

E-Special

A Different Approach to Support

Jill Harrison (r.) is the head of Rimini Street Europe and, like her colleague Dirk Schüller who is responsible for sales in the DACH region, is intimately familiar with the needs and challenges of existing SAP clients. Read the E-3 report about the Rimini Street team starting on page 5.

Joe van der Merwe: “I’m a panic manager and I love it!”

Read the E-3 report on page 6 to find out how Rimini Street SAP support engineer Joe van der Merwe masters his daily tasks.



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As partner to the SAP community, Rimini Street is taking a novel approach to service and support concepts.



Peter M. Färinger

A Better Alternative

Open standards and norms, transparent and virtual IT, and the open source phenomenon enable entirely new business, organisational and technical concepts. At the same time, agility and innovation are a must. No easy feat for the CIO and CFO.

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Very often SAP was and is right. In this case there's no doubt: the role and organisation of IT is changing! Monolithic black boxes are consigned to the past. A modern IT architecture for ERP, CRM, SCM, etc. cannot be based on a singular concept. R/3, ERP/ECC 6.0 and SAP Business Suite 7 with and without HANA must have no single point of failure. The opposite is required: agility, transparency and innovation, along with flexible and holistic support in a 24x7 society.

Because many current challenges and tasks did not exist at the beginning of the R/3 age, innovation, service and support must now be organised differently. What's more, there's another way of doing things. SAP that brought about the process of transparency, hybrid models, the platform approach and the best-of-breed concepts to the community. Now it is up to the existing clients and SAP partners to boldly look ahead and systematically build on these impulses.

Gartner analysts call this bimodal IT. Other experts speak of hybrid solution concepts. The fact is that fulfilling the needs of SAP clients can no longer be achieved with one single tool, solution or organisation. There is, therefore, no choice for businesses but to courageously dive into a bimodal, hybrid business model for their own IT infrastructure – outdated concepts need to be abandoned to make room for agility and innovation. CRM can come from the cloud. The platform may include a database like HANA. The IoT may arise in collaboration with market partners. Service and support don't need to be provided by the manufacturer. SAP has taken the initiative to question,

evaluate and, where appropriate, reinvent every organisational, business and technical aspect. Specifically, it is the large budget items such as licences, infrastructure, service and support that need to be reviewed. Here, bimodal and hybrid concepts can produce the necessary budget funds for more agility and innovation.

The high expenses for the annual maintenance fee are typical for SAP clients. With a bimodal service concept in collaboration with Rimini Street, the CFO and CIO can save relevant support fees. The digital transformation calls for most CFOs and CIOs to take courageous steps: building Industry 4.0, the IoT and a bimodal, hybrid SAP Business Suite with AnyDB or HANA is as important as relaunching the service concept. Rimini Street is a successful partner to the SAP community and specialises in service, support and security.

Many SAP clients have already taken the innovative and bold way of a bimodal and hybrid service concept for their own ERP landscape. This E-3 special shows the opportunities and possibilities as well as specific solutions that will make it possible to develop proprietary SAP architecture with even more agility and transparency in the future, recommended by Gartner analysts. SAP has encouraged and demonstrated it. Successful operation of SAP requires existing clients to make bold and innovative use of multiple sources and speeds – and that definitely involves service and support from Rimini Street!

Peter M. Färinger, Editor-in-chief, E-3 Magazine

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Third-party maintenance by Rimini Street for SAP clients

Fund your Innovation

No company will be able to ignore digitalisation. Everything must be upgraded and converted. And a budget must be allocated to innovation. Where will the money come from if the budgets aren't increasing? The answer: Savings on support through independent third-party maintenance.

Those who speak of digitalisation mention the cloud in the same breath. The latter is an essential prerequisite for the former, they say. Only with the cloud can digital business models be developed and operated. In light of this, SAP's monolithic plan to move all existing clients to a standardised x86 architecture, Linux and HANA as the database platform no later than 2025, and to oblige them to use these in and from the cloud, makes perfect sense.

Existing SAP clients, however, take an entirely different view: only one-third of existing SAP clients see S/4 HANA as a basis for innovative business models, nearly 60 percent are still using Oracle databases and 62 percent will only gradually migrate to S/4 HANA. These are the findings of a study conducted by the market research and consulting firm PAC in collaboration with SNP AG, Dell, Intel and Arvato Systems (<http://bit.ly/2bxKuGQ>). "They do recognise the benefits S/4 HANA offers for scenarios like Big Data though," emphasises Frank Niemann, Vice-President of Software & SaaS Markets at the analyst firm and author of the study. According to PAC, the vast majority of SAP clients would run S/4 in their own data centre or through the classic hosting model. Another third would consider a hybrid cloud concept, while demand for 100% cloud is negligible for S/4. The reluctance towards the cloud is surprising only at first glance. After all, the manufacturing companies among the existing SAP clients, in particular, have spent many years investing heavily into individual adjustments – their own intellectual property. It remains unclear how this could be transferred to the cloud to run profitably and protected. In the worst-case scenario, previous expenditures must be written off and the special code rewritten.

Budget for Investments

In contrast to SAP's all-HANA and all-cloud message, the reality in most enterprises is more complex. But two things are certain: First of all, existing SAP clients need to define their own path into the digital future and must not simply put all their trust in SAP's strategy alone. Next, they need money. For the way into the brave new digital world is associated with investments, both in licenses and in infrastructure.

The possibilities for companies to increase their IT budgets are limited. It is, therefore, enormously important to identify and tap into savings. However this must not be a cheap solution that ultimately impede the digitalisation strategy. One area with high savings potential is support; 22 percent for services which cover only the SAP standard, but not the crucial individual adjustments – this raises the question of whether this even makes sense at all. In addition, only some of the existing SAP clients use the updates and new features in live operation.

Rimini Street: Save and Invest

"SAP is an excellent product. Many existing SAP clients have perfected their systems over the years, so they run stably and map their business processes perfectly," explains Jill Harrison, Rimini Street's Managing Director for Europe and Africa. "This will remain the case throughout the gradual migration to HANA. Existing SAP clients will occupy a fixed place even in the digitalisation and cloud strategy, for example, using hybrid models."

Analysts like Nucleus Research confirm the savings potential, but also attest to the quality of the support



Study author Frank Niemann, PAC:
Only one-third see S/4 as the basis
for innovative processes.

provided by Rimini Street. The manufacturer-independent third-party maintenance specialist offers as standard what SAP sells as premium support. This means all customisations are included in the maintenance service. As a result, clients not only receive comprehensive support for their SAP landscape – including those parts that are or will be built on HANA – but also save 50 percent of the annual maintenance fees. Furthermore, there are no costs for installing unwanted updates. Finally, businesses can deploy in-house or external SAP experts to work on innovations, rather than continue with their previous task of mapping support cases in the SAP standard in order to receive support from Walldorf. This relieves IT budgets and frees up funds for innovation. Smart saving means investing. (pmf)



Quality Service at Half the Cost

By switching to an independent software maintenance service, companies not only benefit financially – the support quality can also be increased, for example, in the context of compliance with tax and regulatory requirements. The examples of Univar and Atkins demonstrate the advantages that internationally successful companies can gain from this.

Better quality support and 50 percent lower cost for Univar

As one of the leading companies worldwide in the distribution of industrial and speciality chemicals, the US company Univar delivers products from its comprehensive portfolio to almost 115,000 clients. In 2013, Univar generated sales of 10.3 billion US dollars. "As a global company we constantly strive to gain added value for every dollar we spend. For me, this means winning back control of our ERP software schedule and optimising our investment in SAP software," says Erik Viens, Chief Information Officer for Univar. When the company's software maintenance costs for ECC 5.0 and 6.0 continued to increase, Univar decided in mid-2014 to try Rimini Street's independent support due to the attractive pricing and the high level of service. By switching to Rimini Street, the company was able to halve its support and maintenance costs, not least because support for customisations is included in the Rimini Street maintenance model at no extra charge. As a result, in-house employees and developers who previously had to provide support for these individual customisations gained time to devote towards value-creating activities. In addition, Rimini Street optimises interoperability with the rest of the IT infrastructure, enhancing the performance of the system. Finally, Rimini Street guarantees support for the current, stable software version for at least ten years. Univar is, therefore, able to avoid the updates which would have been necessary to maintain support for the SAP system. "We are now in a position to invest the significant savings we have made directly into projects that are important for our bu-

siness," explains Erik Viens. Univar used their freed-up budget, for example, for initiatives relating to client loyalty, client management and business intelligence.

The Atkins Challenge

In 2013, Atkins found themselves in a position familiar to many other organisations running Oracle: EBS 11.5.10 was moving to Sustaining Support, which meant virtually no support. The team at Atkins were very happy with their EBS stable system; it was performing and delivering what the business needed. They weighed their options of upgrading their system or breaking out of the traditional ERP upgrade cycle and driving their own roadmap. The problem with upgrading to R12 was that there was no business justification, no return on investment, to do so at that time. Oracle clearly seems to be investing mostly in its cloud business models with little in the way of enhancements for our EBS system. In fact, Atkins wanted to embark on a hybrid IT strategy and implement a series of emerging cloud-based applications for HCM, payroll, recruiting and benefits that would enhance its established EBS system. Along with moving its EBS support to Rimini Street, Atkins also moved its Oracle Database and Oracle Fusion Middleware support. Now the team enjoys better support of all their Oracle products. Better yet, Atkins could change the way they looked at dedicating resources by reinvesting cost savings and shifting attention to innovation rather than self-support or unnecessary upgrades. Not only were the Atkins' team receiving more responsive attention for basic ERP support issues, but they no longer had to devote resources to

support their EBS customisations. "With Oracle, you were always kind of tiptoeing around any customisations that you added" Martin says. This support model necessitated self-support and increased Atkins' total cost of maintenance. "With Rimini Street, it was always made clear to us, even before we came on board, that customisation support was core to their support program. It wasn't a hard black-and-white line between what's Oracle code versus our extensions or customisations," he adds. Now that its IT resources have been liberated to perform more value-added tasks than basic ERP support and maintenance, Atkins is extending its technology platform to grow the business. "We're making inroads in the cloud peripherally around our ERP" Martin says. Developing a hybrid IT approach enables the company to be more agile and responsive. Since moving to independent support, Martin reports that Atkins has seen more engagement from Oracle. Our relationship has improved," Martin says. "I think, overall, making the move to independent support has increased our ability to redirect resources to strategic initiatives."

Rimini Street®

In Europe, many clients trust Rimini Street Support. A few examples are:

- dsb GmbH
- Aurivo
- Albani Group
- Atkins
- Vinci
- Brand

A day in the life of Rimini Street SAP support engineer Joe van der Merwe –

“I’m a Panic Manager and I Love it!”

Every morning between 8:30 am and 9 am, Joe van der Merwe returns from taking his two oldest children to school and heads for his desk. With a cup of coffee at the ready, he starts up his computer. “First, I check the status of pending incidents every morning. Has a new incident been added overnight? Have solutions been found for those urgent incidents that were still open last night? These are the questions I ask myself to prioritise my work for the day,” explains the 39-year-old support engineer with 20 years of SAP experience under his belt before sipping his coffee.

In his role, thoroughness trumps speed. Rimini Street pays close attention to ensuring that all support engineers are vastly experienced, since they are all responsible for a certain number of clients. If this number is exceeded, the third-party maintenance provider hires additional staff. “This is an important point that I like about my work. I really have time to look after each and every client. This makes it virtually impossible that incidents don’t get resolved,” emphasises Joe.

This level of problem-solving expertise comes as no surprise. On average, the SAP support engineers at Rimini Street each have 10 years or more of professional experience, which they acquired either in the project or the support business. “In all modesty, we can say that my colleagues and I are all senior staff members, which has significant benefits for our clients,” emphasises Joe, adding: “If one of us ever gets stuck on an issue, we help each other out. This ensures that our focus is always on our client and their problem, not on us and our own state of mind. This kind of solution-driven team spirit is something I hadn’t encountered at any of my previous employers.”

Situations in which colleagues help one another may arise in particular when the cause of a client’s problem lies in a tiny detail, but after four hours of code analysis it’s very easy to not see the forest for the trees. In such cases, Joe van

der Merwe sends an email to his colleagues and takes a short walk or goes to lunch to clear his head. “What other company offers this kind of freedom and flexibility?” he asks as he looks out of his office window and into his garden.

Quality is Rimini Street’s top priority. And it thrives best where people can engage individually with their clients and draw fully on their skills and creativity. “Often it’s not about solving the specific case, but to change the problem in such a way that the request becomes solvable in the first place. I remember a case where the client wanted to call up SAP functions from the web interface. But that did not work,” says Joe. In the end, the solution was to call up the functional components directly, which were supposed to be executed via the menus in the original request. The client responded promptly: “I’m pretty sure that Joe is an ABAP Jedi,” he commented after the support incident was closed.

Putting the Customer First

Because that is what Rimini Street is all about: client satisfaction. This begins with response times. For example, support cases with priority 1, that is, failure of a productive SAP system, must receive a response from the responsible support engineer within 15 minutes. One member of staff is always on call and in charge of monitoring the incoming requests. Such colleagues are available for each time



“Panic Support Engineer” Joe van der Merwe, Rimini Street, on behalf of the SAP community

zone. If there is no response from the responsible support staff, the case will be escalated to the next higher level, for example, to Europe. If there is no response from there either within a few minutes, all support staff worldwide are alerted. “Naturally, this is more theory than reality, given that the average response time for priority 1 and 2 incidents is currently five minutes. Besides, even our CEO himself would be alerted before the 15 minutes response time lapses,” explains Joe van der Merwe. He is a SAP Senior

“This was my first support incident with Rimini Street. I wanted to put the support staff through their paces, and there was one case that SAP wasn’t able to resolve for more than two years. The manufacturer spent almost the entire year 2011 working on the problem with one of our programmers, but to no avail. I re-opened the ticket in June 2013 with a different description and chased down support about it for five months. Again to no avail, only numerous delaying tactics. When Joe came in contact with the case, he solved the problem in about a week. He was professional and courteous. Thank you very much for your help. I’m so glad that we switched to Rimini Street.”

Comment from a satisfied Rimini Street client after the resolution of a support claim

Support Engineer for Europe, as well as a specialist in ABAP programming and SAP Duet Enterprise, and has been with Rimini Street for almost three years now. Previously, he spent 17 years working as a programmer and support staff member in the SAP environment. This unique experience is what distinguishes the support engineers at Rimini Street. Joe, for example, took just a week to resolve a support case that had been open at the manufacturer for two years. The client's response was glowing (see box above).

"It's feedback that is based on a personal relationship with the client and genuine trust that makes my job so rewarding for me personally," Joe notes with satisfaction. "Clients are always delighted when they are able to work with the same contact person in case of problems. Imagine an SAP system fails and hundreds of employees can't carry out their work, or an entire production line may be about to stop. Even experienced SAP colleagues might panic at first," explains Joe. "So it's great if you can turn to a friend, so to speak. In such cases, I become my clients' consoler, panic manager, communication specialist and problem-solver all in one – and I love it."

The causes of such problems don't always have to be complicated. In one case, a client could no longer log onto the SAP system and start the product system after a system backup. The reason was rather simple: there was just not enough available space for the backup, so many backup files were damaged. In situations like this, it helps to keep a cool head to find the best recovery point from where the production system can be made functional again.

Because even the best support engineer can't know everything, Rimini Street ensures that the necessary expertise is available even before a contract is entered into with a client. Only then can our clients' entire SAP environment including all individual code changes be supported – which is the standard at Rimini Street.

Each month Joe resolves 15 to 25 cases. Most of them are assigned to category 3. They are queries that need to be solved, but have no major impact on the production system. "A good day for me is when I have resolved an issue or saved the day for one of my clients," sums up Joe. (pmf)

Rimini Street Experts lead the way into the Digital Future

The Rimini Street support engineers aren't the only experts in client requirements for enterprise software and SAP in particular. So are all team members responsible for the DACH region. Jill Harrison, Alisa Streifler and Dirk Schüller witnessed how ERP systems were introduced, further developed by the manufacturer and refined by the client with proprietary developments and adjustments. After this golden era, however, functional enhancements in the software portfolio became less frequent, were less relevant to the business or took longer than before. And today? Currently, the companies are faced with roadmaps on the manufacturer side that know only one direction: towards the cloud. Here, however, technical advancements take priority over functional developments. Increasingly, companies and especially existing SAP clients in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, therefore, question the point of the high manufacturer fees that burden their IT budgets and leave hardly any room for investments in innovations.



There came a point when Jill Harrison, head of Rimini Street Europe, also asked herself this question. Having founded the UK's second SAP reseller in 1997, she continues to be excited about SAP solutions and their benefits for businesses. By the same token, she has also recognised how important it can be for companies to take a fresh look at support so that their funds no longer flow primarily into IT operations, that is, maintaining the status quo, but are rather freed up for investments in the future. She has headed Rimini Street Europe since 2013 and, alongside her colleague Dirk Schüller, is focused on sales in the German-speaking region.



Dirk Schüller can also look back on many years of experience with SAP. He has worked for SAP system houses and consulting firms as well as SAP itself for around eight years. He is familiar with the concerns and requirements of existing SAP clients and is responsible for the acquisition of new clients in parts of Germany and German-speaking Switzerland. He joined Rimini Street in mid-2015 – which he believes was exactly the right time. In view of the megatrends of the cloud and digitalisation, businesses can no longer blindly rely on the manufacturers' strategies and need to develop their own digital agenda. In light of this, the independent third-party maintenance provider Rimini Street is an essential component in these companies' future IT strategies.



The third key member is Alisa Streifler. In her role as enterprise account manager, she supports the existing Rimini Street clients in the DACH market in all non-technical matters. She came to Rimini Street from Gartner in 2013 where she supported Oracle and SAP clients for 13 years. Alisa Streifler is also intimately familiar with the enterprise software market. She works very closely with Jill Harrison and Dirk Schüller and is involved very early in the sales process. Furthermore, she ensures that the information and knowledge obtained in the initial client meetings is passed on to the Rimini Street organisation and the support engineers. (pmf)

High and Rising Cost Concerns can be addressed Through Alternative Hybrid IT

IDG Connect interviewed 421 senior staff working for companies headquartered in the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Switzerland and Norway. The majority (69%) of organisations employ over 5,000 people.

Respondents work in a range of vertical sectors, the biggest of which is non computer related manufacturing (18%), followed by financial services (12%); Internet service provider/software/computer services' construction, architecture and engineering; and retail (all 10%).

Over a quarter (27%) are employed in board level positions including chief information officer (CIO), chief technology officer (CTO) and chief security officer (CSO), with 57 percent identifying themselves as either IT managers or IT directors.

Three applications and two software companies – SAP Business Suite, Oracle Database and Oracle E-Business Suite – dominate the current ERP landscape in the 11 European countries surveyed by IDG Connect though it is clear that some organisations use more than one ERP platform simultaneously.

The larger the business in terms of staff headcount, the more likely it is to use SAP Business Suite or Oracle Database, with small organisations preferring BusinessObjects.

Inevitably there is a strong correlation between the size of the organisation in question and the size of its annual ERP maintenance bill. Half of smaller organisations employing less than 1,000 people spend less than £100,000 per annum for example, compared to just ten percent of those with headcounts of 10,000 or more.

Fees also vary according to the specific ERP application currently in use within the organisation itself (see appendix) So while we see that an aggregate of 32-34 percent of organisations using either SAP Business Suite, Oracle Database or Oracle E-Business Suite spend over £500,000 a year (and 12-14% over £1m a year), that figure jumps to 39 percent for Siebel and 49% for BusinessObjects. It is clear that current ERP software vendor support and maintenance programs are

falling short of customer expectations in Europe, with widespread dissatisfaction apparent from multiple issues highlighted by the IDG Connect survey base.

With 53% of organisations paying in excess of £250,000 a year to maintain current ERP platforms and nearly 10% over £1m annually.

This indicates that stable, mature applications continue to meet business requirements whilst revamped alternatives do not offer sufficient innovation or value to merit updates.

This suggests access to skilled help desk staff and software engineers and or knowledge bases is often limited and/or low quality. Most organisations in Europe recognise the value of embracing hybrid IT initiatives that mix on- and off premise application and service delivery, and this is reflected in their plans for ERP systems.

Respondents recognise the potential of these contracts to cut costs, particularly in cases where the amount of support received is either small or expected to shrink over time and where the organisation has chosen to stick with a given application release rather than move to an updated version.

Future Strategies

Somewhat remarkably considering the issues previously reported with current ERP support and maintenance contracts, their high costs and the generally low levels of satisfaction expressed, only just over a third (38%) of those surveyed on aggregate thought their organisation was likely to consider switching their provision to third party ERP support and maintenance services in the next two years.

Using third party ERP support was considered most or very likely by a significantly higher number (57%) of companies employing between 5,000 and 10,000 employees specifically. But

it seems almost half of organisations across Western Europe on aggregate are nevertheless happier to stick with the devil they know (47% reported that their organisation was either very or most likely to keep or extend the contract with their current ERP software vendor in the next two years). Gartner acknowledged growing interest in third party support services in its report “Does Third Party Support Have a Role in Your Postmodern ERP Strategy” published in 2016. The research company noted that the cost of ERP system support could be aligned more closely to the amount of support needed by switching to a third party support provider, particularly in cases where the amount of support received is either small or expected to shrink over time and the organisation has chosen to stick with a given application release rather than move to an updated version.

Satisfaction Level

Satisfaction levels with current ERP system maintenance and support provision appears muted, with less than half of those polled rating access to highly skilled and supportive staff (48%) and support for customised code (41%) as good or exceptional.

That figure drops to 39% for the cost of annual support indicating a widespread perception that ERP system maintenance fees do not offer value for money. A quarter (26%) went even further, reporting themselves either unsatisfied or extremely unsatisfied with current support costs, reinforcing previous findings which point to issues with the high cost of ERP system support.

There does appear to be a close correlation between the fees that organisations spend on annual ERP support and maintenance and their satisfaction levels. Those that pay the most (over £1m a year) are generally more content

with current provision than those that pay the least (less than £100,000) a year for example.

A quarter on aggregate were dissatisfied with tax, legal and regulatory updates, which are often only made available to customers which have either upgraded to the latest version of the software and/or continue to pay for ongoing vendor support and maintenance fees.

Cost of Application Integration

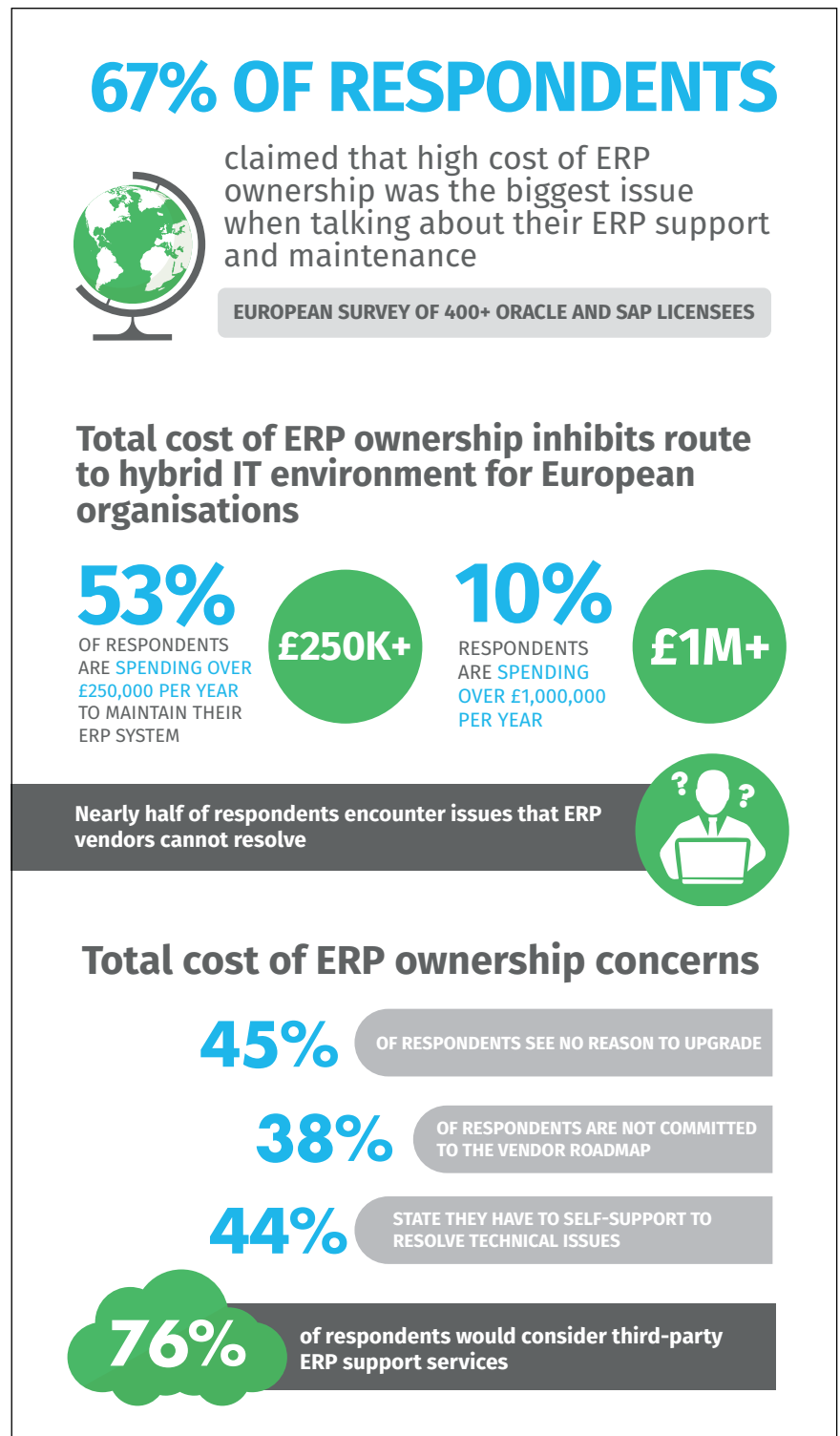
Current ERP systems are often integrated with a range of other applications. Organisations across Western Europe are seeking to improve business efficiencies by building additional capabilities into core applications and enhance process quality and employee productivity by centralizing data access and automating connectivity.

This is particularly true for customer relationship management (CRM) software, which sees ERP integration at 56% of organisations on aggregate. That figure is lower (45%) amongst smaller businesses employing less than 1,000 people specifically who see significantly greater integration with both finance/billing/accountancy (68%) and business intelligence and data analytics applications (77%) compared to their larger counterparts.

Integration with all six types of application is far more prevalent amongst companies paying higher ERP support and maintenance fees (over £1m a year) where the relative scale and depth of cross platform software requirements is likely to demand a price premium.

In many cases those CRM, finance/billing/accountancy, business intelligence and data analytics, e-commerce, SCM and reporting systems are provided as value added elements which are either pre-integrated or bolted on to broader ERP application suites. But many are also delivered post implementation as separate, third-party systems which may have more complex integration and support requirements that incur additional costs.

Total cost of ownership can be a particular problem when it comes to the confederation, management and maintenance of on-premise licensed applica-



Future strategy for ERP support: according to a survey conducted by IDG Connect on behalf of Rimini Street, three-quarters of surveyed Oracle and SAP licencees are considering third-party maintenance options.

tions and centrally hosted SaaS based services, for example. In some cases, it may be possible to minimise integration and support costs by keeping those systems in-house and/or outsourcing support and maintenance responsibility to third party suppliers.



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Answer 42, in response to a non-mathematical question, comes from the novel “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.”

Nothing but the Truth

In the novel “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” by Douglas Adams, 42 is the computer-calculated “Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything.” E-3 Magazine checked with Rimini Street where the added value and the risks associated with third-party maintenance of SAP software lie, and how willing people are to switch. Here is the whole truth.

I want to return to SAP in three years – how much will that cost me?

Previous client experiences show that a return to SAP support is typically free and not subject to any additional charges or penalties. In fact, returning clients are welcomed with open arms. And there are good reasons for this: despite its market power, SAP has no monopoly. The fact is that SAP does not want to ruin any future licencing business due to dissatisfied clients. After all, in many cases these clients could simply switch to SaaS solutions from other vendors if they require new functionalities. Based on Rimini Street’s experience, and despite the acquisition of new software licences, there are usually two reasons why clients return to SAP support: clients are transferred and the new parent company forces them to return to SAP support. Even in such cases, no additional payments have been demanded to date. In one case a client even remained with Rimini Street because of its excellent service quality. Clients wishing to acquire new SAP licences may do so in connection with a new maintenance con-

tract. Especially in the case of HANA or S/4 HANA, clients might be tempted to take this step in about three to five years. Until then, however, they could use Rimini Street support for half the price and then purchase the necessary licenses with the money saved. However, they should consider very carefully whether they already want to deploy S/4 HANA in three to five years’ time. Because these don’t constitute an upgrade, but rather a new implementation with associated project costs for expenses and infrastructure. What’s more, analysts predict that S/4 HANA will take at least another five to ten years to become a mature product. The purchase of HANA licences may be a possibility in three years – if the client really needs the associated performance tunings. But these licences can also be obtained independently of a maintenance contract with SAP. Additionally, Rimini Street offers support for the HANA database – in conjunction with the corresponding cost advantages.

Does Rimini Street also provide support for upgrades?

Before the support contract with SAP ends, the Rimini Street support engineers work with the client to archive most eligible software components for later upgrades. The support staff members responsible for the respective client familiarise themselves with planned upgrade projects and are available for support requests – regardless of how many there are. For the first few days after a client’s upgrade goes live, the support engineers additionally provide hands-on support to the client and are on call 24/7 during this period.

How can a client implement an upgrade after switching to Rimini Street and making changes to their own IT environment?

During the onboarding process with Rimini Street and before the end of the support contract with SAP, clients can obtain and download certain software components for later use. Here the Rimini Street support engineers assist with putting together the software list. Subsequently, clients can create XML files for their SAP environments, which remain usable with SAP even after the support contract has

expired. These don't usually need to be modified if changes are made to the SAP configuration, for example, if new tax laws need to be implemented. In case there are major changes, however, these XML files can be adapted because they are editable. The Rimini Street support engineers can also provide assistance here. In general, Rimini Street invests in expert know-how and tools across all complex technology infrastructure components. This enables independent third-party maintenance providers to reliably extend the life of enterprise software through tried and tested interoperability solutions. Rimini Street has a dedicated team for support services in the field of interoperability. The company's Technical Engineering Architects have product-specific expertise and each boast, on average, far more than 10 years of experience with Oracle and SAP applications in which they specialise. Additionally, Rimini Street has its own research and development department for prototyping, custom development and integration with third-party solutions. Even after switching to Rimini Street, clients can change their infrastructure and configure, customise and implement new software components for at least 15 years.

How can clients without SAP support acquire hardware and licence keys?

SAP licence keys for hardware migrations can be purchased independently of support contracts. After all, SAP licences are hardware and technology independent. Clients who no longer pay maintenance fees to SAP receive a link to the SAP Licensing Portal from Walldorf. Through this portal they can continue to purchase their keys for licences and developers.

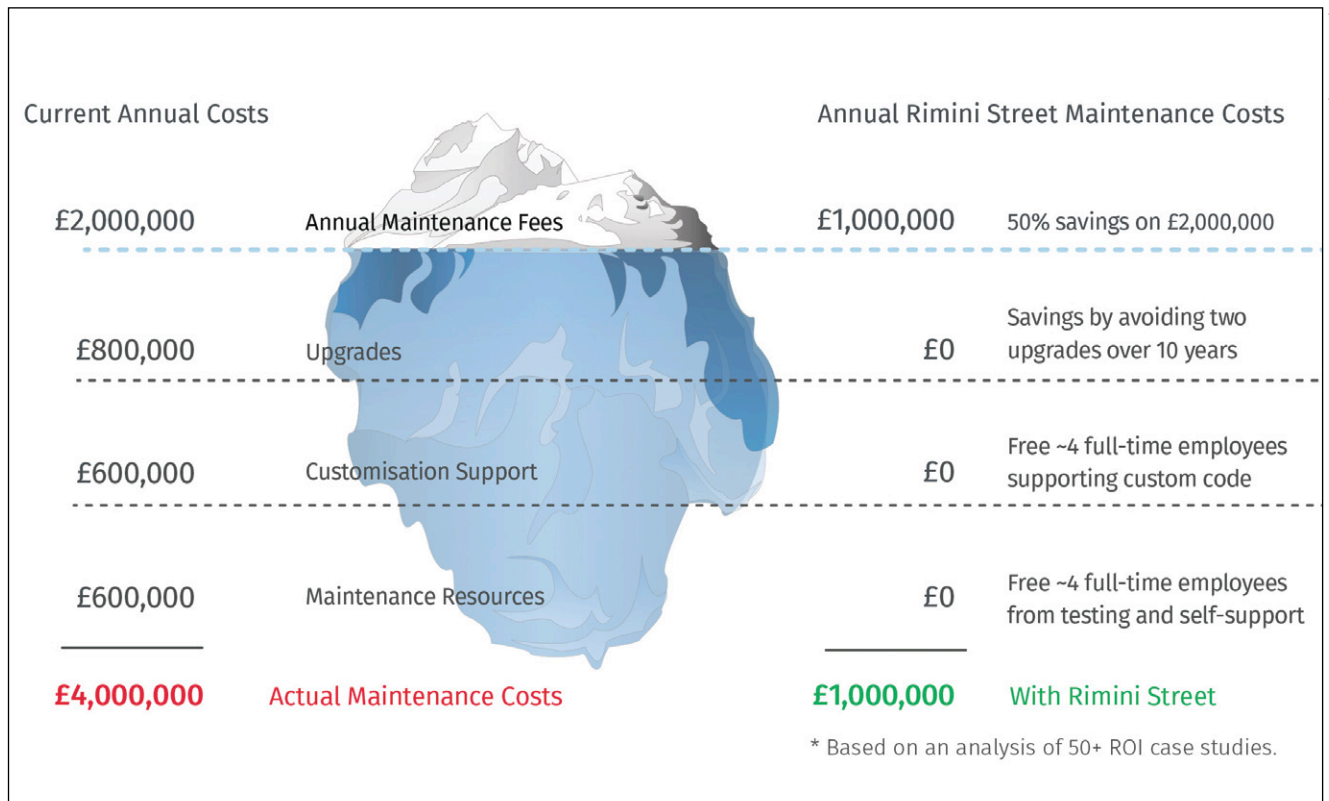
What about clients who need a support pack?

During the onboarding process, and while the support contract with SAP is still valid, Rimini Street provides a complete, ISO-certified archive to which its clients are entitled. Clients can then decide for themselves when they want to implement which update. One of the major advantages clients appreciate about Rimini Street is the independence of the support services when it comes to installing the support or enhancement packs. This saves them a lot of time, money and effort. SAP's support packs are generic and often need to be customised to each individual client environment or undergo intensive testing before they can be installed. Rimini Street fixes, on the other hand, are always

customised to the client's environment and sometimes require only little testing.

How can the risk be eliminated if Rimini Street is not able to resolve certain client issues?

No company in the world, neither SAP nor Rimini Street, can guarantee to solve all support cases. Nevertheless, the resolution rate of the Rimini Street support team is higher than that of the standard SAP support. There are several reasons for this: Rimini Street creates custom fixes for each client, rather than generic ones which must be suitable for as many clients as possible. In addition, Rimini Street provides support for customised solutions that have a much lower risk of having an effect on other parts of the SAP landscape. Rimini Street has advanced the support business model and never lost any clients due to a failure to provide an agreed service. With more than 1,600 clients, Rimini Street has so far never been unable to resolve a client issue through a fix, configuration or other means. According to thousands of client surveys, the average client satisfaction rate is 4.8 on a scale of 1 to 5 – evidence of a truly satisfied client base. Overall, the risks for clients are, therefore, lower when using Rimini Street support. (pmf)



Source: Nucleus Research

Iceberg graphic: SAP clients need to look closely at direct (visible) and indirect costs.

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Engineered for Support™

Extend and Innovate Enterprise Software Applications

Cut Oracle® & SAP® Annual Support Costs by 50%



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- SAP HANA Database
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