Planning and  
Development (PD), 94

Plan Start Date field, Status  
Information, 254

Plan Work Days field, Status  
Information, 254

planning installation, 258-259

Plant Maintenance module, 98

platform administrators, 348-349

Platforms for Service (PaaS),  
cloud computing, 283-284

PLM (Product Lifecycle  
Management), 9, 56

benefits and impact of,  
108-109  
using, 109-110

PMI (Project Management  
Institute), 346

PMO (project management  
office), 220-221

communications  
planning, 222  
quality planning, 222  
risk and contingency  
planning, 222  
scheduling, 221  
scope management, 221

post-installation tasks, 268-269

power users, 119-120

PREPARE, 325

prerequisite checklist,  
installation, 262

presentation, SAP business  
professionals, 339-340

presentation layer, 127

print management (SPAD), 308

printing from SAP, 167  
default values, 169-170  
SAP Print Screen List, 167  
Spool Request Attributes,  
167-169

product cost controlling, 90

Product Lifecycle  
Management, 56

Production Planning and Control  
module, SAP ERP Operations, 97

## Production Planning application (APO)

**Production Planning application (APO), 106**

**professional resources, 353-354**

Americas' SAP Users' Group (ASUG), 355-356

books, 358

InsiderPROFILES Magazine, 357-358

newsletters, 358-359

online resources, 354-355

SAP Professional Journal, 356-357

SAPinsider, 357

**profiles, OS-level profiles, 39**

**profitability analysis, 90**

**program management, 335**

**programmers, IT professionals, 349-350**

**programming tools, 243-244**

ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming), 244-245

Java, 245

NetWeaver Composition Environment, 245

NWDS (NetWeaver Developer Studio), 245

SE80, 244-245

**Project and Portfolio Management module, SAP ERP Corporate Services, 100**

**project board, 224-225**

**project closeout, 227-228**

**Project IMG, 250**

**project implementation perspective, 25-26**

**project initiation, 121-122**

**project leadership, 224**

executive steering committee, 224-225

overall SAP project manager, 226

project sponsors, 225-226

**project lifecycle, 120-121**

business acceptance testing, 123-124

design and construction, 122-123

matching and prototyping, 122

operational stabilization (run), 125

preparation for production cut-over, 124-125

project initiation, 121-122

SIT (system integration testing), 123

**Project Management Institute (PMI), 346**

**project management office. See PMO**

**project planning, 322-323**

for enhancements, 323-324

upgrades, 324-326

**project preparation, implementation development phases (ASAP methodology), 246-247**

**project sponsors, 225-226**

**project teams, assembling, 222-224**

**public clouds, 286**

**Purchasing Planning application (APO), 106**

## Q

**QA (quality assurance), 222**

**QC (quality control), 222**

**Quality Management module, SAP ERP Corporate Services, 99-100**

**quality planning, PMO (project management office), 222**

**query groups, 182-183**

assigning InfoSets to, 187

**query reporting tools, 181-182**

administrative decisions, 183-185

InfoSets, 183

query groups, 182-183

**Quick Info, Options tab, Local Layout button, 161**

**QuickViewer, 191**

creating, 192

## R

**R/3, 13**

**radio buttons, screen objects, 142**

**RAID 0, 36**

**RAID 1, 36**

**RAID 5, 36**

**RAID 10, 36**

**RDBMS (relational database management system), 40**

**Real Estate Management module, SAP ERP Corporate Services, 99**

real-time offer management,  
CRM (Customer Relationship  
Management), 56

real-world cloud scenarios,  
296-297

red swap screen, 314

Reference IMG, 250

regulatory compliance, 114

Release Notes, IMG  
(Implementation Guide), 255

Remaining Work Days field,  
Status Information, 255

replicating data, 138-140

Report Wizard, Microsoft Access,  
201-203

reporting tools, 175

- ABAP List Processing, 176
- ABAP Query, 176
- Ad Hoc Query, 176
- Executive Information System  
(EIS), 176-177
- SAP Information System, 177
- Structural Graphics, 176

reports, executing General Report  
Selection, 177-178

required input fields, 136-138

resources

- online resources. See online  
resources
- professional resources.  
See professional resources

reviewing

- Alert Monitor, 305-306
- infrastructure, 259-260
- system logs (SM21), 303

risk

- managing, 20
- mitigating, 20
- PMO (project management  
office), 222

roles, security, 149-150

row leaders, 118-119

Run SAP, 125

Run SAP roadmaps, implementa-  
tion development phases (ASAP  
methodology), 248

RZ20, 305-306

## S

SaaS (Software as a Service)

- cloud computing, 283
- SAP, 292-293

Sales and Distribution module, 98

sales support, CRM (Customer  
Relationship Management), 55

SAML (Security Assertion Markup  
Language), SAP Single Sign-On  
(SSO), 277

SAN/disk subsystem teams, 240

SAP

- accessing, 47
- access process, 48
- with SAPGUI or fat  
client, 47
- with web browsers, 47-48
- administering, 301
- displaying logs and traces,  
304-305
- monitoring application  
servers (SM51), 302
- reviewing Alert Monitor  
(RZ20), 305-306
- reviewing system logs  
(SM21), 303
- system status (SICK), 301
- workload distribution  
(SM50 and SM66),  
302-303

clouds, 295

- bridging old and new  
worlds, 296
- Business ByDesign, 296
- cloud services, 295
- future of, 298-299
- hosting nonproduction  
systems in clouds,  
297-298
- real-world cloud scenarios,  
296-297
- scalability, 295

defined, 2

difficulties with  
implementation, 215-216

IaaS (Infrastructure of a  
Service), 294-295

importing into Microsoft  
Access, 200-201

integrating AD (Active  
Directory), 213-212

making changes to, 317-318

managing

- application server load,  
312-314
- batch job management,  
308



- database management, 307-308
- print management (SPAD), 308
- SAP application server buffers, 314
- SAP Computing Platform (ST06), 311-312
- workload/performance management, 309-311
- overview of company, 7-9
- PaaS (Platforms for Service), 293
- real purpose and impact, 19-20
- SaaS (Software as a Service), 292-293
- updates, 318
- user IDs, 48
- SAP AG, 227**
- SAP Application Performance Standard. See SAPS (Application Performance Standard).**
- SAP application server buffers, 314**
- SAP Assistant, 196**
- SAP authorizations, 151**
  - ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming), 152-153
  - authorization profiles, 151-152
  - user authorizations, Java application servers, 153
- SAP Basis, 29-30, 231-232**
  - security considerations, 238
  - staffing, 239-240
- SAP Basis layer, 71**
- SAP Basis professional, 235**
- SAP Business Explorer tool, 65**
- SAP business professionals, 329-330**
  - business and functional positions, 334-335
  - functional project and program management, 335
  - functional trainers and testers, 335-336
  - looking for jobs, 330
    - right where you are, 330-331
    - at SAP, 331-332
    - at SAP customers, 334
    - at SAP partners, 332-334
  - preparing for business careers, 336
  - education, 338-339
  - ethics, 340-341
  - leveraging existing business experience, 337
  - looking for work on the fringe, 337-338
  - networking, 338
  - presentation, 339-340
  - right where you are, 336
- SAP Business Server Pages, 205-206**
- SAP Central Instance, SAP software installation, 267-268**
- SAP Central Services Instance for ABAP (ASCS) installation, 264**
- SAP Central Services Instance (SCS) installation, 264-265**
- SAP clients, logging on to access SAP, 129**
- SAP Competency Centers, 234**
- SAP Computing Platform (ST06), 311-312**
- SAP conferences, 361**
  - Managing Your SAP Projects, 362
  - SAP TechEd, 362
  - SAPPHIRE NOW, 361-362
  - WIS-sponsored, 362-363
- SAP data, exporting to Microsoft Excel, 197**
- SAP Database Instance, SAP software installation, 265-267**
- SAP Developer Network, 354**
- SAP Ecosystem, 354**
- SAP enhancements, 318-319**
  - project planning, 323-324
- SAP Enterprise IMG, 250**
- SAP enterprise learning, 95**
- SAP ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), 9, 13, 54, 85-87**
  - evolution of, 86
  - extending with CRM, 106-107
- SAP ERP Analytics, 54**
- SAP ERP Central Component. See ECC.**
- SAP ERP Corporate Services, 54, 99**
  - Project and Portfolio Management module, 100
  - Quality Management module, 99-100
  - Real Estate Management module, 99

## SAP Single Sign-On (SSO)

- SAP ERP Financials, 9-11, 54**
  - Controlling module, 89-90
  - Enterprise Controlling module, 90
  - Financial and Managerial Accounting module, 88-89
  - FSCM (Financial Supply Chain Management), 92
  - GRC (Governance, Risk, and Compliance), 88
  - GTS (Global Trade Services), 91-92
  - Treasury Management module, 91
- SAP ERP HCM (Human Capital Management), 92-94**
  - PA module, 94-96
- SAP ERP Human Capital Management, 54-69**
- SAP ERP Operations, 54, 96-97, 113**
  - Materials Management module, 97-98
  - Plant Maintenance module, 98
  - Production Planning and Control module, 97
  - Sales and Distribution module, 98
- SAP Fans, 360**
- SAP FAQ, 360**
- SAP form letters, creating in Microsoft Word, 198-199, 204**
- SAP GRC GTS, 91-92**
- SAP Help Portal, 354**
- SAP Information Lifecycle Management, 76**
- SAP Information System, 177**
- SAP Innovations 2010, 103-104**
- SAP integration with desktop applications, 195-196**
- SAP Interactive Forms, Adobe, 211-212**
- SAP ITtoolbox, 359-360**
- SAP landscapes, 233**
- SAP Lean Planning and Operations, 113**
- SAP learning solution, 95-96**
- SAP Logon Pad, configuring, 127-128**
- SAP manufacturing, 96-97, 112-113**
  - Materials Management module, 97-98
  - Plant Maintenance module, 98
  - Sales and Distribution module, 98
- SAP Manufacturing Integration and Intelligence, 113**
- SAP NetWeaver Business Process Management. See BPM**
- SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse, 350**
- SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse Accelerator, 76**
- SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse (BW), 76**
- SAP NetWeaver, components, 57-58**
- SAP NetWeaver Composition Environment (CE), 77**
- SAP NetWeaver Developer Studio, 77**
- SAP NetWeaver Enterprise Search (ES), 77**
- SAP NetWeaver Master Data Management, 76**
- SAP NetWeaver Master Guide, 81-82**
- SAP NetWeaver Mobile, 76**
- SAP NetWeaver Portal, 76, 206-207**
- SAP NetWeaver Process Integration, 9**
- SAP NetWeaver Visual Composer, 77**
- SAP Notes, 232**
- SAP Partner Portal, 354**
- SAP Print Screen List, 167**
- SAP process security, 149**
- SAP Professional Journal, 356-357**
- SAP Profile Generator, security, 150**
- SAP Project IMG, 250**
- SAP project manager, 226**
- SAP queries, 187**
  - advanced, 189-190
  - creating, 187-189
- SAP Query, 181**
- SAP Query reports, exporting to Microsoft Excel, 204**
- SAP R/3, 13**
- SAP Reference IMG, 250**
- SAP Service and Asset Management, 113-114**
- SAP Service Marketplace, 354**
- SAP Single Sign-On (SSO), 275**
  - SAML (Security Assertion Markup Language), 277
  - SPNego, 275-277

## SAP software installation

### SAP software installation

- SAP Central Instance, 267-268
- SAP Central Services
  - Instance for ABAP (ASCS) installation, 264
- SAP Central Services
  - Instance (SCS) installation, 264-265
- SAP Database Instance, 265-267
- system variants, 263

### SAP SolMan, 227

### SAP Solutions for Auto-ID and Item Serialization, 113

### SAP Supply Chain Management, 113

### SAP Support Portal, 354

### SAP TechEd, 362

### SAP technical infrastructure security, 148-149

### SAP Transaction Monitor, 309-311

### SAP trees, screen objects, 141

### SAP trial version

- installation, 272-275
  - acquiring, downloading, extracting, 270-271
- preparing for installation, 269-270
- using, 275

### SAP Upgrade Customizing IMGs, 251

### SAP upgrades

- project planning, 324-326
- testing, 325-326

### SAP Web Services, 206

### SAP Workload Monitor, 309-311

### SAP-as-a-Service, 294-295

### SAPGUI, 170

- accessing SAP, 47
- changing sales orders, 170
- displaying goods movements, 171
- for HTML, 158-159
- for Java, 158
- managing accounts, 170
- posting business transactions in A/R, 171
- posting goods movement for materials, 171-172
- Tweak SAPGUI, 159
- for Windows, 159

### SAPGUI Print button, 167

### SAPGUI user interface, 127, 131

- application toolbar, 131-132
- standard toolbar, 131

### SAPinsider, 357

### SAPOSCOL, 38

### SAPPHIRE NOW, 361-362

### SAP-Resources.com, 363-364

### SAPS (SAP Application Performance Standard), 32-33

### SART, 177

### saving data on screens, 138

### scalability, SAP and clouds, 295

### SCC (Supply Chain Cockpit), 105

### scheduling PMO (project management office), 221

### SCM (Supply Chain

### Management), 10, 56-57, 104

- business benefits and impact, 105-106
- purpose of, 104-105

### SCM Expert, 358-359

### scope management, PMO (project management office), 221

### screen objects, 140-141

- check boxes, 141-142
- dialog boxes, 142-143
- radio buttons, 142
- SAP trees, 141
- table controls, 143

### screens, saving data, 138

### SDK (software development kit), 61

### SE80, 244-245

### searching for reports, General Selection Tree, 178-179

### SearchSAP.com, 360-361

### security

- data, 237-238
- databases, 237-238
- disk subsystems, 237
- network considerations, 236-237
- OS (operating systems), 237
- overview, 147-148
- SAP authorizations, 151
  - authorization profiles, 151-152
- SAP Basis, 238
- SAP process security, 149
- SAP Profile Generator, 150
- SAP roles, 149-150
- SAP technical infrastructure security, 148-149
- servers, 237

## Spool Request Attributes

- Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML), 277**
- security teams, 46, 240**
- selecting best SAP solutions**
  - business process
    - complexity, 68
  - cost, 67
  - features of, 67
  - functionality, 67
  - hosted versus on-premises, 67-68
  - number of employees, 68
- selection screens, General Report Selection, 179**
- selling from stock, business processes, 50-51**
- server availability features, 33**
- server hardware vendors, 33**
- server infrastructure, 259**
- server infrastructure teams, 240**
- servers**
  - cloud storage, 34-35
  - direct-attached storage, 34
  - disk storage systems, 34
  - network-attached storage, 34
  - SAPS (SAP Application Performance Standard), 32-33
  - security considerations, 237
  - server availability
    - features, 33
  - server hardware vendors, 33
  - storage area networks, 34
  - storage system availability, 35-36
  - storage system
    - performance, 35
- service providers, clouds, 284**
  - hosted private clouds, 285
  - hybrid clouds, 286-287
  - internal private clouds, 285
  - public clouds, 286
- service support, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 55**
- sessions, 48**
  - logging on to access SAP, 129-130
  - creating sessions, 130
  - ending, 130
- Set Data, 138**
- SharePoint, integrating with SAP, 205**
- SharePoint 2007, integrating with SAP, 205-207**
- SharePoint 2010, 207**
- SICK (system status), 301**
- Silverlight, 207**
- single points of failure. See SPOFs**
- Single Sign-On (SSO), 275**
  - SAML (Security Assertion Markup Language), 277
  - SPNego, 275-277
- SIT (system integration testing), 123**
- site readiness, 236**
- sizing, 233-234**
  - ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming)
  - WebAS (Web Application Server), 234
  - Java Stack, 234
- SM12, 307-308**
- SM13, 307-308**
- SM21, 303**
- SM37, 308**
- SM50, 302-303**
- SM51 (application servers), monitoring, 302**
- SM66, 302-303**
- SME (small and medium enterprise), 53, 58-59**
  - versus Business Suite, 68-69
- SMLG, 312-314**
- SNP Planner (APO), 106**
- SOA (service-oriented architecture), cloud computing, 289-290**
- Software as a Service (SaaS), cloud computing, 283**
- software development kit (SDK), 61**
- Softwarejobs.com, 364**
- SolMan (Solution Manager), 251**
- Solution Centers, All-in-One, 65**
- Solution Manager, 251**
- SPAD, print management, 308**
- SPAU, 325**
- SPDD, 325**
- SPNego, SAP Single Sign-On (SSO), 275-277**
- SPOFs (single points of failure), 36**
- Spool Request Attributes, 167-169**
  - cover sheets, 169
  - General Properties, 168
  - output options, 169
  - Spool Request, 168-169

## Spool Request, Spool Request Attributes

Spool Request, Spool Request Attributes, 168-169

SRM (Supplier Relationship Management), 9, 57, 110-111

business benefits and impact, 111-112

integration benefits, SRM-to-PLM, 111

SSO. *See* Single Sign-On (SSO)

ST02, 314

ST03, 309-311

ST03G, 311

ST06, 311-312

ST07, 312-314

staffing, SAP Basis, 239-240

stakeholders, business perspectives, 23

standalone engines, NetWeaver, 80

standard query areas, 184

standard toolbar, SAPGUI user interface, 131

Status field, Status Information, 253

status fields, System Information icon, 166-167

Status Information, IMG (Implementation Guide), 253-255

stopping transactions, 132

storage

cloud storage, 34-35

direct-attached storage, 34

network-attached storage, 34

storage area networks, 34

storage system availability, 35-36

storage system performance, 35

storage area networks, 34

storage infrastructure, 259

storage system availability, 35-36

storage system performance, 35

stress testing, 124

Structural Graphics, 176

structures, database basics, 40-41

Supplier Relationship Management. *See* SRM (Supplier Relationship Management)

Supply Chain Cockpit (SCC), 105

Supply Chain Management. *See* SCM

System Information icon, status fields, 166-167

system logs

ABAP stacks, 303

Java stacks, 303

reviewing, 303

System option, Options tab, Local Layout button, 162

system status (SICK), 301

system variants, SAP software installation, 263

systems with usage types, NetWeaver, 80

## T

table controls, screen objects, 143

tables, database basics, 40-41

tasks, performing with menu paths, 132

team productivity

NetWeaver, 76-77

SAP NetWeaver, 58

teams

assembling, 222-224

business teams, 45

configuration teams, 45

data teams, 46

development teams, 45

integration teams, 45

other teams, 46

security teams, 46

technical teams, 46

test/QA teams, 45

technical perspective, 25

technical positions,

IT professionals, 345-346

technical project management, IT professionals, 346

technical teams, 46

TechTarget, 360-361

testers, 335-336

IT professionals, 346

testing

business acceptance testing, 123-124

implementation development phases, ASAP methodology, 247-248

load testing, 124

SIT (system integration testing), 123

unit/functional testing, 123

upgrades, 325-326

user acceptance testing, 124

test/QA teams, 45

third-parties, application considerations, 238

toolbars

- application toolbar, SAPGUI
- user interface, 131-132
- standard toolbar, SAPGUI
- user interface, 131

Trace tab, Local Layout button, 164

traces, displaying, 304-305

trainers, 335-336

- IT professionals, 346

transactions, 9-10

- stopping, 132

treasury management, 91

Treasury Management module, SAP ERP Financials, 91

Tune Summary, 314

Tweak SAPGUI, 159

## U

UME (User Management Engine), 153

unit/functional testing, 123

UNIX, 321

updates, SAP, 318

Upgrade Assistant, 325

Upgrade Customizing IMGs, 251

upgrades, 322

- versus migrations, 320-321
- project planning, 324-326
- testing, 325-326

upgrading, 319-320

user acceptance testing, 124

user authorizations

- ABAP (Advanced Business Application Programming)
- WebAS (Web Application Server), 152-153
- Java application servers, 153

user experience (UX), 46

- All-in-One, 66

user groups, creating new, 185

user IDs, 48

logging on to access SAP, 129

user interfaces, 157-158

- JavaGUI, 158
- WebGUI, 158-159
- WinGUI, 159

User Management Engine (UME), 153

UX (user experience), 46

## V

ValueSAP, 227

variants, General Report Selection, 179

- modifying, 179-180

vendors, server hardware

- vendors, 33

virtualization, 294

volume testing, 124

## W-Z

Web Application Server (WebAS), 72

- cloud computing, 289

web browsers, accessing SAP, 47-48

web channels, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), 55

Web Dynpro, 205-206

WebAS (Web Application Server), 72

WebGUI, 158-159

Wellesley Information Services (WIS), 357

Windows, SAPGUI, 159

Windows Clipboard, 143

- copying unselectable data, 144
- moving and copying data, 144

WinGUI, 159

WIS (Wellesley Information Services), 357

- SAP conferences, 362-363

wizards, Report Wizard (Microsoft Access), 201-203

work processes, OS-based work processes, 38

workload distribution (SM50 and SM66), 302-303

workload/performance management, 309-311