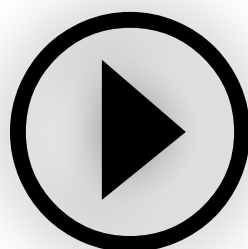Overview
Overview

The History of SAP

Building on a track record of innovation

SAP: A 50-year history of success

In 1972, five entrepreneurs had a vision for the business potential of technology.

SAP established the global standard for enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. SAP S/4HANA takes ERP to the next level by using the power of in- memory computing to process vast amounts or data, and to support advanced technologies such as artificial Intelligence AI and machine learning.

Starting with one customer and a handful of employees, SAP set out on a path that would not only transform the world of information technology. but also forever alter the way companies do business. Now 50 years and more than 400,000 customers stronger, more than ever, SAP is fueled by the pioneering spirit that inspired its founders to continually transform the industry.

Overview of our history

The Early Years

On April 1, 1972, five former IBM employees - Dietmar Hopp, Hasso Platter, Claus Wellenreuther, Klaus Tschira, and Hans-Werner Hector - started the company SystemAnalyse Programmentwicklung (System Analysis Program Development). Their idea was to create standard enterprise software that integrated all business processes and enabled data processing in real time.

SAP's founders and employees worked closely with customers - often sitting side-by-side with employees in customers' offices to learn their business needs and processes. By 1975. they had built applications for financial accounting (RF). invoice verification. and inventory management (RM). Some of their early customers were the nylon factory belonging to ICI in Ostringen, Germany, Knoll. Burda. Linde. and Schott. The blend of real-time data processing, standardization. and integration were the basis for SAP's transformation from a small German company into a global leader in business software. In 1979, the company started developing R/2, the second generation of its software. In 1980, SAP's roughly 80 employees moved into their first own office building in Waldorf, Germany.

From R/3 to Global Player

Even while R/2 was enjoying huge sales success and one year before SAP went public

with an IPO in 1988 – the company's managers were looking ahead to its third generation of software. The SAP R/3 success story began in 1992, with the client-server software smoothing the path to a globalized economy, turning SAP into a global player with subsidiaries and development centers across the world.

In 1999, SAP responded to the Internet and new economy by launching its mysap.com strategy. Ten years later, the company branched out into three markets of the future: mobile technology, database technology, and cloud. To rapidly become a key player in these new domains, SAP acquired some of its competitors, including Business Objects, Sybase, Ariba, SuccessFactors, Fieldglass, and Concur.

Into the Cloud with SAP HANA

In 2011, the first customers started using the in-memory database SAP HANA. Data analyses that used to take days or even weeks were now completed in seconds. Four years later, SAP launched SAP S/4HANA, its latest generation of business software, running entirely on SAP HANA. SAP is committed to enabling every enterprise to become intelligent, networked, and sustainable – bringing together the solutions, technology, and best practices needed to run integrated, digital business processes in the cloud.

SAP offers choice across the four largest hyperscale cloud vendors. The company's integrated applications connect all parts of a business into an intelligent suite on a digital platform. SAP Business Technology Platform brings together application development, data and analytics, integration, and AI into one platform. It is a central element of SAP's "RISE with SAP" offering.

SAP has approximately 269 million cloud users currently, more than 100 solutions covering all business functions, and the largest cloud portfolio of any provider. SAP operates 57 data centers at 32 locations in 15 countries.

Learn more about the early years

FAQ

+   What is SAP and its history?

+   What is SAP famous for?

+   Why is SAP important today?

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