LINUX

Migration or Innovation

SAP users are caught between the conflicting priorities of migration and innovation. Lift-and-shift migration projects often dominate, leaving innovation on the sidelines. But there is a better way.

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Linux is a platform for SAP ERP, from R/3 to ECC 6.0, and the sole operating system for Hana. Linux is at the forefront of open source innovation at SAP. This opinion piece primarily focuses on Linux/Hana architectures.

A possible motto could be "drive by modernization and innovation" - that is, combining migration and innovation without slowing down migration. The reconfirmation of the 2027 deadline is forcing SAP users to migrate databases to SAP Hana and applications to SAP S/4, but the overall goal is to transform the often siloed SAP landscape into an integrated enterprise IT as part of an innovation strategy.

In the past, many organizations followed a step-by-step strategy, tackling modernization only after migration has been completed. This was due to the fact that modernization and optimization at the same time as migration, often added years to the project timeline. However, what was once true no longer applies today. Innovation is not a project phase, but an ongoing and accompanying initiative—open source principles are a prime example. A "lift and shift plus" approach is now possible, i.e., a migration scenario that considers innovation as an integral part from the very beginning.

The phases of modernization

In the past, a modernization process typically took place in four phases: analysis, pre-projects and housekeeping, the actual technical migration to the target architecture, and finally the modernization and integration of innovative solutions. This process describes a more SAP-focused "inside-out" view and delays the desired integration and "outside-in" added value until the end of the migration.

However, even in the SAP world, there is no way around new applications, techniques, and architectures to drive digital transformation. These include hybrid multi-cloud platforms, cloud-native applications, AI and ML, data analytics, big data, and RPA. AI and ML in particular are becoming increasingly important for SAP users. A great many companies are developing and training models with SAP data, and then running them in production environments such as factory and edge scenarios.

It is common knowledge that an open hybrid cloud platform is the ideal basis for this development and deployment process.

Open Source

But what is the foundation for implementing approaches that combine migration scenarios with modernization and innovation themes? That would be open source technologies, cloud-native development models, certified enterprise Kubernetes platforms, and automation solutions, specifically Red Hat OpenShift and Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform. More and more SAP partners, tools, and solutions are building on this very foundation.

Quick wins without disrupting migrations, SAP visibility in project progress, near real-time KPIs, and ballast reduction are just a few of the scenarios that can be implemented without long project lead times. In addition, Red Hat OpenShift also serves simultaneously as a foundation for modernizing and extending existing in-house Abap developments.

Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform is increasingly establishing itself as a bridge builder for automation—with self-services for high-level innovation topics beyond technical migration. Additionally, topics such as compliance, security, and governance, which are traditionally associated with a high manual effort, can be reduced through automation. Automation can also enable faster implementation of the new supply chain due diligence law, for example, by connecting disparate data sources.

It is clear that lift-and-shift processes have their place; however, the processes do not have to be limited to purely technical migration; modernization can also be addressed at the same time. Innovation can also be at the forefront. So why wait? Customers can take the first steps to success today: the platforms are already available—all proven and certified!