

NTT DATA Business Solutions | Wayfinder Assessment

What's Your Next Move?

Strategies for Migrating to SAP S/4HANA Cloud to
Maximize Value



Content

01 Introduction

02 Why migration matters

03 Three migration pathways explained

04 The implementation process explained

05 Overcoming migration challenges

06 Building long-term value

07 The path forward

Introduction

Time is ticking and SAP's end of support for SAP ECC in 2027 is more pressing than you think. That's because the transition from SAP ECC to SAP S/4HANA requires careful planning and execution to avoid unwanted interruptions to your business or additional fees for missing the deadline.

However, the real reason to move to SAP S/4HANA requires an outlook focused on possibility. Businesses around the globe are redefining their operations amid rapid technological evolution. At the center of this transformation sits enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems—the engines driving agility, scalability, and productivity in a digital-first era. For many, the question isn't "Should we modernize?"—it's "How do we modernize wisely?"

Moving to a modern, cloud-based ERP like SAP S/4HANA means walking the line between extracting maximum value from your existing systems and preparing your business for future demands. But navigating this transition demands a deft mix of technical expertise, process optimization, and strategic foresight.

This e-book highlights practical migration strategies for SAP S/4HANA adoption. With a balance of actionable steps and guiding principles, we'll explore how organizations like yours can minimize disruption and deliver transformation successfully.



Why migration matters

A robust cloud ERP system enables real-time financial insights, streamlined supply chains, and intelligent automation—often with minimal customization. These systems help eliminate the challenges many organizations currently face:

- Outdated on-premise ERP systems are unable to handle the complexities of businesses as they have expanded and outgrown these older systems. And customers are demanding more.
- Workflows are bogged down by fragmented processes and custom code.
- Delayed data often leads to reactive rather than proactive business decisions.

This crossroads isn't unique. According to IDC, 80% of organizations plan to replace their current ERP systems at the end of their subscription, while 41% aim to adopt new ERP systems within the next 24 months. The urgency is clear, but the roadmap isn't a one-size-fits-all scenario.

Here's the good news. SAP S/4HANA Cloud is a solution built to last. The beauty of the SAP landscape is that once you have your core ERP system, you can increase the functionality over time with modular deployments to accommodate your specific needs and priorities.

Then, as industry or market dynamics shift, you can choose each new element based on customer need, differentiation, value realization and targeted ROI. Capital gains are then maximized because this stairstep approach allows you to keep an eye on both your present and future needs. And, just as important, your plan can evolve over time as situations continue to shift.

Three migration pathways explained

When it comes to transitioning to SAP S/4HANA, three migration options emerge. Each pathway comes with its considerations, timelines, and outcomes.



Greenfield (New implementation)

A fresh start. This option involves implementing SAP S/4HANA from scratch, freeing your organization from legacy constraints.

- **Ideal for** companies seeking complete process re-engineering and opportunities to implement new technologies without legacy constraints.
- **Benefits include** increased flexibility and innovation, as well as the opportunity to harmonize data and processes across the business. This is a phased approach that involves longer timelines to establish a new organizational structure.



Brownfield (System conversion)

This approach transitions an existing SAP ERP into SAP S/4HANA by upgrading the system's database, data model, and applications in one go.

- **Best for** organizations looking to retain historical data and current workflows with minimal disruption.
- **Benefits:** A risk-averse and cost-efficient option with shorter implementation timeframes. The shorter timeline uses a big bang implementation approach.



Selective Data Transition (Hybrid)

This hybrid approach merges the best of brownfield and greenfield. It allows you to retain critical historical data while adopting new processes selectively.

- **Why choose this?** It balances flexibility with efficiency.
- **How do we do it?** NTT DATA Business Solutions works with our partner, Natuvion, to provide a highly automated, fast and flexible migration to SAP S/4HANA and accommodate organizational and data transformation needs. This method has a medium-length timeline and uses a phased approach.

The implementation process explained

Once you've made the decision to migrate to SAP S/4HANA and you have an idea of which pathway is right for you, it's time to engage with an implementation partner to help you navigate the process. NTT DATA Business Solutions has been developing customized SAP-based business models for over 35 years and has acquired in-depth expertise to help reduce complexity and optimize outcomes.

Here's a general overview of what that process looks like:



Strategic goals and roadmap

We take a deeper dive into your business objectives for the migration and create a detailed roadmap to plan and manage the transition.



System analysis and preparation phase

We perform a detailed analysis of your existing SAP environment to determine migration requirements and evaluate existing customization solutions, processes, and data quality.



Data transfer and data quality

We conduct a thorough review of your existing data and ensure cleansing and consolidation to ensure that only relevant and clean data is migrated.



System and infrastructure requirements

We work with your team to review hardware and cloud requirements for your SAP S/4HANA implementation to ensure that your infrastructure is designed to support the new solution.



Change management and training

We make sure that you have everything you need to communicate with your employees and stakeholders as you make the transition, from targeted training to ongoing support.



Streamline and standardize processes

We highly encourage you to use the transition to optimize and standardize existing processes to increase efficiency and get the most value out of the new solution. Subsequent innovations will build on this foundation and your SAP landscape will scale with you as your business grows.



Security and compliance

We help you identify all security and compliance requirements, and conduct regular audits and reviews to ensure long-term compliance and successful governance.



Customization and enhancements

This process starts by helping you reduce your complexity wherever possible by identifying the standard solutions that will serve you best. Then, we only migrate the essential customizations to ensure long-term maintainability and system stability.



Test management and quality assurance

We help you plan and complete comprehensive testing (functional, technical, load, etc.) to ensure that all systems and processes will work smoothly after migration.



Go-live planning and support

Finally, we carefully plan your go-live to minimize downtime and ensure that you have the post-migration support you need to resolve any issues that arise and assist your users in the new environment.



NTT DATA Business Solutions helps you achieve the best outcome while ensuring your implementation is as efficient as possible.



Overcoming migration challenges

No significant change comes without hurdles, but understanding common pitfalls can help avoid them.

Customization Fatigue

You've spent years tailoring your ERP system to fit specific workflows, but excessive customization often creates rigidity. To truly future-proof your SAP environment, you will need to identify necessary customizations versus those that can be transitioned into standardized, configurable processes.

Tip: Limiting customizations reduces complexity without compromising capability.

Talent Shortages

The skills gap between legacy ERP expertise and cloud-native know-how can delay projects and there are two fixes for this. First, invest in upskilling your IT teams as much as the technology itself. Second, leverage Managed Services from NTT DATA Business Solutions to make sure your team isn't overwhelmed with "just keeping the lights on," and they have the necessary time to focus on strategic initiatives that add value to your business.



Building long-term value

At its core, migration to a modern ERP is about more than operational efficiency—it's about unlocking innovation. Within a short window of moving to SAP S/4HANA, businesses report:

- **Streamlined Operations:** ERP systems equipped with AI-driven workflows reduce manual intervention.
- **Agile Decision-Making:** A unified view of real-time data powers strategic insights and faster pivots.
- **Market Differentiation:** Standardized systems free resources to focus on innovation—not firefighting technical downtime.

The key takeaway is this: Migration is not a one-time event. Business landscapes evolve, technologies mature, and customer expectations shift. Choose partners who offer continuous enhancement cycles, ensuring your ERP solution grows with you.

The path forward

The bridge to the future will not build itself. Transitioning to a modern ERP system requires more than technical expertise—it requires vision, strategy, and an unrelenting focus on business outcomes. Whether you choose greenfield implementation, brownfield conversion, or selective data transition, remember this:

The tools are ready. The strategies are proven. And the rewards are undeniable.

The only question is, what's your next move? Take the Wayfinder Assessment and find out.

The Wayfinder Assessment is a 5-10 minute digital survey that gathers critical information about your business and applies insights drawn from hundreds of successful SAP S/4HANA implementations. The survey asks a series of questions to help you align your business goals and preferences with the right migration approach. You will also receive a scorecard helping you better understand the different approaches and how your responses led to the recommended approach.

[Wayfinder Assessment](#)

