



# Think **BIG**, Start **SMALL**

A look at what's driving innovative thinking today

**T**he need to transform business models and operations was greatly accelerated as a result of the pandemic. While technology can help companies become more agile, enable streamlined workflow processes, and derive helpful insights from large amounts of data, people — and brain power — remain at the heart of innovation. There is an urgent opportunity for SAP customers to gain a lot of value by reallocating resources spent managing applications and applying continuous maintenance to systems, to developing innovation initiatives that can take their business to the next level.

Simply migrating to SAP S/4HANA and the cloud are no longer enough to transform the business. SAP customers and SAP partners providing migration services are beginning to view automation as a competitive advantage and a means to take full advantage of new functionality. SAPinsider recently talked with subject matter experts Michele Cito, Red Hat's Business Development Manager – EMEA SAP Cloud & Service Provider, and Robert Walmsley, Amazon Web Services' EMEA SAP Go-to-Market Lead, to learn more about how the two companies are working together to empower businesses with automation.

## **Q: What specific trends in technology should SAP customers be aware of in today's climate?**

**Michele (MC):** Many SAP customers are migrating to or considering migrating to SAP S/4HANA to enable them to innovate, become more agile, and transform their business. The trend itself hasn't changed, but rather the urgency behind it has, over the past year, as a result of the pandemic and business disruption.

Business disruption has also caused new trends to emerge in the economy, and these trends have impacted decisions being made around technology. Companies are experiencing revenue streams that are less predictable than they were before, they have less cash on hand, and they don't want to incur costs associated with managing their infrastructure. As a result, many organizations have had to move capital expenses (CapEx) to operational expenses (OpEx) in order to fund new business models and work with less resources to achieve more.

Companies need to respond quickly to the challenges of the market, and maintaining a clean core, freeing up resources, and moving to SAP S/4HANA and the cloud are becoming more and more the channels of choice for doing that.

**Robert (RW):** The need to manage all of the business's connected systems as a holistic, end to end solution is increasing. In addition to managing their SAP systems, customers are also looking at additional solutions such as data lakes, Internet of Things (IoT), or machine learning and making sure that, from a security perspective, everything is wrapped up together. Customers now view their SAP enterprise resource planning (ERP) system less and less as an island.

## **Q: How can customers succeed in this current climate that you just described?**

**MC:** The first key to success is achieving speed — the ability to innovate quickly. When customers migrate to SAP S/4HANA, they will be able to create microservice applications to extend the coverage of SAP. This is the key factor that is driving customers to look earlier rather than later into migrating to the cloud.

The second key to success is freeing up resources and properly managing internal processes. When



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customers move to SAP S/4HANA on the public cloud they're able to innovate without investing a lot of money in CapEx, and they're also able to deliver answers to their lines of business much faster. SAP S/4HANA enables a cloud-native environment that can be smartly integrated with other applications, and this is a major appeal for customers considering the migration.

The technical hurdle of migrating to SAP S/4HANA on the cloud has been identified by experts as one of the biggest impediments to moving, so the third key to success is having the right skills and expertise involved to support the migration and maintain and manage the application.

**RW:** Companies have historically invested a lot of time and money managing their platforms, including interfaces, and utilizing automation to help streamline that management is essential.

For example, we recently released AWS Launch Wizard for SAP, which is built on top of what we called our AWS Quick Start solution. Customers can create their entire SAP HANA system, including high availability based on Red Hat, through this wizard. The way it works: the customer answers a series of technical questions, then presses “go.” Several hours or

sometimes minutes later, depending on the complexity, the high-availability environment has been created.

A customer in Italy recently created its first SAP high availability solution in just six hours, and was then able to move whole systems over to the cloud in less than one week leveraging AWS Launch Wizard. This results in two main business benefits: it removes people dependency and human error, and makes maintenance repeatable. What used to take several weeks to plan and a week to execute can now, with AWS Launch Wizard, take days to plan and hours to execute.

**Q: How are Red Hat and AWS working together to help customers be successful?**

**MC:** Utilizing tools that can automate recurring maintenance and leveraging resources that are skilled in managing a cloud environment allows customers to spend less time “running the factory” and more time innovating.

Red Hat has been developing automation playbooks for general purposes to help SAP customers install SAP HANA and SAP S/4HANA in an automated way. We then thought, wouldn't it be great to develop playbooks that are already optimized for deploying on a



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specific infrastructure or managing system? That’s where the recent Red Hat and AWS partnership has come together. The market is saying, we want to migrate to SAP S/4HANA and the cloud and realize the full value of the move, but we have limited resources and don’t want to put time and money into recurrent maintenance. The automation playbooks being offered by Red Hat help customers automate time consuming components of the migration, and they are specifically optimized for the AWS platform.

**RW:** We are focused too on how we can eliminate single points of failure. For example, if you have an SAP solution feeding a data lake, the partnership between Red Hat and AWS helps ensure that the whole thing works together so that a report or a business user doesn’t have a problem just because something in the plumbing stopped working.

**Q: What next steps should customers take to move forward on their SAP journey?**

**MC:** When people think of Red Hat, many still associate us with just providing an operating system. But today, Red Hat offers a very comprehensive set of solutions that can help customers on their SAP journey, including

adding value to data lakes, IoT, and security — especially when it comes to moving SAP systems to the cloud. So thinking about Red Hat’s holistic offerings is important.

**RW:** Companies should start thinking of the big picture. Challenge yourself to reimagine the way you run and operate your SAP platform, and be bold enough to ask what would be possible if technology were not a barrier. If you could fully leverage your SAP and non-SAP data today, what would that allow you to do? If you had an always-on SAP system, what would that mean for your customers?

One of our customers is a manufacturer that makes big earth moving equipment — both standard and made-to-order equipment. By thinking big, the company was able to imagine what might be possible if it could run its SAP S/4HANA solution 24/7. For example, by combining its customer ordering and forecasting data with its shop floor data and running algorithms constantly, the company imagined being able to enhance its manufacturing process, and being able to identify opportunities to repurpose a machine quickly to supply a new customer or replace a broken machine on demand.

Or, start small. Maybe you pull some SAP data and connect that to a few IoT devices. Experiment. ■