



ACCRETE INSIGHT

Migrate First, Transform Later: A
Smarter Path to SAP S/4HANA

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As SAP ECC approaches its end of maintenance deadline in 2027, enterprises are under growing pressure to make decisions about their future ERP strategy. For many, the choice to migrate to SAP S/4HANA is clear. But what's not always clear is the best path to get there. Should organizations take the opportunity to reimagine their business processes at the same time? Or should they focus on technical migration first and transform later?

Increasingly, forward-looking organizations are choosing a “migrate now, transform later” strategy to reduce risk, control cost, and set a strong foundation for innovation. This approach—sometimes called “lift and shift”—focuses first on getting systems onto the SAP S/4HANA platform with minimal disruption, and then using the new capabilities of S/4HANA to drive transformation at a controlled pace.

Why Migrate Now?

Delaying migration to SAP S/4HANA has real risks. As the 2027 deadline approaches, the demand for experienced SAP consultants and migration partners will grow, potentially creating bottlenecks. Organizations that wait too long may struggle to find the right talent and support, increasing the cost and complexity of the transition.



By planning and executing their migrations early, companies avoid the last-minute scramble. More importantly, they gain access to the advanced features of SAP S/4HANA sooner—such as improved analytics, embedded AI, and a modern user experience—which can drive measurable business value.

The Case for “Migrate First, Transform Later”

Migrating an ERP system is complex enough on its own. Combining it with business process reengineering and digital transformation introduces additional risks, longer timelines, and higher costs. A “big bang” approach, where both migration and transformation are attempted simultaneously, often leads to project fatigue, missed deadlines, or even failure.



Instead, separating the technical migration from the transformation allows organizations to:



Phased Implementation: What It Looks Like

The “migrate then transform” path typically unfolds over several structured phases:

<p>Assessment and Planning</p> <p>Define the migration roadmap, assess current ECC usage, clean up data, and identify custom code that needs to be reviewed.</p>	<p>Technical Migration (Lift and Shift)</p> <p>Move from ECC to S/4HANA with minimal changes to business processes. Often this is done using SAP tools like the Software Update Manager (SUM) and the SAP Readiness Check.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Modernization</p> <p>For many, this means moving to RISE with SAP and adopting hyperscaler cloud infrastructure, which can further reduce long-term TCO.</p>
<p>Interface and Integration Realignment</p> <p>Using SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP), companies can centralize APIs and interfaces, reducing future maintenance overhead and simplifying integration testing.</p>	<p>Business Process Transformation (Post Go-Live)</p> <p>Once the system is stabilized, transformation initiatives such as embedded analytics, process automation, or redesigning workflows can be launched incrementally, driven by business needs.</p>	



Leveraging SAP BTP for a Smoother Journey

One of the most strategic moves in a phased approach is leveraging SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP). By moving interface endpoints, extensions, and even some custom development to BTP before or during migration, companies can:

Reduce custom code in the S/4HANA core.

Make testing and validation easier during cutover.

Prepare a modular architecture that supports future scalability and innovation.

In essence, BTP acts as the glue between old and new, enabling smoother transitions and greater flexibility post-migration.



Managing Change Effectively

Change management is critical during any ERP migration. A key success factor for companies following the phased approach is clear communication between technical teams, business users, and leadership.



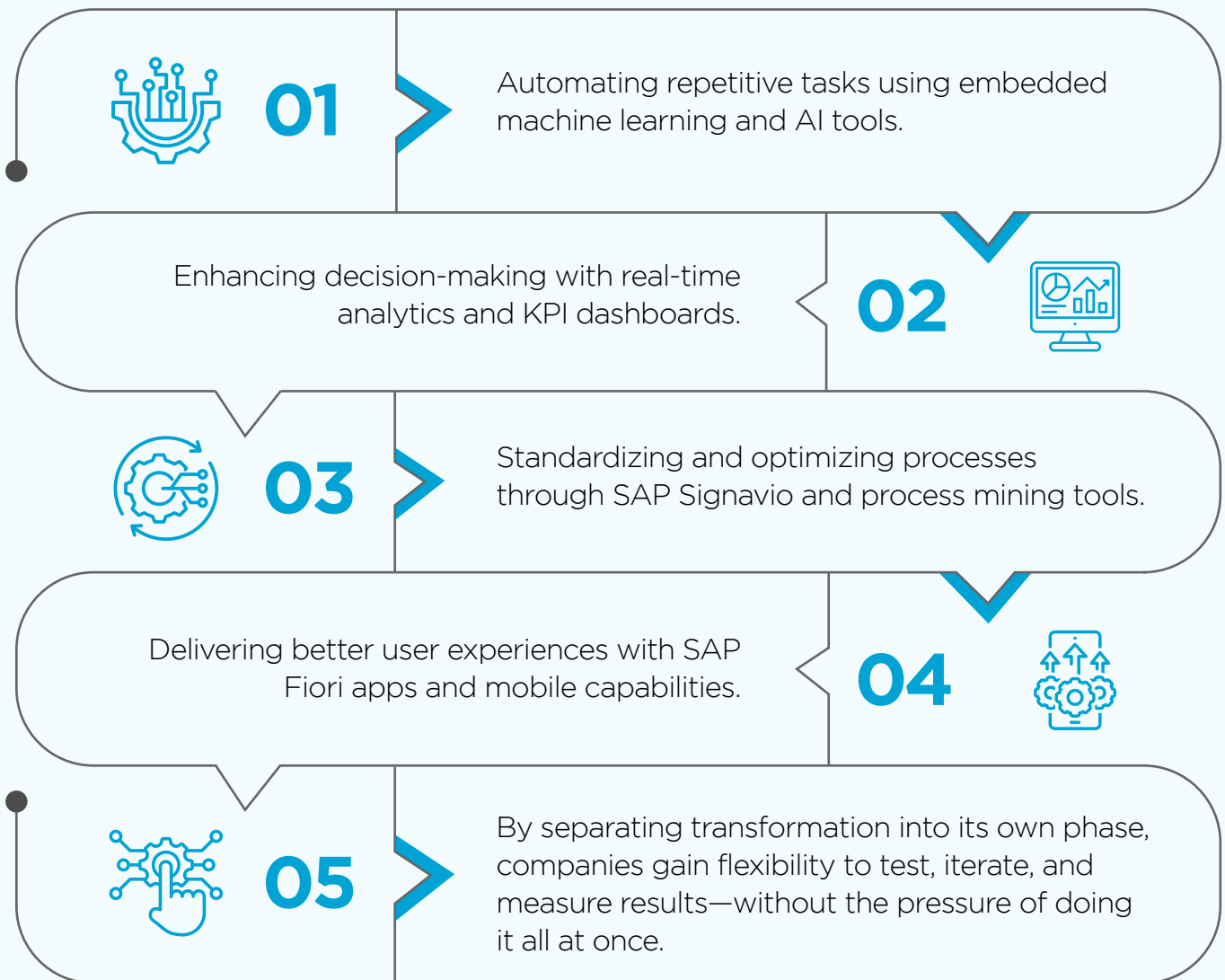
Demand management—deciding which enhancements and change requests to approve—is another area where discipline pays off. During the migration window, freezing major changes to business processes helps prevent moving targets that can derail the timeline.



At the executive level, commitment to the "migrate first, transform later" philosophy is essential. Leaders must advocate for resource prioritization and explain the long-term benefits of a steady, structured approach.

Post-Migration: When Real Transformation Begins

Once SAP S/4HANA is live and stable, organizations can begin unlocking the platform's full value. This includes:



Final Thoughts

A successful SAP S/4HANA migration is about more than just technology—it's about timing, risk mitigation, and building a roadmap that supports long-term goals. The "migrate first, transform later" approach is increasingly proving to be the most practical and sustainable path.



For organizations considering this strategy, the key is to start planning now. With careful phasing, a focus on stabilization, and thoughtful transformation post-migration, companies can achieve both immediate operational continuity and long-term business innovation. Contact us for free consulting at accrete@acnsol.com or ajay@acnsol.com



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