

E-3 exclusive interview with Gerhard Kuppler, Vice President SAP Alliances, Oracle

Going beyond 2025

SAP partner Oracle thinks it is most likely that many major SAP customers will continue to operate their Netweaver-based application systems even after 2025.

An E-3 exclusive interview with Gerhard Kuppler, VP SAP Alliances, Oracle.

By Gottfried Welz, freelance IT writer

Gottfried Welz, E-3: How would you describe Oracle's current relationship with SAP?

Gerhard Kuppler: We have been working with SAP for over 30 years now and we have more than ten thousand joint customers. Those include many major companies; some even have the biggest SAP systems worldwide! Working together with SAP was always determined by our joint customer base. Oracle always tried to keep the relationship serious, responsible, and stable, and we will continue to do so.

We expect that customers who leverage Business Suite or the Netweaver stack will continue to operate smoothly until at least 2025. This is nothing new - SAP has said the same thing several times already. However, we also expect that SAP will be responsible, especially considering the major companies we are working with. Therefore, we strongly believe that big SAP customers will continue operating their Business Suite or SAP classic long after 2025 - until 2030 or even 2035.

E-3: There are still quite a few SAP customers who use Oracle products, especially the Oracle database for SAP in combination with SAP classic and Netweaver-based applications. What can they expect regarding their SAP/Oracle operations in the next years, say until 2025?

Kuppler: Well, SAP should be the one to answer this question! First and foremost, this is about SAP applications and SAP customers. We see it every day: Customers have made thousands of modifications. These modifications make migrating to a new system environment almost impossible - or at least very difficult. Circling back to what I said before: We strongly believe that customers, especially those with numerous modifications, will motivate SAP to provide support even after 2025.

E-3: What would happen if Oracle just decided not to work with SAP anymore?

Kuppler: This question is too theoretical to really answer it. Both companies are signifi-



Gerhard Kuppler,
Vice President SAP
Alliances, Oracle

cant players in the market. As such, we have certain responsibilities. It is highly unlikely that one of us would just neglect these responsibilities all of a sudden.

E-3: Customers sometimes complain about high Oracle licensing costs, also in the context of using VMs in a SAP environment. Why isn't Oracle being a little more forthcoming?

Kuppler: If customers talk to Oracle directly and productively about it, company and client can usually come up with tangible, reasonable solutions in the end. However, there will always be discussions about prices. Apart from that, you also have to see the value that Oracle solutions add to SAP systems - which is very high. Otherwise Oracle would not have such a big market

share in the SAP environment. SAP customers who purchase Oracle products appreciate the stability, security and scalability that we add to their infrastructures.

E-3: For years now, SAP has been using Java or a Java variant. How will the relationship between SAP and Oracle evolve in this regard?

Kuppler: Again, this is more of a question for SAP itself. All I can say is that SAP and Oracle have long-term agreements concerning Java.

E-3: In autumn 2017, Oracle surprised customers with an announcement: SAP can now operate in the Oracle Cloud - and it is even SAP-certified. What was the reason for Oracle to create a cloud infrastruc-

ture for SAP systems?

Kuppler: SAP decided to certify the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI), as it meets all the necessary certification requirements.

Moreover, it is part of our long-term agreements with SAP. Our goal is to offer SAP Business Suite customers the opportunity to leverage the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. Customers benefit for example from Exadata Cloud Services which they can use through the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. Additionally, they can profit from Oracle Bare Metal in OCI as well as virtualized systems.

More announcements concerning Oracle Cloud will follow soon. We want to make sure that customers using Oracle systems can operate their IT landscapes on-premise and off-premise. This is especially interesting for customers who leverage SAP in addition to Oracle applications and solutions.

E-3: How are joint customers from SAP and Oracle reacting to this cloud offer?

Kuppler: SAP customers are very interested in OCI, and there are customers already using it as well. Basically, anytime joint customers need a hardware refresh, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure comes into play. That's because it is a real alternative to on-premise hardware. Customers who additionally also have to leverage a high-performance infrastructure can benefit from Oracle Exadata Cloud Services in many ways.

E-3: And what about Hana? Could Hana and Hana-based applications soon be operated in the Oracle Cloud?

Kuppler: This decision is SAP's to make.

E-3: At Oracle Open World 2018, the general availability of the Autonomous Database (18c) was announced. Will this Oracle database version also be available to SAP customers?

Kuppler: Well, we are thinking about providing certain features of the Autonomous Database to SAP customers as well. However, Oracle has yet to decide about what those features will be and when they will be available.

E-3: Thank you for the interview.

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