SAP Solution Brief
Solution Extensions

SAP IT Process Automation by Cisco

Deliver High Service Quality Across Heterogeneous IT Landscapes

Quick Facts

Summary

IT experts are charged with minimizing the impact of operational issues on business. The SAP® IT Process Automation application by Cisco helps IT staff standardize and unify operational processes across your enterprise, to support maximum uptime and optimal resource usage. With SAP IT Process Automation, you can increase operational efficiency and promote service-level success while minimizing IT upkeep effort. And you realize these benefits even if you run a mix of SAP and non-SAP software.

Business Challenges

- Meet increasing service demand while stretching IT budgets
- Eliminate isolated processes and institute overall governance
- Assess changing business contexts and prioritize responses
- Resolve systemic operational issues that repeatedly cause unplanned downtime

Key Features

- **Unified incident response** – Automate and integrate the whole incident response process
- **Predefined corrective actions** – Model resolution schemes or resolve issues using predefined methods of support for operational processes
- **Advanced reporting** – Enforce compliance with such regulations as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act
- **Visual configuration environment** – Create reusable flows and build in human input points using drag-and-drop techniques

Business Benefits

- **Speed troubleshooting and lift service levels** by automating critical IT processes
- **Free IT staff for strategic projects** by streamlining complex operations
- **Increase operational efficiency and customer satisfaction** through process standardization

For More Information

Call your SAP representative, or visit us on the Web at www.sap.com/solutions/solutionextensions/it-process-automation.

You already know that one way to sharpen your competitive edge is to implement an IT landscape that meets high standards for performance and uptime. You want to ensure that your back office runs smoothly and your processes leverage best practices consistently across your IT organization. With the SAP® IT Process Automation application by Cisco, you can improve your operational efficiency and system reliability by standardizing critical operational processes across SAP and non-SAP software.

You need your IT experts to be a strategic resource, proactively contributing to the present and future well-being of your organization. How can you free these important players from reactively managing faults and incidents in a complex IT network? How can you help ensure business continuity while monitoring and balancing a wealth of variables in advanced architectures like those for cloud computing? How do you succeed in today's global economy, where the trend is toward running on extremely agile architectures and platforms? You must clearly minimize mishaps and outages, establishing operational processes that help you take appropriate corrective measures when issues do arise. And you must leverage the knowledge you gain along the way to sustain IT system health and growth. SAP IT Process Automation, with its robust functionality for automating processes, will improve service levels across the data center.

STANDARDIZE AND AUTOMATE FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY

SAP IT Process Automation helps system administration teams standardize and unify technical operational processes and institute best practices across complex, heterogeneous IT environments.

You can simplify upkeep by automating incident response, IT task management, and corrective actions. You can use preconfigured content and a generic interface to SAP software environments, or you can tailor the implementation to your own landscape. Either way, you automate tasks to make them proactive, preventive, and continuous, in essence placing IT process automation within the domain of application lifecycle management.

ORCHESTRATE COMPLEX OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

SAP software administrators face a special challenge: to bring consistency, efficiency, and visibility into highly complex processes like those for production support and hardware and software maintenance. Your IT staff typically has to perform a number of daily tasks to ensure that enterprise applications are performing at the service levels your business functions require. And these busy people must perform a series of other activities after a change in the system landscape to verify that systems are operational and ready for business execution. Since business process execution cannot be efficient unless technical operations are efficient, performing these procedures and checks flawlessly is mission critical.

Whenever you undertake them, activities for production support and maintenance can become major projects, involving many different applications and operational procedures. The process can easily become cumbersome and error prone, and projects can last weeks when executed manually. When you're reconfiguring databases, recycling application pools, or restarting services, for example, you can experience significant problems if any part of the process is not completed properly. With SAP IT Process Automation, you can let much of the necessary work proceed unattended. You can verify that operational processes are running, audit every step in procedures, and even integrate human approvals and automate escalation and notification.

Automated clerical tasks, such as checking the health of SAP and non-SAP applications, can help you maintain overall visibility and coordinate cross-functional production support and maintenance projects. You realize key benefits in time savings and error reduction, and you always have a detailed automation summary report to make short work of downstream auditing. When you automate through SAP IT Process Automation, you help ensure execution based on best practices to improve business continuity, increase IT productivity, and reduce the risk of business disruption.

Furthermore, you can automate the execution of long-running, multifaceted transactions and let them run in the background. Since some of those complex operational processes also require human intervention,

SAP IT Process Automation can send a message to the process owner at decision points, present the available data, and wait for a response before continuing. You can also arrange to schedule and run multiple transactions in parallel, and you can repeat a procedure in parallel for each data center application or infrastructure component you need to touch. For example, you can restore multiple systems or execute multiple steps simultaneously – at machine speed. And that means you significantly accelerate system readiness and upkeep activities. Plus, you reduce the expenditure of valuable IT time and budget.

COORDINATE WITH SAP AND NON-SAP MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

SAP IT Process Automation provides the enterprise context for process standardization, regulatory compliance, and risk mitigation across all SAP and non-SAP software components of your landscape. It also offers automation packs that help you integrate with specific SAP applications at a deeper level. Particularly useful with the SAP ERP application and the SAP Solution Manager application management solution, it automates the way you manage alerts and the incident response lifecycle. You can model operational processes as simply as you do business processes during implementation blueprinting. The underlying Cisco platform separates the automation engine from application management content, which makes it easier for you to access, update, and extend application-related content. This enables cross-system integration with server infrastructure and systems management products from a number of other vendors.

USE PRECONFIGURED PROCESS-FLOW TEMPLATES OR CREATE YOUR OWN

With SAP IT Process Automation, you can readily reuse preconfigured IT process-flow templates based on best practices for supporting operational environments. Or you can work in a rich drag-and-drop graphical interface to create your own. You can make short work of integrating new third-party applications into the process flows as well. A set of role-based workspaces includes a display of monitoring results and a display of process definitions, along with an overview designed to keep administrators informed of system status.

The underlying single version of the truth helps you streamline operational processes across the entire IT landscape and provide process visibility across various functional teams. And along that whole spectrum, you can generate built-in profitability reports to showcase the value of automating manual tasks.

MAKE THE MOST OF HUMAN CAPITAL

SAP IT Process Automation has an advanced deployment model with robust delegation functionality and security credentialing. You can authorize teams to execute a task and make sure they have the level of access they need to accomplish the task – but no more. By providing a central repository for all procedures and scripts, you maintain clear provenance and simplify version control. That means you can increase productivity and security simultaneously.

Most important, simplifying the way you manage administrative tasks frees your IT team to deploy and scale automated activities as dictated by long-term business priorities, rather than responding to emergency housekeeping headaches. This gives them time and energy to participate in innovation efforts and make strategic contributions toward achieving the business goals of the enterprise.

TALLY THE BENEFITS

Using SAP IT Process Automation is a preferred method for standardizing and unifying IT operational processes in complex, heterogeneous environments. Automation packs facilitate integration with SAP ERP and SAP Solution Manager. The software also interoperates smoothly with other SAP applications, including the SAP NetWeaver® Business Warehouse component and the SAP HANA® platform. Preconfigured content helps you automate incident response activities and orchestrate far-reaching operations, like the incident avoidance checks and maintenance activities essential in complex heterogeneous landscapes and cloud-based architectures. Long-running operational processes can now run in parallel and with limited manual supervision, but you still have a full audit trail for quality assurance. You reduce the risk of error through automated and accelerated technical operational processes executed with governance and consistency. And that consistency helps foster the business continuity and service quality your enterprise depends on.

In short, you gain increased efficiency, visibility, and control – ultimately deriving greater value more quickly from your investment in SAP solutions.

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