White Paper

Go Live On Time – How to use SAP Solution Manager to deliver SAP projects efficiently

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Neil Start and Ben Parris are SAP-certified ALM experts who specialize in SAP Solution Manager and associated 3rd party ALM tools. They are two of the founding members of Rapid ERP (www.rapid-erp.com); providing high quality, innovative SAP consulting services to clients who want to maximize the value that ALM can bring to their SAP operation. With over 45 years of combined experience, Rapid ERP provides the marketplace with the industry's most experienced and knowledgeable SAP ALM consultants.

As we have explored in some of our previous publications, SAP Solution Manager is capable of supporting many Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) processes, from IT Service and Change Management, through Monitoring and Technical Operations, to Business Process Modeling and Optimization.

Most SAP customers are also familiar with the Solution Documentation functionality and have made some progress in defining key business processes to assist with transparency and supportability. However, a majority of SAP implementation and upgrade projects simply overlook the Solution Manager functionality for defining, recording and tracking a project, mistakenly believing that it is difficult to setup and use, or offers nothing over and above a typical combination of MS Project and Excel-based reporting.

In the latest major functional release of SAP Solution Manager – SPS10 (Feature Pack 2) - it is now also possible to utilize the IT Project Management component from SAP's Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) solution. For the first time, true end-to-end management of a large-scale SAP project is possible from a single tool/platform, and all project team members can have a consistent view of schedules and tasks – no more endless chasing for progress updates and merging multiple plan versions prior to that important Project Status meeting!

This paper first investigates some of the challenges typically encountered by SAP Implementation projects, and then explains the Solution Implementation tools and functions in SAP Solution Manager that can help to address them, ensuring that your project can reliably go live, on time.

Key Challenges for SAP Implementation Teams

Throughout the course of a typical SAP Implementation, Upgrade or Enhancement project, the project team and Project Management Office (PMO) will be faced with many of the following questions:

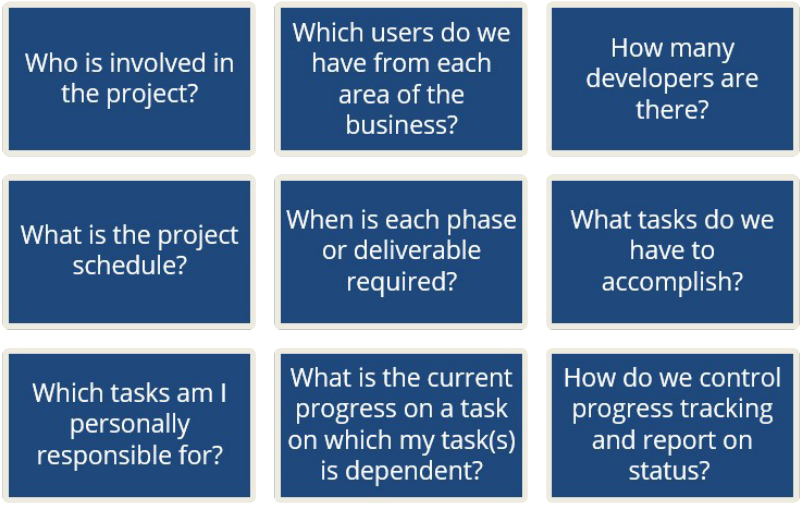

Figure 1- Typical Challenges during SAP Implementation

The natural response is to address each as they occur, solving the problems and refining the approach as we progress, supported by a subset of common applications – email, MS Excel, and perhaps Project, plus a shared document repository or simple network drive.

The alternative approach, proposed here, is to consider the overall methodology at the outset and use a single tool – SAP Solution Manager - to increase transparency and centralize the project management activity.

SAP Solution Manager for Solution Implementation

The Solution Implementation process in SAP ALM covers four phases of the application lifecycle. Requirements, Design, Build & Test, and Deploy are all supported by tools within SAP Solution Manager:

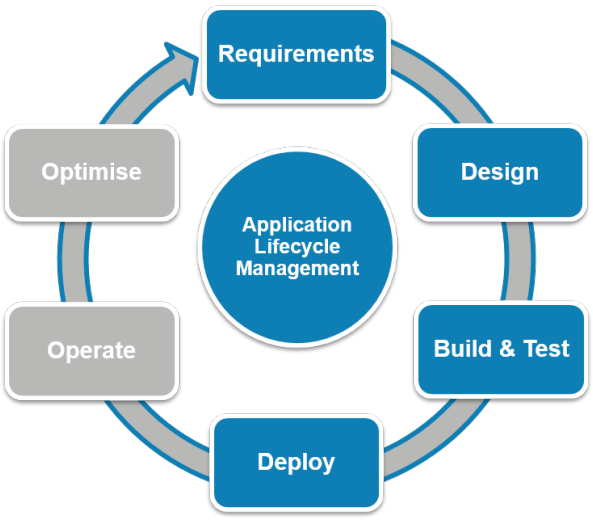

Figure 2- ALM Phases for Solution Implementation

- During the **Requirements** phase you collect and evaluate all business and non-functional requirements for the proposed SAP solution
- In the **Design** phase the scope of your project is documented in the Business Blueprint, detailing the future-state business processes and the SAP or non-SAP components that they will operate on – see our previous paper 'SAP Solution Manager – Much more than a Systems Administration tool' (Richardson, G & Start, N 2013)
- **Build & Test** implements the business processes defined in the Business Blueprint according to the defined requirements, configuring standard SAP processes and adding organization-specific requirements and enhancements to them before undertaking comprehensive and structured testing
- In the **Deploy** phase you pass the application across for live operation and provide initial support to the end users

Dedicated functionality is available to support each of the phases above and it is beyond the scope of this paper to look at all tools for supporting an implementation or upgrade project. Instead we will focus on the cross-phase functionality that enables us to optimize the definition, tracking and reporting of the project across all stages from Requirements through to Deploy.

The Starting Point - Project Definition

To implement or upgrade an SAP solution with SAP Solution Manager, we must first define a project. This captures the system landscape, the project scope, team members, and project standards (document types, keywords status values, etc.) that will be used throughout the project. All central project administration tasks are carried out in the Project Administration transaction (SOLAR_PROJECT_ADMIN) or via the 'Planning' view in the Implementation/Upgrade work center.

Project Type[1]

Several types of projects can be created in Solution Manager; this selection determines the default view and edit options available during the subsequent Business Blueprint and Configuration activities:

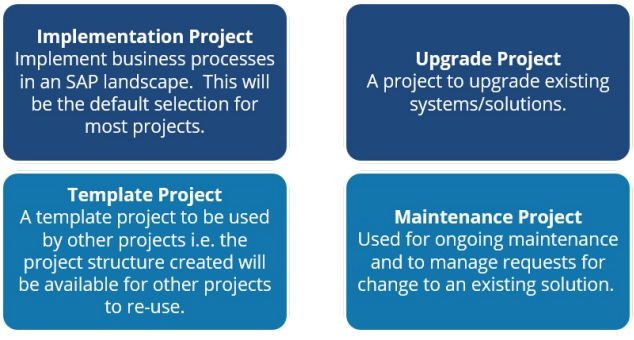

Figure 3 - Types of Project in SAP Solution Manager

[1] You may also see project type 'Optimization' and 'Safeguarding' in the list of possible entries – these project types were intended for SAP-led projects and are not typically used by customers

Creating an Implementation Project

This paper will use an implementation project as its example but the majority of the required data and functionality is consistent across the project types.

The following details can be entered for projects in the Project Administration transaction:

- *General Data:* Contains administrative data for the project, for example Project Title, Project Type, Responsible Person, Project Language, and Start/End Dates.
- *Project Scope:* The SAP Roadmap for use and any relevant project Templates that are to be included
- *Project Team Members:* Addition of Team members against the project allows for these individuals to be assigned against specific nodes of the Roadmap, Blueprint or Configuration structure. All team members contributing to the project should be defined here.
- *System Landscape:* The systems of your landscape are grouped together, by SAP product type, into a logical component. All logical components required for the project must be entered in Project Administration. This will facilitate navigation from the business blueprint, configuration or testing functions in Solution Manager to the actual system according to its role (e.g. Development, Quality Assurance, or Production).
- *Milestones:* Allows for the definition of milestone dates for tracking progress. Default milestones can be copied from the assigned Roadmap.
- *Organizational Units:* Details of the Organizational Units used in the project, e.g. in-scope countries and time zones.
- *Project Standards:* All Status Values, Keywords, Documentation Types (more details below) to be used in the project should be entered here.

Project Standards

The standard values for status, keywords and documentation types configured in the project template are available to all projects of the specific project type and are integrated into the various functions within Solution Manager:

Status Values

Status values provide you with information about the status of the Business Blueprint and Realization phases of the project. For ease of use (and to ensure consistency) it is advisable to prefix each status with

a three letter abbreviation corresponding to the area where the status should be used, e.g.

- **Adm** – General Administrative status reporting
- **Cfg** – Configuration Tab in Realization
- **Dev** – Development Tab in Realization

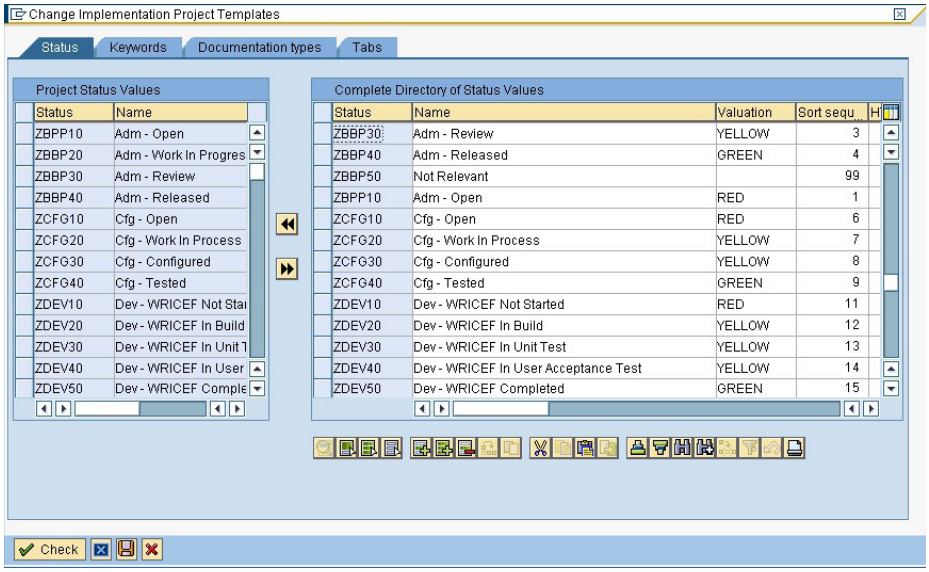

Figure 4 - Example Project Status Values

Keywords

Keywords are centrally-defined metadata 'Tags' that provide the ability to filter the subsequent Roadmap, Blueprint or Configuration structures to relevant nodes, facilitate the search for specific documents within these structures, and provide further selection options for reporting on progress.

Keywords can be used within an SAP Solution Manager project in the following scenarios:

- In the Roadmap to allow for efficient reporting and filtering of nodes.
- Within the Business Blueprint and Configuration areas, allowing for efficient reporting and filtering of the structure.
- At a document level to differentiate between document types and aid with classification.
- Against a development object to allow for easy identification.

In order to prevent confusion and enable efficient search capabilities, you should try to limit keywords to a small number of meaningful and reusable values

Documentation Types and Templates

The document types selected for a project determine the different documents which can be created, uploaded or referenced in your created project. You can also specify the correct template to be used, the status values, and the role(s) who should approve the final version (optionally using a digital signature mechanism).

Roadmaps – To Get Where You're Going, It Helps to Have a Good Map!

Roadmaps contain standard SAP methodologies and cover the most important aspects and phases of an SAP implementation or upgrade. Each Roadmap provides a hierarchical structure of activities, displayed in a graphical format, and links to accelerators and tools to assist with project tasks.

Once a Roadmap is selected during the Project Administration, a project-specific Roadmap is then available as a mechanism to guide and track the project through to its implementation. Additionally, it can provide a repository for project specific documentation (PMO documentation) that is not specific to either the Business Blueprint or Configuration activities.

ASAP Implementation Roadmap v8

ASAP (Accelerated SAP) is SAP's standard methodology for the implementation and enhancement of SAP applications. It provides guidance on the required activities and tasks that need to be carried out throughout all stages of an SAP project and supports project teams with templates, tools, questionnaires, and checklists, which can be used from planning through to the productive operation of the SAP solution.

Figure 5 - ASAP Roadmap Phases

Each phase is briefly described below:

- ***Project Preparation*** – Guides the team through the initial planning and preparation of an SAP project.
- ***Business Blueprint*** – helps to achieve a common understanding of how the company intends to run SAP to support their business. The result is the Business Blueprint, a detailed documentation of the results gathered during requirements workshops.
- ***Realization*** – The purpose of this phase is to implement all the business process requirements based on the Business Blueprint.
- ***Final Preparation*** – Complete the final preparation (including testing, end user training, system management and cutover

activities) to finalize your readiness to go live. The Final Preparation phase also serves to resolve all critical open issues. On successful completion of this phase, you are ready to run your business in your live SAP System.

- ***Go Live Support*** – The purpose of this phase is to move from a project-oriented, pre-production environment to live production operation.
- ***Run*** – The primary goal of this phase is to ensure the long-term operability of the solution.

Benefits

Adopting the ASAP methodology for your project provides a comprehensive guide to streamline the required activities and offers you the following benefits:

✓ Faster implementations with options for Traditional, Rapid Delivery and Agile development projects

✓ More reliable projects thanks to proven tools, accelerators, and business procedures based on many years' experience with SAP projects

✓ Less risk due to the use of a formal quality management process

✓ Lower implementation costs due to use of accelerating techniques and the more efficient use of project resources

✓ Provides an effective framework for project management that complies with the Project Management Institute Project Management Body Of Knowledge (PMI PMBOK) industry standard

✓ Covers the entire project lifecycle – from initiation through delivery to post-project operations

Working with Roadmaps

You can view all available standard SAP Roadmaps in Solution Manager via the Roadmap transaction (RMMAIN) or the 'Plan' section of the Implementation/Upgrade work center. This area also provides access to any project-specific Roadmaps you have created by assigning a Roadmap in the 'Scope' section of Project Administration:

Roadmap view and structure

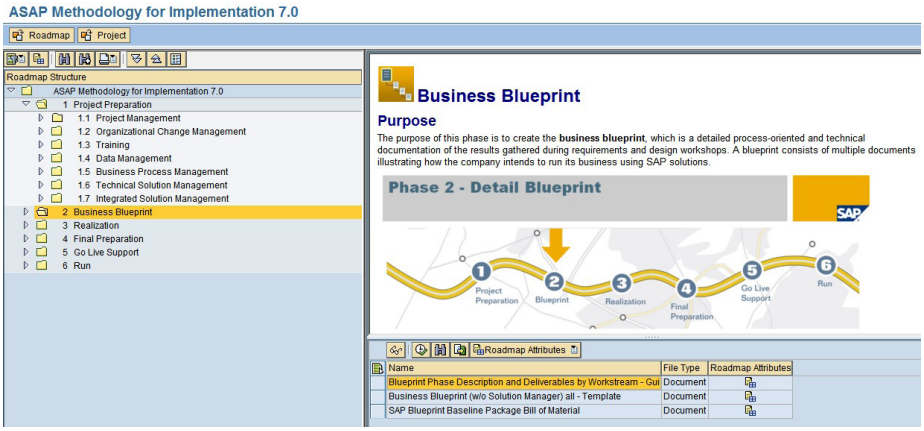

Figure 6 - Roadmap view in Solution Manager

The left-hand screen area contains the structure view of the Roadmap which describes the hierarchical relationship between high level project Phases (level 1), Work Packages (level 2), and individual deliverables and sub-deliverables in the form of Tasks (level 3), and Activities (level 4).

On the top-right, you will see the topic area that describes the current element and the inputs, outputs, activities, and tasks that are required to complete each project deliverable.

At the bottom-right are the accelerators available for the selected Roadmap element. These include examples, templates, whitepapers, guidelines, and links to the SAP Help Portal and to further information on the SAP Service Marketplace to help you complete your implementation project more efficiently.

You can also make notes and record the status of the structure element (Open/In Process/Complete), assign the responsible project team member, create an issue relating to the deliverable or project phase, or upload PMO-related documents.

Filters

Filters provide a mechanism to restrict the hierarchical view of the Roadmap structure to specific nodes of interest.

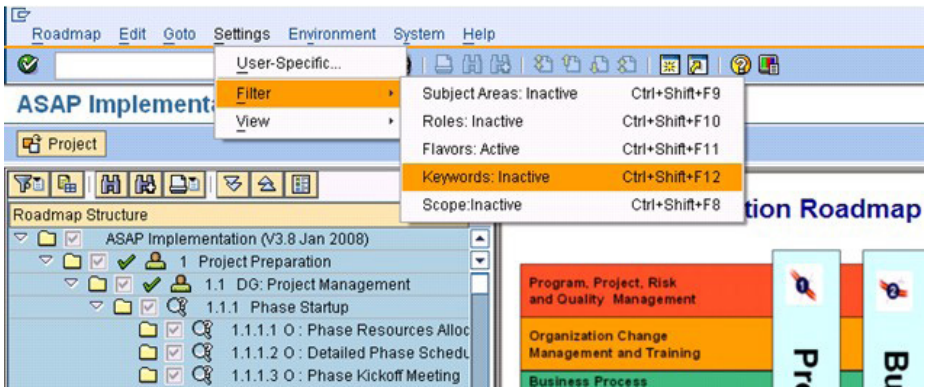

Figure 7 - Roadmap Filter Selection

Filtering the Roadmap structure can be a very useful way to simplify the view of the Project; limiting the nodes to those which directly impact specific roles or have been categorized by a project keyword, answering questions such as, 'which tasks does an application consultant have to complete for the implementation of an SAP Industry Solution for Oil and Gas'?

Defining Task Ownership and Progress

Throughout the Blueprint and Realization (Configuration) phases of a project, you use the associated transactions in Solution Manager (SOLAR01 and SOLAR02) to document the affected business processes and technical objects.

It is helpful to allocate the project team members responsible for each item within the Blueprint process structure and record this on the 'Administration' tab of the Blueprint transaction. This will improve tracking and communication, especially in the case of cross-functional processes. Keywords can also be added on the 'Administration' tab to further classify the structure items and this information can be used to support reporting. Even if you don't want to manage the plan at a granular level (by documenting planned and actual 'Person Days' effort) it can be beneficial to use these fields to store the number of lower-level deliverables (within a top-level item) that this team member(s) is responsible for, e.g. number of blueprint documents to be authored – again this approach can support consistent and straightforward real-time status reporting.

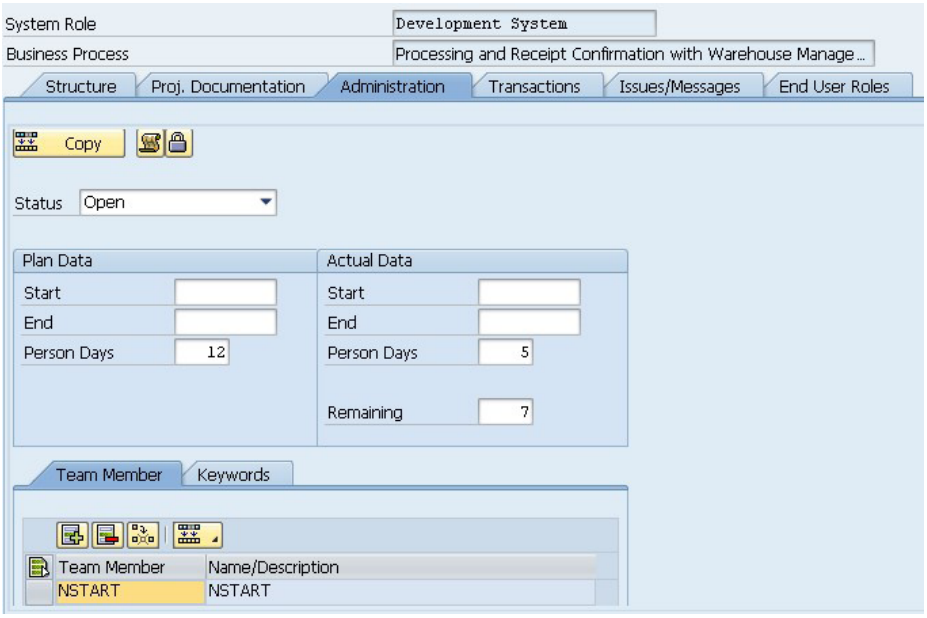

Figure 8 - Assigning project team member(s) and maintaining administrative data

Similarly, for status tracking within the Realization phase, assign the person responsible for configuration of this process/process step by selecting a 'Team Member' on the 'Administration' tab of the Configuration transaction.

It is also possible to manage status of the individual configuration items by assigning a ‘Person Responsible’ to each individual entry on the ‘Configuration’ tab if you want to track status and progress at a more detailed level:

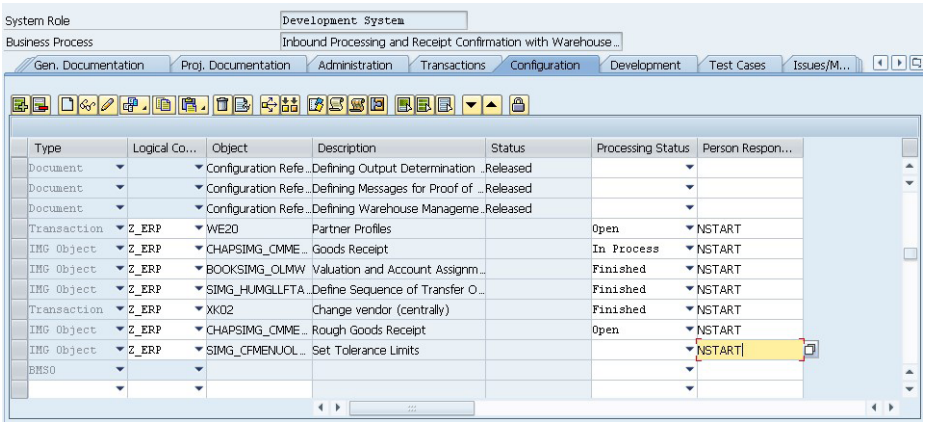

Figure 9 - Responsibility for individual configuration items

Issue Management

Issues affecting the process design should be recorded in the blueprint structure on the ‘Service Messages’ tab against the relevant structure item. A project team member can be assigned to this issue and will be responsible to solve it. Using the reporting functionality, the status of all current issues can be evaluated.

General project issues can be recorded against the roadmap, on the ‘Service Messages’ tab for the relevant phase or deliverable.

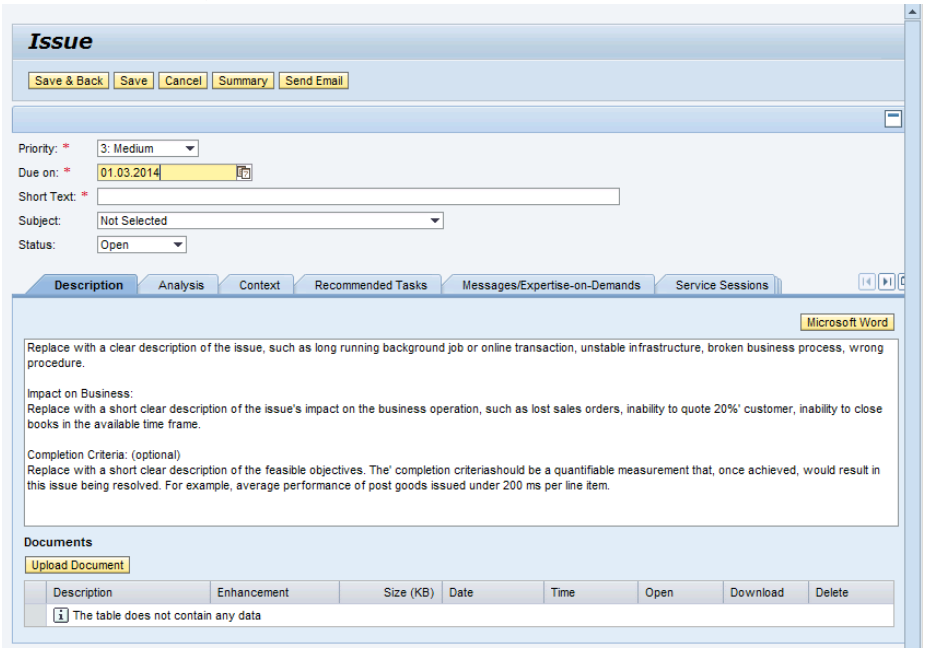

Figure 10 - Issue maintenance dialog

Reporting

As explained above, information about a project, for example, status, deadlines, and team member assignment can be entered in Solution Manager. If this practice is established and consistently applied, the detailed reporting options will allow easy tracking of the progress of the project. The more details you record, the more project analysis options there are.

Solution Manager offers a collection of reports, all available in one transaction (SOLAR_EVAL). The reporting can also be accessed from the Implementation/Upgrade work center via navigation area 'Reports':

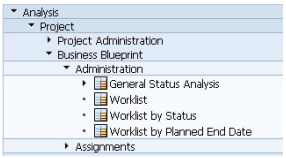

Figure 11 - Business Blueprint Administration reports

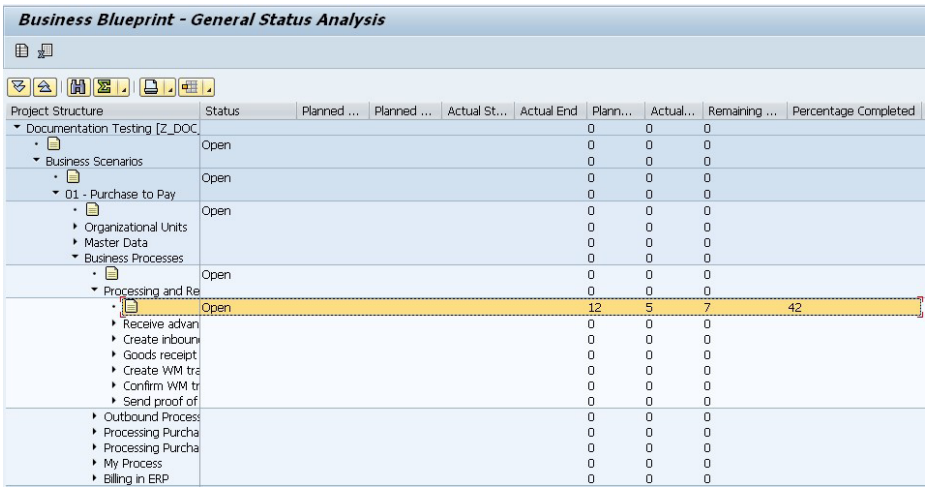

Figure 12 - Example status analysis output

SAP Project and Portfolio Management in Solution Manager

The final piece of functionality we will look at is the integration of SAP Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) projects into SAP Solution Manager. This is a new capability (available as of Solution Manager SPS10) which allows a Solution Manager Implementation project to be associated with a PPM project that will control the creation of tasks, manage project team members, and allocate resources for each task.

A Project Manager can now have visibility of all tasks and resources across multiple projects, with the associated information and workflow available in one central system, simplifying the job of managing complex interrelated programs of work.

Predefined templates, project versioning, Gantt charts, and project reporting/analysis are all available, along with time reporting that can be integrated into an existing ERP system for financial processing.

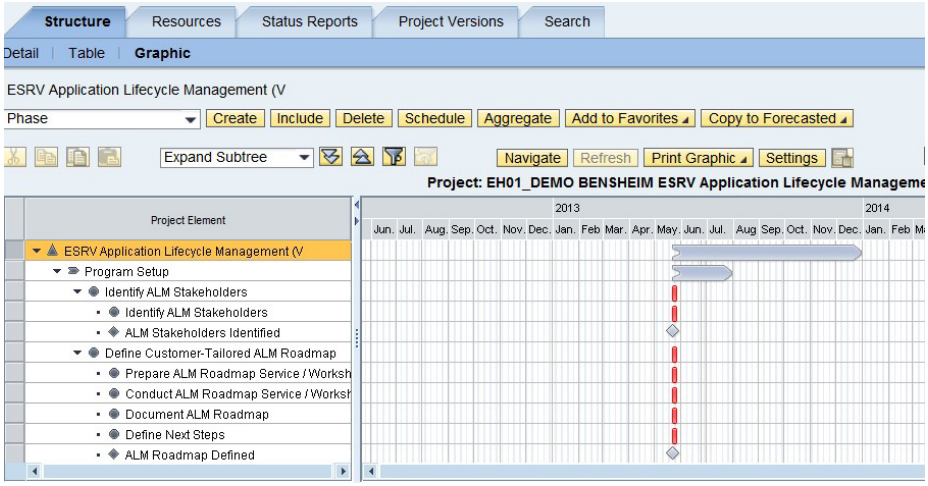

Figure 13 - Project Gantt chart Graphic

After go-live, SAP PPM projects can then be integrated with a Solution Manager ChaRM Maintenance project and used on an ongoing basis to create tasks and assign resources directly from the Change Request and Change Documents, and synchronize these back to the PPM project. You can also record time in the Change Request and Change documents and consolidate this into the PPM project.

Project and Change Managers, and PMO, will therefore have better visibility of scope, resources and time spent across each project and Change Request, without having to resort to manipulating data in Excel or updating tasks in MS Project.

Conclusion

Using SAP Solution Manager during an SAP Implementation, Upgrade or Enhancement project provides a consistent approach and methodology, removing confusion from within the project team over what deliverables each phase contains, and where they should record their activities and status updates.

As long as the approach is determined up front, applied in a practical fashion and communicated clearly, everyone will find it an invaluable tool for reference and collaboration throughout the project. Adoption of the tool can be increased by identifying a Solution Manager 'Champion' – typically a Solution Lead or member of the PMO - who will provide the initial point of contact for project team queries.

The recent introduction of SAP PPM components in Solution Manager has 'plugged a gap' in the suitability of the platform for true end-to-end project management, and even if you have previously discounted its capabilities, perhaps now is the time to take another look...

Why not use Solution Manager on your next SAP project, and ensure that you go-live on time?

Additional Information

ASAP Methodologies for SAP [online]. Available:
https://service.sap.com/asap
(SAP Marketplace Login required)
Last accessed: 6th May 2014.

Business Add-ons for ASAP [online]. Available:
https://service.sap.com/asap-business-add-ons
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Last accessed 25th Mar 2014.

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