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SAP® Business One, The Answer to the Challenges of SMB Business Management Software Selection

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The market for business software developed for small and mid sized businesses (SMB) was already crowded. Players like Microsoft and Best Software have bought up popular software labels in an effort to corner this ever-expanding market. In addition, there have been many half-hearted and failed attempts by large software players that proved these companies either didn't understand the SMB market, or that they were never really committed to be successful in the first place. The SMB market is ever changing and very demanding; and has changed dramatically in the last 10 years. Today there is a very faint line that separates the demands that SMB's face versus that of large corporations. Today, if you plan to be in the game of business, it really doesn't matter if you are small or large; the rules are the same and tools are as complex for one as the other. SMB's therefore are creating a demand for increasingly complex solutions. Unfortunately, their budgets have not expanded with their needs. In fact, it is just the opposite; the SMB requires more functionality than ever but has less money to spend.

So why did SAP, the business software Goliath jump into the SMB mix? And what makes the German giant think they can succeed where others have regularly failed? Before I answer these questions, I need to frame the perspective from which I bring my opinions to this subject.

For the last 23 years I have developed, sold, implemented and supported business software applications for the SMB marketplace. My company has over 1500 customers who are predominantly in the SMB space. I have watched and participated as the market traveled through mini-computers to microcomputers to networked platforms. I have lived through batch mode character applications, to the elegant real-time graphical user interfaces of today. While some might argue that my background does not make me an expert on the subject; few would disagree that I am well



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qualified to share some very qualified opinions on the subject of small business software applications. My approach to this business has always been through the eyes of an entrepreneur rather than a mind of a technocrat. Business software is not about technology for technology's sake. It is a necessary tool for progressive businesses. My opinions therefore, are from the perspective of a small businessperson and the factors that drive our IT decisions.

Let me first answer the question of why SAP entered the SMB marketplace, for this is a relatively brief discussion. All of the major software players are looking for growth, and once you have penetrated and saturated the markets you serve, you have to look elsewhere. Many companies have turned to other markets entirely, or they have diversified into products outside of their mainstream offerings. Whatever the strategy, it is clear that the large software players have turned their attention to the numbers that the SMB market supplies. It is fairly obvious that for every Fortune 500 Company there are hundreds, if not thousands of SMB's. These smaller companies represent the easiest source for growth.

SAP, I believe, also sees the growth in these markets. However, there are two unique aspects of their strategy. First, they are staying with their core competence. SAP has always been a business applications provider, and they will continue to be so for the SMB market. This alone is a huge advantage over Microsoft for example, who is trying to make the transition from Windows to SMB applications, or Oracle who is going from database to business applications. SAP is seeking growth but they are staying with what they know - and that is business applications. Second, SAP has a tremendous ecosystem of customers and users around the globe. There are hundreds of large companies that have many small divisions scattered around the world. These smaller locations are often unable to cost justify the implementation of high-end SAP products. These smaller opportunities are often lost to various low end packages, creating an IT dilemma for companies which use several different packages to try to integrate all locations into their corporate IT structure. SAP recognizes this unique opportunity to very cost effectively approach this ecosystem with a low cost alternative, but with all of the necessary tools and interfaces into the existing SAP corporate platform. So while Microsoft or Best Software might be going into various small companies at a given time, SAP will be



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installing hundreds of systems into various companies within their large, global ecosystem.

It is important to understand that SAP's offering to the SMB market is not a "light" version of SAP's larger applications. They have released an entirely new platform and launched a whole new division called SAP Business One. SAP Business One is the result of the acquisition of an Israel based company, which was serving the SMB market in Europe. SAP knew not to try to "downsize" their existing offerings, but to start with a fresh product that was developed specifically for the SMB space. The other aspect of the strategy, which is unique, is that for this new division, they recruited their staff almost exclusively from the SMB software market rather than moving people around from within. The result is a team of professionals who know the SMB market and are armed with a fresh new product SAP Business One.

It is my belief that SAP will not only succeed in this market but will become a dominant player in this market over the next three years. For the first time in my career, a company has delivered a product to the SMB's that was developed through the eyes of the SMB and all of the challenges they face to be competitive against much larger companies.

I will explain in detail why I believe SAP will capture this market, but first let me explain the frustration that SMB's face when implementing business software. In short, SMB's historically have been unable to predict and contain their IT infrastructure cost. They are faced with IT costs that rise unpredictably over time. Entrepreneurs hate unpredictability and therefore shy away from decisions where cost is unpredictable. The average small business is faced with IT costs that rise every year. Before you decide to challenge this statement, let me explain.

Let's first take a look at what drives the cost of an SMB software application.

Drivers of cost for SMB applications

- 1) **Acquisition Cost** – most obvious is the cost of the software itself. All software comes at a price, but at the end of the day the playing



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field has been leveled. The market for SMB software has dictated the value so that most of the products available, while different in their pricing approach, do not vary tremendously from product to product.

- 2) **Required Platform** – all software has to run on something. However all applications are not created equal when it comes to the expense of required platforms. I have seen companies that have required hardware upgrades almost every time they release a new version of their application. This is usually due to poor architecture in the application or inefficiency of the tools used to create the system. I have also seen products that have run efficiently for three years or more with no required hardware upgrades. This can definitely be a major area of concern when considering the overall cost of a system.
- 3) **Maintenance Costs** – this is the ongoing annual cost of maintenance and support for the system. Most companies charge 17% to 20% of the purchase price per year.
- 4) **Cost of Implementation** – this is the cost of actually getting the system live in the first place. Implementation costs can vary greatly based on the application. Components of this cost are data migration services, systems integration, training, consulting, process engineering and project management.
- 5) **Cost of Customization** – Of the hundreds and hundreds of business software implementations my company has performed, only a handful have gone into production without some level of customization. This can be a large cost component of a system based on complexity, but also based on the power and flexibility of the tools available to a particular system. As technology has progressed, the cost of customization has come down, however this continues to be a major cost concern to SMB software buyers.
- 6) **Cost of Custom Software Maintenance** – this is probably the single largest factor in determining the long-term cost of a system. It is one thing to customize an application but yet another to keep that customization up to date. For example, let's say a small



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company buys an inventory control and accounting system but they want the system interfaced to their existing CRM system and also to their shipping manifest system in the warehouse. In addition, let's also assume that the company needs some modifications to the core order entry system, which impacts both customer and shipping data.

The interfaces and the customization are easy enough (except for the cost) but as time goes on (and not very much time) a new problem emerges. For simplicity let's say that the CRM system, the accounting system and the shipping system are all at version 1 of their product when the customization is performed. Soon the CRM system will release version 2 and guess what? The new version 2 is not compatible with the customization that was performed in the accounting system. Just about the time that this issue is corrected, the shipping product company releases version 2 of the IR product and the cycle repeats itself. Bear in mind this is a very simple example and many times there are many more systems that need to be integrated.

There are only 2 possible responses to this phenomenon. The SMB can continually invest in attempting to stay current with all of the releases from the various products they use, or they choose to freeze versions of product in order to contain maintenance costs and the disruption of the ongoing programming and testing. They often decide not to add any more customization to their systems. Unfortunately, this decision frequently ends up costing the company more rather than less. By freezing the versions, they suffer an opportunity cost from missing all of the new features which become available in the future. They also forfeit any productivity gains that could be achieved through the customization of the system. So often the cost of not customizing is far greater than the cost of customizing.

- 7) **Cost of System Integration** – as illustrated above, SMB's often need to integrate various systems. While companies would typically prefer to purchase a single turnkey solution that meets all of their needs, it is rarely practical, if available at all. The average SMB has a multitude of systems they access and are faced with the



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challenge of manually reconciling the data between these systems or paying the cost (both initial and long term) of integrating these systems.

In general, the issues listed above are the primary cost factors of automating a small and mid-sized organization. SMB's are faced with a cost life cycle that looks something like "**Figure 1**" below...

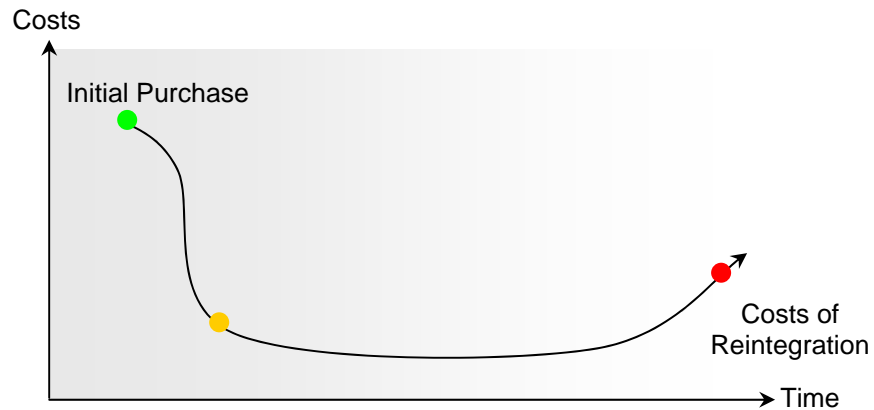


Figure 1: Cost Trend of Automation with Traditional Systems

There is the obvious outlay of capital at the beginning of a project. This outlay includes not only the purchase price, but also the labor of training and system integration. The costs then fall to an amount that equals the on-going support cost of both hardware and software, plus any subscription fees and/or communication line costs.

A short time after go live however, the cost starts to creep upward as maintenance costs rise based on required customization and various systems integration tasks. A desired cost trend of Automation would be more similar to "Figure 2" below...

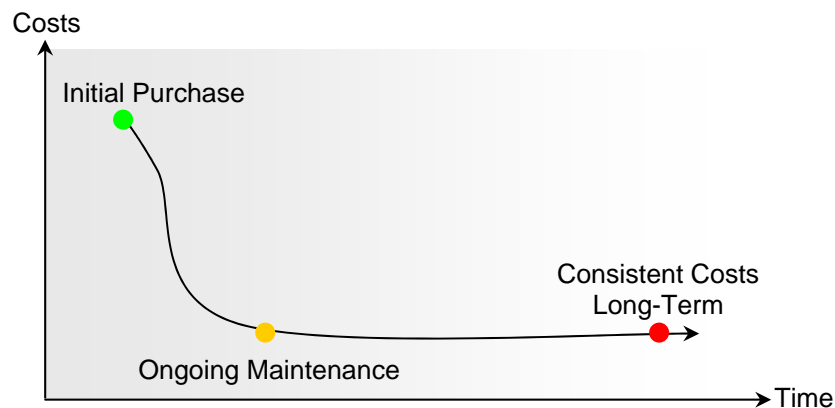


Figure 2: Cost Trend of Automation with SAP Business One



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In a perfect world, on going costs would be predictable, if not fixed.

So having explained the norm for SMB automation, I will move to why I believe SAP will become dominant in this market. We will now take a look at the features that position SAP Business One uniquely against their competitors. At the end of the day, you can summarize all of these features to two things, the ultimate in flexibility and the absolute ability to predict and fix future costs. Let's review the features of SAP Business One that makes this possible.

SAP Features

- 1) **SAP Business One Pricing Module** – SAP Business One is offered in a very simple “named user” pricing method. For a very reasonable “user price” the customer pays a fixed price per named user which includes all of the SAP Business One components. Most of the industry charges by user count and then by module, so as a company progresses with their implementation and desires new functionality for other parts of their business, they are required to purchase the additional modules. SAP provides any new developed modules at no cost so long as the customer is current with maintenance fees. Considering the rate at which SAP is developing new functionality in SAP Business One, customers benefit from a one-time investment in both present and future software.
- 2) **Simple User Interface** – SAP Business One displays a very unique user interface, which makes navigation and learning the system very simple. (see **Figure 3**) Not only is the navigation clean and simple, there is plenty of “one button” access to Microsoft Office products as well as E-mail and text messaging. A little deeper look reveals design features that make the system even simpler to learn. For example, traditional systems have various entry points for virtually the same types of data. Rather than learning an Accounts Payable module and an Accounts Receivable module, SAP Business One provides conventions like a Business Partner module and a Banking module. All customers, vendors and prospects are entered from one screen, the same for all banking needs. While money is either coming in or going out of the systems,



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SAP has figured out that you don't need two separate functions on the menu to accomplish payments and receipts.

These are two of the many areas within SAP Business One where SAP has shattered the paradigms that cause business systems to be difficult to implement and slow to learn.

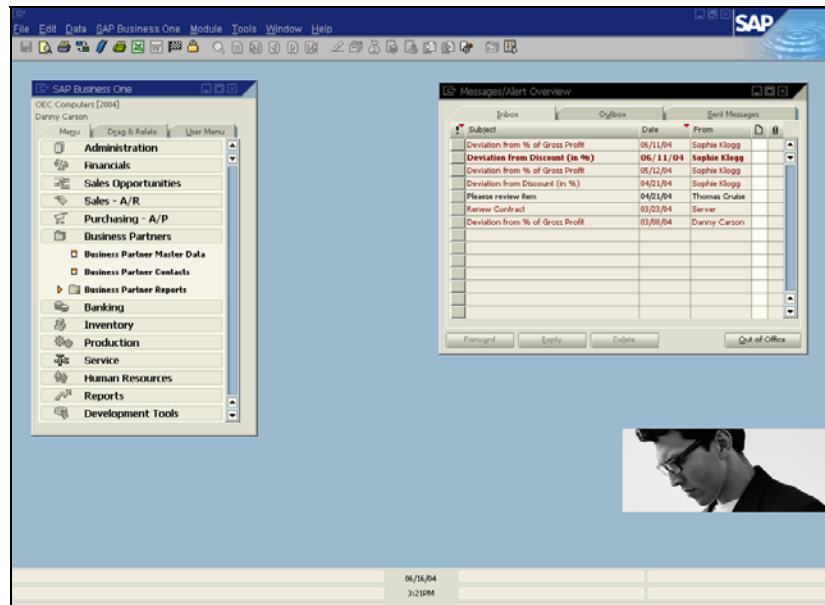


Figure 3: Simple User Interface

- 3) **Adaptability** – An extremely attractive feature of SAP Business One is its ability to be easily adapted to any number of environments without extensive modifications. Several features make this possible. First, the user can add an unlimited number of user-defined fields (UDF) to the system. (see Figure 4) These fields may be added to static data files, document headers or even to the body of documents. The fields can be simple input fields or can perform complex structured queries.

Most systems reserve a few fields that users can define but the fields are usually limited and don't respond to queries and reports as effectively as native fields. In SAP Business One the UDF's respond just like the native system fields do, ensuring that processing is not compromised when displaying the UDF's. Users also don't have to be concerned with subsequent versions because the upgrades auto protects the integrity of any pre-existing UDF's.



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Finally, the UDF's can be used to enhance even the line items within documents and the user can quickly (within minutes) change the user interface on complex input documents.

Along the same lines, but even more powerful is that SAP Business One also allows the use of unlimited user defined tables as well as user defined objects. This combination of features offers extreme adaptability for businesses that do not have extensive resources for customization.

All printed documents within SAP Business One can also be modified through the use of a document editor that allows users to use drag and relate? features to build an unlimited number of document formats for any number of users.

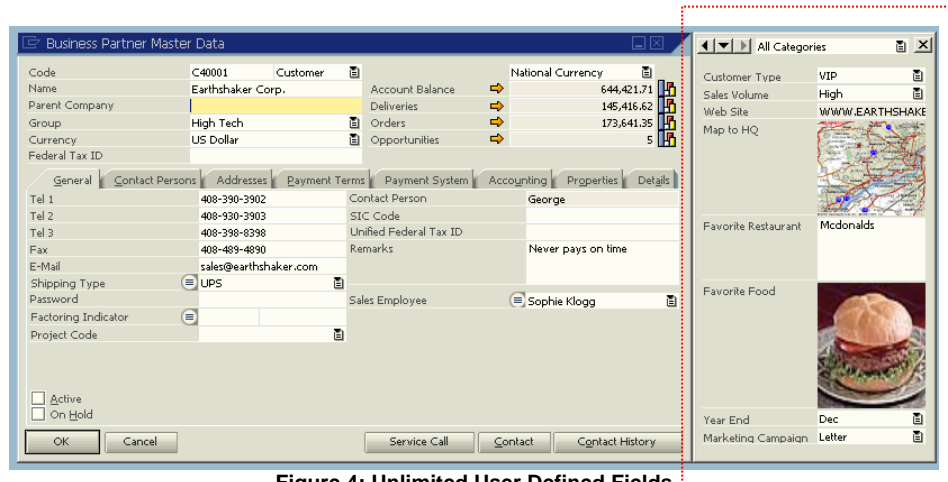


Figure 4: Unlimited User Defined Fields

- 4) **Work Flow Management** – Another unique feature of SAP Business One, and maybe the most significant, is the ability for SMB's to “manage by exception”. This is particularly powerful being that small business managers operate almost exclusively this way. As an entrepreneur, I can attest to the reality of my own experience. There are very few days where I get to the office and look for everything that's going according to plan. I am looking for the things that have gone wrong so I can immediately take corrective action.

SAP Business One has an embedded workflow management tool that can be used in virtually every area of the system. Users can quickly and easily define alerts based on their own business rules.



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The user can also determine who gets those alerts and by what method the alerts are sent. For example, if a salesperson attempts to enter a quote with an item discounted by more than an acceptable level, the system can immediately and automatically send an alert to a sales manager. With one click, the sales manager can see the document in question and take corrective action by sending immediate feedback to the salesperson. This is a fairly simple example, but users can also easily define very complex alerts. Let's say that a distributor has particular items which are very critical to the business. A user could easily set up an alert to trigger when the available quantity for those items hits a certain level. The alert could be routed to the particular purchasing agent who is responsible for purchasing those items, and maybe the salespeople who sell them to avoid running low on quantity for customer orders without overstocking inventory. The alerts can be sent via SAP Business One or can be routed via e-mail, fax or text messaging on a cell phone.

This functionality allows SMB's to get the most out of their system as they can tailor these alerts around the way they specifically do business. Managers can constantly know what the most immediate task is that needs their attention.

- 5) **Embedded CRM** – Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is almost a misnomer in SAP Business One, for it works just as well with vendors as it does with customers or prospects. SAP Business One's CRM capability is very well designed to sit within the application rather than being "added to" the application. With most products, CRM is an add-on package that requires customers to buy a separate package, or in the best case, purchase another module. They are also often required to run the CRM on a separate server. Then, they still have the requirement of data integration from their accounting system into the CRM. In addition, the look and feel is often different in the CRM system than the core application so additional training is required.

In SAP Business One, the CRM requires no additional server, or even additional training. In fact, CRM is almost a by-product of day-to-day processing of transactions. Salespersons can easily track



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their opportunities and prospects by scheduling reminders for callbacks and events. Accounts receivable managers can use the same functionality to assist in collections, and purchasing agents can use the functionality to track vendor quotes and manage vendor relationships. For those companies that have very sophisticated CRM requirements for managing marketing campaigns, advance telemarketing requirements or specific vertical applications of CRM, SAP has a third party add-on called One Track that provides very sophisticated, web enabled access to SAP Business One CRM functionality.

- 6) **Reporting Features** – SAP Business One gives users a multitude of reporting options to allow customers dynamic access to data. First, there are a series of standard reports, which come with the system. This sounds fairly standard until you actually see one of the reports. Every report within SAP Business One is displayed with a series of orange colored “hot keys” (see **Figure 5**). Wherever a user sees a “hot key”, they can click on that key to see the detail behind a certain reported item (see **Figure 6**) For instance, if you print an inventory stock status report, each item will have a “hot key” next to it. Upon clicking that “hot key”, the user can see all of the information available about that item. From all open orders for that item to every historical order ever placed for that item, warehouse data, pricing info, anything about that item is available without changing screens or navigating menus. A simple click on the “hot key” reveals the data. Every report in the system offers this feature.

#	Item No.	Item Description	In Stock	Sales Orders	Order	Available Qty.
2	A00001	IBM Inforprint 1312	1,602	933	41	710
3	A00002	IBM Inforprint 1222	1,720	1,325	78	473
4	A00003	IBM Inforprint 1226	1,719	1,169	63	613
5	A00004	HP Color LaserJet 5500	516	529	75	62
6	A00005	HP Color LaserJet 4400	630	444	9	195
7	A00006	HP 600 Series Inc	512	480	7	39
8	A00007	HP 10 Premium Glossy Paper	72	378	320	14
9	A00008	HP LJ Address Label 100	45	270	235	10
10	B20349	Tape Backup 1920	119	83	58	94
11	C7589	Computer Package	20	10	32	42
12	L19030	Labor	23	10	77	90
13	M00004	Toy story	6	7	283	282
14	M9890	Buglife	31	28	154	157
15	S00002	Musicbox	51	2	53	102

Figure 5: Live Report with “Hot Keys” to Drill-Down



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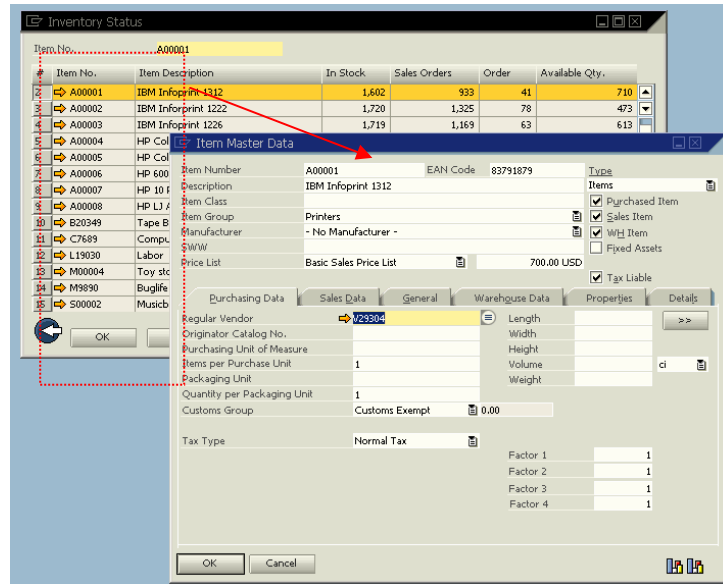


Figure 6: Line Item Detail from Live Report

The next reporting feature offered within SAP Business One is the Reporting Wizard, which allows users to create custom reports without the need to learn a reporting tool such as Crystal Reports. The wizard walks the user step by step through the selection of tables and data fields in familiar, easy to use language. There are no complicated field names to cross-reference and fairly complex reports can be generated in a matter of minutes. The reports that are generated can then be saved for repeated use and also come with the same “hot key” feature that is used in the standard reports.

Finally, but maybe most significantly, SAP Business One has a built in feature called “Drag & Relate™”. The “Drag&Relate” feature is something you won’t see in other systems. SAP has patented this feature and it clearly is a competitive advantage against other systems. “Drag&Relate” allows users to select a field of data with a mouse click and then drag that field to almost any menu item for an instant report that displays the relationship of the selected field to the selected menu items. For instance, a purchasing agent who is in the middle of entering a purchase order to a particular vendor might want to know something about past purchases from that vendor. He or she would simply have to click on the vendor field and drag it to the menu item called Purchase Orders (see figure 7) and an immediate report pops on the screen displaying every purchase order ever generated for that vendor. (see figure 8) The



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user can then use a very simple filtering feature to narrow the focus of the report to the specific data for which he/she is looking. Once again, these Drag&Relate reports feature the “hot keys” and all of this functionality is available whenever and wherever the user desires. In the example above, the purchasing agent never had to exit the purchase order entry process to access this feature. When you get the data you need you can simply close the window and you are precisely where you were when the “Drag&Relate” feature was started.

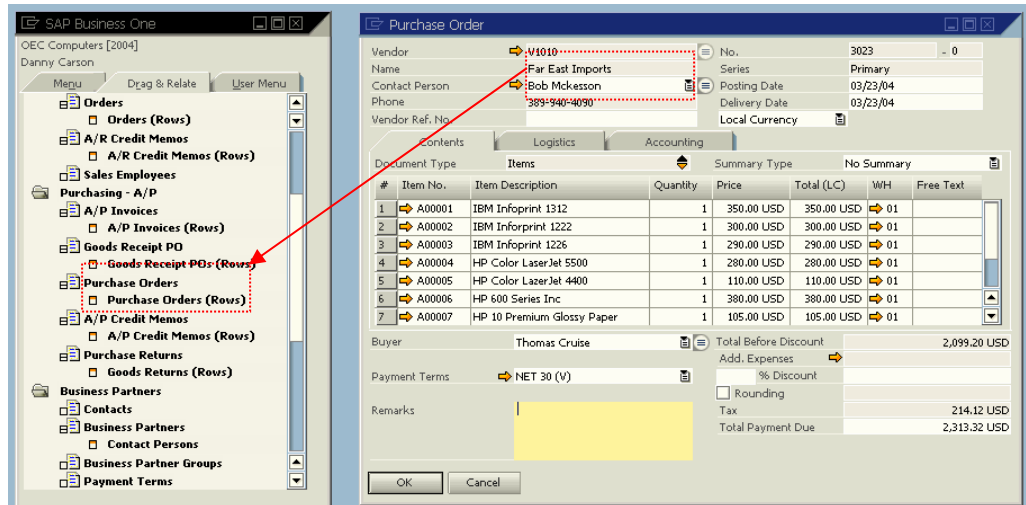


Figure 7: Drag and Relate Vendor Name over Drag and Relate Module for Data Analysis

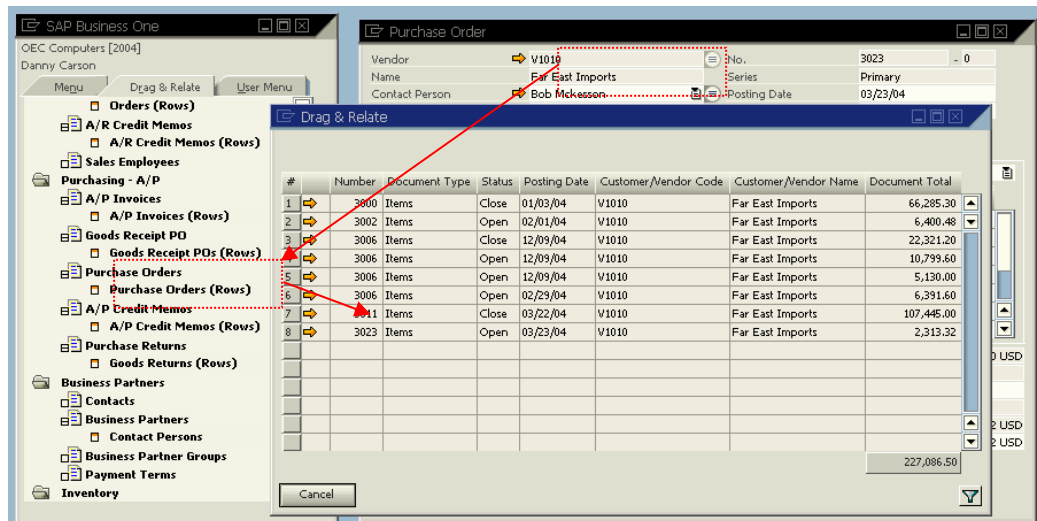


Figure 8: Report Dynamically Generated through Drag and Relate Data Analysis



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- 7. Global Product** – The fact that SAP is a global company requires that SAP Business One be a global product. As such, it supports nearly 20 languages and an unlimited number of foreign currencies. It is also important to note that there are not multiple versions of SAP Business One for the various countries supported. The language and currency features sit within SAP Business One and SAP only has a single version of the code to support the entire world.

The obvious benefit to SMB's is that as their business grows and expands, they are able to support the local languages and currencies for those countries in which they wish to do business without maintaining different systems. What might not be so obvious, but is critically important, about this "single code" approach, is that SAP can concentrate their entire development efforts on one product and users all across the globe get the advantage of this focused development effort. Most software companies have a separate code set for the various countries they support. This requires multiple development teams and a divided effort at best. As SMB's expand into other global markets, this frequently creates system problems, which translate to time and money. SAP has a huge team of developers working to enhance SAP Business One and their entire combined efforts yield advantages to every user worldwide.

Besides the many usability features that make SAP Business One unique, there are also a number of technical features that need to be considered to fully understand why SAP Business One is positioned so strongly in this market.

SAP's Technical Features

- 1. Open Architecture** – SAP Business One is built on an SQL platform, so users can have a great deal of flexibility for upward scalability and the myriad of products and tools available to users who have a SQL platform. Sybase ASE is also available, starting August 2004 and gives users the option of using a platform other than Microsoft. The Sybase platform, in early testing, seems to perform significantly faster than MS SQL and is also substantially less expensive.
- 2. Layered Architecture** – SAP Business One is designed to take advantage of an API layer for user interface changes and a DPI

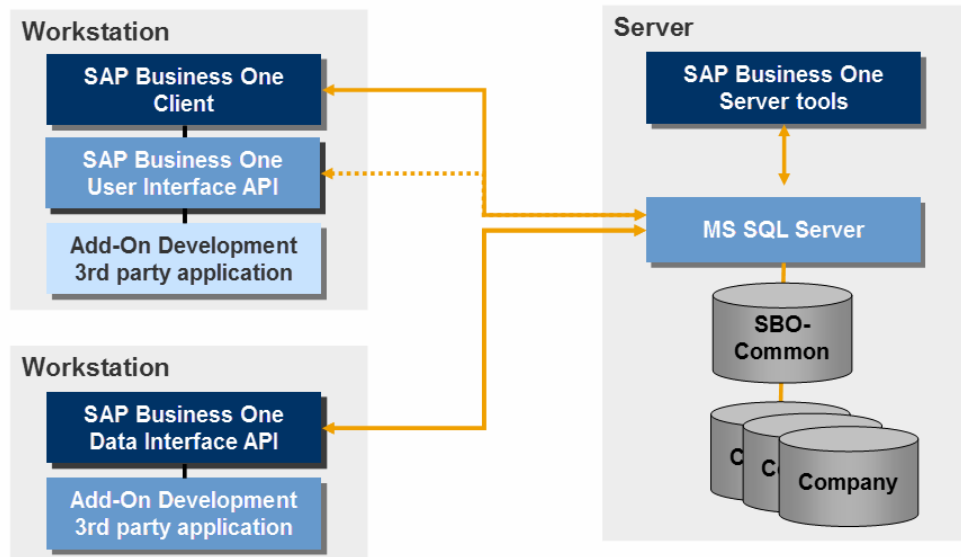


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layer for changes to the database. Before the reader drifts away, let me state why this architecture is important to SMB's.

(see Figure 9)

User Interface API exposes the UI elements of the SAP Business One front-end



Data Interface API exposes the SAP Business One data objects. It can be used independently from the SAP Business One front-end to access a company.

Figure 9: SAP Business One API Architecture

As stated earlier, the maintenance of customized software is a major contributor to overall system cost. This API and DPI layered approach is how SAP helps SMB's fix their long-term maintenance cost. Simply put, this approach allows SAP to maintain a protected source code while offering customizations through the API and DPI layers. This gives the SMB the ultimate flexibility of being able to modify virtually every area of the system if required, without compromising the integrity of the source code. This completely eliminates the problems of traditional systems where future upgrades are made complicated if not impossible. Even heavily modified systems can take advantage of future upgrades with no pain and most importantly with no additional cost. This is in contrast to traditional systems, where even simple modifications can cause turmoil when upgrading. Users typically must re-integrate (if not rewrite) the modifications into each new release. At best, this is very costly for SMB's. At worst they decide to not upgrade anymore and they miss out on new vendor enhancements and position



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themselves for problems down the road as the Software Vendor develops new functionality.

- 3. Upward Mobility with SAP** – Included in the technical features that make SAP Business One attractive, is the ability to either interface to or upgrade to one of the larger products within SAP. SMB's have the flexibility of moving to mySAP ERP with little effort. SAP has also provided the ability to interface SAP Business One to these products, which is very important to smaller divisions of larger companies that need to communicate to their corporate host system. There are 3 layers of the interface capability for the various levels of required availability between systems.

This is also very important for companies who are part of a supply chain and need to efficiently communicate to suppliers and customers. And since SAP has the largest installed base of enterprise systems in the world, it is a good bet that smaller companies either now or in the future will be required to communicate with an SAP system somewhere in the world.

- 4. Data Migration Toolkit** – Another important component of small business software is the ease with which you can migrate data from an existing system. This can be a very expensive and time-consuming part of system migration. SAP Business One has a toolkit that simplifies this process. The toolkit creates transactions using business rules to filter the data rather than performing a massive “data dump” that then manually has to be sorted by date and revenue/expense categories. The migration toolkit uses Microsoft Excel as the transfer repository so everyone and anyone can easily understand the data that is being transferred. The toolkit can also be used to easily integrate SAP Business One to other systems within an enterprise that needs to maintain more than one system.
- 5. Software Development Kit** – Sooner or later, almost every business needs some level of customization to their system. And even with SAP Business One's flexibility with user defined fields and reporting, there are still times when customization will be necessary. For those times, SAP offers a very powerful Software



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Development Kit (SDK). The SDK takes advantage of the API and DPI layers and provides a rapid development environment that allows development to be done in a fraction of the time required with traditional tools. In addition, programmers can use a whole series of languages to work with so that almost any programmer can quickly be productive and not be required to learn another language.

The SDK generated code requires no reintegration as new versions arrive. The code sits in a separate object that allows maximum flexibility without the risk of obsolescence. This feature can't be emphasized enough when considering technology in a small business. Even the simplest changes within most systems takes several hours to complete and has cost implications and complications for the entire life of a system. With SAP Business One's SDK, customization is simply not an issue and SMB's can be as aggressive as they choose to tailor their system to their exact needs.

Now you know why this entrepreneur feels that SAP will dominate this market over the next few years. I know there are those who are thinking that the writer is biased because he sells SAP Business One. Fair enough, but before you start to discount what has been written here you need to consider this: My company is one of the oldest and largest reseller firms in the United States. We service over 1500 customers in 5 different vertical markets and offer turnkey systems and support to those customers. There is not a software vendor on the market today who would not want us to sell their software. The various software vendors who are desperately fighting to find stability within their reseller channel recruit us often and hard. But our focus is fixed on SAP Business One as we are confident in its future and our ability to grow with it. SAP has delivered the right product, with the right technology, at the right time, for the right price.

One might ask how SAP Business One stacks up feature to feature against their competitors, and that is also a fair question. Actually, SAP Business One doesn't match feature-by-feature against much older products. However, consider the task of older product vendors trying to transform legacy applications to a true state-of-the-art technology platform, compared to SAP's task of adding a few features for added



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functionality. Microsoft has already stated that it will be several years before they will finish their next generation strategy and other companies aren't even saying what their strategy is. It will be virtually impossible for any established vendor to come close to SAP Business One's technology without a complete rewrite of their system; and even if they have the money to rewrite, will the market give them the time?

SAP, on the other hand, in the few short months we have been involved with the product, has released a Human Resources module, a Service Work Order module, and a Manufacturing module. In addition, hundreds of enhancements have been made to the system in general. Using their own tools, SAP is developing at lightning speed and will soon overcome any competitive threats regarding specific functionality.

In addition, because of the platform design and the tools for development, there are solution partners who are equally as fast at developing vertical market solutions around SAP Business One. In less than a year, solution partners have delivered complex manufacturing solutions, world class wholesale distribution and warehouse management, project accounting, time and billing, point of sale, e-commerce storefronts, sophisticated document management, mobile solutions for PDA's and much more that time doesn't allow to list.

In summary, SAP has positioned SMB's to benefit from the software giant's years of dominance at the enterprise level. SMB's can now compete with much larger companies that have huge IT budgets. For the first time, SMB's can take the next level of advancement with a product that will not only meet their needs today, but will also grow with them in the future. In review, and at the end of this discussion, the key elements of SAP's success with SAP Business One are found in six key benefits customers will achieve.

SAP Key Benefits

1. They can implement and go-live fast with measurement in days and weeks rather than months and years.
2. They can quickly have any required modifications made at a fraction of the cost of other systems.



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3. They can easily and cost effectively integrate into other systems they are required to support.
4. They have a system that can easily adapt to almost any environment as their business changes.
5. They can be assured of a virtually unlimited upgrade path and scalability.
6. And last but not least, they can finally have a fixed long term cost that they can predict and manage.

This paper started with the explanation of an already crowded industry. It might be crowded today, but not for long. Only the strongest players will survive and SAP looks to lead the way with SAP Business One.

~ The End ~

About the Author



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Mr. Carr founded CDI 23 years ago to become one of the Midwest's leading providers of business computer solutions to the Manufacturing, Distribution and Hospitality industries. Today, CDI has three locations in Michigan and Ohio and serves over 1500 small and medium sized businesses. As well as having developed and published a number of business applications, CDI also has strategic relationships with companies such as SAP and Micros/Fidelio.