

8 simple rules for migrating SAP to the cloud

As SAP has announced its intent to end mainstream support for SAP Business Suite core applications at the end of 2027, now is the ideal time to harness the advantages of SAP in the cloud, hybrid cloud or multicloud - including faster innovation, easier compliance, data-driven benefits, flexible and scalable infrastructure and much more.

Learn from the experts what you need to ensure a smooth, successful SAP migration project.





It's all about making cloud migration a success

SAP is critical to the operations of hundreds of thousands of businesses and, given its impact on core business functions, it is understandable that IT departments have taken a cautious approach to migrating SAP environments to the cloud.

The era of cloud-first has slowly been making progress, but its successor has already arrived in the form of cloud-only. And with SAP ending support for any product not running on SAP S/4HANA in 2027, embracing a cloud-first strategy should be a priority.

For many businesses, a move to the cloud can seem daunting, especially if they don't have the in-house knowledge or skillsets to tackle a migration project. As a result, most businesses have yet to truly explore cloud migration, let alone establish a solid strategy. delaware believes that this is a missed opportunity and that, for all businesses using SAP, it's now the ideal moment to start thinking about migrating to the cloud.

However, we don't believe businesses should rush this process. No organisation wants to get things wrong or fail to ensure they are properly positioned to fully reap the benefits of being in the cloud. As plenty of pitfalls await those who undertake hasty cloud migrations, it's important to fully understand how to make migration a success. That's why our experts can share these 8 simple rules with you for successfully migrating SAP to the cloud.

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Selling migration to your business

Before you can start laying the groundwork for a successful cloud migration, it's often necessary to convince certain stakeholders that it's worth making the move. This is especially true if you have a legacy system that, in its basic form, still works.

To specific key stakeholders, migration to the cloud might seem like an unnecessary expense and needlessly resource-intensive project to undertake, considering that the systems you have in place still function in their on-premise environment, eventually though these platforms will go end-of-life

This is why you need to build a business case that can demonstrate a range of compelling differentiators that the cloud can provide for your business. Here are some of the most significant ones to consider.

**DISCOVER THE CLOUD
DIFFERENTIATORS**



Cloud Differentiators



Eliminate system infrastructure management and maintenance requirements, as your cloud provider will schedule **automatic updates** and bring you the latest innovations and upgrades.



Cloud platform providers invest hundreds of millions in addressing **data security**, providing cutting-edge proactive, preventative and analytic controls to measure threat and vulnerability.



Avoid the risk of reaching capacity or overspending to future-proof your operations, as cloud **flexibly scales to meet changing demands**.



Avoid running expenses caused by the continuous deployment of low-utilisation environments for development, quality assurance, production and special projects.



From a resource perspective, the cloud **frees up your IT team** to focus on more innovative and revenue-generating initiatives.



Quickly and easily back up data, which can include geographic diversity and improve recovery time objective with multi-route, multi-provider networking connectivity.



Move from a CAPEX cost model to an **OPEX model** by removing the costs of refreshing your on-premise infrastructure.



Cloud providers have SLAs that guarantee **high availability** with 99.9% uptime, fast repair times and remediation should anything ever go wrong.



Accelerate time to market for new products and services by rapidly leveraging cloud-based development resources.

8 rules to follow if you want to lead after migrating SAP to the cloud

Now that you have presented your business case for migration and received the green light, it's time to start planning your migration.

But to reap the numerous benefits of cloud migration, your project must be managed correctly and to a high standard. To help you achieve this and move forward with maximum confidence, we have picked the brains of our experts and distilled 8 simple rules to follow.

They are presented in no particular order, as each rule is equally important.



1

RULE #1

Assess, plan and then plan some more

The main goal of getting your SAP workloads to the cloud is so you can provide the exact functionality you promised to your business stakeholders.

To start with, you need **an in-depth understanding of which workloads make sense to move**, as well as how, when and what is required. This assessment will enable you to put a meticulous plan into place that details the migration from beginning to end. Doing so ensures that everyone is on board with the migration execution process.

Some planning tips:



Conduct a risk analysis study for the project. This may add extra time but will prove to be very useful.



Consider possible negative eventualities and lay out a contingency plan for every step.



Ensure that each step on the migration journey has due dates and a verification procedure.



Ensure your plan takes the required internal resources into account.

No matter how well you plan, due to the voluminous nature of the data involved, you can expect the migration of your SAP workloads to the cloud to be a time-consuming (but worthwhile) venture.

2

RULE #2

Better safe than sorry: back everything up

Things can go wrong and there's nothing worse than losing your SAP workloads during migration. So, as it's always better to be safe than sorry, back up your current environment before attempting to migrate to the cloud.

With a back-up safely stored away, you can rest easy knowing that you will **be able to fully restore systems in the event of a server crash** or some other disastrous event.

While a full back up is good, it is not suitable for selective rollbacks or for restoring individual deleted objects. To do this, it's necessary to **make incremental backups** that will enable selective rollbacks to previous versions of any object (personal documents, security settings, user, universe connections, etc.) at any time.

3

RULE #3

Orderly data, productive environment

Interested in laying the best foundation for cloud migration success? Then, you need to invest time and energy into cleaning up your existing environment before migrating it over.

That's because **less content results in an easier, faster and cheaper cloud migration**, and will help to improve the quality of your data, increase the efficiency of your reporting, lower storage costs and start you out in the right mindset.

When in the cloud, don't take its limitless capabilities for granted by being wasteful with database space. To avoid needless 'hoarding', it's useful to **start archiving all the data you don't need** before you migrate. In their experiences with this process, our experts have found it's not that uncommon for businesses to be able to eliminate hundreds of gigabytes of unnecessary, less business-relevant or duplicated data.

Bear in mind that, because of the amount of data that needs archiving, the housekeeping process can take months to complete. But investing that time at the start of the project will save you time and money in the long run.

RULE #4

Be prepared for post-migration

You might discover that your colleagues expect that, after 'switch day', everything will instantly go back to - or actually be better than - normal. This is just not the case. What you, and they, need to be prepared for is the **required post go-live tweaking, as well as ongoing SAP performance tuning**, that will happen once you've completed the move to your new cloud landscape.

Never neglect preparing for post go-live. Don't let the project manager hand off the project to an admin who has played no part to date. That's a guaranteed recipe for disruption and disaster, since the admin won't have any experience with your system.

You need to make sure your SAP migration plan has a section that covers post go-live tuning. As this can be a nuanced task, make sure that you **have some expert hands available to guide you** in the form of a specialist managed services partner.

Once everything is up and running, and tuning has been completed, **track and report on performance** to ensure that, at the bare minimum, it matches your previous setup. However, it should surpass the same deployment on premise. If it's not, then you can catch any issues early to ensure you get the most out of your new setup.

**It's all about
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migration a success**



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RULE #5

Be security aware

When it comes to the on-premise vs. cloud security conversation, cloud providers are spending vast sums on enhancing the security of their clouds and adopting ISO benchmarks. Major cloud players like Google, Amazon and Microsoft provide public cloud services that comply with ISO/IEC 27018:2019 and continue to employ huge teams of individuals to keep their platforms as secure as possible. This is **a level of security that few (if any) businesses can match** on-premise.

When you move to the cloud, it is important to change the mindsets of those colleagues that believe in the importance of staying physically close to your data. Dispel their apprehensions about the security of storing mission-critical infrastructure virtually in the cloud, since, after all, **the big players have the resources to do it significantly better.**

However, be aware that security of your cloud and data has little to do with its physical location, and everything to do with **who has access to what, where, how and why.** Also, moving to the cloud is a good opportunity to identify data impacted by regulatory requirements so administrators can monitor and audit sensitive information during the cloud migration process.

This is why your cloud migration project is the ideal time for people in charge of data security to review security strategy, access protocols and regulatory requirements. We advise drawing out a detailed map that lays out the current security structure and how it should look after migrating to the cloud.

RULE #6

It'll take more than a crash course

Having a clearly defined TOM and RACI matrix post migration is something that many firms neglect to consider before moving to the cloud. Without one, you could be left wondering who will run what once you get there.

Make sure that **somebody in your team has enough knowledge** about how your cloud system works to ensure that they can keep it up and running or help fill the gaps so that you don't always have to burn through your managed service provider retainer.

Even if you have someone with the skills required to migrate, these are quite different from those needed to keep your cloud-based systems up and running. It's best to **plan in advance and select the right individuals** so that they can begin honing their skills well ahead of migration.

This will involve investing time and money, as well as ensuring the employee is able to balance a normal work/life routine with incremental training (since you don't want them to leave halfway through due to stress, lack of interest or burn-out).

Having someone on hand that you trust with enough knowledge to make sense of what is going on will make your post-transition lives smoother and hassle free.



7

RULE #7

No team is an island

Obviously, you want to experience as few issues as possible during migration, but it's uncommon to find a business lucky enough to have in-house cloud and SAP experts on their payroll. If you find yourself in this situation, given the steep learning curve of SAP and the cloud, you should consider doing things differently and **augmenting your core IT team with experienced resources** for the migration.

If you decide to take this route, act wisely and **don't compromise on quality** for the sake of getting cheaper service. Choose a partner that will enable a smooth cloud migration and guarantee services that work in the best interests of your business. Some things to look out for in an ideal migration partner include:



Experts with **in-depth experience of SAP** operating system/database upgrades and migrations.



Specialists who can **design cloud landscapes and build virtual machines** that optimally run SAP.



A **solution for every aspect** of your migration, including integration between the disparate systems.



Confidence in **navigating and troubleshooting** the migration across multi-layered, parallel work streams.



Partner relationships with **leading public cloud providers**.

8

RULE #8

Leave some of it to the 'robots'

As most SAP landscapes require numerous nearly identical cloud servers as well as the creation of several core SAP systems as migration landing points, it makes sense to automate aspects of the process in order to reduce time, costs and the chance of errors. For example, you could create and test a server in the cloud as a model and then automate the build-out of the remainder to match this setup.

It's best to **measure twice, build once and then automate any further builds** going forward. Once you have started down the automation path, you can identify additional places where automation can add value – either with the migration, ongoing operations or even yearly workload changes. Ultimately, you will end up with an elastic, cloud-based SAP system that can power up and down automatically.

A variety of **emerging and maturing tools are assuming a lot of the heavy lifting associated with cloud migration and management**. In doing so, they're helping companies increase their migration speed, reduce risk, and boost the overall quality and precision of their decision-making. Using advanced features, your system can self-heal by using the power of the cloud to build predictive analytics to identify and fix problems with minimal human intervention.

It's not an understatement to say that **those who focus on getting the automation right will witness a far more successful cloud journey** than those who don't, and not just during the initial migration.

How SAP on Azure brings the best of both worlds to Renson

Renson is a Belgian family business that develops and manufactures ventilation, sun protection and glass covering solutions for outdoor areas like terraces. Committed to continuous improvement, the Renson IT team seeks to ensure a lean, agile IT while getting the most long-term value from it.

When Microsoft and SAP meet in the cloud

The Renson team had been using Microsoft cloud solutions like Azure and Office 365 for years. Renson CIO Koen Van Loo: "Implementing SAP on Azure would offer us a certified environment and plenty of flexibility, scalability, redundancy and security." They selected delaware as implementation partner because of the strong cultural fit as well as delaware's experienced Microsoft and SAP consultants.

The entire basic SAP S/4HANA package and more specialised modules were implemented, but the company's complex, highly automated IT infrastructure proved challenging during the rollout. "delaware also offers tight connections with the vendors," Koen adds. "For example, when a performance issue came up, we could work closely with the 'black belt' consultants from delaware, Microsoft and SAP to rapidly solve the problem."

With SAP running in Renson's standard Azure cloud, it has become significantly easier for the IT team to integrate SAP with a wide range of applications. Koen: "Even more, Azure continuously offers new functionalities that we can explore to find out if they offer value for us."

Why SAP on Azure was the right choice for Renson



The possibility of a **comprehensive partnership** with SAP and its entire IT ecosystem



Infrastructural capacity for all of its SAP workload requirements



Ultimate flexibility, enabling its use as a **platform for innovation and insights**



Support proximity

Checklist for success

The project of migrating SAP to the cloud can be daunting. So, our checklist lays out some of the key considerations to tick off during the process. Convince business stakeholders that it's worth moving SAP to the cloud by producing a strong business case that clearly highlights the benefits of migration.

- ✓ **Get internal buy-in**
Ensure buy-in and commitment from key stakeholders.
- ✓ **Optional: find a partner**
Find a partner specialised in SAP and cloud infrastructure to provide independent consulting, help with SAP architecture, design the cloud landscape, provide guidance and help execute the migration. Run an initial assessment of your entire SAP landscape to clarify your starting position and identify any quick wins. Explore how new product generations impact infrastructure, technology and processes.
- ✓ **Run an assessment**
Run an initial assessment of your entire SAP landscape to understand your starting point. Explore how new product generations impact infrastructure, technology and processes.
- ✓ **Understand requirements**
Understand the new infrastructure and technology requirements for the journey.
- ✓ **Develop an SAP Roadmap**
Plan out the steps that will be taken and time frame required to migrate SAP systems to the cloud.
- ✓ **Choose a cloud platform**
Choosing the right cloud environment is important.
- ✓ **Rethink governance**
Think about how your governance strategies, especially around data security, will be shaped after your migration to the cloud.
- ✓ **Clean up data**
Proactively cleanse, archive and purge to reduce data anomalies, and where possible, condense your system footprint.
- ✓ **Complete a test run**
Completing a mock migration run using production-similar source systems to predict the necessary outage window for the business and target actions.
- ✓ **Test legacy systems**
Run additional testing on legacy operating systems and databases to gain a deeper understanding of how they operate on the cloud.
- ✓ **Training and qualifications**
Don't underestimate the required additional technical knowledge. It's a good idea to decide up front which competencies will be retained internally and which will be managed via an external service provider.

Contact us

No matter how complex your SAP migration project is, our experienced team has the extensive expertise in SAP to ensure a smooth execution. This expertise means we know how to run and maintain the infrastructure required for your SAP environment. Our UK projects are delivered by our team, and with our global presence, we can easily support customers with their international needs.

Once you are ready to start building a roadmap to seamlessly transfer your SAP systems from your data centre to Microsoft Azure Cloud, don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

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