

## SAP Activate for SAP SuccessFactors –

### Start your Digital Transformation by migrating HCM to the cloud

SAPIT Corporation

*SAP bought SuccessFactors, a cloud-based human resources (HR) solution, in 2011 for \$3.4 billion. Their legacy solutions, Human Resources (HR) and HCM, have always required a lot of effort – for SAP maintaining and its customers operating them. At the time, SuccessFactors was competing with Workday and Taleo. Now, Taleo’s market share among HCM systems is less than 0.1%. Workday ranks at the top with 25.4%, SAP HCM second with 12.2% and SuccessFactors HCM eighth at 5.7%, (<https://6sense.com/tech/human-capital-management>). SAP’s strategic HCM solution is SuccessFactors – not the “classic” SAP HCM. Mainstream support for HCM on ERP 6.0 ends in December 2027, and extended support will be available through 2030 (at an added cost). Customers using the HCM compatibility pack in SAP S/4 on-premise can receive a prolongation, only if they move to SAP S/4 Cloud, private edition, via a lift-and-shift migration preserving the current release – one might think twice before going down that path.*

*For a digital transformation and moving enterprise applications to the cloud, it can make perfect sense to start with non-value chain applications, like HR, because this will have less impact on operations and pose a lower risk. Since HR is an area not directly linked to operations, it can be a logical choice. In order to provide a sound and proven methodology to deploy SAP SuccessFactors HCM, SAP developed SAP Activate for SAP SuccessFactors and made it available on “SAP for Me” for access via the Road Map Viewer (<https://me.sap.com/roadmapviewer>).*

### What is SAP Activate for SAP SuccessFactors?

The SAP Activate for SAP SuccessFactors roadmap is accessible through the Road Map Viewer (RMV), listed as a “Cloud Specific Methodology” in the “Line of Business Solutions” section.

The roadmap released on 09 February 2026 covers all phases of the project lifecycle of a SuccessFactors implementation. SuccessFactors has the following modules:

- A. Core HR and Payroll
- B. Talent Management
- C. Workforce Management
- D. Sales Performance Management

Obviously, (A.) is the only legally required solution, your payroll must comply with all applicable laws. But it makes sense to look into the others, too. How, for example, would you prove that

your promotion processes are bias-free, warding off litigation claiming the contrary, without having a talent management software (B.)? In addition to C., for operating a contingent workforce, you need a cloud-based contingent workforce management platform, like Fieldglass (acquired by SAP in 2014), which has to be licensed separately. These are questions you have to answer from the get-go, and determine the target solution portfolio – SAP, non-SAP or a mix.

## Project lifecycle for SAP SuccessFactors

The SAP Activate for SAP SuccessFactors roadmap provides step-by-step guidance for the implementation and following the roadmap is critical to ensuring its success. The project highlights and key deliverables per phase are, as follows:

### 1. *Discover*

You determine the *implementation scenario* and start looking into *organizational change management (OCM)*. The implementation strategy and the scope of the implementation are set, along with the implementation approach, phases, and initial effort estimations. You can expect this to have quite an impact on the organization. Therefore, you should start with the OCM framework well ahead of time, before preparing for the actual implementation. You need one “OCM champion” per country or per company affected.

### 2. *Prepare*

You officially start the implementation project. In the case of SuccessFactors, you can't just “dive into” the fit-to-standard workshops. Active employees and managers will have become used to legacy ESS and MSS processes, like PTO requests, staff appraisals, pay adjustments and the like. You have to analyze these processes and the data; this “Data As-Is Analysis” is an important step in Employee Central implementations. You run evaluations of your current reporting in your legacy system and can hand them over to SAP (or your SI) for a detailed analysis or do this internally. SAP provides a readiness check tool dedicated to SuccessFactors. The data architecture as-is questionnaire is another deliverable and will take some time to complete. You also need to look at integration requirements (e.g. APIs) at this stage. From a *project management* perspective, you focus on strategic and operational planning to prioritize functional, localization and business requirements. This includes stakeholder management and change planning. You define roles, responsibilities and establish the project governance.

### 3. *Explore*

In fit-to-standard analysis workshops, you validate the solution functionality within the project scope and confirm business alignment. One of the key deliverables in a SuccessFactors implementation is the design of role-based permissions. For this, SAP provides the accelerator “Using Role-Based Permissions,” the latest version was recently released (11 February 2026); the document has 242 pages, almost 200 of which are

dedicated to the central list of role-based-permissions. These include HR operations, loading data, reporting and the integration of AI. For example, you can have AI generate interview questions. A lot of alignment work is needed. The SAP Business Accelerator Hub (<https://api.sap.com>) lets you determine the required integrations. Lastly, Identity and Access Management and planning of user training also belong in this phase.

#### 4. *Realize*

Now you build the system and the required integrations, starting with the test tenant. Here you make heavy use of SAP Best Practices, installing them according to the project scope: Finance integration, Employee Central, Employee Central Payroll (each country), Payroll Processing Control Center, Recruiting, On-/Offboarding, Performance, Goals, Succession and Development - to name a few. The master data integration service is set up to replicate data between systems; SAP provides a guide as an accelerator. Identity and access management, specifically role-based-permissions are set up. Given that employees' personal data is sensitive on one hand, and testing has to be meaningful which requires "real life" data, you will likely wind up with applying the same rules to your test environment that you have in production. While virtually no one would care about who can view GL master records, salary and bank account data etc. is entirely different. And it's not only the data that is worth protecting: the processes alone, the procedures used in HR should become known only to those who need to know them. There will be quite a bit of "heavy lifting" on the OCM side: you analyze and manage the change impacts, prepare training and conduct solution walkthroughs. You prepare for the cutover and build your production system towards the end of this phase.

#### 5. *Deploy*

Now you build the production system and execute the cutover. You hand the system over to the support organization.

#### 6. *Run*

You operate the solution and analyze user adoption. There will be two updates per year.

*We hope this clarifies how you can apply the SAP Activate for SAP SuccessFactors methodology.*

*For more details or a discussion, feel free to get in touch. You can reach us*

- *on LinkedIn* <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sapitcorp> *or*
- *via the contact form* <https://sapitcorp.com/contact/>

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