

2021-2022

# RESEARCH AGENDA

## 2021-22 SAPinsider Research Topics

### The DART™ Methodology

SAPinsider has rewritten the rules of research to provide demonstrable deliverables from its fact-based approach. The DART methodology serves as the very foundation on which SAPinsider educates end users to act, creates market awareness, drives demand, empowers sales forces, and validates return on investments. It's no wonder that organizations worldwide turn to SAPinsider for research with results. The DART methodology provides actionable insights including:

**Drivers** – These are macro level events that are impacting an organization. They can be both external and internal and require the implementation of strategic plans, people, processes and systems.

**Actions** – These are strategies that companies can implement to address the drivers impact on the business. These are the integration of people, process and technology. The should be business first but fully leverage technology enabled solutions to be relevant for our focus.

**Requirements** – These are business and process level requirements to support the strategies. These tend to be end-to-end for a business process.

**Technology** – There are technology and systems related requirements that enable the business requirements and support the overall strategies that the company is taking, they must consider the current technology architecture and provide for the adoption of new and innovative technology enabled capabilities.

### How SAPinsiders Participate in the Research

The SAPinsider research process is an invitation-only quantitative survey and qualitative interview-based method focused on the voice of the 600,000+ global SAPinsider community. During the course of a year, we survey and interview several thousand SAPinsiders and synthesize their insights. This peer-best-practices-led benchmarking research process extracts intricate knowledge of SAP and related ecosystem solutions, migration paths, road map and other insights in relation to the business drivers, strategic actions and requirements of end- users. The end objective of our research is to enable SAP users adopt, and upgrade technology efficiently based on sound decisions, performance parameters and business value.

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**October**

## Data Warehousing/Data Management in the Cloud

With 99% of the members of the SAPinsider Community running at least some applications in the cloud, determining where and how data will be stored in the cloud is a critical need. This need is demonstrated by the fact that data warehousing, data lakes, and data storage represent the second most important workload in the cloud. This SAPinsider research will look at how organizations are planning on storing that data, what tools they are using for storing and managing that data, and what plans they have moving forward.

## Trends in Tax

Revenue authorities across all regions continue to step up enforcement capabilities, amid more robust enhanced electronic filing and invoicing requirements, in support of an expanding indirect tax environment. Greater tax compliance requirements add complexity to an already rapidly changing business landscape, putting pressure on CFOs and tax professionals to provide real-time reporting and insights. Best-in-class organizations are prioritizing investments in data management and process automation tools to build end-to-end visibility across digital tax workflows and processes. SAP S/4HANA, universal journal, and tax engine represent some of the key technologies forming the foundation for an enhanced digital tax plan. Our research will explore the trends and strategies, shaping investment decisions around tax automation. The report will also examine the impact of indirect tax policy momentum occurring across Europe.

**November**

## Future of Business Intelligence

We have entered the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Technology has taken a massive leap in the last decade and is expected to take another exponential leap in this coming decade, leading to rapid advances in the discipline of data science. Data science practices introduced the world of business to the significant impact AI and ML tools. With the emergence of these new tools and technologies, a key question that organizations that leverage BI tools and the end user of BI tools are asking is : What is going to be the future of Business Intelligence? The objective of this report is to explore the answer to this question by capturing the knowledge and insights accumulated by the SAPinsider community and combining those insights with our industry insights.

## Optimizing Financial Close and Record-to-Report Process

Over the last two years, SAPinsider research has shown that the financial close and record to-report process represent significant pain points for most organizations. Over-reliance on manual processes and poorly integrated systems have left many companies struggling with inefficiency. This benchmark report explores where SAPinsiders are when it comes to improving their core finance and accounting processes. Understand where companies are with their use of automation and intelligence, and learn whether or not the move to SAP S/4HANA has had a significant impact on the record-to-report process. Learn what blend of

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SAP and non-SAP solutions companies are investing in and what the current outlook is on custom vs. the “best practices” approach.

## HR State of the Market

For many organizations, HR is the last department to receive technology investment. Still, the trend to more remote work and changing employee expectations are putting the spotlight on HR. Cloud offerings have become the dominant force in HR technology. There are more and more options for outsourcing the management of everything in HR from software to the processes. In this report, we will examine what is driving companies to address HR needs, what actions they are taking to create more effective HR processes, the results they expect to get from their HR departments, the technologies that HR departments are using to accomplish their goals, and what HR functions will be most important for 2022.

## RISE with SAP

SAP announced their RISE with SAP solution in January 2021, transforming their cloud-based approach and offerings. Since January, SAP has extended the offering to include HXM and procurement features, as well as announcing industry specific versions. But while many customers expressed an initial interest in learning more about the solution, it is unclear how many plan on adopting it in the long term. Our research will explore whether SAPinsiders plan on adopting RISE with SAP, if they are leveraging the Business Process Intelligence features to help drive their business transformation projects, and how much traction the solution is getting in the marketplace.

## The CIO's 2021 Transformation Report Card: Who's Winning and Why

Digital transformation and innovation remains a top priority for CIOs and other tech leaders. But how are these projects going and are they delivering tangible benefit to both business and IT? This executive research report study examines data and input from a variety of tech leaders across many of the major industries. We will look at how leaders are measuring ROI from their transformation initiatives related to efficiency, productivity, and the ability to support new business models and products. We will explore the key factors that are separating successful transformation initiatives from failing projects. Leaders will describe in their own words how they are scoping initial projects and establishing important metrics. You will also learn how CIOs are increasing collaboration between business and IT, addressing change management challenges, and putting innovation in the hands of the entire organization.

December

## Inventory Management and Optimization

Traditionally, organizations are challenged with inventory optimization at sites in the supply chain often hold excess inventories to avoid stock outs. This challenge is further compounded in a multi-echelon supply chain environment with many locations within the enterprise. With the advent of the pandemic, a new norm is gathering pace with companies shifting their inventory management strategies to accommodate the increasing demand for responsive supply chain requiring distribution centers to be closer to the customers. The

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objective of this report is to answer what emerging technologies have been developed to meet the inventory management and optimization challenges. Through this research SAPinsider will look at what companies look for in solution capabilities, tools that connect the warehouse with effective WMS solutions, inventory optimization solutions, initiatives being undertaken, and lessons learned.

## Change Management and Testing for SAP

As organizations deploy new systems and update existing applications, they need to ensure that these systems are functioning without error. This same requirement can exist when moving changes from development and test systems into QA and production as everything needs to be performing as expected to avoid business disruption. This SAPinsider research will examine the tools that organizations are using to manage changes to systems and environments, how they are performing testing, and what challenges they are facing in performing these tasks.

## Analytics in The Cloud

As organizations digitalize at a rapid pace, the amount of data that their processes are generating is exponential. Rapid expansion of edge analytics and collection of unstructured data is also proliferating. As organizations move to cloud-based data platforms and warehouses, they are also looking at cloud-based analytics applications. Analytics in the cloud offers several advantages like agility, flexibility, ease of integration and rapid innovation that align with today's rapidly evolving data and analytics landscape. This report will examine where SAPinsiders are in their journey, what are their pain points and their planned roadmaps.

January

## Automation in Finance

Organizations targeting end-to-end visibility require automation across core finance functions as part of an overall financial transformation that translates daily business activity into real-time insights. In this report, SAPinsider will deliver an update on the implementation of automation tools and maturity of automation strategies within core financial management functions. This SAPinsider report will benchmark the trends and progress of SAP customers in automating processes, identify the tools they use and plan to use, and highlight the challenges and benefits of financial process automation. Finally, this research will investigate the future of automation in finance to see what's next for this topic.

## Transformation in the Enterprise

While some organizations are already well advanced with their overall business transformation, but true business transformation is more than just moving workloads to the cloud. Features in RISE with SAP are helping accelerate or jump start that deeper business transformation for those who may not have already started, but it is important to gain an understanding of what business transformation is before it can be properly implemented. This research will examine whether organizations are going through a digital or business transformation, what that transformation means to them, how far they have reached, what

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workloads they may be transforming, and what infrastructure they are using to support that transformation.

## Automation in GRC

GRC teams are increasingly important to organizations, and GRC professionals may be expected to do more with less. Automation is key to enabling GRC teams to be more efficient, and allows GRC professionals to focus more on the areas where the organization is most vulnerable. This research will explore what is motivating organizations to automate in GRC, what strategies they are taking to automate, what types of tools they are using to automate, and what they hope to achieve through GRC automation.

February

## AI and ML: State of The Market

We have entered the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Technology has taken a massive leap in the last decade and is expected to take another exponential leap in this coming decade, leading to rapid advances in the discipline of data science. Data science practices introduced the world of business to the significant impact AI and ML tools. This report intends to examine where SAPinsiders are in their AI and ML journeys, what pain points they plan to alleviate leveraging AI and ML, and what is their roadmap to build AI and ML enabled capabilities within their organization.

## The CIOs 2022 Agenda for SAP, SAP S/4HANA, the Cloud and Beyond

2021 has certainly been a year of transition for both business and IT teams. But what does 2022 hold in store for Tech Leaders who run SAP? This executive benchmark study delves into the key organizational and technology focused priorities that CIOs who run SAP are investing in for 2022. Learn how executives continue to navigate the challenges of managing hybrid work environments. See what progress they have made in their SAP S/4HANA and Cloud journeys and whether or not these technological shifts are truly driving transformation and innovation within their business. Understand the key skills and talent that leaders are betting on and how they are evolving their current SAP, business, and IT organizations. We will compare results between our 2021 and 2022 benchmark studies so that you can see what trends are accelerating and which ones are struggling to gain traction amongst technology executives.

## Application Development for SAP

SAPinsiders have traditionally used ABAP as their core development language for customizing and enhancing SAP applications. But with organizations now accelerating their adoption of cloud-based technologies, there are many low-code and no-code alternatives alongside more traditional programming languages. Although SAP has made significant efforts to focus more on the developers that are key part of their ecosystem, it can be difficult for SAPinsiders to understand where they should focus their teams from a skills and education standpoint to have the most impact on technologies they may only just be adopting. This research will explore where organizations are focusing their development

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efforts, what types of tools they are investing in terms of both education and capabilities, and what their plans are for the future.

## Cash Management and Visibility

Exponential transaction growth across mobile and digital channels, coupled with supply/demand shocks and business disruptions, provide the catalysts for SAPinsider member organizations to modernize cash management operations. For business leaders, transparency and accuracy across cash flow activities are critical to generating on-demand insights that detail the proper health of your organization. As a result, Finance and IT teams are rethinking end-to-end core business processes (O2C, Q2C, P2P, S2P). In addition, how to optimize the finance functions and workflows that support them (invoicing, payments, AR/AP, bank connectivity) to improve real-time cash visibility. In this report, we examine the cash, treasury, billing/revenue management strategies of our SAPinsider finance community and benchmark the utilization trends and process shifts across SAP ERP, SAP partner, and third-party solutions, tools, and services.

**March**

## Workforce Movement: State of the Market

Companies in many industries are finding it more difficult to recruit and retain employees in key positions. This has put pressure on HR teams to come up with new ways to either retain their current staff or explore new talent that was available. Some industries have struggled to meet staffing requirements in general. In this report, we will explore what strategies companies are using to recruit, onboard, and retain top talent and what is driving them to build out to build out their workforce movement capabilities. We'll also examine what they expect to achieve from their recruiting, onboarding, rehire, and retention programs, and what technologies they are using to meet those expectations.

## Cybersecurity Threats to SAP Systems

Cybersecurity has become an increasingly important topic over the past year, particularly as SAP systems become a central point of business and financial truth within the organization and are more desirable as targets. With growing numbers of businesses being hit by ransomware or supply chain attacks, or a combination of both, understanding the nature of threats to SAP systems and what organizations can do to protect themselves is critical. This report will determine the most important factors driving organizations to protect their SAP systems, the tools that they are using to secure them from both external and internal exploits, and the strategies that they are taking to ensure the data in their SAP systems is secure.

## Plant Maintenance and Asset Management

While Plant Maintenance and Asset Management solutions have been around for some time, they have not always coexisted. The convergence these technologies has become a critical competitive tool for organizations, and with recent trends many end users and organizations are looking at more effective real-time tracking, asset uptime visibility, and plant reliability for their critical plant assets. This report will evaluate how technologies like collecting asset-level performance data and driving it through Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning-based

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analytical engines can enable predictive plant maintenance impacting overall plant performance and eliminate downtime.

## **SAP S/4HANA Finance and Central Finance**

Multinational organizations are increasingly selecting SAP S/4HANA Central Finance as the primary technology to launch their digital transformation journey. The Universal Journal can deliver near-term ROI for CFOs validate the long-term vision for the financial system of the future. SAP S/4HANA Central Finance provides CIOs the flexibility to proceed with greenfield, brownfield deployment and standardize highly customized and complex systems at their own pace. SAPinsider will highlight the different ways SAP customers are handling financial data and closing processes, while updating performance of implementation strategies against benchmark data.

## **Data Management and SAP HANA**

The SAP HANA database has become the back end for SAP systems from ERP to analytics and multiple line of business solutions. Whether this is running in an on-premise environment, or organizations are leveraging a fully cloud-based data lake that they can use to drive real-time decision making across the enterprise, SAP HANA is the tool that many SAPinsiders are using as their primary repository for data. But effectively managing that data and fully leveraging SAP HANA are key tasks that can be complex and not easily achieved. This research will examine whether organizations are adapting SAP HANA as their primary data store, what is driving their data storage and data management decisions, and how much impact the positioning of SAP HANA has had on their broader plans for data within the organization.

**May**

## **SAP S/4HANA Migration Benchmark Report**

Over the last three years, SAPinsider research has showed a steady increase in the proportion of those who have already adopted SAP S/4HANA. However, our 2021 research on this topic showed an increase for the first time in three years in those who indicated that they currently have no plans to make the move. These customers have used the extension of mainstream maintenance provided by SAP to put off a long-term, expensive project. This state of the market report will determine where the SAPinsider community currently stands with their plans to move to SAP S/4HANA, and whether those that delayed their plans are starting to re-evaluate that decision. We will look at the data behind these findings, as well as the transition strategies of the survey respondents.

## **GRC: State of the Market 2022**

Governance, risk, and compliance is becoming increasingly important as companies move to new technologies, many of which are in the cloud. In this report, we will revisit our 2021 benchmark to determine what has changed for companies in the past year regarding GRC. We will explore what is now driving their GRC strategies, how and why their GRC actions expectations may be changing, and the trend of GRC technology adoption.

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## Process Automation and SAP S/4HANA

Efficient business processes are the lifeblood of any organization. The opportunity to leverage intelligent technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and various forms of robotic process automation are abundant today, but organizations need to carefully select the right technologies and solutions that are the right fit for their business culture, skillsets, and existing solutions. This benchmark report revisits where SAPinsiders are on the maturity curve when it comes to process automation across core functional areas. We'll explore key technology investments and help customers navigate the challenges of automating processes between divisions and organizations.

June

## Data-Driven Financial Planning & Analysis, Forecasting

Financial planning and analysis (FP&A) has historically been manual, data-intensive, and complex. However, finance function innovation now allows finance professionals to pull financial metrics across multiple systems quickly. Data-driven planning mirrors the current operating environment where collaboration and cutting through data silos are critical. With modern planning solutions, finance teams spend less time on manual tasks and more analyzing data. As a result, organizations gain visibility into their current situation and potential outcomes based on different assumptions or decisions made today. We will explore what drives the FP&A strategies and solutions organizations are implementing and leverage the data to understand better where SAPinsiders are in their technology adoption journey.

## Cloud and SAP S/4HANA DevOps

A well planned and architected move to S/4HANA in the cloud can provide business impact, but it can be very time-consuming, disruptive, and risky. Hence, an increasing number of SAP customers are adopting DevOps to deliver faster and less risky deployment of new SAP applications and upgrades. Companies are trying to overcome people, process and technology challenges to DevOps all the way from requirements planning, continuous integration, testing, delivery to deployment. Companies that already have strong DevOps in non-SAP applications have an advantage.

July

## Deployment Approaches for SAP S/4HANA

Over the past three years SAPinsider has tracked how organizations are deploying SAP S/4HANA. While those who have already adopted the solution were more likely to be driven by a business need to transform and update processes combined with having increased flexibility and scalability in supporting infrastructure, the upcoming end of maintenance of existing ERP systems remains the primary driver for those who are still evaluating the solution or are yet to make plans. This SAPinsider report will examine what deployment models organizations are looking to use, how those are changing from what previous research has shown, and what impact offerings like RISE with SAP are having on deployment strategy and choices.

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## Payroll State of the Market

Companies may fear change in payroll more than any other area—getting a paycheck wrong is the most surefire route to an unhappy employee. However, the rise of cloud payroll offerings that offer new capabilities and managed payroll services that purport to guarantee accuracy may be causing some organizations to re-examine their payroll processes and systems. If this follow-up to our 2019 Payroll and Its Impact on Cloud HR report, we will examine what is driving companies to transform payroll strategies, what processes are most important, what they expect to get out of any payroll transformation, and the payroll technologies they are using or evaluating.

## Supply Chain Planning in the Cloud

Supply chain complexities and disruptions today require not only real-time visibility but also end-to-end visibility to every nook and corner within your global supply chain footprint. Add to this the imperative to plan and execute in near-real time as well and limitations of certain on-premise data and analytics infrastructure come to limelight. To address the feature requirements of planning tools for the new age supply chains, many providers and end-users are looking at the cloud. The ability to integrate with edge solutions, collect, analyze and plan in near-real time, becomes much more feasible and scalable in a cloud-based tool and/or infrastructure. This research report explores that trend and evaluates where SAPinsiders are in their journey.

**August**

## Master Data Management for Finance Function

Financial systems generate more master data than any other business unit. However, many companies operate in siloed processes. As a result, multiple systems hold parts of the financial data, making it difficult to access and modify, separated from all other applications or platforms, and without the use of their tools. Master data management enables finance organizations to ensure accurate, complete, and consistent master data across finance applications, finance users, and financial reporting infrastructure. This report will examine the core strategies, and technologies organizations are evaluating, investing in, and using to govern their master data properly for use across the financial function.

## Integration in the Hyper-Connected Landscape

For the last two years, SAPInsider has been tracking the requirements, challenges, and best practices of integrating SAP ERP with other SAP and non-SAP applications, both on the cloud and on premise. Past research has proven the increase in the quantity and complexity of integration. Several new technologies and tools are being deployed to solve this challenge and new governance models and processes are being tried. In this research, we will continue to examine these trends and understand how SAP customers are solving this challenge and how new technologies are being deployed.

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## Risk Management in Hybrid Environments

It is becoming more and more common for companies to deploy hybrid enterprise systems—meaning some are hosted on-premise, while others are hosted in the cloud. Additionally, these systems are often best-of-breed, which means they may have varying access touchpoints. Finally, employees are looking to access systems in various locations. All of these hybrid systems and access points create extra levels of risk for GRC and Security teams to address. In this research, we will examine how SAPinsiders are solving the issue of elevated risk in hybrid environments.

**September**

## Enterprise Cloud Deployment

For the last three years, SAPinsider has tracked the movement of SAP workloads to cloud environments where organizations have been looking to improve flexibility and scalability, deploy solutions more rapidly, and provide a consolidated data set for analytics and AI solutions. This report will determine where the SAPinsider currently stands with moving their SAP workloads to the cloud, and what cloud environments they are using. We will examine the trends with these findings, following the changes over the past years, and examining which workloads are most likely to be deployed in the cloud and which are still lagging.

## Process Automation in Supply Chain

In SAPinsider SOM research (Feb 2021), SAPinsiders highlighted that process automation, and specifically process automation in finance and supply chain processes was a key objective for them. This report will understand the progress SAPinsiders have made in the area of supply chain process automation, where they currently are, what are the technologies and vendors they are looking at from an automation perspective and what is their future state roadmap.

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## Research Taxonomy

Month	Report	Analytics, Automation, and AI	Application Development & Integration	CIO	ERP Platform & Infrastructure	Financial Management	GRC	HCM	IT Operations & Infrastructure	SCM	Security
October	Data Warehousing/ Data Management in the Cloud										
October	Trends in Tax										
November	The Future of Business Intelligence										
November	Optimizing Finance Close and Record-to-Report Process										
November	HR State of the Market										
November	RISE with SAP										
November	The CIO's 2021 Transformation Report Card										
December	Inventory Management and Optimization										
December	Change Management and Testing for SAP										
December	Analytics in The Cloud										
January	Automation in Finance										
January	Transformation in the Enterprise										
January	Automation in GRC										
February	AI and Machine Learning: State of the Market										
February	The CIO's 2022 Agenda for SAP, SAP S/4HANA, the Cloud and Beyond										
February	Development in the SAP Landscape										
February	Optimizing Order-to-Cash Cycles										
February	Cash Management and Visibility										
March	Plant Maintenance and Asset Management										
March	Workforce Movement: State of the Market										
March	Cybersecurity Threats to SAP Systems										
April	SAP S/4HANA Finance and Central Finance: State of the Market										
April	Data Management and SAP HANA										
May	SAP S/4HANA Migration Benchmark Report										
May	Process Automation and SAP S/4HANA										
May	GRC: State of the Market										
June	Financial Reporting and Visibility										
June	Cloud and SAP S/4HANA DevOps										
July	Payroll: State of the Market										
July	Deployment Approaches for SAP S/4HANA										
July	Supply Chain Planning in the Cloud										
August	Financial Data Management/MDM										
August	Risk Management in Hybrid Environments										
August	Integration in the Hyper-Connected Landscape										
September	Enterprise Cloud Deployment: State of the Market										
September	Process Automation in Supply Chain										