

Whitepaper

# Building the composable enterprise



# The need for business composability

## What is composability?

Composability is a well-established concept, originally used for IT application development. In simple terms, it means building customized solutions rapidly from standardized components, with a minimum of custom code (or even without this requirement at all). This approach dates back to the 1990s, and most modern application development would be unthinkable without it.

As we collectively move into the world of disaggregated, distributed cloud, where intelligence is pervasive throughout the network, the influence and significance of composability is growing fast. Rather than just building applications through reconfiguration of objects or programming elements, we are now starting to build complete end user solutions, highly personalised to individual customers, using composable building blocks to configure and adapt business solutions in flexible ways. This approach is a potential gamechanger in terms of customer experience, service provision, revenue growth and business agility.

Where **business composability** is concerned, the focus shifts towards a different (and arguably more ambitious) form of modularity: how to mix and match, blend and reconfigure complete business units, elements, solutions, methods, teams, everything. In particular, we need to consider how to compose new *business processes* and *business capabilities* quickly and efficiently, keeping the core applications safe while enabling adaptations securely around the edge.

This is how we can help businesses become more agile and responsive than before, while competing successfully in a faster-moving, less predictable marketplace. It may be argued that such rapid and flexible changes can lead to unknown risk, yet rapid business composability should actually be understood as an essential tool for improving business KPIs in regards to quality, speed to market and competitive performance.



## Why is this so important?

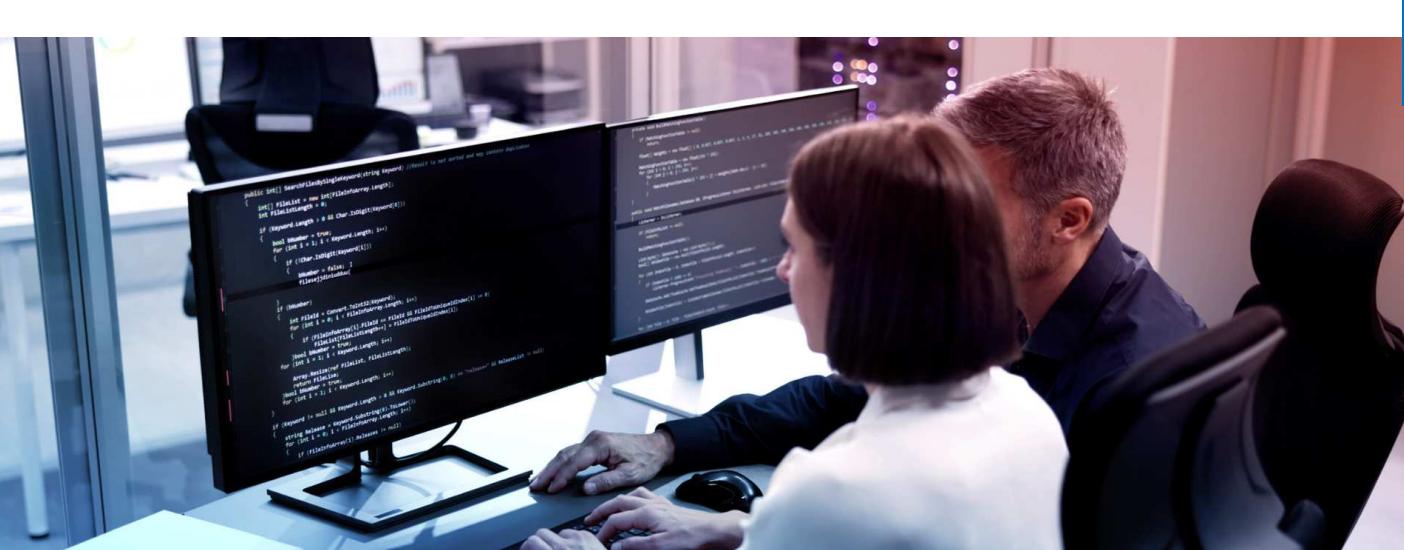
Enterprises move to cloud seeking better performance against KPIs, lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and improvements, perhaps radical improvements, to all aspects of the corporate cost base. It is notable that major corporate applications, and especially ERP, have acted as an obstacle to cloud adoption, as the strategic importance of ERP is so great, and the complexities of making ERP cloud-enabled are considerable.

On the other hand, such cloud capabilities as Machine Learning, AI and composable services are valuable tools for adding value to ERP solutions, while supporting the business to adapt and evolve their existing ERP systems and related processes more flexibly to the requirements of a changing market.

Where ERP is concerned, enterprises are still struggling with how to manage the change process: this paper provides insights as to how we can simplify and derisk cloud for such organisations. Cloud promises to make enterprises “lighter” and faster, which should be a major incentive for change. Business composability plays a significant part in delivering these targeted benefits, covering SAP ERP as well as other core applications.

**In summary, business composability gives enterprises the ability to evolve into new forms, with the potential for competitive advantage over slower moving rivals.**

Just as the cloud offers more options for targeted solution development, it also offers richer potential for business configuration. In the cloud, it is possible to identify capabilities, units, offers and individuals from many different sources. Business Composability now means, not just rapid configuration of corporate capabilities, but of capabilities within a global ecosystem. That could be transformational.

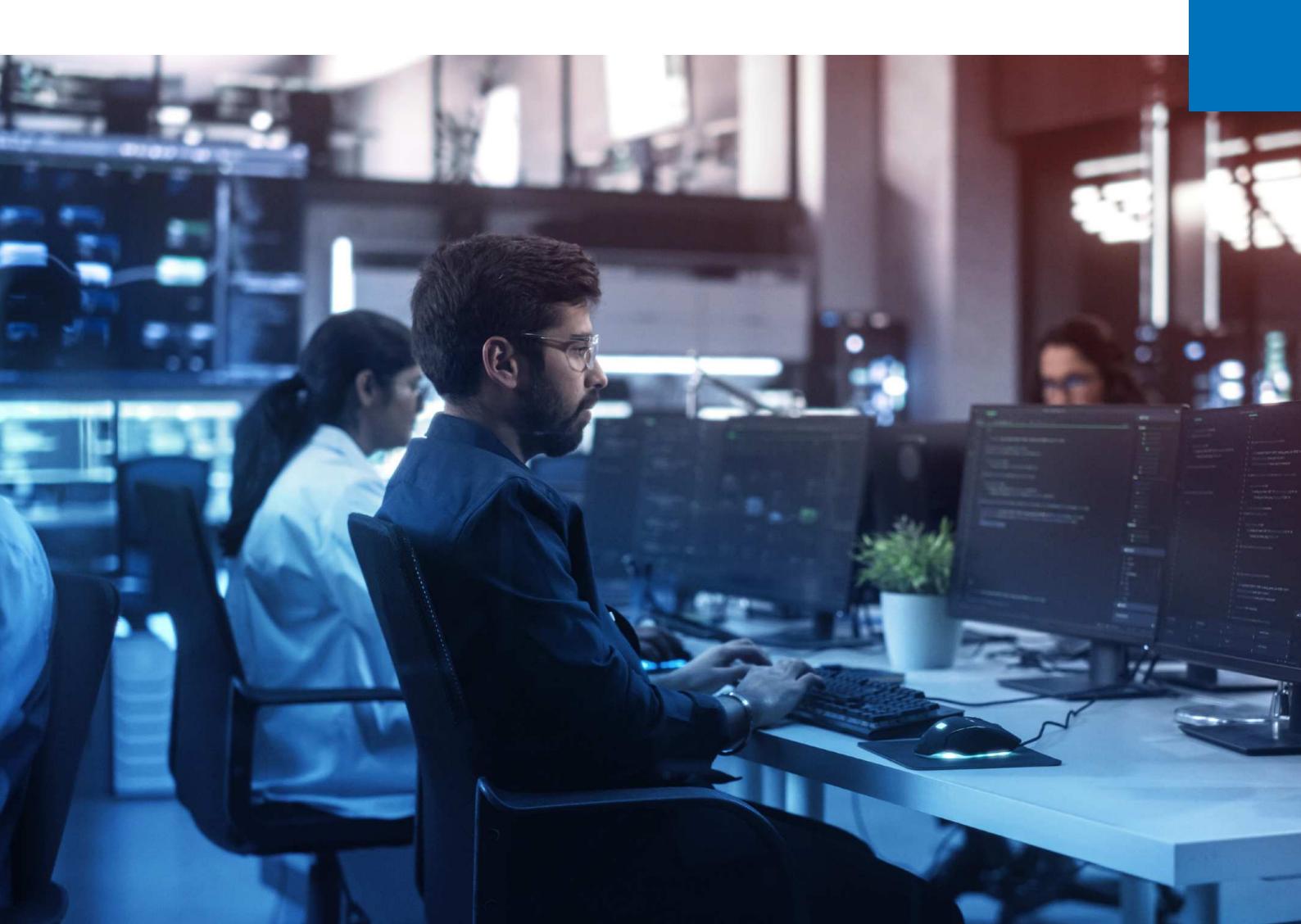


## The key elements of composable

Most large enterprises have based their core processes on a small number of very large enterprise applications. For many of them, this means using SAP: for ERP, procurement, financial management, customer experience, HR management, information insights and analysis, integration with other agents and systems, and some aspects of supply chain management.

The importance of these activities is so great that, as we have seen, many enterprises would rather leave their existing SAP instances in place as discrete enterprise instances than take what they see as the major risk of moving them to cloud. We understand this viewpoint but do not think it is sustainable for the long term. Cloud is inevitable, and that includes for hosting ERP. The question now is how to make this process of change as painless as possible?

Transition to SAP S/4HANA enables existing corporate processes to operate effectively in the cloud, without rebuilding from the ground up: this is the necessary first step for cloud-enablement. As we shall see in the next chapter, SAP bundles SAP S/4HANA together with several options in different environments to give clients freedom in configuration, composition and customization: enabling them to choose the best fit for their business.



Before looking at how this new paradigm works, we should understand that all forms of composability are based on four core principles:

First, **modularity**. This means every component within any technology environment must be designed and built to be reusable and inherently suitable for fast configuration.

Second, **integration**. All modules must have the ability to operate successfully as part of an integrated system. This implies common standards and connectivity by design.

Third, **autonomy**. Individual modules must be rapidly configurable yet also independent, so each can be updated, evolved and replaced as required, without needing to change the modules around them.

Fourth, **orchestration**. This is the ability to oversee, manage, maintain, fine-tune and optimise the total environment created by the integrated modules. It is the key to ensuring that the entire operational landscape not only has the flexibility inherent in modular construction and rapid reconfiguration, but can also be managed as an entire, fully functional enterprise business environment.



These four principles of composability are the key to delivering the essential benefits we are targeting through moving to the cloud. Equally important is the ability to ensure architecture, technologies and thinking can easily interact and support each other.

Altering management mindsets and the attitudes of technology practitioners is the necessary first step in building a composable approach to the future. Many enterprises find this to be a considerable challenge, and one in which they require expert support, as we shall see in the rest of this paper.

# Choosing the right platform

## Platforms for innovation

In all industry sectors, we can see that businesses are being disrupted at high speed, and executives are challenged to make their businesses more agile and inherently capable of rapid changes to stay ahead of a constantly evolving market. Enterprise architectures that enable and support the business now require the ability to cope with fast and often unpredictable change. They must be much more agile than in the past.

In the world of business composability, *rigid platforms are now inappropriate* and will not deliver the outcomes demanded in a changing business environment. This underlines the core truth about moving to SAP S/4HANA Cloud: it is not simply about cost and operational efficiency, but about the ability to move fast and innovate.



## SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP)

As we have seen, moving to SAP S/4HANA is an initial step in re-imagining enterprise processes and ERP systems for the cloud. When used by a single large enterprise, this means it is possible to keep SAP S/4HANA core code ringfenced and protected from local modifications, enabling SAP to keep the core continuously upgradeable, at best practice level and able to deliver ongoing innovation. This vision, now being rolled-out by SAP, is known as the Clean Core concept.

SAP S/4HANA also provides a framework for customization and extensibility, but this is strictly limited, when compared with the capability of SAP BTP, because SAP BTP is *designed for Extensibility*. It offers a compelling way of maximising the innovation and agility of cloud, but with the security and integrity of a strong enterprise environment. In headline terms, here is how it works.

SAP BTP is a Platform as a Service (PaaS) solution that offers in-memory database capabilities, platform services and unique micro services to create and extend intelligent applications in cloud and enable them for mobile devices. The platform is designed to accelerate digital transformation by helping to develop applications quickly, easily and economically, without investing in local infrastructure and a big focus on developer productivity and domain driven development.

SAP BTP therefore reduces effort on common development tasks and provides key users and developers the full capabilities to write extensions and their own solutions quickly and efficiently. Based on open standards, SAP BTP offers complete flexibility and control over your choice of hyperscalers, frameworks, development languages and applications. It also offers the capability to develop a hybrid landscape with cloud, on-premise and legacy applications.



## How does it work?

SAP BTP is relevant to large enterprises because it is an *extensible platform*, which uses services (rather than orthodox programming) to enable collaborative work, with a high level of customisation, *on the platform*- but *outside the core applications*. This recognises that enterprises will always want to build their own variations to suit specific business goals.

The move to SAP S/4HANA and the SAP BTP therefore enables as many variations as an enterprise requires, while keeping the integrity of core applications secure, as shown in figure 1 below:

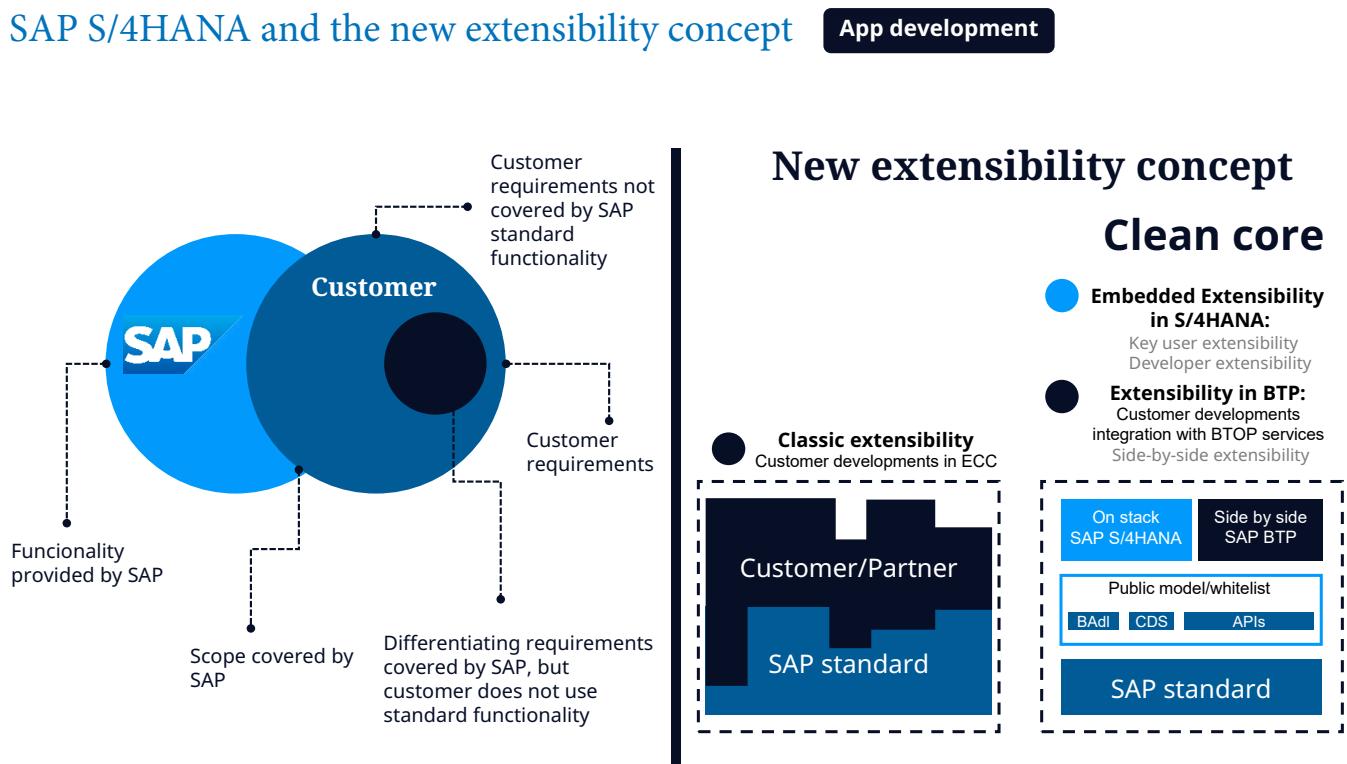


Figure 1. The clean core concept, with extensibility.

This approach differentiates between core functionality (which is provided and maintained by SAP) and customer-specific functionality, which may build on standard functionality while *extending it*, or in some cases does not use core functionality at all.

As this diagram shows, there are three modes of extensibility. Two of these (Key User and Developer) are embedded within SAP S/4HANA itself. The third mode (Side by Side) is a capability of SAP BTP. In all cases the key outcome is to safeguard the core functionality of SAP, itself, while enabling individual customers and their specialist partners to develop targeted solutions, which build on SAP but *extend its capabilities further*.

Extensibility, therefore, does not completely depend on SAP BTP (as SAP S/4HANA is also an “extensibility platform”) but SAP BTP provides more options and a richer set of capabilities through its additional built-in pillars: Integration, Automation, Developer productivity, Analytics and AI. The simple goal of the concept is that customers will have a “best of both worlds” approach. We can see this set out more clearly in figure 2 and 3 below:

## SAP strategy

### Configuration of SAP S/4HANA cloud solutions

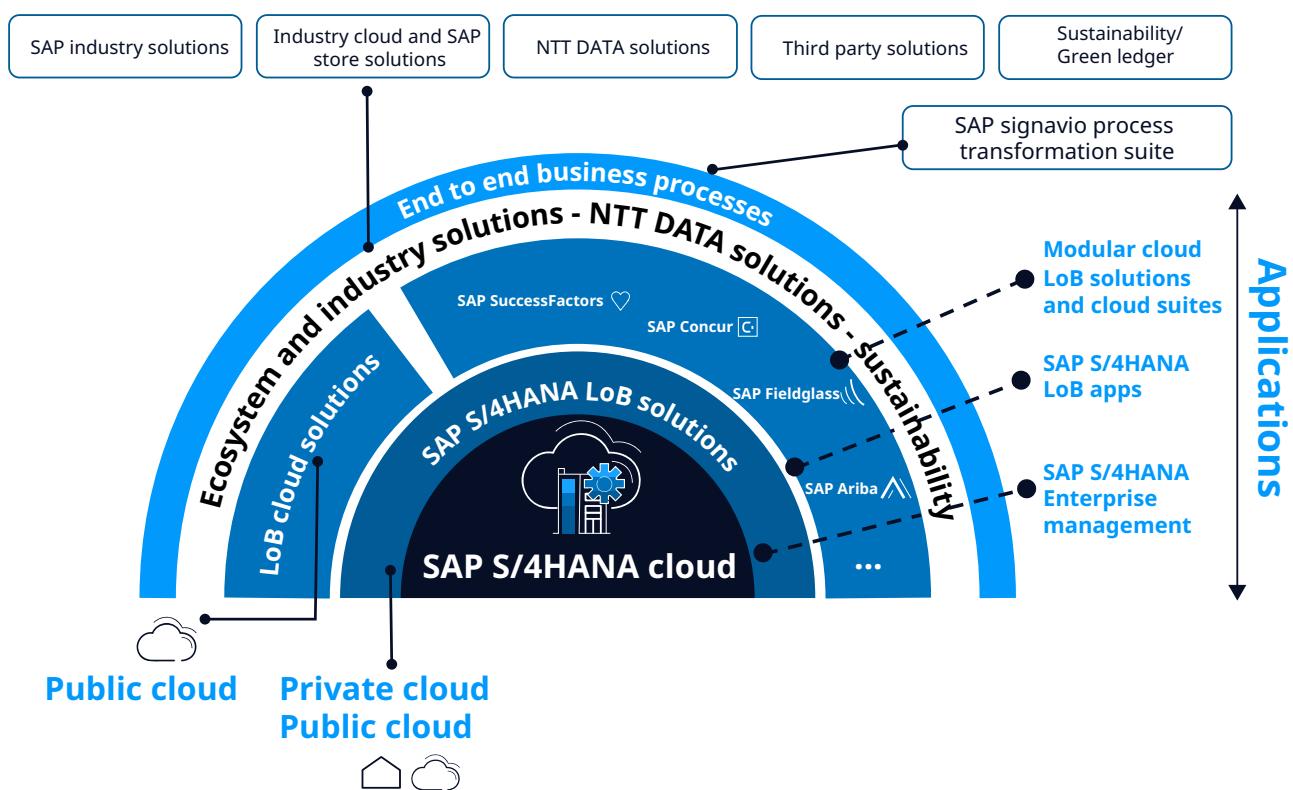


Figure 2. Top level view of how SAP S/4HANA Cloud creates a foundation for composable business solutions.

In figure 2, we see how SAP can be hosted in either private or public cloud, and how its own Line of Business solutions establish a foundation for building out more targeted user-specific solutions around the edge. In figure 3, we see how extensibility can be taken to new levels of functionality and detail.

## Modular and composable

Lines of business

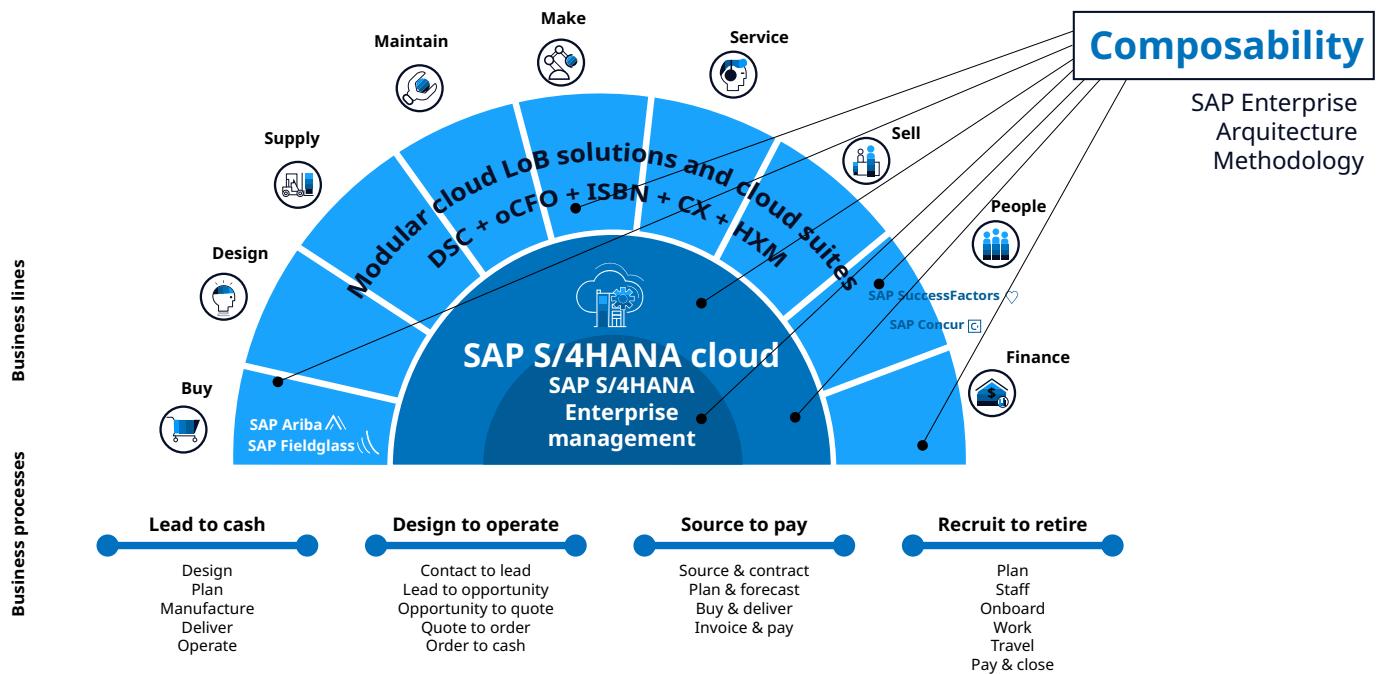


Figure 3. How extensibility can be used to develop solutions that are both industry and function-specific, customized to the needs of each individual enterprise.

This approach uses the SAP Modular Application Portfolio, which provides tools and methods for helping to build new solutions at each stage of enterprise activity, from procurement to design and build, from supply to finance and people management.

Core SAP will be supplemented by the freedom to build highly customized and user specific solutions around the edge, building on enterprise applications but with as much specificity and targeting as the customer requires. This is the key to moving enterprises into ecosystem based, cloud enabled operations.

## Beyond classic SAP

The combination of SAP S/4HANA and the SAP BTP enables a high level of extensibility, which offers large enterprises important new options. They can now ensure the integrity of their core SAP applications, knowing they will always be current and have their services kept at best practice level, and completely secure... Yet also be able to build the personalised, targeted enterprise solutions they require, without the need for a large in-house IT practice dedicated solely to managing the core applications.

This "best of both worlds" approach is exactly why SAP BTP is so attractive to most large enterprises. Why is this so important?

The main reason is simple enough: SAP applications have been at the heart of large enterprise operations for so long now, and are so deeply embedded that they bring a great deal of complexity, some of which is difficult to manage. Around the core (represented by SAP S/4HANA) is the Extension Suite and Integration Suite, both proprietary SAP toolsets, together with the SAP RISE business transformation service, and connections to the now more than 200 individual SAP solutions.

**For ERP and related enterprise applications in the cloud, a combination of SAP S/4HANA and SAP BTP provides the most efficient, secure and low risk options for extending core capabilities and enabling collaborative working in the cloud.**



# NTT DATA strategic vision

## The composable enterprise

For most enterprises, SAP will remain an essential factor in their core processes. This does not mean, however, that they wish to depend entirely on a single vendor, even one as capable and trusted as SAP. Their technology and application landscapes will be hybrid as a matter of course. They will work with multiple suppliers and partners, and this is likely to include at least one or more hyperscale cloud provider.

These enterprises need an IT partner that understands their challenges and will advise and guide them to establish the processes they individually require, supported by an IT landscape that serves these purposes. This will result in leveraging the advantage of standardized reliability and individual flexibility.

We have seen above how the use of SAP S/4HANA Cloud and SAP BTP provide the basis for extensibility, but how can they use this capability to create a composable business landscape, in which enterprises and their partners can use extensibility to enable business composability? In other words, how do we help businesses to transform themselves into a composable enterprise?



Here we need to turn our attention away from SAP and ask what exactly a leading technology partner, like NTT DATA, is doing to add real value to its clients in applied composability. We can illustrate this in a top-level way through figure 4 below.

This demonstrates the respective capabilities that a large enterprise requires in order to make composability part of its natural way of life. To the left we see the SAP ecosystem, based on core SAP (S/4HANA), cloud hosting, PaaS (provided by SAP BTP), and Line of Business applications, forming the start point for extensibility in and around SAP BTP.

To the right we see the contribution made by the NTT DATA composable enterprise strategy. This includes collaboration with SAP and its extended ecosystem, but it also includes investment in proofs of concept, original solution development and continuous interaction with real-world client use cases and experiences. Above all, NTT DATA plays a key role in digitizing core processes, which is a necessary first step towards simplifying, accelerating and enabling composability.

## The Composable Enterprise | NTT DATA's Ecosystem for Innovation

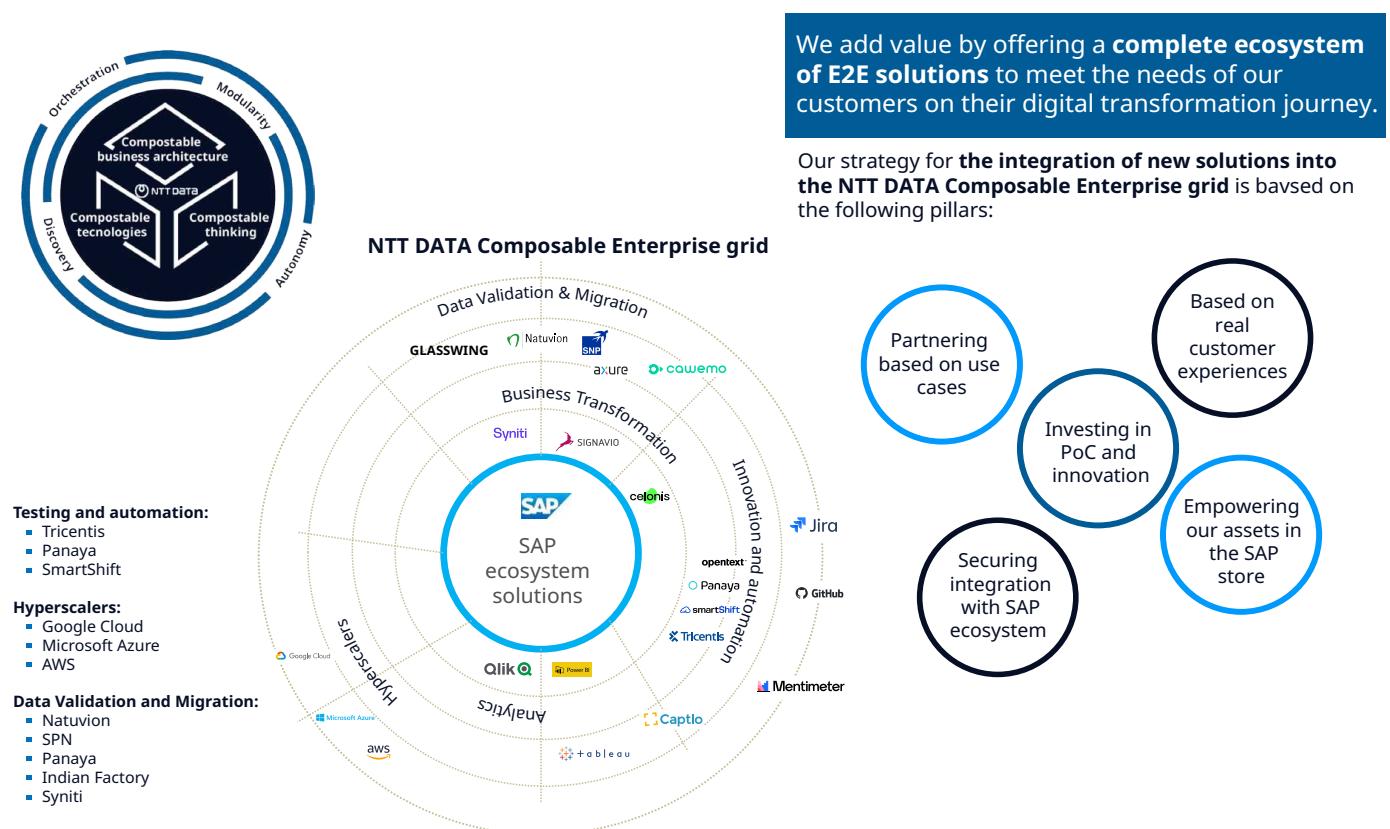
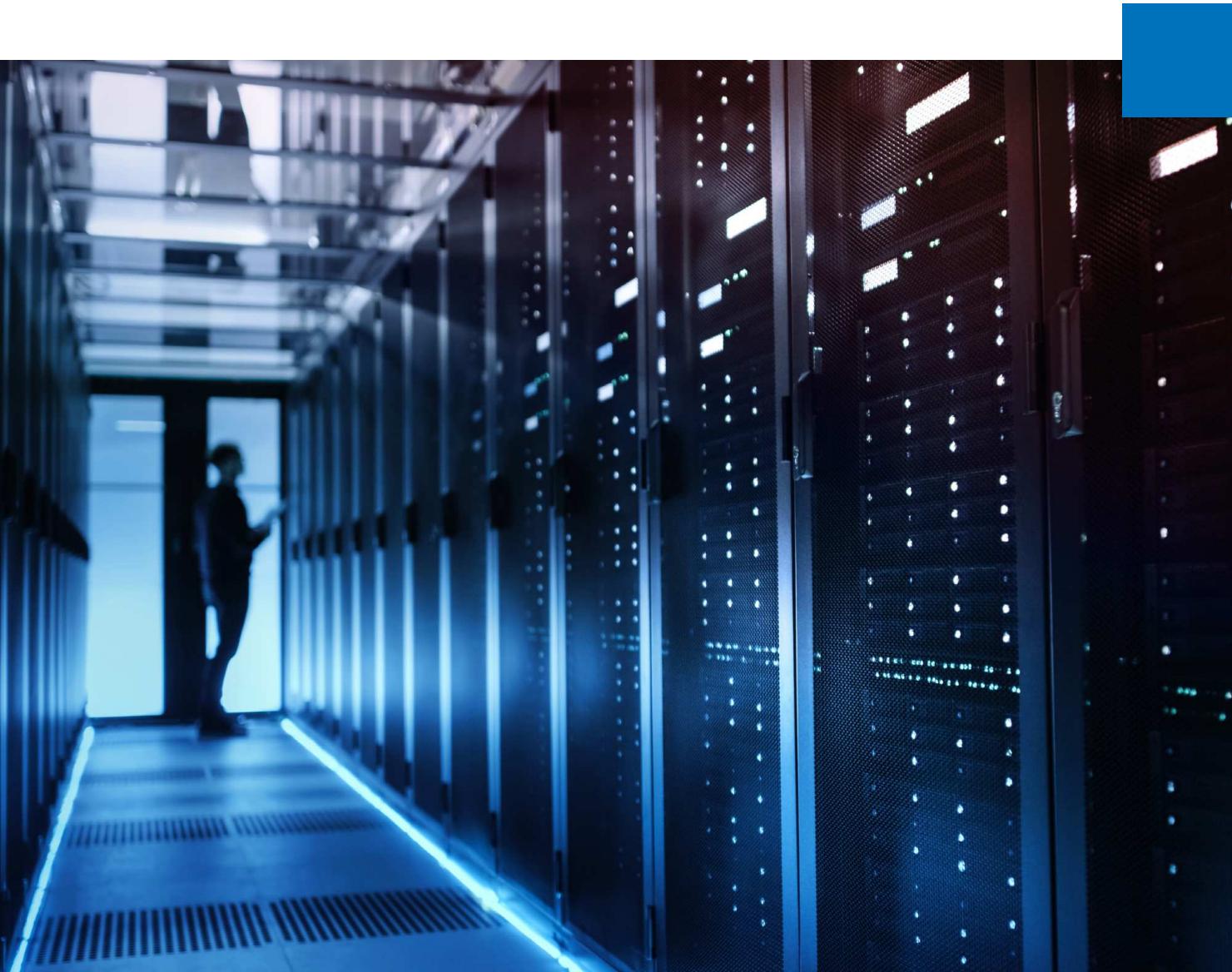


Figure 4. The NTT DATA Composable Enterprise grid.

This demonstrates the need for a partner that has a thorough understanding of client (the enterprise), key vendor (SAP), ecosystem partners (specialist solution providers), and relevant technology. The task of the IT solution partner is to integrate all the contributing applications and technologies in the context of the market, emerging trends and end user preferences and compose a viable solution within these constraints.

We need to remember not just what business composability IS but what it IS FOR. Businesses seek to become more agile, fast-moving and responsive in order to serve their customers better and thereby gain competitive edge, leading to growth, profitability and shareholder value. To be composable is the most basic factor in achieving these desirable goals. Composability is not an end in itself, therefore, but a vital, extremely necessary *means to an end*, which is being more competitive through product and service excellence.

It means nothing if we insist on operating only at the technology level. Enterprises also need market insights, customer knowledge and an ability to co-innovate at speed. That is precisely why an innovation partner, like NTT DATA, is so necessary. Let's look more closely at how this innovation relationship can- and should- work in practice.



## Role of innovation partner

When working with an enterprise client to build on SAP S/4HANA Cloud and SAP BTP, NTT DATA focuses on the need to develop innovative solutions to real world requirements. To use a simple analogy, NTT DATA uses a “manufacturing/factory” approach, producing Business Solutions based on standard materials but with a high freedom of customization, based on client requirements. We illustrate this process and working relationship in figure 5 below:

To the left, we see SAP S/4HANA and its available Line of Business solutions, forming the first stage in the move to composability. The ability to extend capability beyond core SAP and its Line of Business solutions involves use of the Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) which, as we have seen, provides extensibility for development of customised solutions.

## This is how we digitise processes...

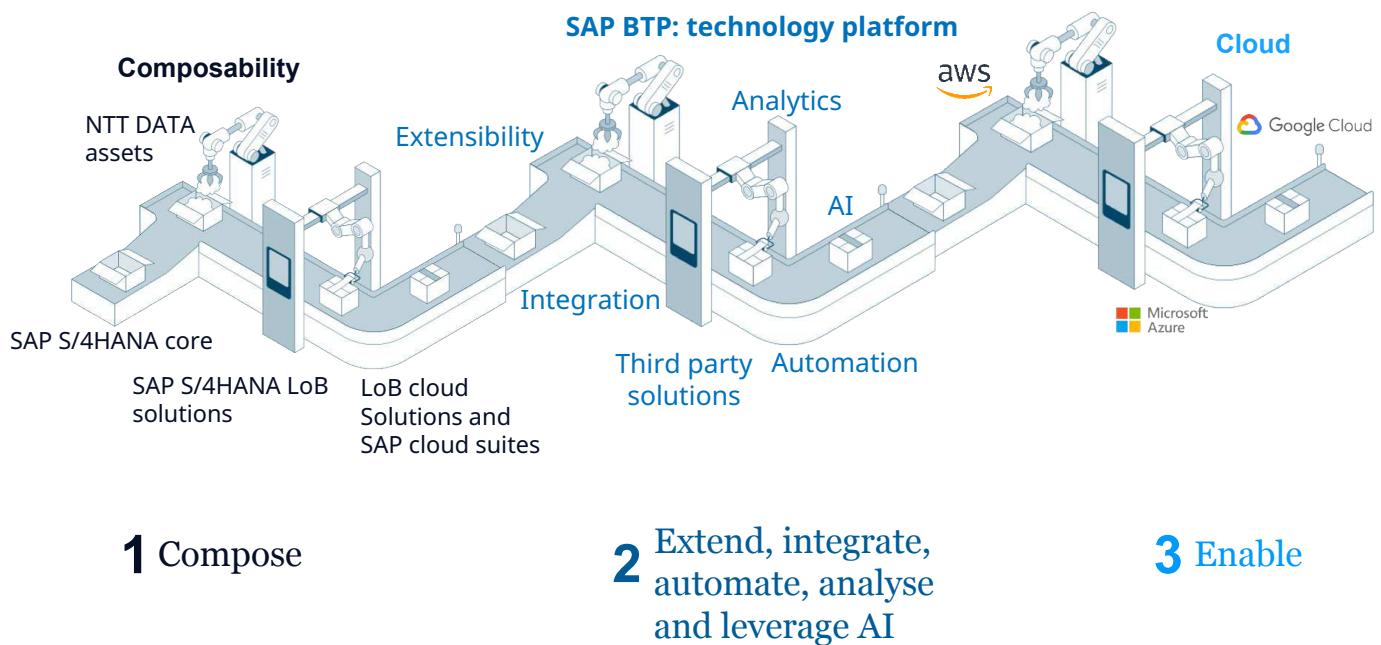
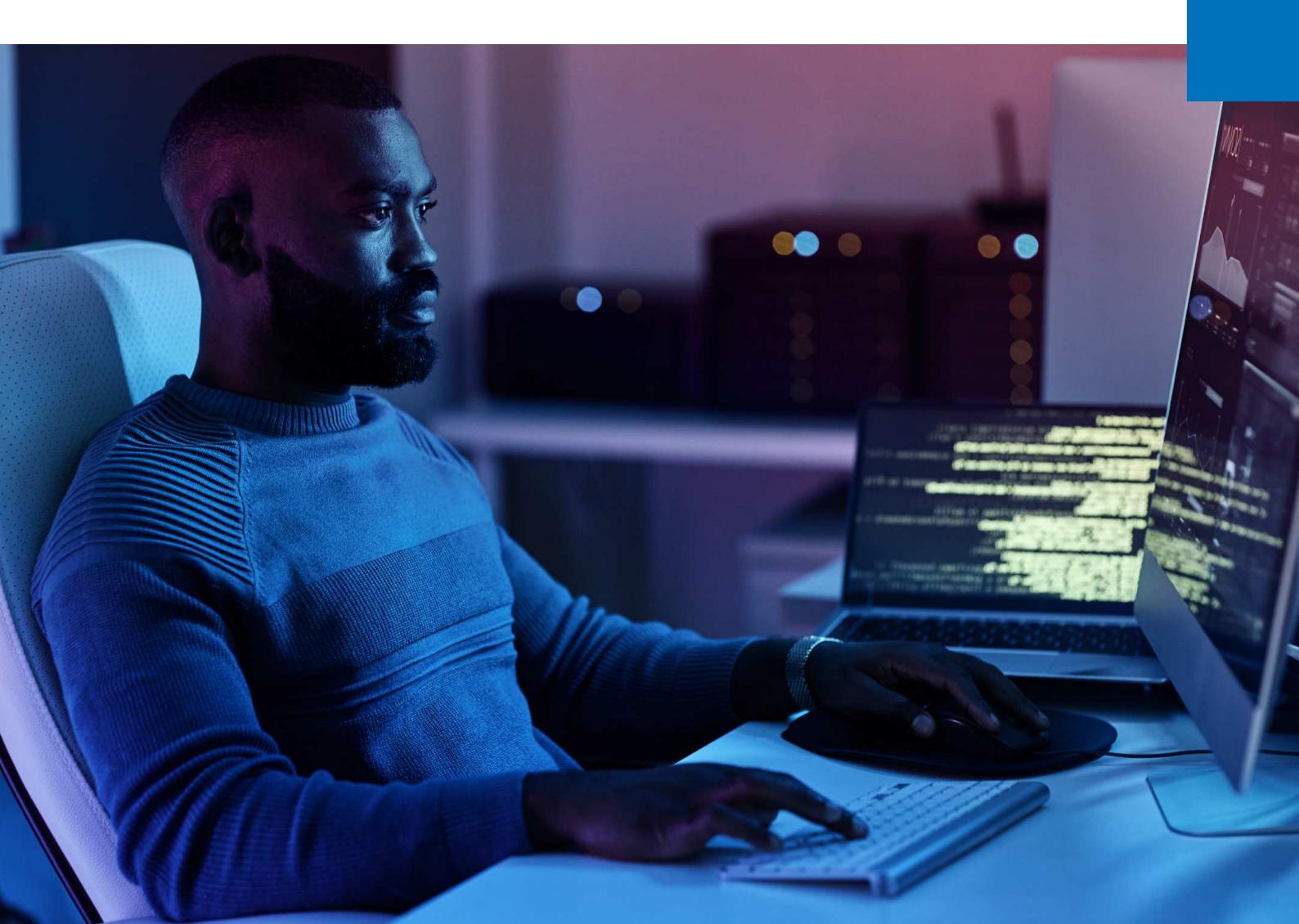


Figure 5. The innovation relationship, building on SAP.

At this stage we see growing opportunities for enhancing flexibility by using generic building blocks for AI and machine learning, independent of the standard components from the SAP S/4HANA core. In addition, all building blocks on SAP BTP can be reused and connected with further business processes.

At the third level of detail, NTT DATA works with its clients to build individualised solutions that provide higher forms of responsiveness, agility and speed in dealing with market trends, end user demands and enhanced experiences. In some cases, for example Digital Workspace, office productivity or Internet of Things, we use modularity and integration, to develop customized solutions quickly and easily, that consist of building blocks from all three stages.

This three stage approach forms the foundation for a transformational process that helps enterprises move towards their true goal, which is to *use extensibility effectively*; by doing this to *achieve true business composability*, and in the end to achieve the objective of being an *intelligent enterprise*. This is a term we use to define a business that has made the move successfully into a different way of working, in which aspects of cloud, ecosystem and machine intelligence is used to deliver improved performance in all aspect of the business. In the next section we summarise what this designation means in more detail.



## Intelligent enterprise

The intelligent enterprise vision focuses on three interconnected areas: the need to drive better *operational efficiency*; to deliver *digital transformation*; and to *enhance innovation*.

In this context enterprises and their strategic partners must deal with different layers of complexity and find effective methods for combining them within the same operational platform. The list of challenges below is by no means exhaustive but it does reflect the knowledge built up over the past 10 years by NTT DATA, leading to the pragmatic approach we have now developed for SAP BTP optimisation and enhancement.



*Data volumes* are likely to be high, especially when dealing with a complex ecosystem that crosses national boundaries. This is likely to cause issues related to bandwidth, latency and security. We will also see complexities related to *business rules*, where we need to apply a consistent approach to achieve the desired outcomes, with *standardized methodologies* for the same functionalities, and a consistent global approach to *governance*, as well.

Moving forward requires *industrialization*, based on proven accelerators and templates, with high levels of *reusability*, in a world where there is both a huge amount of *complexity* and an inability to use the same code for different applications. Systems in a complex landscape of this kind may simply be incompatible, yet somehow we need to ensure they can work together, delivering to common goals, backed by a much improved *user experience* throughout.

Once you start to make maximum use of SAP BTP extensibility, therefore, moving beyond the single enterprise environment to build business composability in the cloud, it is inevitable that you will encounter all these and no doubt other sources of complexity. There is no one size fits all for this requirement: each enterprise will need its own custom built extensibility solution to deliver the right combination of agility and efficiency they require.

NTT DATA brings its own toolsets, capabilities and rich experience to this task. We believe that making best use of SAP in the future will not only require the move (a transformational change in itself) to SAP S/4HANA Cloud, it will also involve substantial re-engineering of organization, culture and processes to make them more intelligent. This is the key to becoming not just an Intelligent Enterprise, but also a *composable enterprise*.

Once again, Extensibility is not an end in itself: it is a technology path towards becoming a more highly agile and responsive player in a faster-moving, more competitive marketplace. As a key business partner, NTT DATA never forgets this. We do not only *know the technology itself*, we also know *what the technology is for*. This is about our clients' business success, and we combine our SAP expertise with our innovation capabilities to deliver on this goal.



## Key use cases

NTT DATA has already worked with clients to develop proofs of concept and practical use cases for applying SAP BTP-enabled extensibility to creation of new solution in different industries. Below we give some headline examples. More information is available for review and exploration on request.

**Circular battery management.** A key task for all industrial concerns is the drive for circularity (maximum reuse and recycling, minimum use of new materials), and as the growth in use of Electric Vehicles gathers pace, so concerns over recyclability of EV batteries also grow.

As part of the sustainability use case development project, sponsored by SAP, NTT DATA has developed a dashboard and underlying technology to enable the recyclability of battery components to be viewed and tracked. This has proved that it is possible to enhance the circularity of batteries that use current Lithium-ion technology. The same approach can also be applied to new generation non-Lithium batteries.

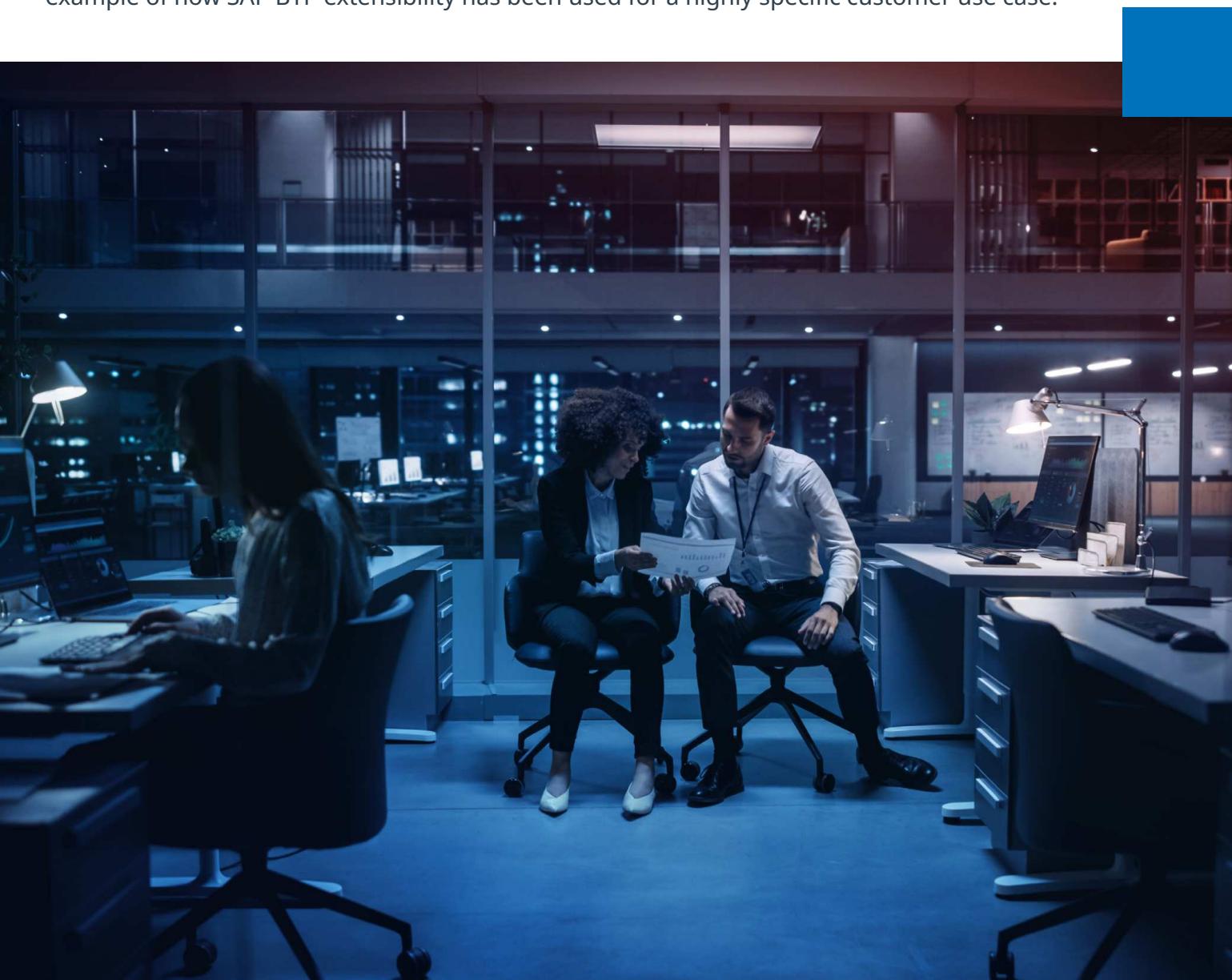
**Digital workspace.** Providing one Launchpad for all employees, the digital workspace is a customizable environment, that brings together productivity applications (such as O365 and Teams), with SAP applications and 3rd party tools, personalized to suit the exact needs of each individual and group. The workspace includes a highly intuitive user interface, delivering the same ease of use and high-quality experience across all devices, from office desktop to mobile.



Digital workspace provides a collaborative environment, where project team members, including those working remotely, can meet, interact and share the same knowledge base- while also accessing a wider world of SAP and other applications through a central entry point. With consistent rules and governance, this new approach to collaboration around SAP-related projects brings productivity, cost and operational efficiency benefits to the entire business.

**MES IoT solution.** Working with global meat processing company Campofrío, NTT DATA has automated and redeveloped the Manufacturing Execution System (MES) for salting and production of very high quality processed and packaged meats (including Spanish delicacies such as Jamon Serrano).

The entire management architecture was redesigned to become more modular and scalable, enabling faster, easier maintenance and more reliability in action. Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) are used as IoT devices, automatically transmitting data to Supply Chain Planning (SCP) Edge services, bringing higher levels of speed and automation to the entire process. This is a classic example of how SAP BTP extensibility has been used for a highly specific customer use case.

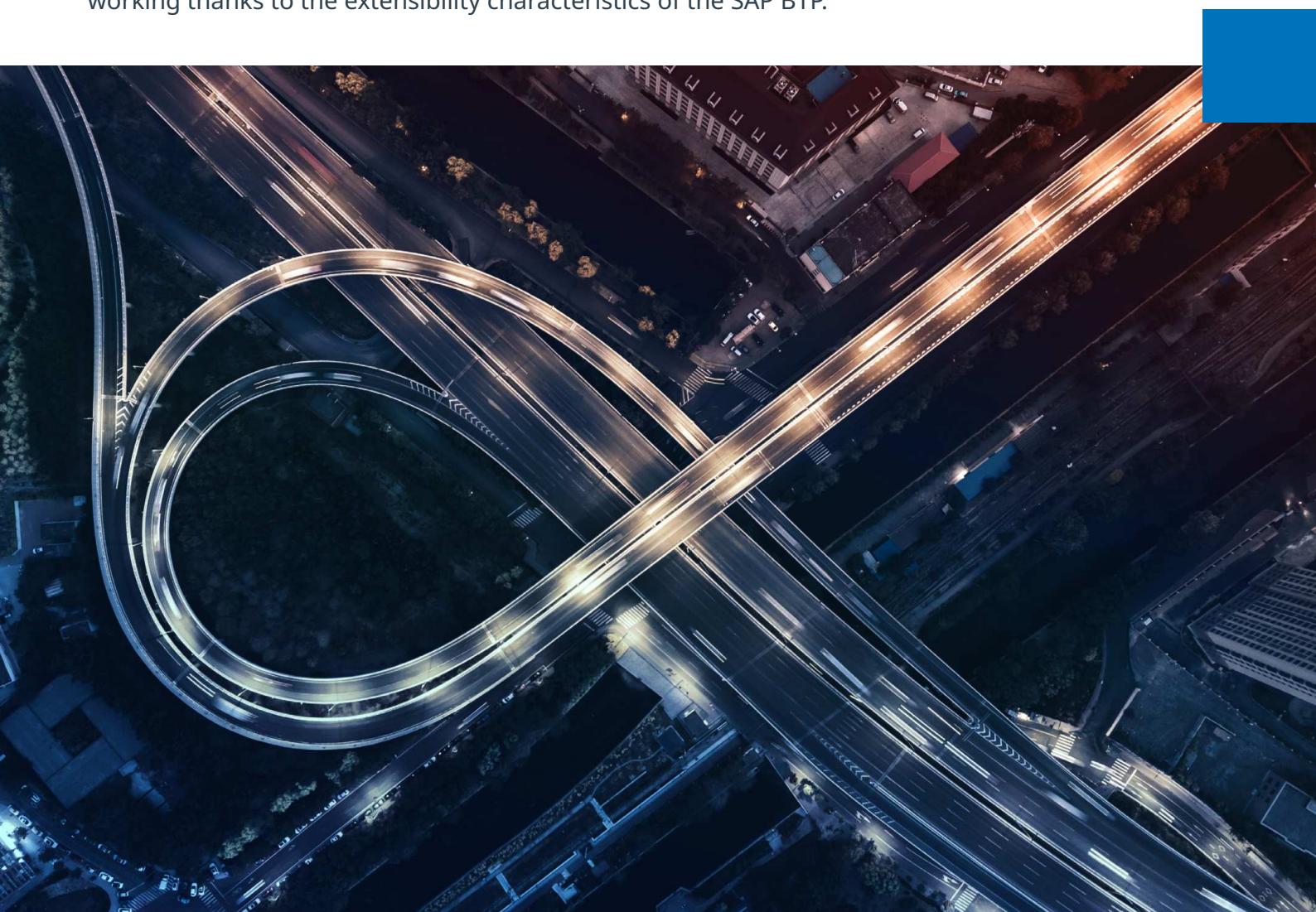


# The NTT DATA transformation journey

## SAP informed, hybrid approach

Every SAP customer now understands the importance of the SAP cloud strategy. Based on transition to SAP S/4HANA, the goal is to move away from a client-owned SAP instance, normally managed by their own corporate IT departments on-premise, and towards the cloud. This transformation move can happen in stages, can involve private or public cloud, and will be accompanied in most cases by implementation of the SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP).

NTT DATA has published recent papers both on transition to SAP S/4HANA and implementation of SAP BTP, with an exploration of how to maximise the extensibility potential of this platform to ensure best practice SAP operations combined with improved agility. In this approach, we see how maintaining the SAP Clean Core is entirely compatible with highly flexible partner and ecosystem working thanks to the extensibility characteristics of the SAP BTP.



## Understanding the context

We strongly recommend that readers of this paper also download our [SAP S/4HANA](#) paper to ensure they are fully informed about the wider technology context for extensibility, composability and Intelligent Enterprise. In particular, we want to emphasise the key factor in any SAP-related process of evolutionary change, which is the need to maximise the potential of SAP, while yet avoiding vendor lock-in.



Very few technology companies know as much about SAP as NTT DATA. Thanks to our deep roots in the Germany automotive and discrete manufacturing industries, our relationship with SAP goes back to the very beginning, with the first ERP software SAP took to market. We were among their very earliest customers, and have been strong and respected business partners ever since.

This matters, because it is precisely our deep understanding of, and respect for SAP that makes us so clear about the need for a future strategy in which SAP plays a critical role, but is never allowed to become dominant in the enterprise technology vision. In the world of collaborative, cloud-enabled ecosystems, there are a growing number of innovative, often very precisely targeted solutions available to most enterprise functions.

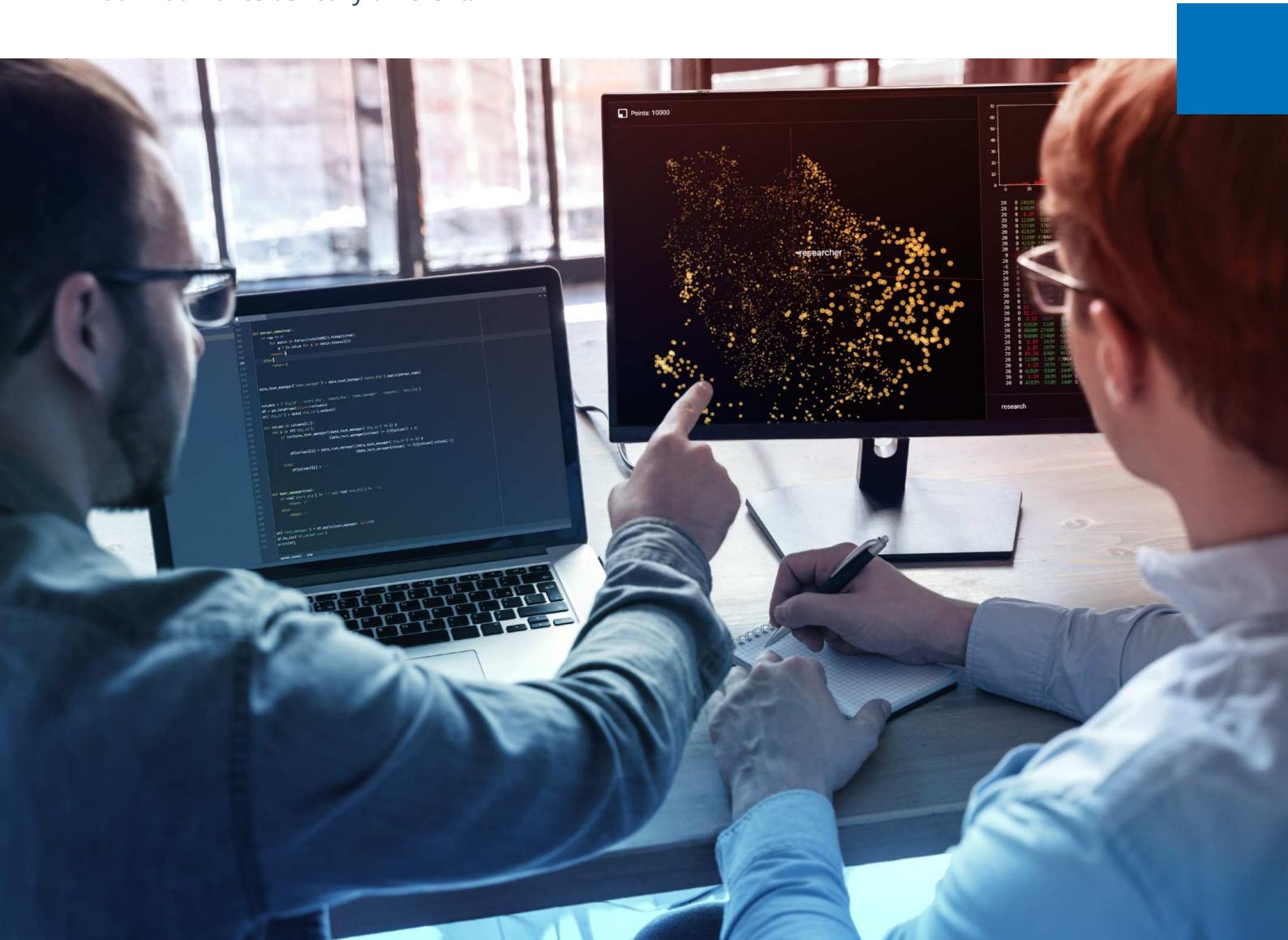
Our task, in working for our own customers, is to build solutions that are precisely targeted at their own specific needs, and that are capable of evolution, as our customers' own business priorities change and develop. This means, for example, that we value SAP's BTP for its qualities as a highly flexible and extensible technology platform, but our core focus is *on using extensibility as a tool for targeted solutions*.

## NTT DATA and SAP

NTT DATA is an SAP Platinum partner and SAP Global Service Partner, defined by leading analysts as a global leader in the field of SAP S/4HANA Application Services, worldwide. Thanks to our industrial heritage, as part of the wider NTT Group, we are also a major researcher and innovator in our own right.

We have developed methodologies, solutions and tools - all approved by SAP - that form the basis of our SAP practice. Our business consulting teams are located all over the world, which means we have strong capabilities in virtually every market. Technical consultancy for SAP is closely integrated with SAP consulting teams, providing a single point of contact, no learning curve and fast transit to high intensity, evolving high performance operations.

But what makes us really different?



**NTT DATA employs 19,000 SAP experts worldwide.**

## Business consulting services

The starting point for any successful transition and transformation activity is high quality consulting, and that is the rationale for our consulting services strategy.

In the context of all enterprise functions built on SAP S/4HANA, we know that many customers will need both technological *as well as* business advisory to clarify their needs, understand the alternatives SAP offers and plan a long and mid-term roadmap ahead. This form of initial evaluation service is built into our own HR transformation methodology.

This approach provides the time and space needed to understand options, review and evaluate them in depth, prepare a detailed roadmap to the future, followed by experienced professional guidance to unlock the maximum value from the transformation process. NTT DATA is rated by leading technology analysts as a top performer and leading in all aspects of SAP S/4HANA adoption. Our consulting capabilities play a major part in achieving this recognition.

**We have more than 3000 business consultants ready to support major transformation projects.**



## Preconfigured SAP accelerators

NTT DATA can deploy high expertise and advanced capability to suit all architectural requirements, from pure SAP to a wider ecosystem of software and technologies. Our teams are always focused on client outcomes, so they are technology agnostic, able to select the right partners to provide platform services.

**We have preconfigured SAP S/4HANA implementation templates for life sciences, automotive, manufacturing and medical devices, with others in development.**

## Technologically agnostic capabilities

We understand that all transformation projects will take place in an industry context, so we are ready at all times to deploy our SAP-based *Industry Solution* templates, which enable faster project commencement and reduce the level of new work required, enabling NTT DATA to accelerate definition and creation of solutions customized to individual enterprises.

In case our templates are not sufficient for a particular customer requirement, we can also *Build* industry-specific solutions at speed due to the presence of a mature and experienced global development practice, covering every part of the world and backed by rapid onboarding and training techniques.



**17 industry solutions and 60 rapid deployment solutions developed by NTT DATA.**

## Global presence

We are committed to an uncompromising “*people first*” strategy. We know that a main reason for the high analysts rating NTT DATA achieves year after year is a result of the high project delivery quality, which would be nothing without our people and tools.

**NTT DATA will have 200,000 IT professionals, following completion of the ongoing merger activity to bring together all NTT DATA entities outside Japan within a single company.**

## Training excellence

Our SAP Academy is one of the world's leading establishments for recruiting, training, mobilizing and constantly developing outstanding professionals in the field of SAP systems, solutions and technologies. We believe in lifelong technical and business education: our people are not simply trained and left to do the best they can. They are always within the scope of our development processes, always motivated and empowered to develop new capabilities, while contributing to our uniquely rich knowledge base.

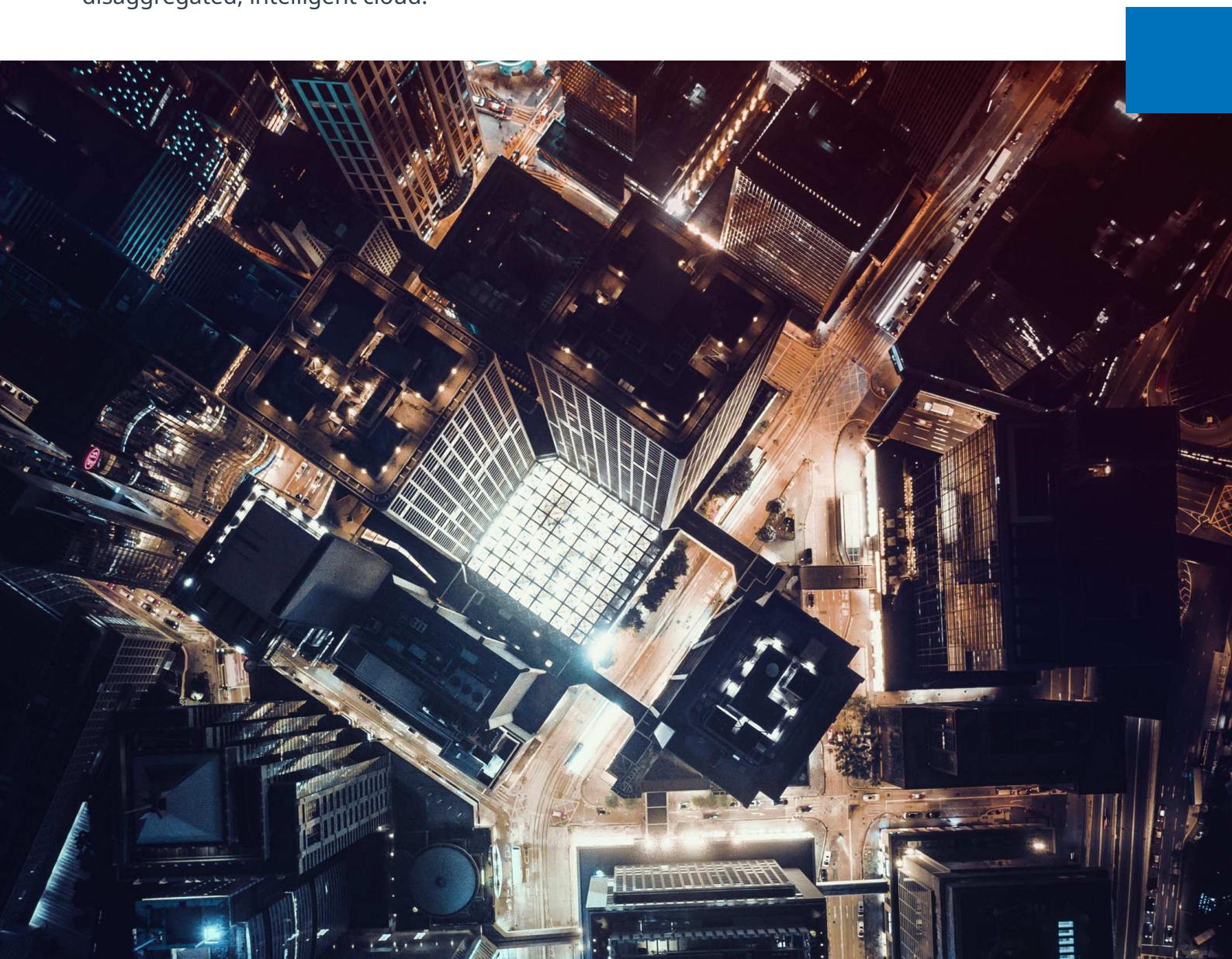


**NTT DATA SAP S/4HANA certified trainings, NTT DATA SAP S/4HANA learning system, training management support, client foundation enablement, client tailored trainings, project support, project team training.**

# Conclusion

In most industry sectors, enterprises are seeking to achieve higher levels of business composability, while becoming more intelligent in how they are structured and managed. NTT DATA believes that using the Extensibility potential of SAP BTP is critical to achieving this goal in most cases, but the transition to SAP S/4HANA and SAP BTP is not enough in itself to provide the complete solution enterprises need and seek.

The extensibility potential of SAP BTP makes it possible for enterprise and their partners to build a growing number of highly customized solutions, which also interact smoothly and easily with core SAP, thanks to the Clean Core concept and SAP BTP extensibility options. This frees enterprises to focus single-mindedly on business advantage, and work with specialists that are true, proven partners for innovation. That is the role NTT DATA plays in this new world of ecosystem working in disaggregated, intelligent cloud.



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