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Transforming SAP® Processes Through Automation

2026 Trends & Challenges

Understanding adoption, opportunities, and challenges in SAP® modernization



Contents

Click below to navigate

03 **Executive Summary**

04 **Key Highlights**

05 **Introduction**

06 **Exploring Automation: Adoption and Challenges**

11 **S/4HANA Migrations: Challenges and Data Management**

15 **SAP® BTP Adoption and Challenges**

18 **Conclusion: The Future of SAP® Automation**

20 **Methodology and Demographics**

Executive Summary

SAP®-run organizations are at a critical inflection point. The pace of migration to SAP® S/4HANA has accelerated dramatically, with nearly 60% of companies already live or in process, and momentum is building as the 2027 deadline approaches. This transformation is reshaping IT strategies, processes, and data management practices across industries.

Yet while SAP® S/4HANA migration is moving forward, automation adoption has plateaued at 57%, unchanged from last year. The slowdown reflects the intense focus on migration projects, the abundance of automation tool options, and persistent complexity in SAP® processes. Even as AI promises new possibilities, companies remain cautious, wary of layering more complexity into already challenging modernization efforts. Still, the number of organizations not engaged in automation continues to shrink, and adoption patterns show growing reliance on best-of-breed strategies, no-code/low-code platforms, and citizen development to scale automation without overwhelming IT.

SAP® Business Technology Platform (BTP) adoption is also on the rise, with 50% of companies now leveraging its services and another 26% starting their journey. However, adoption is hindered by the same complexity challenges observed across automation and migration. Skills shortages, the difficulty of developing solutions in SAP® BTP, and the challenge of understanding its vast capabilities all reflect the steep learning curve of modern SAP® environments.

The common thread across automation, migration, and SAP® BTP adoption is complexity — spanning business processes, data, user interfaces, and organizational change. Companies must balance sustaining today's operations while preparing for tomorrow's innovations. Those that directly address complexity with automation, data quality management, and unified platform strategies will be best positioned to capture the full value of SAP® S/4HANA and SAP® BTP.

ASUG

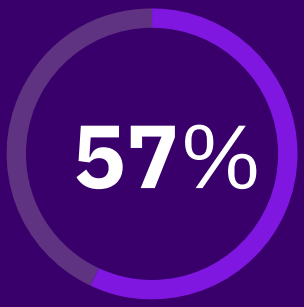
As America's largest network of SAP® customers, partners, and professionals, ASUG helps people and organizations get the most value from their investment in SAP® technology.

Key highlights



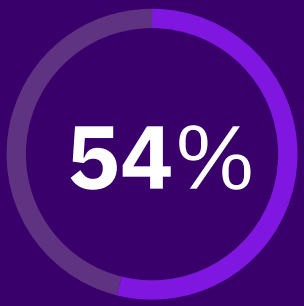
SAP® S/4HANA Migration

59% of companies are fully or partially live on SAP® S/4HANA (+13 points vs. 2024).



Automation Adoption

Adoption plateaued at **57%** in 2025, essentially unchanged from 2024.



Data & User Interfaces

54% of companies operate in mixed UI environments (SAP® GUI, Fiori, and GUI for HTML). Full adoption of Fiori doubled from 9% in 2024 to **18%** in 2025.



SAP® BTP Adoption

50% of companies now use BTP (+10 points vs. 2024), with 26% initiating adoption.

Introduction

Our 2025 survey of SAP® ERP users shows that by the end of the year, 64% will either be fully migrated to SAP® S/4HANA or in the process of making that transition. For many of these companies, the move to S/4HANA is more than just a system upgrade — it is fueling broader IT transformation and modernization initiatives that will shape their businesses for years to come. At the same time, customers are being confronted by significant barriers that slow progress, from rigid legacy processes to fragmented data landscapes.

This transition creates a mix of challenges and opportunities that can easily disrupt the smooth path to modernization. At its core, a complex dynamic is created by the tension between sustaining today's reliable business operations and laying the groundwork for tomorrow's innovations.

To better understand these tensions and how SAP®-run companies are addressing their inherent complexity, Precisely conducted a market survey with ASUG, asking SAP® users to identify and clarify the core trends and opportunities shaping their future. While the survey focused on automation, it also revealed how companies are leveraging automation to reduce friction, accelerate their modernization journey, and achieve better business outcomes.

This is the third year Precisely has conducted this survey. In 2023, the research highlighted how multidimensional complexity often stalls progress toward digital transformation. In 2024, we saw significant momentum; broader adoption of automation, increased use of SAP® BTP services, and accelerated S/4HANA migration activity. Building on those findings, our 2025 research set out not only to track these trends but also to dive deeper into the complex barriers companies face across three core areas:

1. The evolution of automation adoption and the challenges that continue to hamper it.
2. The state of SAP® S/4HANA adoption and whether migration momentum is accelerating or slowing down.
3. The growth of SAP® BTP adoption and the factors holding companies back from wider usage.

This research, combined with Precisely's decades of experience helping organizations streamline and automate core SAP® ERP processes, offers a unique lens on the emerging trends in the SAP® ERP marketplace — highlighting both opportunities to seize and gaps to close. The conclusions are drawn from the data we collected and expanded on by the daily conversations the Precisely Automate team has with SAP® users navigating these same challenges.

The tension between today and tomorrow

TODAY		TOMORROW
Long IT lead-times	<<<< >>>>	Agile innovation
Manual processes	<<<< >>>>	Scalable automation
Fragmented, poor-quality data	<<<< >>>>	High-integrity, data-driven insights



Exploring Automation: Adoption and Challenges

While CIOs see automation as a powerful driver of efficiency, the realities of SAP® modernization are slowing its momentum.▸

Automation Adoption: Progress and Pause

Our2025 surveyindicates that automation adoption remains steady at 57%, essentially unchanged from 58% in 2024. This plateau follows strong growth in previous years, suggesting that many companies are holding back on new automation initiatives until their ERP migrations are further advanced (Figure 1).

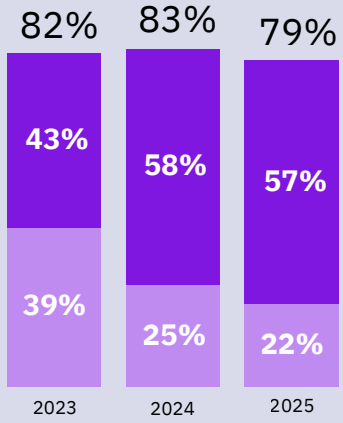


FIGURE 1

Automation use for SAP® migrations stabilizes

How would you describe your organization's experience with automation for SAP® migrations/digital transformation processes?

- Never used automation, but considering for the future
- Currently using automation

Conversations with customers and SAP® ERP users reveal several reasons behind this stall:

1. Migration pressures dominate

Research from ASUG shows that over 30% of SAP® migration projects are delayed and/or over budget. As a result, many SAP® teams are dedicating nearly all their resources to their SAP® S/4HANA migrations, leaving little time to evaluate or implement non-core initiatives, such as automation.

2. Too many choices

The automation market has expanded rapidly. Longstanding platforms, like the Precisely Automate portfolio and RPA providers, now share the stage with newer entrants, such as Microsoft Power Apps and SAP® Build. With numerous options, organizations are pausing to reevaluate their strategies and determine which tools best align with their modernization roadmaps.

3. AI adds to the noise

The rapid emergence of AI agents and large language models (LLMs) has sparked interest but also created uncertainty. Many teams are waiting to see how these technologies evolve before committing to a clear automation path.

Despite the slowdown, when organizations do move forward, most (54%, up four points from 2024) continue to deploy automation on a case-by-case basis. This incremental approach has remained dominant over the past two years and is likely to continue into the future. We also see growth in the adoption of "best-of-breed" solutions (19%, up four points from 2024) as organizations embrace no-code/ ▸

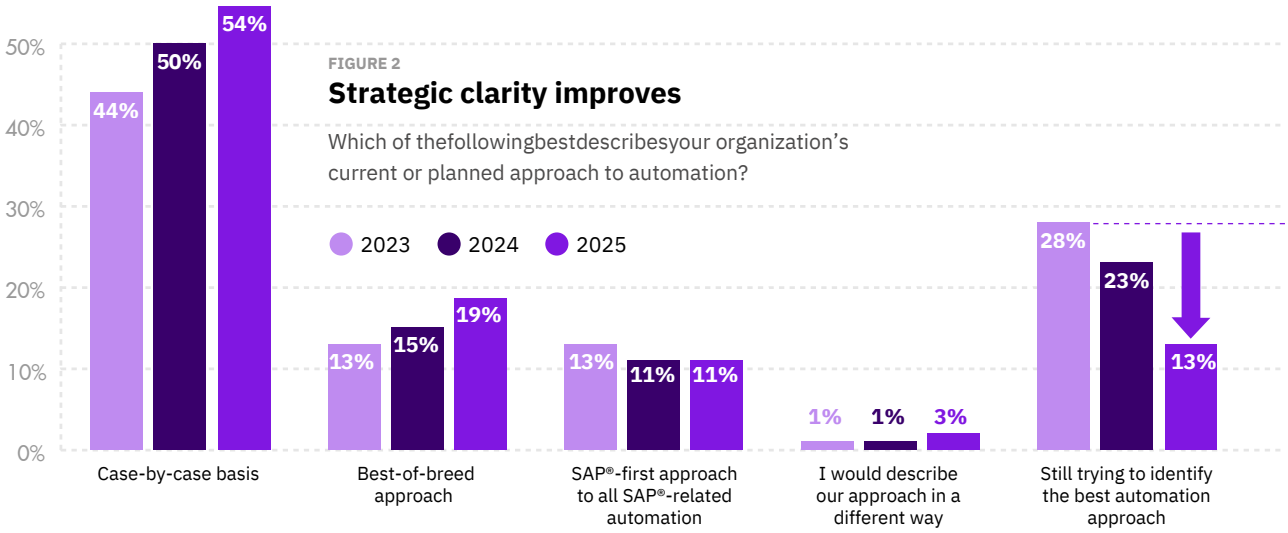


FIGURE 2

Strategic clarity improves

Which of thefollowingbestdescribesyour organization's current or planned approach to automation?

2023 2024 2025

15%

decrease in those trying to identify the best approach

low-code platforms that deliver efficiencies across both SAP® and non-SAP® environments.

Another positive sign: fewer companies are stuck in "evaluation mode." In 2025, only 13% reported still trying to identify the best automation approach, down from 23% in 2024 and 28% in 2023. This suggests growing confidence in the role of automation as a driver of both efficiency and business value, bolstered by the maturity of modern no-code/low-code solutions (Figure 2).

9%

increase in those reporting complexity of business processes as a top challenge

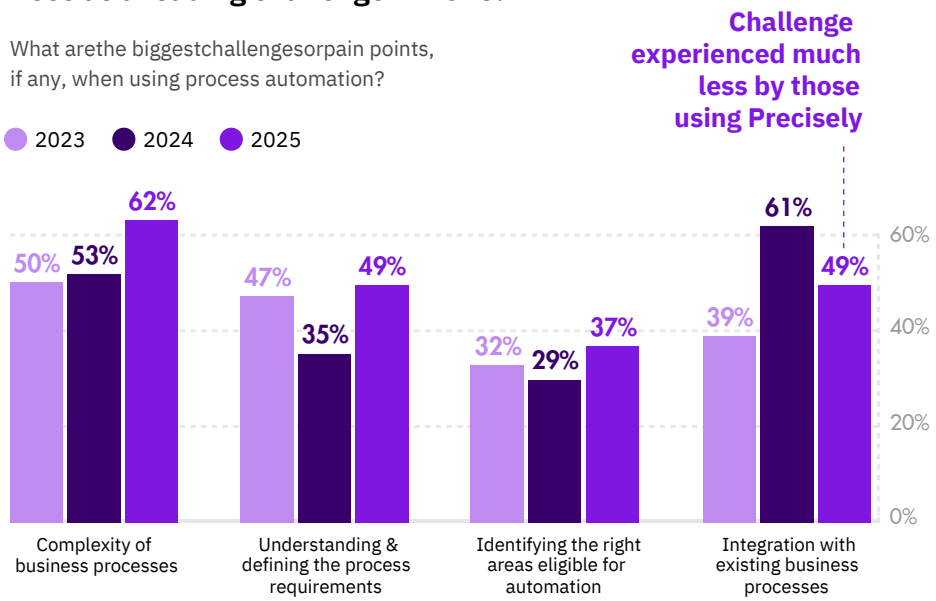
The Challenges Slowing Automation Adoption

Our 2025 survey also reveals a shift in the top challenges to automation. Last year's #1 barrier, integration, was overtaken by process complexity (62%). Integration now shares second place with understanding and defining process requirements (both at 49%). Together, these three issues highlight the pressures created by SAP® migrations and the complexity of running SAP®- driven businesses (Figure 3).

Process complexity: By design, SAP® ERP processes are complex. The process to create a single master data record can include hundreds of fields, require input from multiple teams across the organization, and adhere to strict procedures to ensure compliance.

FIGURE 3

As automation strategies mature, complexity rises as a leading challenge in 2025.



Designing automation for these processes can be time-consuming and challenging.

Defining requirements: Closely tied to complexity, simply mapping the steps of an SAP® process can be a significant undertaking. Automation often requires incorporating hundreds of business rules to meet compliance and regulatory standards, and capturing those rules can take as much time as building the automation solution itself.

Integration: As companies demand tighter alignment between SAP® and other systems of record, integration remains a formidable challenge. Even with simpler APIs to connect SAP® with applications like Salesforce, the effort required often compounds the difficulties of both process complexity and requirements gathering. These barriers reflect the same tension highlighted in our introduction: the need to maintain stability today while preparing for tomorrow's innovations. The key for SAP®-run organizations will be finding ways to address complexity without stalling progress, ensuring automation remains a catalyst rather than a casualty of modernization. ▶

The Role of No-code/ Low-code and Citizen Development

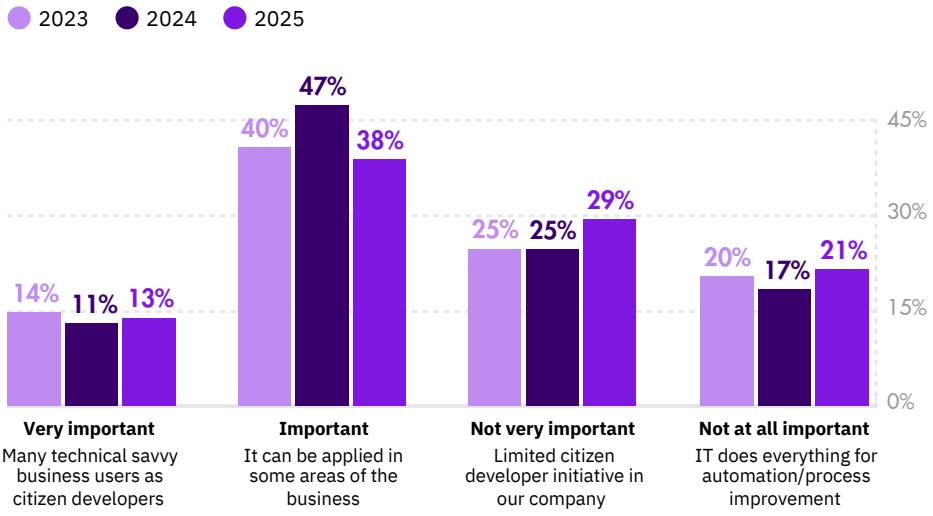
One waycompanies are overcoming automation barriers is by enabling “citizen developers” through no-code/low-code automation platforms. When implemented effectively, citizen development programs allow business users to automate processes directly, accelerating adoption without overburdening IT.

In our 2025 survey, more than half of the respondents identified citizen development as an important part of their automation strategy. Notably, the share of companies rating it “very important” rose to 14% in 2025 (up from 11% in 2024). The driver behind this growth is the expanding capability of no-code/low-code platforms, which now allow both professional developers and business teams to work in a shared environment. This consistency delivers faster results and reduces duplication of effort (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Citizen development and business user involvement remain key

How important is citizen development for your organization?



focus on complex, data-intensive workflows as well as monitoring and administration of non-IT developed solutions (Figure 5).

According to our survey, 18% of organizations already have collaborative SAP® teams comprising both citizen and professional developers. However, 42% still restrict automation entirely to SAP® IT teams — a legacy model that often leads to long lead times and higher costs. The historically complex nature of SAP® ERP processes makes this cautious approach understandable, but also highlights the missed opportunity for scaling automation more broadly across the business (Figure 6). ▶

Three out of four survey respondents (75%) confirmed that the capabilities of no-code/ low-code platforms are important to their automation strategy. Conversations with SAP® users echo this: with tight budgets and scarce IT resources, many organizations are seeking a unified environment where citizen developers can handle simpler, straightforward automations. At the same time, SAP® IT teams

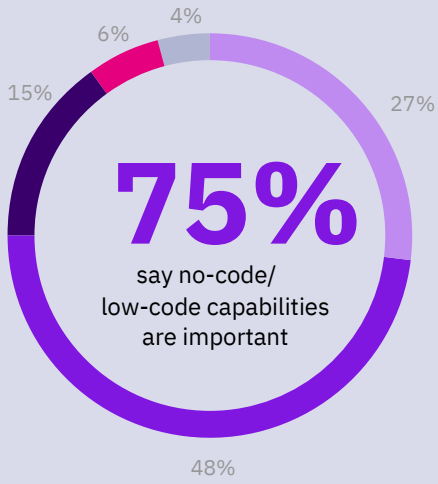


FIGURE 5

No-code/low-code platforms are important to automation strategies

How important are no-code/low-code capabilities when choosing an automation platform for your SAP® processes?

- Very important
- Not very important
- Somewhat important
- Don’t know
- Neither important or unimportant

FIGURE 6

SAP® IT developers most often bring automation plans to life

Who isprimarilyresponsiblefor developing automation solutions for your organization's SAP® processes?

42%

Developers on SAP® IT Team

27%

Professional developers in a centralized IT Team

18%

Collaborative teams that include both professional developers and citizen developers

8%

External System Integrators/ Consultants

CONCLUSION

Exploring Automation: Adoption and Challenges

Our 2025 surveyhighlightsatemporary slowdown in automation adoption, driven by three primary factors:

1. Migration pressures

Organizations are diverting resources to SAP® S/4HANA migration projects.

2. Tool abundance

The growing variety of powerful no-code/low-code platforms has led many companies to pause and reassess their options.

3. Persistent complexity

Even after migration, SAP® ERP processes remain highly complex, requiring careful evaluation before commencing automation development.

Overlaying this is the emerging (but still unproven) promise of AI-driven automation, which adds uncertainty to the decision-making process.

Despite these headwinds, the number of organizations yet to embark on their automation journey continues to decline. Growth in both case-by-case adoption and best-of-breed strategies demonstrates that the appetite for SAP® automation remains strong. Looking ahead, no-code/low-code platforms, as well as citizen development, will play a pivotal role in breaking through today's barriers and enabling tomorrow's transformation.■



SAP® S/4HANA Migrations: Challenges and Data Management

With the 2027 deadline approaching fast, SAP® S/4HANA migration is no longer optional, and companies are accelerating their efforts. Our 2025 survey reveals that 59% of organizations are now fully or partially live on SAP® S/4HANA, representing a 13-point increase from 2024. Another 5% expect to be live by the end of 2025, while an additional 29% will be actively engaged in the migration process. ▸

After years of slow movement, momentum is finally building (Figure 7).

Yet progress is far from simple. When asked about the barriers slowing migration, respondents identified three major hurdles:

Business process change (49%)

The shift from SAP® ECC to SAP® S/4HANA is not a simple "lift-and-shift." It requires companies to fundamentally rethink how core SAP® data creation and management processes are structured and administered.

Customizations (44%)

Many organizations have built unique, business-critical processes in SAP® ECC that cannot be transferred with SAP®'s standard migration tools. This makes adopting SAP®'s "clean core" strategy difficult, often requiring additional custom tool development or manual workarounds.

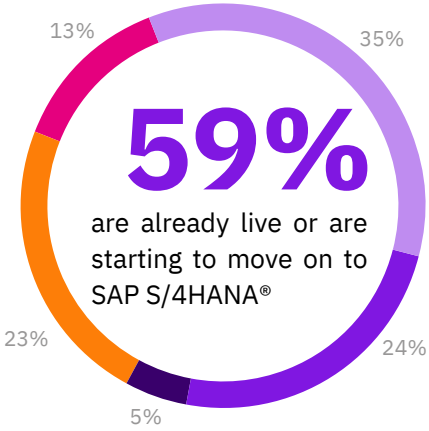


FIGURE 7

The migration to SAP S/4HANA® is in full swing

What are your plans to implement SAP S/4HANA®?

- Fully migrated
- Partially migrated
- Within 6 months
- Within 7-24 months
- 2+ years from now

Organizational resistance (37%)

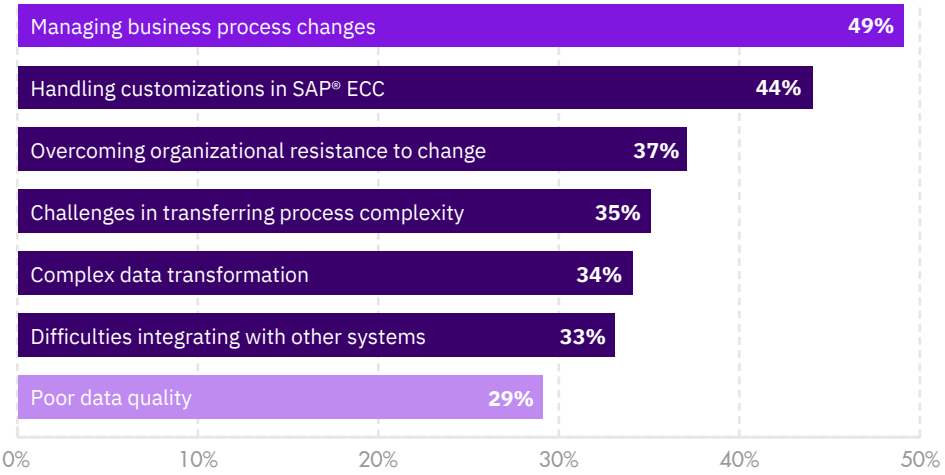
Change management remains one of the most underestimated challenges. Companies consistently tell us that the cultural and operational shifts associated with moving to SAP® S/4HANA are as challenging as the technical migration itself.

These results confirm what we hear in daily conversations with SAP® customers: migration from SAP® ECC to SAP® S/4HANA is a struggle, often requiring as much organizational adaptation as it does technical execution (Figure 8).

Precisely Automate helps companies overcome migration roadblocks by simplifying the transfer of custom data and processes from SAP® ECC to SAP® S/4HANA, supporting both "clean core" initiatives and business continuity.

Customizations and complexity hinder S/4HANA migrations.

What are the biggest challenges you have experienced or expect to experience during your SAP S/4HANA® migration?



29%

of organizations with low automation note poor data quality as their biggest challenge

Data Quality as a Hidden Challenge

Whilelower on thesurvey's ranked list, data quality consistently surfaces in customer discussions. The issues fall into two main categories:

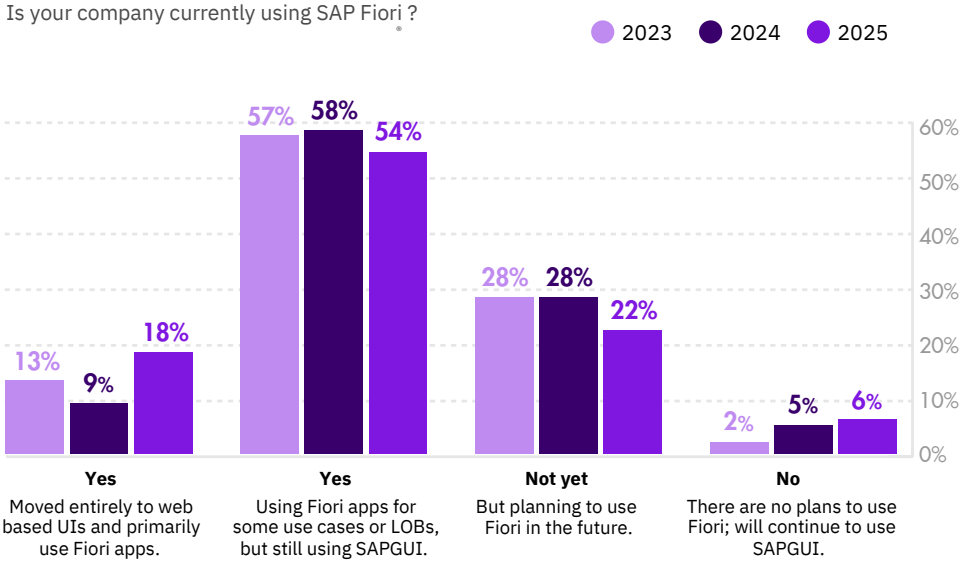
1. Accuracy
Manual data management processes often introduce errors that complicate migration.

2. Transformation
Moving data from acquired SAP® ECC and non-SAP® systems into SAP® S/4HANA and the HANA database requires significant restructuring of the data, which many teams underestimate. Building automated data quality and transformation into the migration plan can reduce errors, accelerate timelines, and deliver lasting improvements that extend beyond the migration itself.

FIGURE 9

Primary use of SAP Fiori® rises steadily, but dual-support with GUI remains crucial.

Is your company currently using SAP Fiori ?



The Challenge of Multiple User Interfaces

Afurther complicationcomes from the shift in user experience. Moving away from the traditional SAP® GUI toward SAP® Fiori apps and the web-based GUI for HTML creates friction for both IT and business teams. While GUI for HTML offers a familiar interface, Fiori is a fundamentally new environment intended to simplify user interactions.

Our survey reveals that 54% of companies continue to operate in mixed UI environments. This represents a slight improvement from 2024, yet it remains a significant source of complexity. At the same time, the share of companies that have fully transitioned to Fiori and GUI for HTML doubled from 9% in 2024 to 18% in 2025, indicating an accelerating adoption rate as companies transition away from the SAP® GUI and toward web-based interfaces (Figure 9).

Precisely Automate provides continuity, ensuring business teams experience a seamless user interface even during transition.

This complexity has direct implications for automation. Many IT teams hesitate to adopt automation solutions until their UI strategy stabilizes, to avoid duplicating development work across multiple environments. Organizations are therefore seeking automation platforms that deliver consistency across SAP® ECC and SAP® S/4HANA, as well as across all SAP® interfaces, including the SAP® GUI, Fiori, and GUI for HTML.

Adoption patterns reinforce this dynamic. Finance, sourcing, procurement, and supply chain continue to be the leading areas for Fiori usage — reflecting both the complexity of processes in these domains and the availability of SAP®-delivered Fiori apps to support them (Figure 10).

+6%

increase in Finance usage of SAP Fiori® since 2024

+17%

increase in in sourcing & procurement usage of SAP Fiori® since 2024

FIGURE 10

Finance leads in both current and planned use of SAP Fiori®

Which of the following are you currently using or planning to use SAP Fiori® appswith?

Line of business	Total	Currently using SAP Fiori®	Planning to use SAP Fiori®
Finance	**74%**	**69%**	**91%**
Sourcing & procurement	62%	63%	58%
Supply chain management	55%	54%	61%
Sales and distribution	47%	47%	48%
Master data management	45%	45%	45%
HR	39%	39%	39%
Plant maintenance	36%	33%	45%
Business intelligence (BI) & analytics	36%	38%	30%
Enterprise asset management	27%	25%	33%

CONCLUSION:

SAP® S/4HANA Migrations: Challenges and Data Management

SAP® S/4HANA migration is gaining pace as the 2027 deadline approaches, but the journey remains complex. Companies are contending with profound business process changes, longstanding customizations, and significant organizational resistance, while also addressing underlying issues such as data quality and transformation. In addition to this, the shift to new user interfaces, such as Fiori, is introducing unexpected complexity for both IT teams and business users.

Despite these challenges, the trend line is clear: migration is accelerating, and more organizations are preparing to leave ECC behind. Those that build automation, data quality management, and consistent user experiences into their migration plans will be best positioned to not only meet the deadline but also unlock the full value of SAP® S/4HANA. For these organizations, the migration is more than a technical upgrade — it is an opportunity to modernize processes, enhance data integrity, and establish a stronger foundation for future innovation.



SAP® BTP Adoption and Challenges

Alongside the surge in SAP S/4HANA migrations, adoption of the SAP® Business Technology Platform (BTP) is also gaining traction. Our 2025 survey shows that 50% of companies are now using SAP® BTP services (up 10 points from 2024), with another 26% beginning their journey.

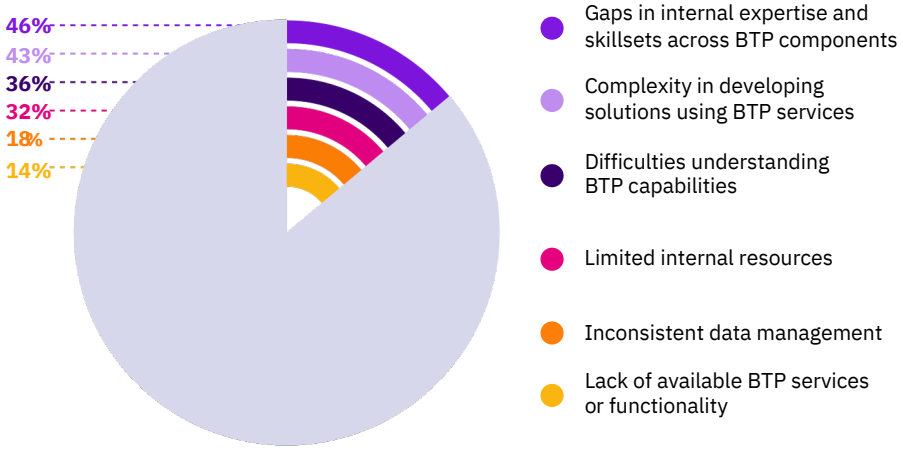
Based on these trends, we believe nearly all SAP® S/4HANA customers will eventually rely on SAP® BTP to some degree (Figure 11).

But adoption is far from straightforward. Many organizations are running into the same barriers we see across automation and migration — complexity and limited expertise. In fact, the top three challenges cited by survey respondents were skills gap (46%), complexity of development (43%), and difficulty understanding capabilities (36%) (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12

Top SAP® BTP challenges center on internal skills, solution complexity, and difficulties understanding capabilities.

What arethe biggestchallenges,ifany,thatyourorganizationfacesin implementing or adopting SAP® BTP?



1. Skills gap

A lack of in-house expertise is the most significant barrier, echoing what we hear in conversations with SAP® customers. This shortage of BTP talent hinders adoption and limits companies' ability to fully leverage the platform .

2. Complexity of development

While SAP® BTP offers a wide array of services and components, companies often describe the experience as like receiving a "build-it-yourself kit" without instructions: too many parts, and not all of them fit together seamlessly. The skills shortage magnifies this complexity.

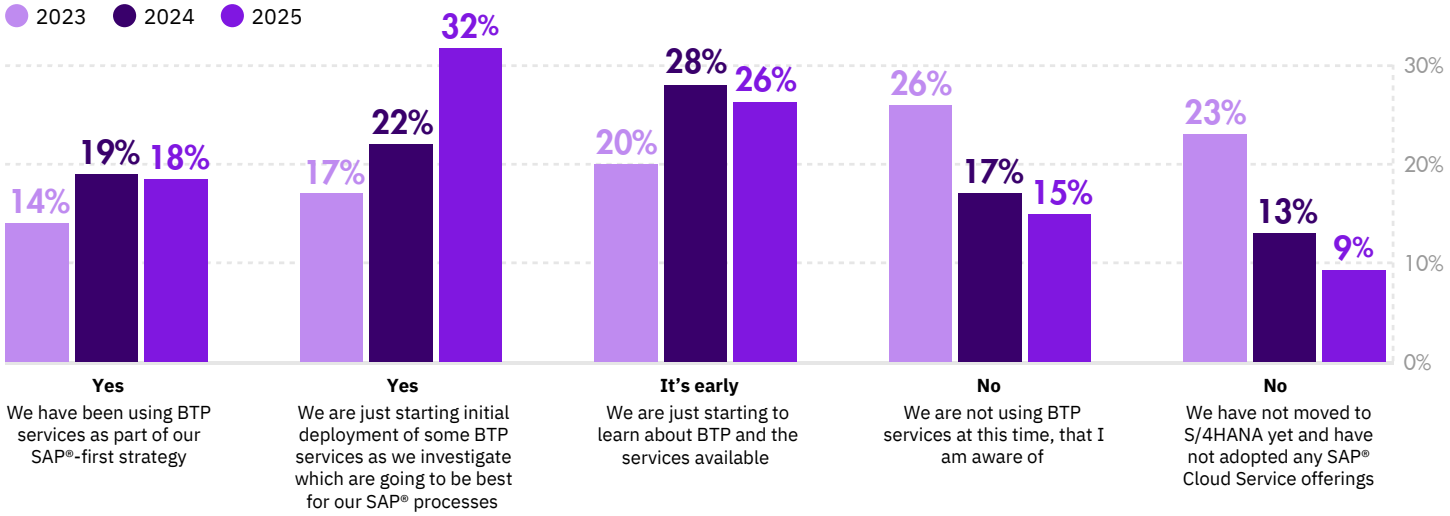
3. Difficulty understanding capabilities

Even when organizations adopt BTP, many struggle to fully grasp its breadth. With limited resources, few teams have the expertise needed to combine its myriad services into end-to-end solutions. ▶

FIGURE 11

BTP usage reaches 50%, driven by growth in early-stage adoption.

Is your company currently using the services available through the SAP® BTP?



SAP® BTP was designed to be a one-stop shop for extending and optimizing SAP® processes. In practice, companies are finding it powerful but difficult to harness. Unless organizations invest in skills and simplify their adoption strategies, SAP® BTP risks becoming underutilized — even as it becomes an essential layer in the SAP® modernization journey.

CONCLUSION:

SAP® BTPAdoption and Challenges

SAP® BTP adoption is clearly accelerating, with half of the surveyed companies already using its services and another quarter beginning their journey. This momentum underscores BTP's importance as the innovation layer for SAP® S/4HANA, enabling companies to extend and optimize core ERP processes.

At the same time, adoption challenges are significant. Skills gaps, solution complexity, and limited understanding of SAP® BTP's full capabilities are preventing many organizations from realizing its potential. Companies that invest in building expertise, simplifying their approach, and aligning SAP® BTP with their broader automation and migration strategies will be best positioned to unlock its full value. ■



The Future of SAP® Automation

Our 2025 survey highlights a market at a pivotal moment. SAP®-run organizations are accelerating their move to SAP® S/4HANA as the 2027 deadline approaches, with more than half already live or in process. At the same time, automation adoption has plateaued as companies divert resources to migration, while SAP® BTP adoption is growing but is weighed down by skills shortages and complexity.

The picture that emerges is one of both progress and pause. Companies recognize that automation, modernization, and platform adoption are crucial to driving efficiency, agility, and innovation; yet they are compelled to balance these ambitions against the realities of migration deadlines, complex processes, and limited resources. The “today vs. tomorrow” tension we outlined at the start of this report remains the defining challenge for SAP® users. ▶



Despite the obstacles, the trajectory is clear. The number of companies not engaged in automation continues to shrink. Case-by-case automation remains dominant, but best-of-breed strategies and no-code/low-code platforms are expanding. Citizen development is gaining importance as organizations seek ways to scale automation without overwhelming their IT teams. Migration to SAP® S/4HANA is accelerating, and even with the challenges, companies are making steady progress toward process standardization, cleaner data, and modern user experiences. SAP® BTP adoption, while uneven, is growing into the natural extension layer that will power innovation on top of SAP® S/4HANA.

The lessons are clear for CIOs and SAP® leaders. Success will depend on striking the right balance: keeping migration on track while not delaying the automation and platform strategies that will deliver long-term value. Automation must be seen not as something to revisit after migration, but as a foundation for managing complexity, improving data integrity, and ensuring modernization delivers on its promise. Similarly, investing in skills and organizational change management is as critical as the technology choices themselves.

How Precisely Can Help

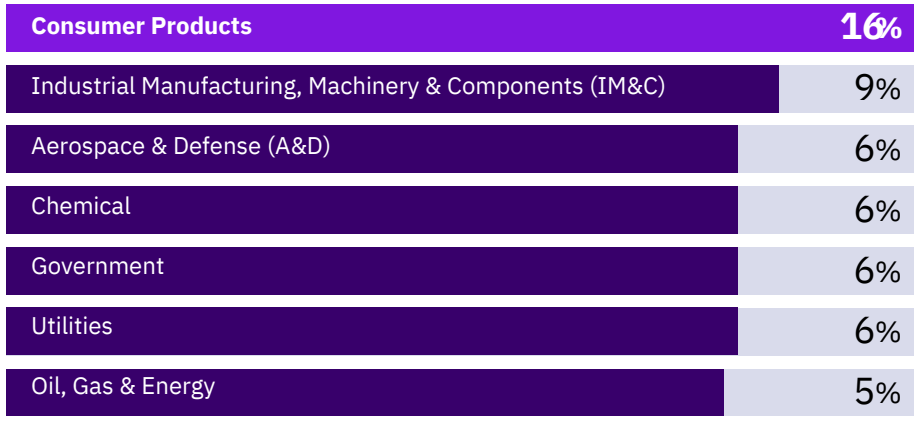
At Precisely, our decades of experience helping companies streamline and automate SAP® ERP processes have shown us that modernization is most successful when automation, data management, and platform adoption move in tandem. The insights from this survey confirm that, while barriers remain, companies are making meaningful progress. Those who act decisively today will be the ones best prepared to capture tomorrow's opportunities. ■

Methodology and Demographics

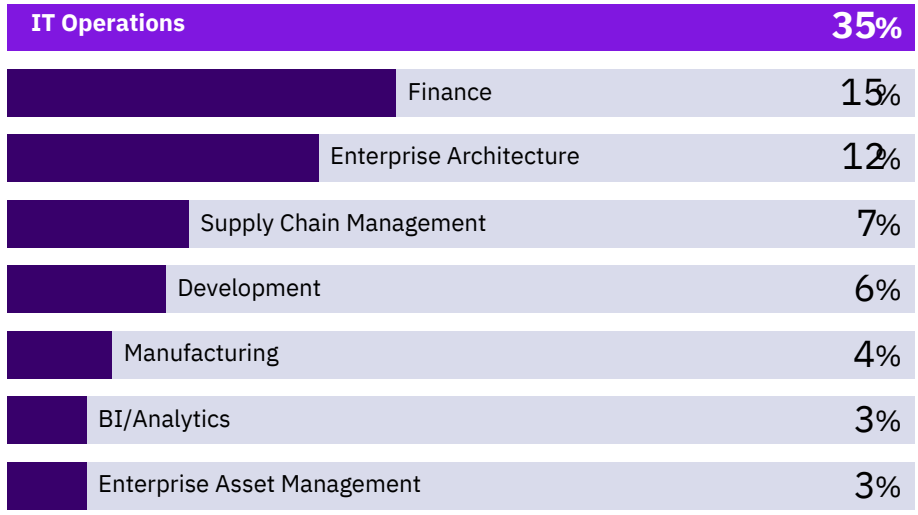
To conduct this research, Precisely worked with ASUG (Americas SAP® Users Group) to develop the survey and collect responses from select ASUG members. In total, 173 surveys were completed, representing a broad swath of the SAP® landscape, including SAP® IT stakeholders and business users of SAP® ERP systems and processes.

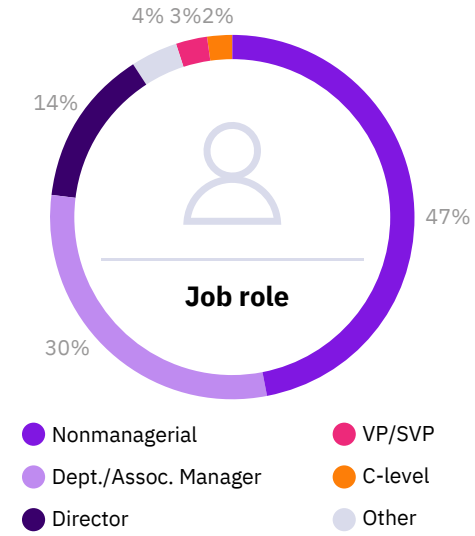
ASUG led the analysis of the survey results in collaboration with Precisely. Precisely authored the report, putting the findings into context to describe the state of SAP® automation today.

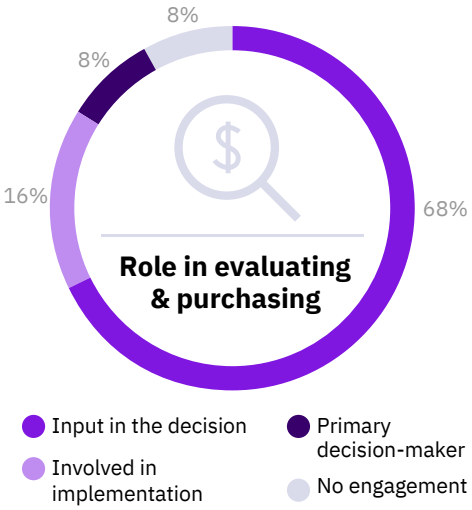
Primary industries

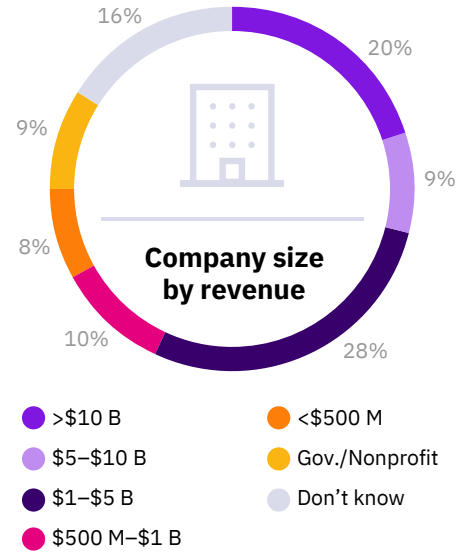


Primary departments









precisely

As a global leader in data integrity, Precisely ensures that your data is accurate, consistent, and contextual. Our portfolio, including the Precisely Data Integrity Suite, helps integrate your data, improve data quality, govern data usage, geocode and analyze location data, and enrich it with complementary datasets for confident business decisions. Over 12,000 organizations in more than 100 countries, including 95 of the Fortune 100, trust Precisely software, data, and strategy services to power AI, automation, and analytics initiatives.

Precisely Automate, a key part of the portfolio, enables business users to automate complex, data intensive SAP® business processes and make mass data changes quickly and easily. What exactly will those successes look like? Think swifter SAP® processes, improved governance, reduced costs, and better data integrity – overall, a more efficient, powerful new approach to your SAP® master data management.

Learn more at **precisely.com/sap.**

ASUG

ASUG is the world's largest SAP® user group. Originally founded by a group of visionary SAP® customers in 1991, its mission is to help people and organizations get the most value from their investment in SAP® technology. ASUG currently serves thousands of businesses via companywide memberships, connecting more than 130,000 professionals with networking and educational resources to help them master new challenges. Through in-person and virtual events, on-demand digital resources, and ongoing advocacy for its membership, ASUG helps SAP® customers make more possible.