



The **SAP** Report Q2 2026



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Welcome



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Welcome to this special AI edition of the Q2 SAP Report 2026!

Unless you have been immersed in an extended digital detox since SAP's Orlando and Madrid Sapphire events, it will have been impossible to escape AI and the Autonomous Enterprise. SAP is now trying to position itself not just as the system where enterprises record what happens, but the platform that predicts and acts on what should happen next - across every system, every data source, and every business process.



In this special AI edition, we take a closer look at the key messages from Sapphire, highlighting different industry viewpoints. And that includes Tyler Watts and Emily Dalby who represented bluewave in Madrid (pictured).

2026 H1 has seen bluewaveCONSULT, bluewaveSELECT's sister company, delivering more small SAP projects via SoW engagements than ever before, pointing towards an opportunity in the market for smaller consultancy partners to excel on a mandate of single accountability, client-side independence, and onshore delivery - all at the right price point.

Elsewhere, bluewaveSELECT also has a record number of independent SAP freelancers on assignment in all four corners of the globe, and permanent hiring figures are encouragingly back to pre-pandemic levels.

We love a challenge; if you think we can add fresh energy to your SAP talent requirements - contract, permanent or SoW - please get in touch.

Specialist SAP Reports and Guides

We've worked with some of the best in SAP to bring you these helpful guides and reports, to help you achieve your goals. So here they are, all in one place.



DOWNLOAD FREE RESOURCES BELOW:

Neurodiversity in SAP >

The latest stats on neurodiversity in the tech sector, why now is the right time for employers to improve their approach to neurodiversity.

IR35 Guide >

Advice from Qdos to help hiring managers build an internal business case for engaging outside IR35 contractors.

Hiring Manager's Playbook >

Eighteen pages filled with useful, objective data on how to attract and retain great SAP contractors.

SAP Contractor Survey Results >

UK & Ireland contractor survey results on how much contractors are paid, what drives them to accept or reject a role, and what makes them stick around for the duration of a project.

Women in SAP >

How the percentage of women in SAP has progressed over time and the impact of AI.

SAP Licensing Guide >

Practical advice from Gaurish Dessai, Enterprise Solutions Architect, on how to navigate the complex world of SAP licensing.

Free S/4HANA Advisory Sessions

Your Guide to SAP BTP & CPI: Essentials for ECC to S/4HANA Migration Success >

With Faraz Mohsin, SAP S/4 Lead, Thrinath Krishnamoorthy, CPI & BTP Architect

'No Regret' Moves: How to Mitigate Risk with a Capability Assessment for Your ECC to S/4HANA Transition >

With Tim Smith, SAP S/4 Programme Lead

Demystifying SAP Datasphere: Futureproof Your Business Analytics >

With Ali Bashir, Business Solution Lead

Why Integration is Critical to S/4HANA Success: The 5 Things SAP Leaders Need to Know >

With Kirit Mistry, Enterprise Architect

5 Ways to Accelerate Business Growth Through Data in Your S/4HANA Upgrade >

With Floyd Sepanya, Data Design Lead

The 5 Key Components of a Successful S/4HANA Implementation in Retail >

With Paul Drage, SAP Retail Programme Manager

The 5 Biggest Challenges of an S/4HANA Implementation (and How to Overcome Them) >

With Paul Kelly, Chief Technical Architect

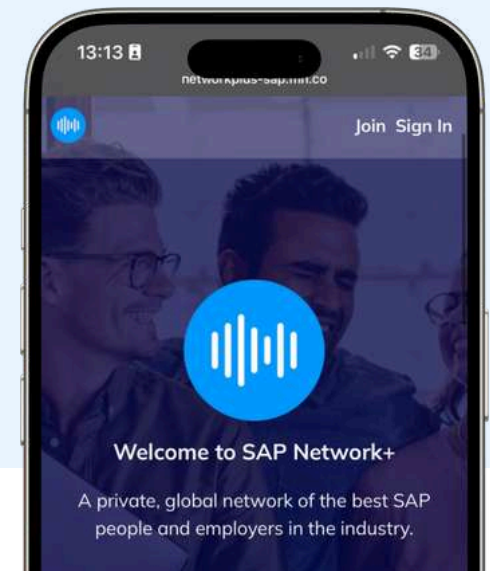
C-Suite Approved: How to Build a Winning Business Case for SAP S/4HANA >

With Roberta Watts, CIO



It's like LinkedIn, but exclusively for SAP people. The only private, global network of the best SAP people and employers in the industry. And it's completely free to join. Brought to you in collaboration with UKISUG.

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Industry News



**SAP's biggest AI bet yet:
Agents that execute, not
just assist**

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**SAP U-turn brings AI
features to ECC and on-
prem S/4HANA**

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**SAP customers say AI is
next in line to eat their
budgets**

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**Company blew \$500M on
Claude in 30 days due to no
employee usage limit**

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**New SAP on Azure
announcements from SAP
Sapphire 2026**

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**90% of companies kicked
off their SAP S/4HANA
implementation process**

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**Cloud, AI and the looming
transition bottleneck**

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**2026: Trends and
investment in the SAP
community**

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Recent Acquisitions

SAP's Acquisition Activity

Before we move on to reflections on Sapphire - and SAP's current and future AI offerings from different corners of the industry - let's focus on SAP's acquisition activity.

SAP announced the acquisitions of Dremio and Prior Labs and completed the acquisition of Reltio, all in May 2026, just days before Sapphire launched in Orlando.

These aren't isolated deals; they are intended to form a deliberate, sequenced answer to the single biggest obstacle to enterprise AI: how to harness data that isn't ready to be used.

Together, the three acquisitions construct a flow pipeline, Reltio cleans and unifies the data > Dremio makes it openly accessible > Prior Labs makes it predictive and intelligent.

1 RELTIO = DATA TRUST

Before you can do anything with enterprise data, it has to be reliable. Reltio's role is to unify, cleanse, and harmonise data from multiple sources, both legacy SAP systems and third-party applications. This filter is designed to stop AI agents from working with contradictory, duplicated, or incomplete data.

2 DREMIO = DATA ACCESS

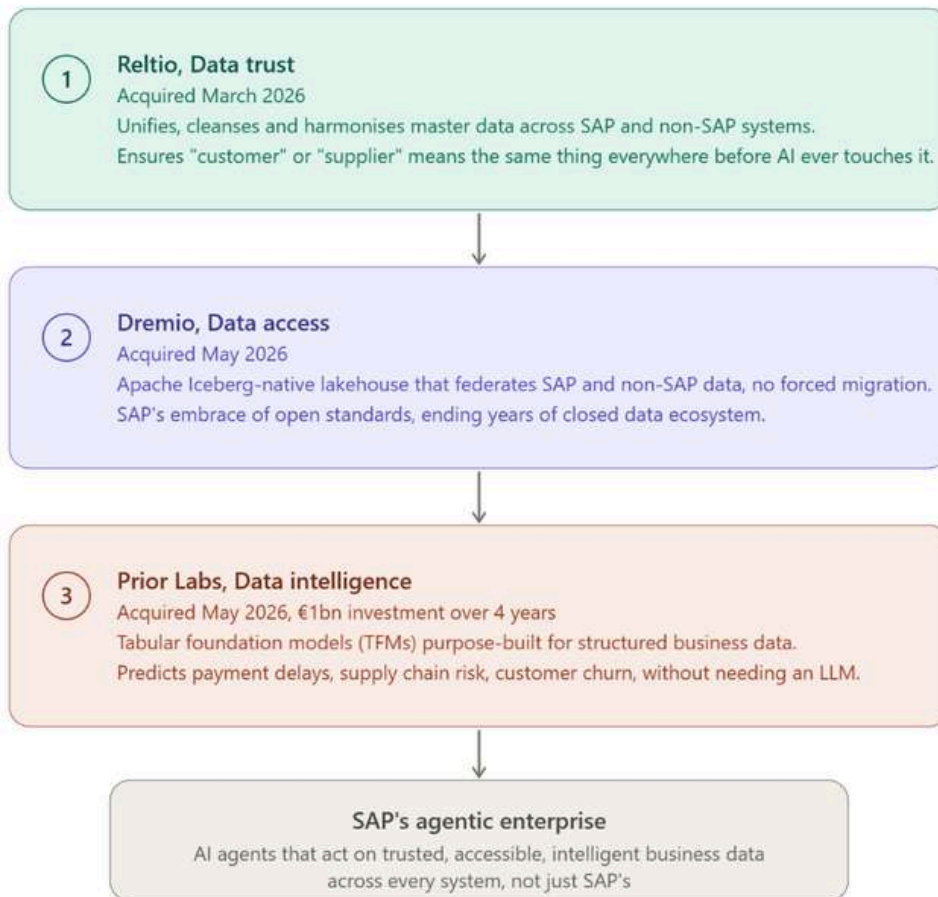
Once data is trustworthy, it needs to be accessible across all of an enterprise's systems, not just SAP's. This is SAP's embrace of open standards after years of operating a relatively closed data ecosystem, and a pragmatic acknowledgment that their customers will never put all their data in SAP.

3 PRIOR LABS = DATA INTELLIGENCE

With steps 1 and 2 providing clean, accessible data from all systems in one place, the Prior Labs acquisition is positioned to provide a purpose-built AI layer with tabular foundation models integrated across SAP AI Core, Business Data Cloud, and the Joule assistant.

Recent Acquisitions

SAP's acquisition strategy: building the enterprise AI stack



The Honest Caveats

The agentic enterprise is still more vision than reality for most organisations. A few things to keep in mind:

● Trust and governance

Remain unsolved; most businesses aren't ready to let AI agents take consequential actions without human sign-off.

● Integration complexity

Is enormous; agents need clean APIs and data contracts that most enterprise IT environments don't yet have.

● Liability is unclear

When an agent makes a bad decision, who is responsible?

The near-term reality is probably hybrid - agents handling high-volume, lower-stakes decisions autonomously, with humans retained for anything consequential, of higher value, or unusual. The longer-term trajectory, if the trust and governance challenges get solved, is agents taking on progressively more of what human teams currently do.

SAP's bet is that whoever owns the data infrastructure when that happens will have an extraordinarily strong position. That's the baseline logic behind the three acquisitions.

AI: Are Future SAP Jobs at Risk?

The honest answer is selectively yes, but not catastrophically, provided professionals adapt. Sapphire '26 marked a shift in how SAP positions itself - not as a software vendor, but as a business AI company. CEO Christian Klein framed the central question plainly: whether SAP will remain a software company at all. The defining announcement was the Autonomous Suite - the model is no longer AI that assists human decision-making, but that AI executes mission-critical business processes independently.

SAP has deployed over 50 domain-specific Joule AI assistants and 200+ specialised agents to execute tasks end-to-end, from compressing the financial close to automating supply chain rebalancing. However, even Klein admitted that "If AI runs payroll, financial close, or supply chain planning, 80% accuracy is not good enough." That emphasis on precision means human oversight isn't disappearing; it's shifting.

SAP roles facing declining demand

● Transactional Functional Consultants

These are likely to be most at risk. Many SAP roles have historically been transactional, manual invoice matching, basic reporting generation, etc. AI is now beginning to handle these 'robotic' tasks. SAP systems now have the capacity to perform financial reconciliation and procurement workflows automatically with very little human involvement through Intelligent Process Automation.

● Finance Operations

Those handling month-end close are also directly targeted. The Autonomous Close Assistant handles journal entries, reconciliations, error resolution without manual intervention, aiming to compress the month-end close from weeks to days.

● HR Administration

Those in SuccessFactors face significant automation. SAP's Autonomous HCM automates payroll, recruiting, workforce planning, upskilling, and organisational modelling across the entire employee lifecycle. Roles that primarily existed to run these processes manually shrink.

● Basic ABAP Developers

Writing routine reports, interfaces, and enhancements face compression, as AI coding tools, low-code environments, and S/4HANA 'fit as standard' erode the need for volume ABAP work.

AI: Are Future SAP Jobs at Risk?

Roles rising in demand

The EU AI Act places SAP projects in HR, Finance, and Procurement directly under regulatory oversight - with bias audits, explainability, and traceability now mandatory requirements. This translates into real consulting work towards people who govern, design, and supervise AI. This shift creates a new services market around AI-ready platforms, where value depends on connecting business data, workflows, and AI agents into operational processes. Specifically, future demand will rise for:

● S/4HANA Migration Architects

Enterprises still on SAP ECC should treat Sapphire 2026 as a signal to prioritise AI readiness. Scaled autonomous workflows are unlikely in the near term while core ERP environments remain highly customised and technically constrained. This means a huge wave of migration work is still ahead.

● Business Process Architects & Business Value Architects

Rather than fixing broken workflows, professionals will design the AI logic to prevent the workflow from breaking in the first place.

● SAP Security and Governance Specialists

As AI expands, so will the EU AI Act and other regulatory requirements - driving demand for people who can ensure agents operate within defined boundaries.

● AI Agent Designers and Joule Studio Developers

Joule Studio 2.0 provides an environment for enterprises and partners to build and govern custom agents, creating demand for specialists to configure and extend these tools.

● BTP Experts

The centrepiece announcement at Sapphire was the SAP Business AI Platform, which merges SAP's AI foundation layer with SAP Business Data Cloud and BTP into a single integrated offering. This effectively makes BTP the backbone of SAP's entire AI strategy going forward so expect demand to rise considerably. And since SAP's U-turn on AI and innovation for on-prem customers, BTP is also the gateway to AI for those users who have not yet migrated to S/4HANA.

AI: Are Future SAP Jobs at Risk?

New emerging job types

New AI-related roles are beginning to appear in the SAP world, including AI-Enabled Financial Analysts, SAP Financial Forecasting Specialists, Supplier Risk Specialists, AI Procurement Consultants, AI Recruitment Strategists, and Employee Analytics Specialists. Professionals who can integrate AI technologies into SAP workflows will become essential.

There's an important distinction between "AI-native" roles, new jobs that didn't exist before, and "AI-enabled" roles, which are existing positions expanded by AI capability.

Both are growing, but the AI-native roles (agent orchestration, prompt engineering for enterprise workflows, AI model governance) are genuinely new territory.

The common thread through all the rising and new roles is the shift from execution to governance and design.

The people who understand why SAP processes exist, not just how to run them, will be in the strongest position as the autonomous wave rolls in.

The bottom line

The SAP professionals most at risk are those whose value is primarily in executing repetitive, process-driven tasks. Those who can understand why SAP processes exist, connect them to business outcomes, govern AI agents, and navigate the coming wave of S/4HANA migrations are in a strong position.

Expect less time spent on manual tasks and more focus on analysis, strategy, and AI-powered decision-making. The SAP market isn't shrinking; it's restructuring, and the window to get ahead of that curve is right now.

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From System of Record to Autonomous Enterprise: What SAP's Sapphire Announcements Mean for Your Business



Conor Riordan

Chair, UK & Ireland SAP User
Group (UKISUG)

Conor Riordan is Chair of the UK & Ireland SAP User Group (UKISUG), where he has spent the past two years supporting the community, amplifying member voices, and shaping the future direction of SAP engagement across the member base. He brings 30+ years of global leadership experience in the Pharmaceutical industry, with a proven track record of driving digital transformation at scale, unlocking operational excellence, and delivering sustainable growth across supply chain, customer service, and enterprise operations.

I'm still buzzing from Sapphire in Madrid, the launch of Joule Studio and SAP's broader vision for the Autonomous Enterprise. It was, genuinely, a major step forward. But as Chair of the UK & Ireland SAP User Group, my role is to look beyond the stage announcements and ask: what does this actually mean for the organisations we represent, and what do business and technology leaders need to prioritise to benefit from it?

A Shift in Conversation - From Technology to Business Outcomes

For decades, SAP has been the system of record at the heart of global business - quietly underpinning hundreds of thousands of enterprises and supporting much of the world's supply chain activity. Its role has traditionally been transactional: reliable, structured, and process-driven.

At Sapphire, there was a notable shift in tone. The conversation felt less about technology for technology's sake, and more about whether enterprise systems can evolve from simply recording what happened to helping organisations understand why it happened, and increasingly, what should happen next.

SAP's vision of the Autonomous Enterprise points toward a future where AI is deeply grounded in business process context, governance, and operational data. Christian Klein is clearly betting that this combination, particularly through its knowledge graph and business process understanding, will become a key differentiator in enterprise AI.

There was a confidence to the messaging that felt different from previous AI cycles. Not because AI itself is new, but because the focus is moving toward practical business outcomes: productivity, decision-making, resilience, and profitability. The launch of Joule Studio exemplifies this ambition; it is a major step forward in enabling business-led AI development within the SAP ecosystem.

From System of Record to Autonomous Enterprise: What SAP's Sapphire Announcements Mean for Your Business

The Reality Our Members Face

For many of the organisations UKISUG represents, the reality on the ground is more complex. Many of our members are still balancing major transformation programmes, difficult S/4HANA business cases, skills shortages, data challenges, and the operational risk that comes with large-scale change. For them, the journey to this AI-powered future will not be straightforward, nor should it be rushed without clear value and strong governance.

That is why the debate now feels more strategic than technical.

For years, the move from ECC has often been framed as a modernisation programme. Increasingly, it may become a question of long-term competitiveness and readiness for a world where AI is embedded directly into enterprise operations.

Will the Autonomous Enterprise fully materialise? Only time will tell.

But after this week, it feels clear that the direction of travel has changed, and the organisations that modernise their business processes, data foundations, and governance models earliest may ultimately be best placed to benefit from it.

Joule Studio: Powerful, But Only If Governed Well

As a business process owner, I believe that the real value of Joule Studio will be determined by one decisive factor: control - specifically, clear authority over who governs and operates it.

Real value will not come from IT or the business operating independently. It will come from a clearly defined operating model built on two complementary pillars:

- Business accountability for processes, outcomes, and rules, where true context and value creation reside.
- IT accountability for the enabling platform, providing governance guardrails, integration standards, and consistent data semantics to enable safe, scalable enterprise "vibe coding".

This establishes a product-centric operating model in which business process owners design and continuously refine solutions close to the process, while IT maintains enterprise coherence, compliance, and reuse. Neither can succeed without the other.

From System of Record to Autonomous Enterprise: What SAP's Sapphire Announcements Mean for Your Business

What Business and Technology Leaders Should Prioritise

Based on what I saw at Sapphire and the conversations happening across our user community, here is where I believe organisations need to focus:

- Get your data foundations right. AI is only as good as the data underpinning it. Organisations with clean, well-governed, and contextually rich data will be able to exploit SAP's AI capabilities far more effectively.
- Modernise your business processes - not just your technology. The Autonomous Enterprise vision assumes well-structured, understood business processes. Organisations still running heavily customised, undocumented processes will struggle to unlock the value on offer.
- Define your governance model before you deploy AI. The business-led, IT-governed operating model is not optional; it is the difference between incremental capability and genuine transformation. Establish who owns outcomes, who sets guardrails, and how both sides collaborate.

A Strategic Moment - Approached Carefully

Ultimately, SAP's success with the Autonomous Enterprise will depend less on the capability of the technology and more on whether organisations implement a clear, business-led governance structure.

The direction of travel from SAP is clear and compelling. But our members should not feel pressured to rush toward a future that their foundations are not yet ready to support. The organisations that will benefit most are those that combine the ambition to modernise with the discipline to govern well.

That balance, between ambition and governance and between business ownership and IT stewardship, is the conversation UKISUG will continue to facilitate on behalf of our members as this story develops.

SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better



Tyler Watts
Director, bluewaveSELECT

A View from bluewaveSELECT on SAP's AI Revolution

There are some SAP events that feel important while you are attending them, and then there are events that genuinely feel like a marker for where the industry is heading over the next decade. SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026 firmly felt like the latter.

Representing bluewaveSELECT at Sapphire this year alongside my colleague Emily Dalby, it was immediately clear from the moment we arrived at the IFEMA Madrid that this was not simply another annual SAP conference. The atmosphere, messaging throughout the venue, customer conversations and keynote themes all pointed toward one central narrative: SAP is now fully positioning itself as an AI-first enterprise platform company.

The event branding itself "The Beginning of Better" perfectly reflected the tone throughout the week. SAP's vision is no longer centred solely around ERP transformation or cloud migration. Instead, the focus has clearly evolved toward autonomous business operations, AI-enabled decision making, and the creation of intelligent enterprise ecosystems powered by SAP Business AI.

For those of us operating daily within the SAP ecosystem, particularly across S/4HANA, Procurement, Supply Chain and Enterprise Transformation programmes, Sapphire 2026 offered a fascinating insight into where customer investment, innovation and hiring demand are likely to be heading next.

Christian Klein's Keynote: SAP's AI Strategy Comes into Full Focus



The standout moment of the event was undoubtedly the keynote on Day 2 delivered by SAP CEO, Christian Klein.

His presentation strongly reinforced something we at bluewaveSELECT have discussed within previous quarterly market reports, that 2026 would become a defining year for enterprise AI adoption within SAP landscapes.

SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

Addressing the attendees, Christian explained how rather than positioning AI as an optional enhancement layer, SAP will now move toward embedding AI directly into the operational fabric of enterprise business processes. Within his keynote several announcements particularly stood out:

SAP Business AI Platform

The introduction and expansion of the SAP Business AI Platform felt like the centrepiece of SAP's future direction. The messaging throughout Sapphire consistently emphasised one key idea: AI must move beyond experimentation and become operationally embedded into the enterprise.

SAP's vision appears to focus on enabling organisations to build, orchestrate and scale enterprise AI securely across business functions, whilst leveraging the enormous volume of transactional and operational data already sitting within SAP environments.

This is particularly significant because SAP arguably possesses one of the world's richest enterprise data ecosystems. Therefore, the opportunity to operationalise that data through AI is massive.

Joule Studio 2.0 – SAP Democratise AI Development

One of the most discussed announcements throughout the event was the evolution of Joule Studio into version 2.0.

This felt particularly important because SAP appears to be pushing hard toward democratising AI development within enterprise organisations.

The messaging around Joule Studio 2.0 centred on allowing businesses to build and run AI-driven experiences with significantly lower barriers to entry. The emphasis on accessibility, orchestration and scalability suggests SAP wants AI development to move beyond specialist developer teams and become more integrated into wider operational functions.

After the announcement, conversations with customers and partners consistently revolved around how quickly organisations may now be able to operationalise AI use cases inside existing SAP estates. With many also acutely surmising that Joule 2.0 clearly represents a clean break for SAP and a reset on some of the shortcomings of Joule 1.0.

SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

SAP Business Data Cloud Connect

Another major theme throughout Sapphire was data connectivity and orchestration. SAP Business Data Cloud Connect appears as if it has been designed to tackle one of the biggest historic barriers to enterprise AI adoption, fragmented data landscapes.

SAP repeatedly stressed the importance of trusted business data, contextualisation and interoperability. And the message was clear - AI outcomes are only as good as the enterprise data foundations beneath them.

For customers currently navigating complex S/4HANA transformations, legacy modernisation projects and multi-platform ecosystems, this announcement will likely become increasingly important over the coming years.

SAP AI Agent Hub & The Rise of Autonomous Enterprise Operations

One of the most futuristic and arguably most significant concepts introduced during Sapphire was the SAP AI Agent Hub.

This announcement reinforced SAP's wider shift toward autonomous operations. Rather than AI simply providing recommendations or analytics, SAP is now clearly moving toward AI agents capable of executing operational tasks, orchestrating workflows and autonomously supporting business processes across functions.

This theme tied directly into another major announcement that generated considerable attention across the event: SAP Autonomous Suite.



SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

SAP Autonomous Suite

The SAP Autonomous Suite presentation genuinely felt like a glimpse into the next generation of enterprise technology. SAP showcased a future where applications, agents, data and AI services operate together within increasingly autonomous operational ecosystems.

The messaging throughout these sessions suggested SAP sees autonomous business process execution as the next major evolution of enterprise software. For Procurement, Supply Chain and operational SAP environments specifically, the implications could be enormous.

Our conversations throughout the week revolved around how this may reshape:

- Procurement Operations
- Supply Chain Orchestration
- Workforce Planning
- Business Analytics
- Service Management
- Operational decision-making
- Enterprise support functions.



From a recruitment and talent perspective, this evolution is also likely to create substantial demand for professionals who can bridge SAP functional expertise with AI enablement, automation strategy and business transformation leadership.

SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

The Emerging SAP Talent Landscape What This Means for Clients & Consultants

One of the most interesting discussions throughout Sapphire was not simply around the technology itself, but around whether organisations currently possess the talent capability required to successfully operationalise these next-generation SAP innovations.

As SAP accelerates toward AI-enabled and increasingly autonomous enterprise environments, the market looks likely to head into a new phase of SAP skills demand. Sapphire suggested that future demand may increasingly favour professionals capable of operating across both traditional SAP domains and emerging AI-enabled business models.

For organisations hiring within the SAP ecosystem: this creates an increasingly competitive talent market. Many businesses are now attempting to simultaneously accelerate S/4HANA programmes whilst also exploring AI roadmaps, automation strategies and data modernisation initiatives. As a result, the demand for highly adaptable SAP professionals continues to intensify.

For SAP consultants and candidates themselves, Sapphire highlighted a significant career opportunity. Professionals who continue developing expertise around SAP Business AI, BTP, automation, data connectivity and intelligent enterprise processes are likely to become increasingly valuable as these technologies move from innovation discussions into operational reality.

From bluewaveSELECT's perspective: this evolving landscape is already beginning to influence customer hiring strategies and talent conversations across the global SAP market.



SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

SAP Experience Centre: Bringing the Vision to Life

A very popular, and equally impressive area of the event, was the SAP Experience Centre.

Rather than simply presenting concepts through slide decks, SAP created highly interactive demonstrations allowing attendees to explore the Business AI Platform vision in a far more tangible way. Walking through the Experience Centre made it much easier to visualise how SAP intends these technologies to integrate into real-world enterprise environments.

This hands-on approach helped move discussions beyond theoretical AI conversations and into practical operational applications, something many customers are now increasingly focused on.



SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

Beyond Technology: The Power of the SAP Community

Whilst the technology announcements were clearly the headline focus, one of the most valuable aspects of Sapphire remains the people. Madrid provided an incredible setting to reconnect with existing clients, partners, and consultants, many of whom we regularly support across global SAP programmes at bluewave.

It was fantastic to spend time with long-standing friends of bluewaveSELECT whilst also taking the opportunity in the sunshine to build relationships with many new SAP professionals for the very first time.

One of the most consistent themes in our conversations throughout the week was the growing pace of transformation currently happening across the SAP market globally. Organisations appear increasingly focused on:

- AI strategy
- S/4HANA acceleration
- Business transformation
- Intelligent automation
- Data modernisation
- Talent scarcity in specialist SAP domains

For us - as a specialist SAP recruitment, delivery and consulting business - Sapphire offered invaluable insight into where customer priorities are rapidly evolving. And we look forward to keeping pace with this movement.

Inspirational Speakers & Evening Events

Beyond the technology content itself, Sapphire also delivered several memorable moments through its guest speakers and networking events with no expense spared!

Talks from Formula 1 legends David Coulthard and Kimi Räikkönen brought an interesting perspective around elite performance, pressure and continuous improvement... themes that strongly resonate with enterprise transformation programmes.

The closing session featuring multiple Grand Slam winner Roger Federer was another standout moment, offering reflections around consistency, longevity and high-performance mindsets.

Outside of the conference halls themselves, the networking opportunities across Madrid were exceptional. The WalkMe event on Tuesday evening and the SAP Drinks Celebration at the IFEMA Exhibition Centre created fantastic opportunities to continue conversations with customers, partners and SAP professionals in a more relaxed environment.

SAP Sapphire Madrid 2026: The Beginning of Better

Final thoughts from bluewaveSELECT

Leaving Sapphire Madrid 2026, one thing felt very clear, SAP is no longer talking about AI as a future concept. It is actively positioning AI as the operating layer that will sit across the future enterprise.

The combination of SAP Business AI Platform, Joule Studio 2.0, SAP Business Data Cloud Connect, AI Agent Hub and the SAP Autonomous Suite points toward a future where intelligent automation becomes deeply embedded into core enterprise operations.

For organisations currently investing in SAP transformation programmes, the challenge will increasingly become not simply whether to adopt AI-enabled capabilities, but how quickly they can operationalise them effectively.

From bluewaveSELECT's perspective, the event strongly reinforced our belief that the SAP market is entering one of its most transformative periods in years.

And if Sapphire Madrid 2026 was any indication, the next phase of enterprise transformation has only just begun.



The Autonomous Enterprise: The Future of How Business Runs



Gaurish Dessai
Principal Enterprise Architect

Gaurish is a Principal Enterprise Architect with a wide range of industry experience gained in both end-user and consultancy. Now working directly for SAP, Gaurish's ability to translate executive vision and strategy into effective IT strategy & solutions, ensuring alignment with business goals, makes him a popular choice with customers and a well-known speaker at industry events.

Next Era of Enterprise Software is Not About AI. It's About AI Being Used to Drive Business Value.

The technology has arrived. The models are powerful. The use cases are endless. And yet, most organisations remain stuck, running pilots that never scale, deploying co-pilots that assist but do not transform, and layering intelligence on top of systems that were never designed to act on it.

Seventy-four percent of organisations report being stuck in AI pilot mode with no clear path to enterprise-wide value. The reason is consistent: most AI initiatives are built from the outside in or on the edges adding intelligence on top of disconnected systems, ungoverned data, and processes that lack the context AI needs to act reliably.

This is the problem SAP set out to solve. Not with another AI feature. But with a fundamentally different operating model for the enterprise. We call it SAP's Autonomous Enterprise.

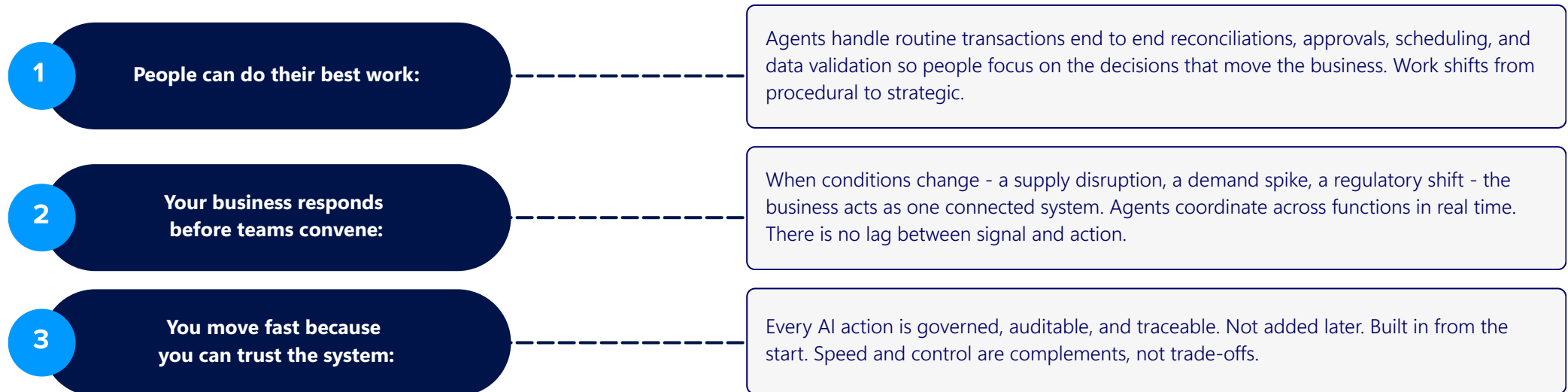
What is SAP's Autonomous Enterprise Vision?

SAP's Autonomous Enterprise is the future of how a business runs. It is a business where AI assistants and agents manage and execute end-to-end processes, while people focus on judgment, strategy, and value creation.

This is not a product. It is a vision, and a destination for how organisations will operate: human-led, AI-enabled, grounded in real business context, with governance built in from the start.

The Autonomous Enterprise: The Future of How Business Runs

Three principles define how an Autonomous Enterprise operates differently:



SAP's Autonomous Enterprise is the future of how a business runs. It is a business where AI assistants and agents manage and execute end-to-end processes, while people focus on judgment, strategy, and value creation.

This is not incremental improvement. It is a structural shift in how enterprises create and capture value. The current AI landscape is defined by a paradox: unprecedented capability, but limited enterprise impact. Generic AI models can process language and generate content. But they cannot reason over how your business runs - how finance connects to procurement, how supply chain constraints cascade into manufacturing decisions, or what compliance rules govern a cross-border transaction. Without this context, AI gives unreliable answers that lead to costly mistakes.

AI is typically added on top of disconnected, outdated systems. Without a shared data model or unified architecture, organisations cannot coordinate processes effectively. Most organisations lack the infrastructure to ensure AI accountability, traceability, and safe scaling. Building an agent is increasingly easy. Maintaining, supervising, and evolving it across complex business operations is where the real effort lies.

The Autonomous Enterprise: The Future of How Business Runs

SAP's Autonomous Enterprise is delivered through five interconnected capabilities:

1

JOULE - A NEW WAY TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR BUSINESS

Joule is SAP's AI layer - the point where people express intent and the system mobilises the right data, workflows, and agents to deliver on it. Through Joule Work, a dynamic workspace, users no longer navigate between systems. They state what they want to accomplish, and Joule orchestrates the response surfacing insights, automating routine tasks, and coordinating agents across the enterprise. The experience is intent-driven, not application-driven. Joule Assistants are role-based AI teammates that use deep process context to coordinate agents and execute complex workflows across the business. Joule Agents are the purpose-built systems that carry out specific multi-step tasks autonomously within governed boundaries.

2

SAP AUTONOMOUS SUITE: INTELLIGENCE ACROSS EVERY DOMAIN

The SAP Autonomous Suite organises the enterprise into Autonomous Domains Finance, Supply Chain, Procurement, Human Capital Management, and Customer Experience where assistants and agents execute work end-to-end with grounding in the data and process context of integrated application layer.

3

INDUSTRY AI DEPTH BUILT IN

Generic AI cannot solve industry-specific problems. A pharmaceutical company's compliance requirements are fundamentally different from a retailer's demand planning challenges or a utility provider's meter-to-cash operations. Industry AI embeds sector-specific process knowledge, data models, and regulatory logic directly into AI capabilities. This is where SAP's five decades of industry expertise become a decisive advantage. The AI does not need to learn your industry from scratch. It arrives with that knowledge built in.

The Autonomous Enterprise: The Future of How Business Runs

4

SAP BUSINESS AI PLATFORM

The SAP Business AI Platform is the enterprise AI foundation that brings together the ability to build, contextualise, reason, and govern in one unified environment to build, contextualise and govern the agents across the enterprise.

5

AGENT-LED TRANSFORMATION

Becoming an Autonomous Enterprise requires a modern cloud foundation. SAP accelerates this journey with AI-powered migration and modernisation tools that reduce transformation effort by up to 35 percent. Seven purpose-built assistants spanning system analysis, data management, custom code modernisation, configuration, testing, rollout, and project management work together as an integrated toolchain. They do not replace human expertise. They amplify it, making complex ERP modernisation faster, safer, and more predictable.

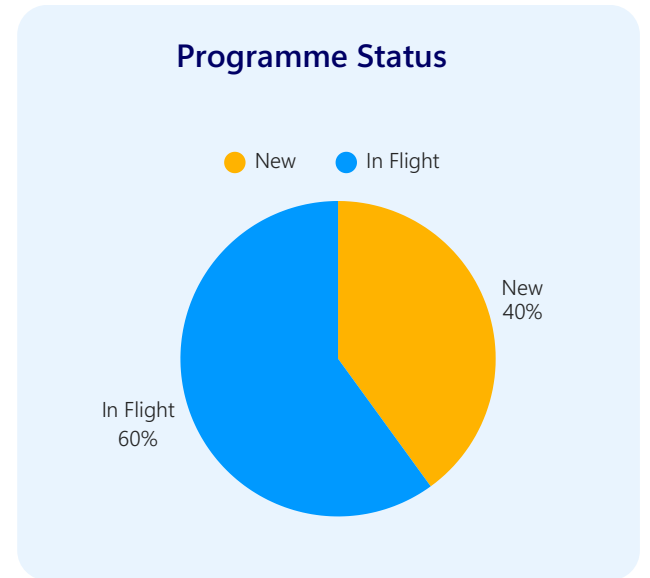
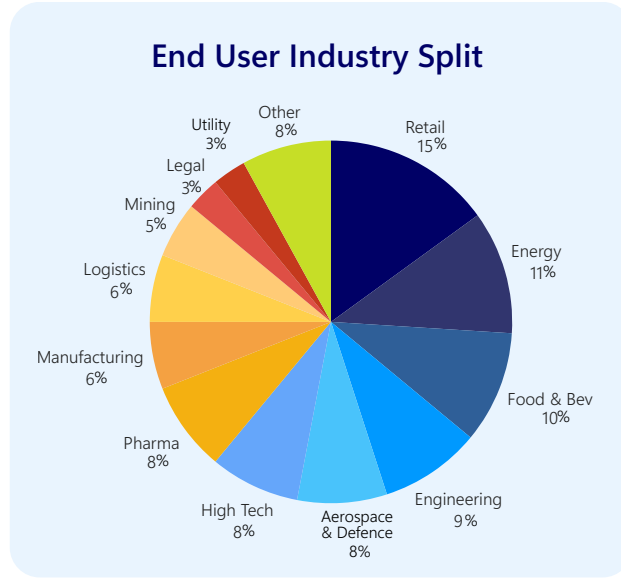
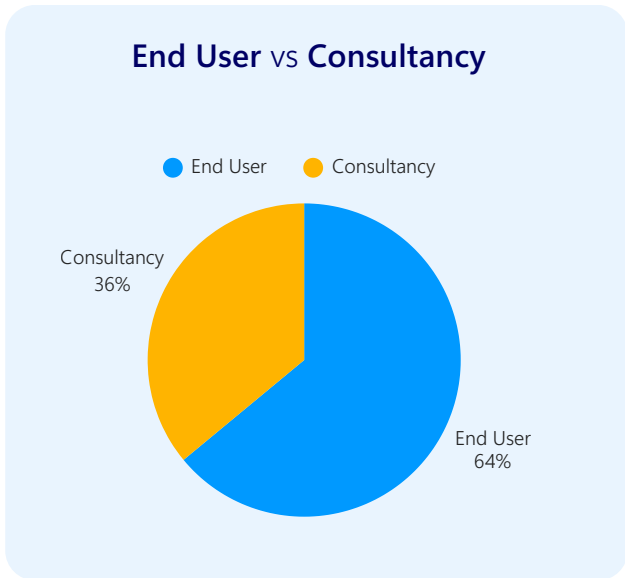
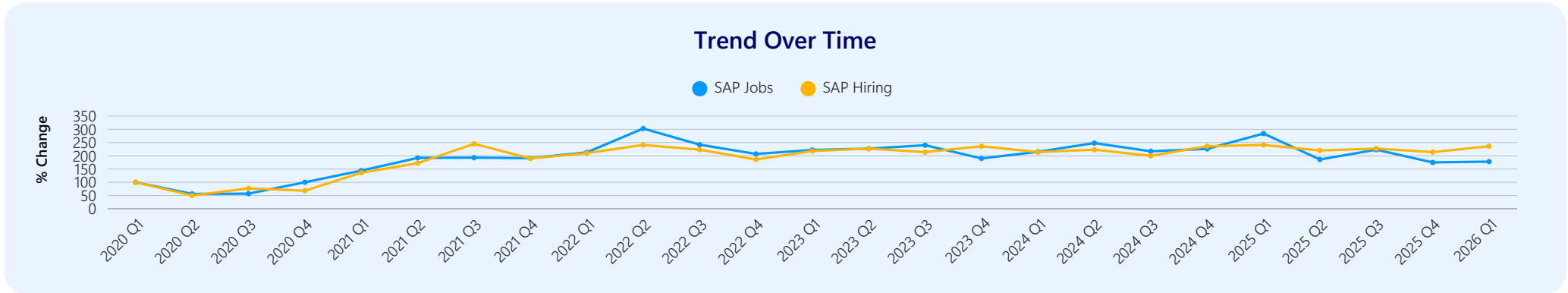
The Autonomous Enterprise is not a single announcement or a product launch. It is SAP's long-term vision for how businesses will operate and a commitment to building the technology, the platform, and the ecosystem to make it real.

The enterprises that move first will define the standard. They will attract the best talent, serve customers faster, manage risk more effectively, and compound their advantages in ways that followers cannot easily replicate.

The question is no longer whether your enterprise will become autonomous. It is how quickly you get there and who helps you do it with the depth of knowledge, the richness of data, and the rigour of governance that enterprise-scale operations demand. The future of business is autonomous. And it starts with SAP.

Jobs & Hiring Data

Who is Hiring?

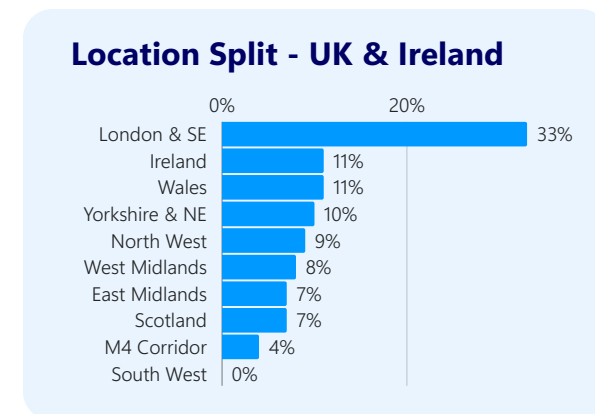
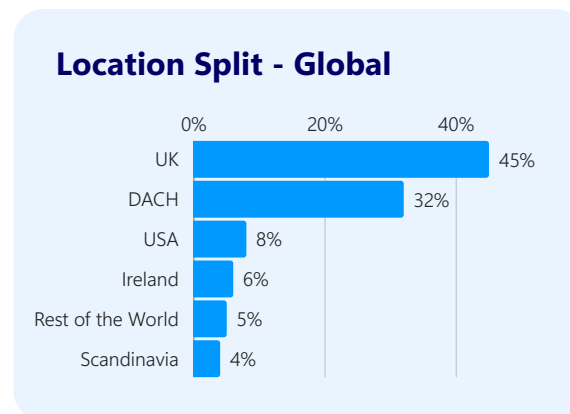
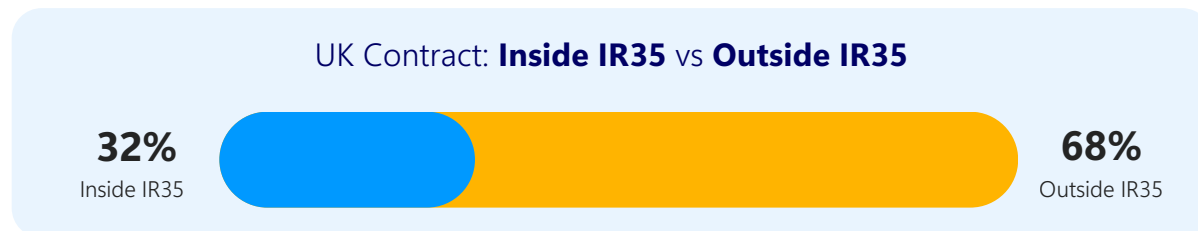
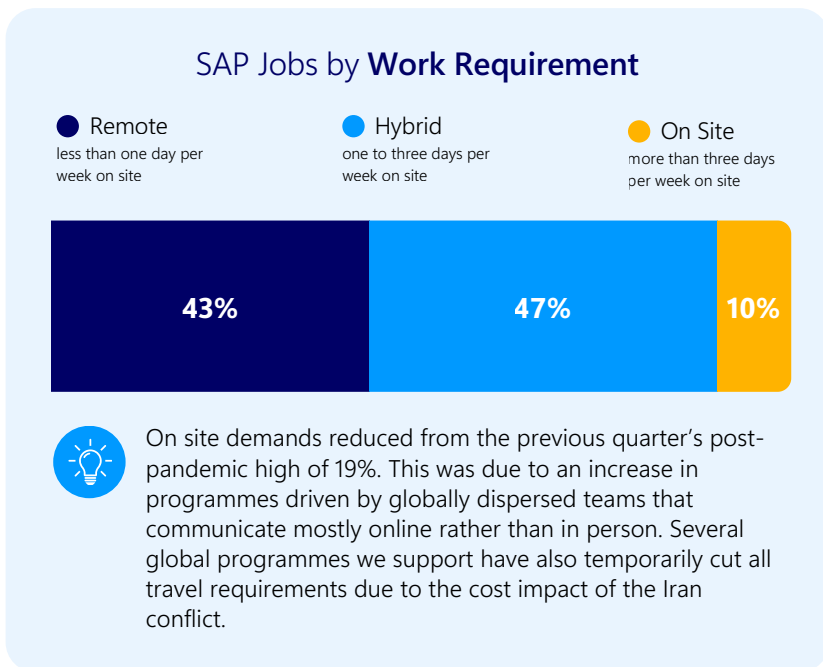
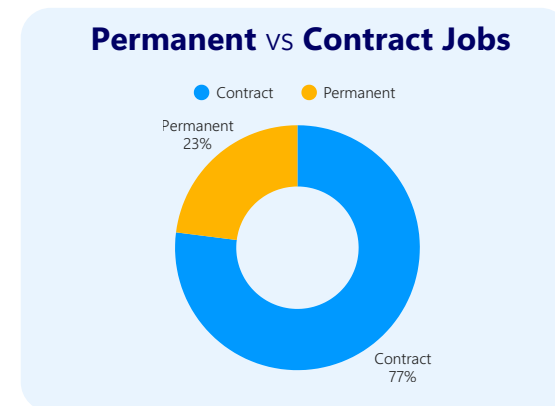


Jobs & Hiring Data

Q1 Demand

The SAP jobs market opened 2026 on a strong footing, with hiring activity across the first quarter pointing to a resilient and broadly distributed demand for SAP talent. End-user organisations continued to dominate the hiring landscape, accounting for 64% of all SAP roles brought to market, compared to 36% originating from consultancies - a split that underscores the ongoing importance of in-house SAP knowledge and capability as businesses manage increasingly complex transformation agendas.

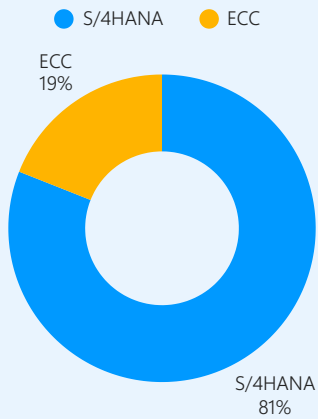
Encouragingly, the quarter's hiring activity reflects a healthy balance between momentum and new opportunity: 60% of roles came from inflight SAP programmes, reflecting continued investment in ongoing transformations, while 40% were tied to new initiatives. This mix points to sustained demand that is likely to continue through the remainder of the year, as established programmes mature alongside a steady flow of new initiatives.



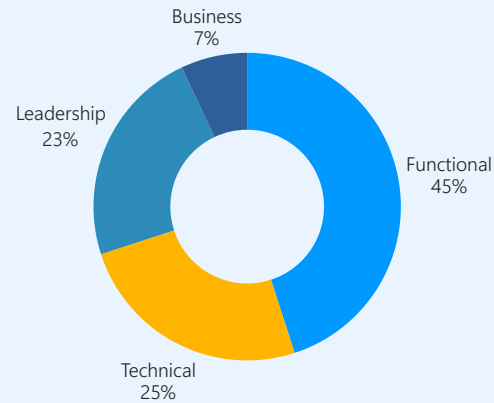
SAP Jobs & Hiring Activity

Q1: Most In Demand

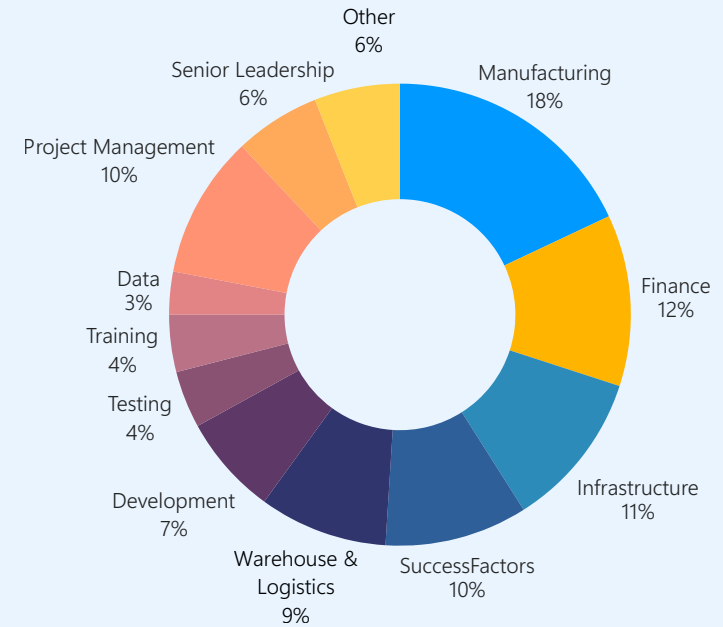
S/4HANA vs ECC Expertise



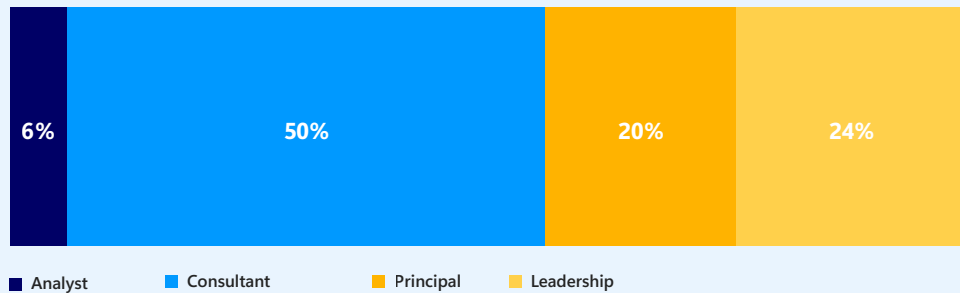
Function



Domain



SAP Jobs by Seniority



Top 5 In-Demand SAP Skills in Q1 2026

1

MANUFACTURING

In last quarter's SAP Report, we predicted that demand for manufacturing and supply chain skills would surge as a 2nd wave of S/4HANA transformations takes hold (1st wave being finance and finance-adjacent functions). Demand for core modules such as MM, PP and QM has been most visible with MES, including SAP Digital Manufacturing, and the new S/4HANA PEO solution also featuring.

18% of Q1 2026 SAP demand

2

FINANCE

Easily the most featured in the Top 5 over the last three years, every S/4HANA transformation starts with, or at the very least, involves the finance domain. And with 1/3 of SAP businesses yet to migrate to S/4HANA, we expect this trend to continue. There was high demand for 'standard' FI/CO skills at all levels last quarter, with additional focus on R2R process expertise, FSCM and Treasury.

12% of Q1 2026 SAP demand

3

INFRASTRUCTURE

SAP customers are simultaneously trying to keep decades-old, heavily customised legacy ECC systems alive, migrate to S/4HANA, protect against the constant threat of sophisticated cyber attacks, add AI to everything, and move to hyperscalers; all of which has increased demand for SAP BASIS, security, HANA, cloud, and integration engineers into the Top-5 for the first time.

11% of Q1 2026 SAP demand

4

SUCCESSFACTORS

HR strategy is being driven by AI, skills intelligence, workforce analytics, and executive pressure to do more with fewer people. Experienced SuccessFactors people are consistently in high demand, and with SAP now embedding AI agents and Joule capabilities throughout to move with the times, this especially applies to those who understand both HR operations and SF AI capabilities.

10% of Q1 2026 SAP demand

5

WAREHOUSE & LOGISTICS

SAP warehousing and logistics skills, especially EWM, transportation management, and supply-chain integration, are at a premium as companies rebuild how they run global operations, looking for digitalisation, efficiencies and resilience against geopolitical instability. Contributing to the 2nd wave of S/4HANA programmes mentioned at the top of the page, key skills in demand last quarter were EWM, TM, GTS and IBP.

9% of Q1 2026 SAP demand



Q1's Top 5 in-demand SAP skills accounted for **60%** of all vacancies.

SAP Salary Benchmarking

Are you paying the right amount for your permanent SAP resources?

Share this page

SAP Salary Benchmarking



Job Role	Salary Range	
Leadership	Lower	Higher
Transformation	£140k ↓ -6.7%	£220k ↔ 0%
Programme	£120k ↑ 4.3%	£150k ↔ 0%
Project	£80k ↔ 0%	£120k ↔ 0%
PMO	£45k ↔ 0%	£80k ↔ 0%
BAU/Head of	£90k ↑ 5.9%	£120k ↔ 0%
Technical	Lower	Higher
Architect	£80k ↔ 0%	£130k ↔ 0%
Basis	£65k ↑ 8.3%	£95k ↔ 0%
Security	£60k ↔ 0%	£90k ↑ 5.9%
ABAP	£60k ↔ 0%	£90k ↑ 5.9%
Integration	£70k ↔ 0%	£95k ↔ 0%

Job Role	Salary Range	
Technical	Lower	Higher
Data Manager	£75k ↔ 0%	£105k ↔ 0%
Data Lead	£80k ↔ 0%	£100k ↔ 0%
Data Consultant	£55k ↔ 0%	£85k ↔ 0%
Business	Lower	Higher
Process GPO	£90k ↑ 5.9%	£125k ↔ 0%
Process Lead	£85k ↔ 0%	£110k ↔ 0%
Process BA	£50k ↔ 0%	£80k ↔ 0%
Change Manager	£75k ↔ 0%	£100k ↔ 0%
Change Consultant	£60k ↔ 0%	£85k ↔ 0%
Training Manager	£70k ↔ 0%	£90k ↔ 0%
Training Lead	£60k ↔ 0%	£90k ↔ 0%
Training Delivery	£45k ↔ 0%	£70k ↔ 0%



Compared to previous quarter

SAP Salary Benchmarking

Are you paying the right amount for your permanent SAP resources?

Share this page

SAP Salary Benchmarking



Job Role	Salary Range			
Functional	Lower		Higher	
Solution Architect	£80k	↓ -5.9%	£125k	↑ 4.2%
OtC Lead	£80k	↔ 0%	£110k	↑ 4.8%
OtC Consultant	£60k	↔ 0%	£90k	↑ 5.9%
RtR Lead	£90k	↔ 0%	£120k	↓ -4%
RtR Consultant	£70k	↔ 0%	£90k	↑ 5.9%
PtP Lead	£80k	↑ 14.3%	£110k	↑ 15.8%
PtP Consultant	£70k	↔ 0%	£90k	↔ 0%
Manufacturing Lead	£80k	↔ 0%	£95k	↔ 0%
Manufacturing Consultant	£65k	↔ 0%	£85k	↔ 0%
Warehousing/Logistics Lead	£80k	↔ 0%	£95k	↔ 0%
Warehousing/Logistics Consultant	£65k	↔ 0%	£85k	↔ 0%

Job Role	Salary Range			
Functional	Lower		Higher	
SF Manager	£95k	↔ 0%	£115k	↔ 0%
SF Lead	£75k	↔ 0%	£115k	↔ 0%
SF Consultant	£70k	↔ 0%	£105k	↔ 0%
BI Manager	£75k	↔ 0%	£100k	↔ 0%
BI Lead	£65k	↔ 0%	£85k	↔ 0%
BI Consultant	£45k	↔ 0%	£80k	↔ 0%
Test Manager	£75k	↔ 0%	£95k	↔ 0%
Test Lead	£65k	↔ 0%	£90k	↔ 0%
Test Consultant	£45k	↔ 0%	£75k	↔ 0%



Compared to previous quarter

SAP Day Rate Benchmarking

Are you paying the right amount for your contract SAP resources?

Share this page

SAP Salary Benchmarking



Job Role	Contract Benchmarking			
Leadership	Lower		Higher	
Transformation	£1,300	↓ -13.3%	£2,500	↔ 0%
Programme	£800	↑ 6.7%	£950	↔ 0%
Project	£600	↔ 0%	£800	↔ 0%
PMO	£400	↔ 0%	£600	↔ 0%
BAU/Head of	£600	↔ 0%	£700	↔ 0%
Technical	Lower		Higher	
Architect	£850	↑ 6.3%	£1,200	↔ 0%
Basis	£500	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Security	£500	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
ABAP	£400	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Integration	£600	↑ 9.1%	£850	↔ 0%

Job Role	Contract Benchmarking			
Technical	Lower		Higher	
Data Manager	£750	↓ -6.3%	£1,000	↔ 0%
Data Lead	£600	↔ 0%	£850	↔ 0%
Data Consultant	£450	↔ 0%	£550	↔ 0%
Business	Lower		Higher	
Process GPO	£650	↔ 0%	£850	↔ 0%
Process Lead	£550	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Process BA	£350	↔ 0%	£500	↔ 0%
Change Manager	£600	↔ 0%	£950	↓ -5%
Change Consultant	£500	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Training Manager	£600	↔ 0%	£700	↔ 0%
Training Lead	£550	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Training Delivery	£400	↔ 0%	£500	↔ 0%



Compared to previous quarter

SAP Day Rate Benchmarking

Are you paying the right amount for your contract SAP resources?

Share this page

SAP Salary Benchmarking



Job Role	Contract Benchmarking			
	Functional	Lower	Higher	
Solution Architect	£950	↓ -5%	£1,200	↔ 0%
OtC Lead	£550	↔ 0%	£700	↔ 0%
OtC Consultant	£500	↔ 0%	£600	↔ 0%
RtR Lead	£600	↔ 0%	£800	↔ 0%
RtR Consultant	£500	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
PtP Lead	£650	↔ 0%	£750	↔ 0%
PtP Consultant	£550	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Manufacturing Lead	£650	↔ 0%	£850	↔ 0%
Manufacturing Consultant	£550	↔ 0%	£750	↔ 0%
Warehousing/Logistics Lead	£600	↔ 0%	£850	↔ 0%
Warehousing/Logistics Consultant	£550	↑ 10%	£650	↔ 0%

Job Role	Contract Benchmarking			
	Functional	Lower	Higher	
SF Manager	£700	↔ 0%	£900	↔ 0%
SF Lead	£600	↔ 0%	£750	↔ 0%
SF Consultant	£500	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
BI Manager	£600	↔ 0%	£750	↔ 0%
BI Lead	£600	↔ 0%	£700	↔ 0%
BI Consultant	£550	↔ 0%	£650	↔ 0%
Test Manager	£600	↔ 0%	£850	↔ 0%
Test Lead	£500	↔ 0%	£600	↔ 0%
Test Consultant	£350	↔ 0%	£450	↔ 0%



Compared to previous quarter

Global SAP Freelancer Pay Rates

Last quarter, we published a global view of SAP freelancer rates in 2025 to reflect the cost-benefit of optimising local resources for the localisation of global template rollouts and the ever-popular blended onshore, nearshore and offshore implementation teams.

The costs have been updated for 2026 and to provide consistency, we have used SAP freelancer pay rates in the UK and Northern Europe as a baseline for global comparison. This data has been collated as a budget benchmarking tool to help guide programme managers, procurement teams, business leaders, and other interested parties through the intricacies of global SAP resource costs. You'll find this on the next page.



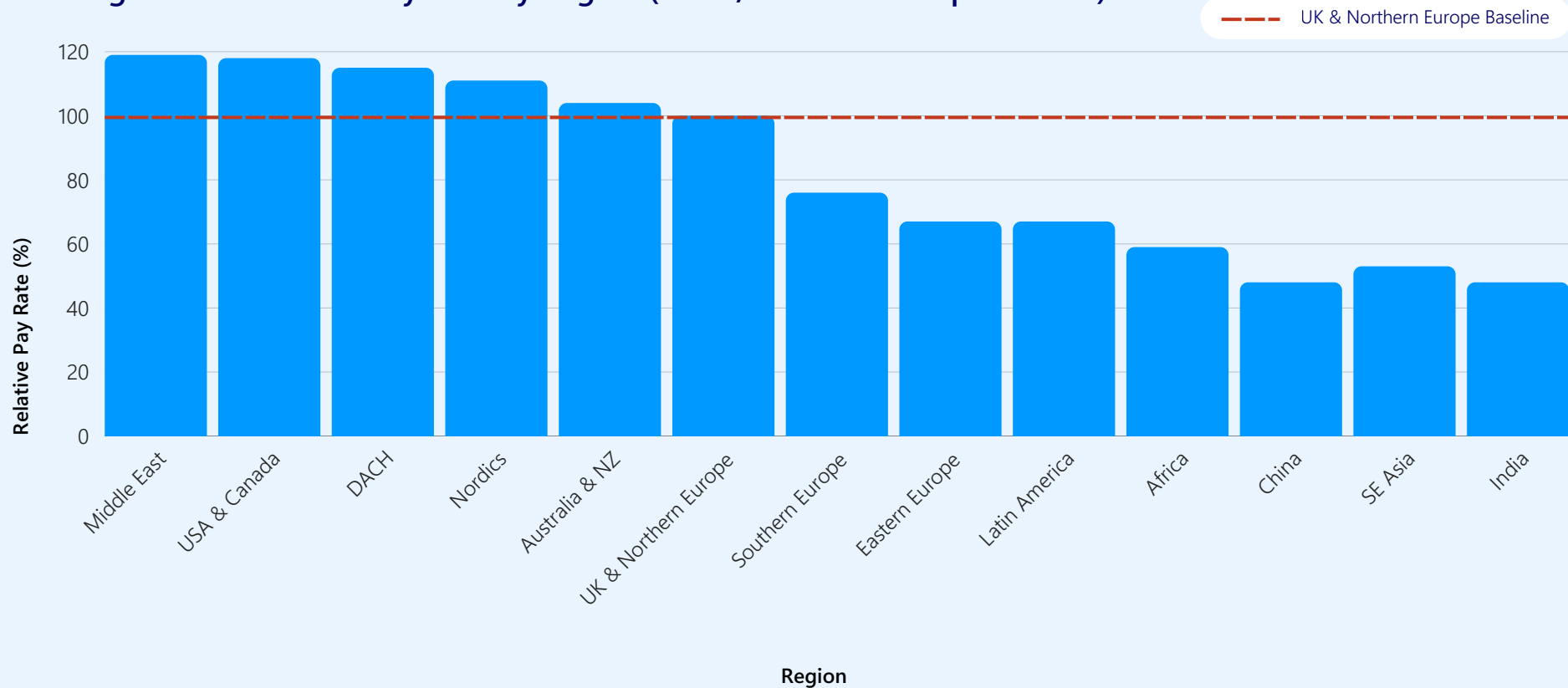
Global SAP Freelancer Pay Rates

bluewaveSELECT delivers compliant, risk-free SAP resources in all regions highlighted, and updates average day rate values on an ongoing basis.

Region	Rate vs UK/N. Europe	Notes
UK & Northern Europe	100% (Baseline)	Baseline: SAP contractor £600-900/day depending on modules, scarce skills, and experience
USA & Canada	+15% to +30%	Higher bill rates for S/4HANA transformation programmes; large consulting budgets
DACH (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)	+15% to +25%	Typical €700–€1,200/day in Germany/Austria; Switzerland highest in Europe
Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal)	–20% to –30%	Local budgets lower; remote EU contracts often close to UK-equivalent rates
Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, Czechia, etc.)	–25% to –40%	Increasing remote cross-border contracting pushing top-tier specialists closer to Western European rates
Nordics	+20% to +25%	Freelance SAP rates often 20–25% above UK levels
Middle East	+15% to +35%	Mega-transformation programmes (public sector, oil & gas) driving premium rates
India	–50% to –60%	Offshore delivery centres dominate; only niche freelance architects approach EU pricing
China	–40% to –50%	Mostly permanent/local contracting markets
South-East Asia	–35% to –50%	Growing S/4HANA demand but budget-sensitive clients
Australia & New Zealand	+5% to +15%	Stable, mature SAP market, limited local talent pool
Africa	–30% to –50%	Few large SAP programmes, except selected expat contracts
Latin America	–25% to –40%	Increasing near-shore delivery to US clients narrowing gap slightly

Global SAP Freelancer Pay Rates

Average SAP Freelancer Pay Rate by Region (vs UK/Northern Europe = 100%)



What's changed vs 2025?

Key 2026 adjustments

1

DACH AND NORDICS SLIGHTLY HIGHER

Large S/4HANA migrations and smaller talent pools increased premiums; contractors in this region frequently reach €900–€1,200/day.

3

EASTERN EUROPE GAP NARROWING

Remote cross-border contracting allows senior specialists to secure Northern/Central European rates more often, especially in architecture or programme roles.

2

USA PREMIUM WIDENED SLIGHTLY

Cloud ERP transformation budgets and consulting-led delivery have pushed US bill rates higher than most of Europe.

4

MIDDLE EAST PREMIUM INCREASED

Government transformation programmes (Saudi Vision initiatives, etc.) continue driving higher programme-level rates.

Global SAP Freelancer Pay Rates

bluewaveSELECT's global network of specialist SAP talent enables large enterprises to deliver complex implementations with confidence. By connecting organisations to the right expertise anywhere in the world, we help ensure projects move forward seamlessly across multiple regions.

Our international reach not only accelerates deployment and drives consistency but also provides the flexibility to scale resources as needs evolve, balancing cost efficiency with high-quality delivery. With access to consultants who understand both global best practices and local business nuances, we provide the expertise that allow companies to achieve smoother rollouts, stronger user adoption and sustainable long-term success with SAP.



bluewaveSELECT delivers compliant SAP talent solutions globally. Please ask your consultant how we can help.

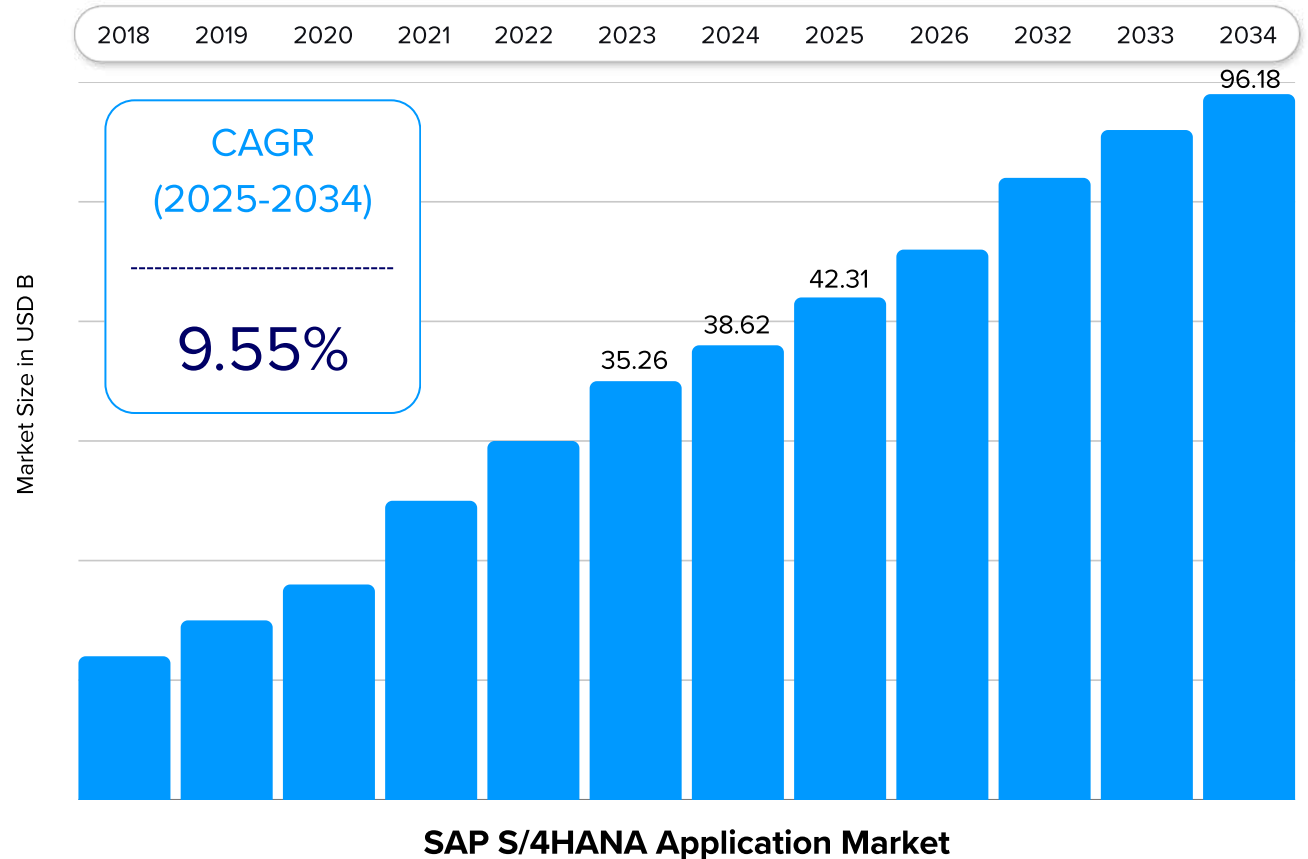
S/4HANA Adoption

Current Deployment Levels

In February, an SAPInsider survey showed that 31% of member organisations had already transitioned to S/4HANA, 26% are in active implementation and 21% remain in the evaluation phase.

41% plan to move before the 2027 SAP ECC end-of-support deadline however, 18% of these businesses say will not finish by 2027.

Globally, the SAP S/4HANA market is projected to grow from USD 42.31 billion in 2025 to USD 96.18 billion by 2034, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.55%.



S/4HANA Adoption

Deployment by Industry

Adoption rates and key drivers for SAP S/4HANA by industry:

Industry	Adoption Rate	Key Drivers
Manufacturing	40% (UK)	Supply chain optimisation, real-time analytics, AI integration
Retail	30% (UK)	Omnichannel inventory management, customer experience enhancement
Banking & Financial Services	Moderate	Risk management, regulatory compliance, financial reporting
Healthcare	Emerging	Patient care improvement, regulatory compliance, process integration
Utilities	Growing	Operational efficiency, asset management, sustainability reporting
Public Sector	10% (UK)	Legacy system challenges, budget constraints
Technology & Telecom	Moderate	Customer relationship management, real-time analytics

S/4HANA Adoption

Adoption by Company Size

No. of Employees	% of S/4HANA Customers
Small (<50 employees)	22%
Medium (50-1,000 employees)	41%
Large (>1,000 employees)	37%

Revenue Range	% of S/4HANA Customers
Small (<\$50M)	38%
Medium (\$50-\$1B)	18%
Large (>\$1B)	40%

Adoption by Region

- **UK** Manufacturing and Retail lead S/4HANA adoption due to digital transformation and real-time data.
- In the **USA**, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Consumer Packaged Goods are key adopters, seeking streamlined production, optimised processes and enhanced customer experience.
- **APAC's** S/4HANA adoption is growing rapidly (10.2% estimated growth in Q2 2025), with Greenfield deployments common in Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Energy.

S/4HANA Adoption

Here's a clear comparison table outlining the key differences between SAP S/4HANA On-Premise and Cloud (both Private and Public options where relevant):

Category	On-Premise	Cloud (Private Edition)	Cloud (Public Edition)
Deployment Location	Customer's data centre	SAP-managed private cloud	SAP-managed public cloud
Control Over System	Full control (customisation, updates, infra)	Moderate (limited infra control)	Minimal (standardised environment)
Customisation	Extensive customisations possible	Moderate customisation allowed	Highly limited customisation
Upgrades	Customer controls upgrade schedule	SAP recommends upgrades, but some flexibility	Automatic, frequent upgrades by SAP
Cost Model	Capital Expenditure (CapEx)	Operational Expenditure (OpEx)	Operational Expenditure (OpEx)
Infrastructure Needs	Customer must procure and maintain	SAP provides and manages	SAP provides and manages
Implementation Speed	Longer (due to setup and config)	Faster than on-premise	Fastest
Security & Compliance	High control, good for strict compliance needs	Strong, but dependent on SAP's policies	Strong, but less customer control
Performance	Depends on customer infrastructure	Optimised by SAP	Optimised by SAP
Innovation Adoption	Slower (manual adoption)	Faster (cloud features accessible)	Fastest access to new features
Integration Flexibility	High (ideal for legacy/3rd-party systems)	Moderate	Limited (designed for standard integrations)
Use Cases	Heavily customised, regulated industries	Hybrid needs, moderate customisation	Standard business processes, rapid scaling

Risk Mitigation Checklist

Implementing SAP S/4HANA presents technical, strategic and organisational challenges. This nine-point Risk Mitigation Checklist helps anticipate and reduce major project risks.

[Download this page](#)[Download Checklist
as PDF](#)

1

PROJECT PLANNING & GOVERNANCE

- Define clear business goals and KPIs for the implementation.
- Choose correct deployment model (on-premise, private or public cloud) early.
- Establish a strong project governance structure (PMO, steering committee).
- Secure executive sponsorship and business buy-in.
- Include change control and escalation procedures in your governance model.

2

SCOPE & REQUIREMENTS MANAGEMENT

- Clearly define and freeze project scope early in the lifecycle.
- Avoid scope creep by enforcing a change request process.
- Prioritise high-impact business processes and modules.
- Identify "must-have" vs "nice-to-have" features to manage complexity.

3

TECHNICAL PREPARATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Conduct a readiness assessment (including sizing and landscape planning).
- Upgrade/prepare infrastructure (servers, network, cloud subscriptions).
- Evaluate & refactor existing custom code using SAP's Custom Code Analyser.
- Plan for system performance and load testing before go-live.

4

DATA MIGRATION & QUALITY

- Perform early data cleansing and validation.
- Use SAP tools (e.g., SAP Data Services, Migration Cockpit) for data migration.
- Establish a master data governance (MDG) framework.
- Test data migration in phases to avoid full rollback risks.

5

CHANGE MANAGEMENT & TRAINING

- Conduct an impact analysis to identify affected teams and roles.
- Develop and execute a structured change management plan.
- Provide hands-on training for SAP Fiori and redesigned processes.
- Identify and prepare super-users or change champions.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE 

Risk Mitigation Checklist

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as PDF](#)

6

TESTING & VALIDATION

- Perform end-to-end integration testing with all upstream/downstream systems.
- Include negative test cases and performance/load testing.
- Involve business users in user acceptance testing (UAT).
- Maintain a robust defect tracking and resolution process.

7

CUTOVER PLANNING & GO-LIVE

- Create a detailed cutover checklist with clear task ownership.
- Perform a dry run (mock go-live) to identify bottlenecks.
- Set up rollback procedures and contingency plans.
- Ensure helpdesk and hypercare support are ready post go-live.

8

SECURITY, COMPLIANCE & AUDIT READINESS

- Implement role-based access controls aligned with business processes.
- Review SOD (segregation of duties) risks with GRC tools.
- Ensure audit trails, logging, and compliance reporting are configured.
- Test data privacy and compliance scenarios (e.g., GDPR, SOX, HIPAA).

9

RESOURCE & VENDOR MANAGEMENT

- Vet system integrators/consultants for S/4HANA-specific experience.
- Align internal resources and SMEs with critical project phases.
- Monitor vendor SLAs and hold regular check-ins.
- Use a blended team model for knowledge transfer and long-term support.



Cost vs business benefit remains the primary inhibitor for the move to S/4HANA, however, there is no denying that adoption is entering a mature phase in 2026. The majority of businesses we partner with are 'S/4HANA-active' in one form or another and are increasingly selecting hybrid cloud-based deployments, with the private cloud option being particularly popular due to its balance of control and scalability.

Rescuing a Global FMCG Carve-Out

How Independent SAP Expertise Delivered Programme Continuity and £4M+ in Cost Savings

SITUATION

A global leader in the \$100bn cosmetics industry, operating across more than 100 countries and comprising a portfolio of iconic consumer brands, embarked on one of the most structurally complex carve-outs in recent FMCG history. Backed by a major international private equity firm, the business was being separated from its former parent company and required a full stand-up of independent IT and SAP infrastructure within a fixed Transitional Service Agreement (TSA) window.

The scale of the programme demanded an extraordinary breadth of specialist SAP competency across every functional domain: Finance, Manufacturing, Logistics, HR & Payroll, Data and Business Intelligence, deployed simultaneously across three major global regions. The organisation faced the dual pressure of completing technology separation while building operational independence from scratch, all against non-negotiable TSA exit deadlines.

COMPLICATION

Despite the programme's critical strategic importance, the client faced an acute resourcing crisis. The virtual, globally dispersed team environment, combined with the intense pace of a PE-driven carve-out, had proven incompatible with the profile of consultants previously sourced through conventional channels. Previous key hires had failed to perform under pressure, creating dangerous choke points in programme delivery.

Prior engagement with large Systems Integrators had revealed a further structural tension: SI-supplied consultants, while technically credentialed, brought significant commercial overhead. Day rates inclusive of SI margin, bench costs, and account management layers translated into blended costs materially higher than the programme budget could sustain across a multi-year, multi-region engagement.

The programme's governing team, experienced in the demands of global M&A execution, concluded that cultural fit, pragmatism, and the ability to operate without the scaffolding of a large SI environment were as important as technical capability. What was needed was a different kind of resourcing partner.

Rescuing a Global FMCG Carve-Out

How Independent SAP Expertise Delivered Programme Continuity and £4M+ in Cost Savings

RESOLUTION: THE BLUEWAVESELECT APPROACH

bluewaveSELECT was engaged at a critical programme point, with delivery continuity and TSA exit timelines under active threat. Our intervention was structured around three pillars:

1

PRECISION TALENT MATCHING

Rather than drawing from a general SAP talent pool, bluewaveSELECT activated a network of independent SAP professionals with verified pedigree in divestments and commercial carve-outs. Candidates had direct, demonstrable experience on comparable global programmes across FMCG and Pharma, including transactions involving major multinationals. And they understood the pace, ambiguity, and interdependency inherent in TSA-driven separations.

Crucially, the screening process assessed behavioural and cultural fit alongside technical competency. bluewaveSELECT evaluated candidates' capacity to operate in high-pressure virtual teams, make pragmatic decisions under uncertainty, and self-direct without the infrastructure support typical of large SI engagements.

2

GLOBAL COVERAGE

bluewaveSELECT sourced and placed specialists across all three programme regions: EMEA, NAM/LATAM, and APAC, addressing both the functional breadth and geographic depth required. Roles spanned Global Leadership, Change Management, and subject matter expertise in Finance, Manufacturing, Logistics, HR & Payroll, BI, Data, Validation, and UAT, over 40 discrete specialist positions in total.

Where regional language, cultural context, and regulatory knowledge were requirements, these were treated as essential qualification criteria rather than preferences. This ensured consultants could integrate immediately into local workstreams without an acclimatisation lag.

3

COST ARCHITECTURE: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS VS. SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS

A defining feature of bluewaveSELECT's solution was the delivery model itself. By supplying independent SAP contractors, rather than SI-employed consultants, the programme achieved a cost structure fundamentally incompatible with SI commercial models.

Total savings versus equivalent SI-supplied resources exceeded £4 million across the engagement.

This saving was a direct consequence of structural differences in how independent contractors and SI consultants are brought to market (details on the next page).

Rescuing a Global FMCG Carve-Out

How Independent SAP Expertise Delivered Programme Continuity and £4M+ in Cost Savings

Dimension	Independent Contractors	SI-Supplied Consultants
Day Rate	Market rate contract teams provided with central accountability and a single consolidated invoice	Rate inclusive of SI bench costs, account management, and profit margin (typically 30- 60% premium)
Accountability	Direct accountability to the programme; motivated to deliver outcomes	Primary accountability to the SI; contractual incentives may not align with client urgency
Agility	No bench obligations; deployed and stood down in line with programme needs	SI scheduling and utilisation targets can delay mobilisation or extend engagements beyond need
Expertise	Career specialists with 15-25 years in a single domain	Generalist consultants may be deployed based on availability as much as fit
Pragmatism	Accustomed to self-direction and operating without SI infrastructure support	May rely on SI-provided tools, frameworks, and back-office support
Knowledge Retention	Programme-aligned; knowledge is accumulated and retained on the client side	Knowledge often resides with the SI practice, creating dependency and transition risk

Rescuing a Global FMCG Carve-Out:

How Independent SAP Expertise Delivered Programme Continuity and £4M+ in Cost Savings

THE RESULTS

- ✓ Zero resource attrition: not one bluewaveSELECT-placed consultant withdrew from the programme due to performance, cultural misalignment, or inability to sustain programme pressure.
- ✓ £4M+ saved against equivalent SI-sourced delivery models, freeing programme budget for functional build and operational readiness.
- ✓ Programme restored to trajectory: delivery timelines were recovered, and the programme returned to a credible path toward TSA exit compliance.
- ✓ 40+ specialist roles filled across EMEA, NAM/LATAM, and APAC with zero geographic coverage gaps.
- ✓ Continuity of knowledge: independent consultants remained programme-embedded, ensuring institutional knowledge was retained client-side.

CLIENT PERSPECTIVE

"bluewaveSELECT has been a fantastic partner in providing the volume of quality SAP professionals that we need in terms of accuracy, speed and commercial value. Ours is a demanding divestment programme with challenging deadlines, and I have found bluewaveSELECT to be transparent in their assessment of potential candidates whilst showing a great understanding of our project pressure."

Global Programme Resource Lead

UKISUG Update

UK & Ireland SAP User Group

Get to Know UKISUG – Your Independent SAP Community

The UK & Ireland SAP User Group (UKISUG) is the independent voice for SAP users across the UK and Ireland.

We exist to help SAP customers reduce costs and maximise the value of their SAP investments by connecting them with a community of over 4,000 SAP professionals.

Additionally, we're delivering unparalleled education, resources and advocacy.



UKISUG Update

UK & Ireland SAP User Group

What will we learn from the insights paper?

In this insights paper, we will learn about the strategic benefits a COE can enable, including:

- 1 BUSINESS-IT ALIGNMENT
- 2 GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDISATION
- 3 INNOVATION ENABLEMENT

UKISUG
YOUR INDEPENDENT SAP COMMUNITY

Building a Successful
SAP Customer COE

**DOWNLOAD
NOW** ✓

Insights Paper

New Insights Paper: Building a Successful SAP Customer COE

An SAP Customer Centre of Expertise (COE) can provide vital support to organisations looking to modernise their legacy ERP systems or migrate to SAP S/4HANA. However, it can also be difficult to know where to start.

Based on interviews with customers who have successfully built their own SAP Customer COEs, we have launched a new insights paper which shares practical insights to support organisations that are evaluating or planning to set up a COE.

UKISUG Update

UK & Ireland SAP User Group

Full 2026 Events Calendar

View all upcoming events [here](#).

2026 Symposia Highlights

APRIL 22	S/4HANA SYMPOSIUM	LONDON
JUNE 17	PEOPLE MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM	MANCHESTER
JULY 15	BTP SYMPOSIUM	LONDON
SEPT 15	CLOUD SYMPOSIUM	BIRMINGHAM
SEPT 29	CLOUD SYMPOSIUM	MANCHESTER

View all Symposia [here](#).

KEY
IN PERSON EVENTS

UKISUG 2026 EVENTS CALENDAR- PARTNER

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
10 WELLBEING SESSION 20 WISAP MENTOR SESSION	11 PAYROLL 25 SUPPLY CHAIN 26 IRISH HR & PAYROLL	18 PUBLIC SECTOR 19 SUCCESSFACTORS 26 DATA SYMPOSIUM (DUBLIN) 31 SECURITY & CONTROL	22 S/4HANA SYMPOSIUM (LONDON) 28 ENTERPRISE ASSET MGT
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
7 ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE 13 REAL ESTATE 14 FINANCE 21 CONCUR	3 PUBLIC SECTOR 5 SUPPLY CHAIN 17 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM 18 ENTERPRISE ASSET MGT 23 SECURITY & CONTROL FORUM	15 BTP SYMPOSIUM	
10 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION	15 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION	20 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION	17 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
8 APPLICATION LIFECYCLE MGT 15 CLOUD SYMPOSIUM 16 FINANCE 24 IRELAND 29 AI SYMPOSIUM 30 LEARNING & CHANGE MGT SUPPLY CHAIN	15 IRISH HR & PAYROLL 21 SUCCESSFACTORS 27 PAYROLL SECURITY & CONTROL CLOUD ERP BTM FORUM		
23 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION	18 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION	18 WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION	WELLBEING SESSION WISAP MENTOR SESSION

UKISUG Update

UK & Ireland SAP User Group

For everyone who attended SAP Sapphire, we hope you all had a great time. As an SAP User Group, it is important to us to stay up to date and Sapphire is an event we never miss. Our Chief Executive, Craig Dale, and our board members attended both Sapphire Orlando and Sapphire Madrid. To help make sense of the key announcements, we have put together a blog post summarising the highlights.

[Read our Sapphire 2026 summary blog here →](#)

AI is clearly a major strategic priority for SAP right now and that makes it a matter of importance to us as a User Group too. It is a topic we continuously explore and our yearly AI Symposium is an event that's not to be missed. Please find more information below.

Craig & Grosh
UKISUG

AI Symposium 2026

Given the scale of SAP's AI announcements at Sapphire, there has never been a better time to come together and explore what this means in practice. That is exactly what our AI Symposium is designed to do.

 **Tuesday, 29 September 2026**
 **etc.venues, Manchester**

[Save the date.](#)

We are currently working on the agenda, so watch this space for more details soon. In the meantime, if you would like a flavour of what to expect, you can take a look back at last year's agenda.

[View the 2025 AI Symposium agenda →](#)



If you are interested in attending, please contact Grosh or Craig to discuss eligibility. You can find their contact details below.

UKISUG Update

UK & Ireland SAP User Group

More Than a Community: How User Groups Help Shape SAP's Direction

Being part of UKISUG is about staying informed and having a seat at the table. At a recent joint UKISUG and SAP event, Yasmin Awad, who leads SAP's Global User Groups Organisation, made clear that SAP's relationship with its User Groups is both supportive and strategic.

Here are some of the key takeaways:

- ➔ SAP has a dedicated global team supporting more than 40 user groups worldwide. UKISUG is one of the most active and influential among them.
- ➔ The relationship works both ways. SAP shares early insight into product strategy and roadmap plans, while user groups feed back real-world challenges, feature requests and views on licensing and communication.
- ➔ Through the global **SUGEN network**, UKISUG ensures that feedback from UK and Ireland customers shapes SAP's strategy at both a regional and global level.
- ➔ This engagement has driven real change. Feedback from user groups has influenced SAP on licensing and communication and, in some cases, led to structural changes. As more organisations move to the cloud, this relationship matters more than ever.

[Read the full blog post →](#)

UKISUG Update

UK & Ireland SAP User Group

Get in Touch

For more details on UKISUG membership, events or how we can support your organisation, please contact:



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Or visit us at www.sapusers.org



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Sources

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SAPInsider

UKISUG (UK & Ireland SAP User Group)

FinTellect

Gartner

Market Research Future

Business Wire

AllInvest

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The Register

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