S/4HANA migration with Avantra

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How to pull off the biggest
SAP project of your career with confidence

December 31, 2027 – Every single person in the SAP ecosystem knows the date and it's stuck in the back of their minds. SAP is drawing the line in the sand and stating all SAP environments need to be converted to S/4HANA. Of course there is always the consideration that SAP will push that date out, they've been known to do that in the past, but many people are skeptical that it will be pushed again.

So here we sit, watching the years dwindle by, knowing we need to take action. And we all know, an S/4HANA migration is not an overnight activity, but is probably going to take years to plan and execute..
It's probably going to disrupt the business in some shape or form and it's not going to be easy or cheap.

The planning stages of this process are deeply important. The organization will be considering if they'll be doing a 'greenfield' installation, in other words standing up a net new environment; a 'brownfield' approach, migrating existing data; or a bluefield approach, pretty much a hybrid of the other two.

For some organizations the S/4HANA migration is the correct time to migrate their systems out of a datacenter and into a cloud, limiting the amount of business interruptions. Whether that is the case or not, the SAP engineering team is going to be busy properly architecting the final solution.

On top of all of this, there will be timelines to manage, training to complete across the business, mapping the new system to possible legacy environments, trial migrations
– the list goes on and on.

Planning stage

The often overlooked issue here is that this isn't going to be completed by a junior employee. The planning stages itself is going to require the time and effort of the best and brightest of the team. Unfortunately, through all of this, there's still a system that needs to be maintained.

This is where a world class AIOps solution comes into play. By putting in a solution with observability automation and hyperautomation, the team almost instantly gets time back in their day to focus on the S/4HANA initiative. Instead of constantly being pulled in various directions, the engineers can focus on properly architecting the new environment, running well executed and documented trial runs and being 'present' in planning sessions.

In addition to giving the team time back in their day, having a proper AIOps solution in place during this time will provide metrics on how the system is currently behaving. These benchmark reporting metrics become invaluable later, post migration.

Preparation phase

Towards the tail end of the planning stage is the preparation phase. During this time the team is getting ready for cutover day by practicing migrations, testing new code, training business users, among other things.

By utilizing a hyperautomation solution, new test systems and training systems can be powered on/off for specific availability times, have trial and training system refreshes with data, and/or stand up net new environments on the fly.

Manually, these tasks take time, but with Avantra these can be done with a click of a button.

Cutover day

When the big day rolls around and it's time to finally cutover, there are a lot of technical issues that could arise.

Depending on how the technical part of the migration is being completed, it could mean business downtime, where every second counts. So, having observability on source and target systems with escalation based notifications means the correct team members can get notified of migration issues immediately, without delay or blasting out issues to everyone.

Audit tracking

Alongside this is the issue of audit tracking. With everything else going on during a S/4HANA migration, it always seems that audit controls get completely forgotten about. Partly, it's due to everyone being so focused on the task at hand, but another big part of this is that systems need to be 'opened up' in specific ways to migrate data.

If systems are not properly closed back down in the new system before handing the environment over to the business for production use, it will probably mean a flag on the yearly audit.

In conjunction with data migration, you have to consider getting all of the business specific audit controls about password length, patch management, or system hardening. These are so often forgotten about.

By having an AIOps solution for SAP operations observing these controls, flagging them to the team, or using automation to automatically set these controls gives the organization and audit teams a huge sigh of relief.
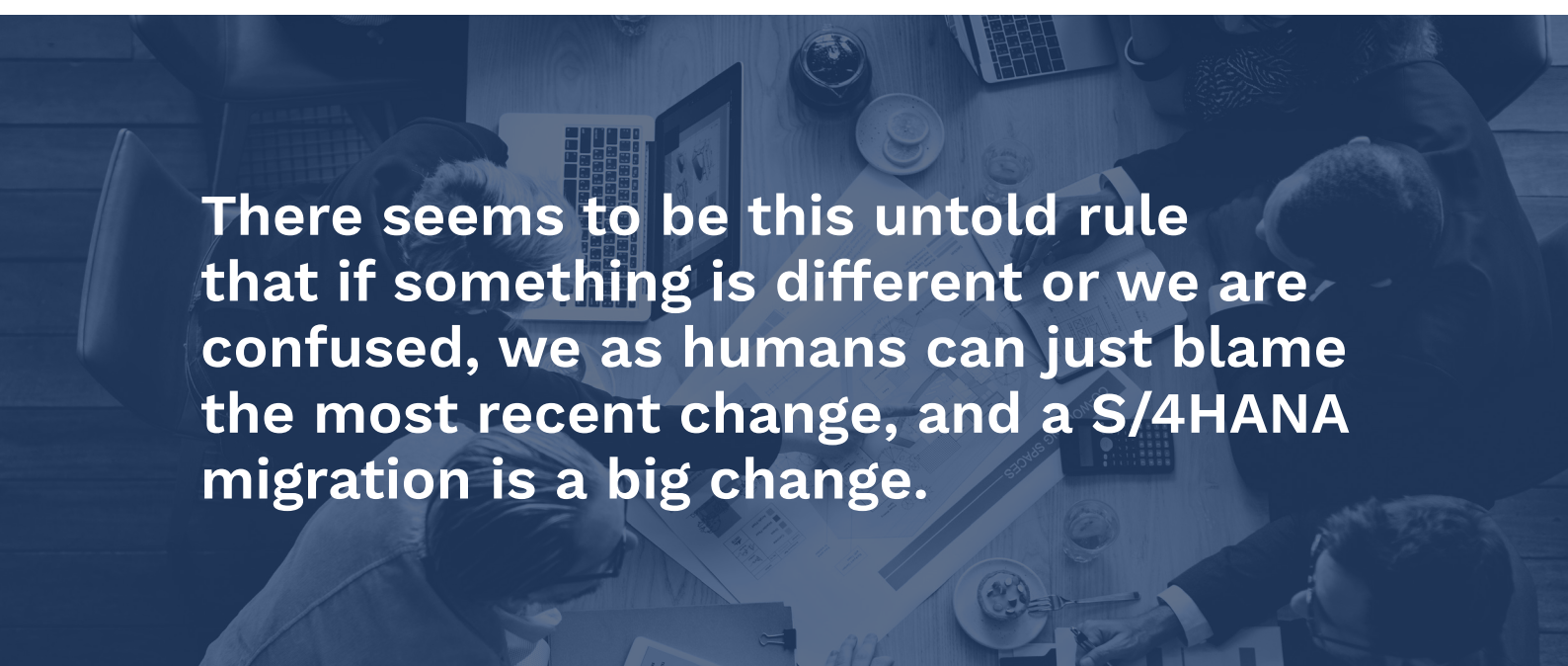
Hand off

As the S/4HANA system is handed off to the business for use, we're not out of the woods yet. In fact, for many organizations this is an intensely stressful time. Not only is everyone curious how the new system will work for the business, but the performance of the system is also key.

Visibility into the environment may mean different things to people. Upper management may want to see high level performance while deep technical engineers may want specific metrics. Having an observability automation solution, like Avantra, that has complete flexibility in how dashboards are created and shared is vital to a successful migration.

Furthermore, having an understanding of how the underlying technical components of the process of a business work, could never be more important. Being able to quickly identify issues within the ABAP stack, connection problems between internal systems and SaaS cloud solutions and/or bank, vendor, customer, or any third party interfaces is important.

Every minute counts, and not having this mapping at your fingertips can lead to some major issues post migration. In addition, no matter how well the system is performing, all business users are going to be hyper critical of how the system is behaving.

"This process used to be faster in the old system" or "why does this seem to take longer than before" are typical things heard when a new business system is launched. Now, it could be the case that performance is actually worse, or it could simply be human nature.

There seems to be this untold rule that if something is different or we are confused, we as humans can just blame the most recent change, and a S/4HANA migration is a big change.

This is where those benchmarks of how the system was performing prior to the migration become so vitally important. It takes the guesswork and emotion out of trying to figure out if this really is a performance issue, or as is more often the case, just a new environment.

I Conclusion

Let's cut to the chase, S/4HANA migrations are tough. But by having an AIOps solution in place which is specifically designed for SAP operations, with observability automation and hyperautomation packaged into a single platform, an S/4HANA migration does not have to look so daunting.

> **The migration to S/4HANA was easier thanks to Avantra. We've used Avantra to monitor our landscape before, during and after the migration, to ensure we received the expected performance enhancements by migrating to S/4HANA.**
>
> **Our landscape is very complex, we can't even imagine managing and monitoring it without Avantra. No other tool in the market can give us the same results.**

By giving the team time back in their day to properly plan - setting performance benchmarks, automating testing and training environments, having technical eyes and ears on the migration itself, making sure the system is 'audit ready' and providing visibility post migration during hypercare times - can give teams the confidence to pull off possibly the biggest SAP project of their careers.

Talk to an S/4HANA expert about your migration plans, get in touch at www.avantra.com

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