The Ultimate Guide to Moving to Cloud  
Part 2: Tales from The Crypt
What the early adopters of Employee Central are Saying

Sherryanne H Meyer, SHRM-SCP

No customers or vendors have been injured in the making of this story. This information is real and has been gathered from real customer experiences. Names may have been changed to protect the innocent.

If you have ever been part of an HR systems implementation, you know it’s not easy. Sides are formed, battle lines drawn and you don’t know what you don’t know. Relax. This is natural – and will be pretty much the same when you implement cloud. Fasten your seatbelts and keep your hands and arms safely inside the cloud vehicle at all times. We’ll be starting our journey in just a moment’s time. Your virtual advisors, ASUG’s HR Community of subject matter experts (SMEs), are standing by ready to assist you.

Ready, set, go live

Everyone looks forward to the moment the system is complete and we can return to our regularly scheduled programming (er, that is, the tasks we were doing before we embarked on a systems implementation project). Before we even begin, let me advise you to get comfortable right where you are – that is, in the midst of change. The biggest mistake we have all made in our HR systems journeys has been to think the job was done at go live.

In fact, go live is the birth of a new being that you will need to commit to nurturing, understanding, changing and helping to mature throughout the coming decades. Being an HR systems program manager means your work is never done. And that fact remains wherever you are in your journey – even if you don’t plan (right now) to make the journey to cloud.

It’s not about the technology

Fellow HR colleague, Jason Averbook, would say, successful HR is about 45% processes, 45% people and 10% technology. I agree. So, before you even get in line for this amusement ride to the cloud, gather
your people - your process experts - and ask them to map what is being done today, to question why it’s done, to talk about what is really needed for business success and to create a crystal clear future vision for supporting your business.

Chances are good that your people – especially leaders - are not going to respond with a resounding “Oh, give me manager self-service, please! I desperately want to create all the technical attributes of the next position I need to fill!”

**What we want**

You want user adoption (of your new system) to be high, so give your humans what they want. And some of what they don’t want – that is, things they would not think to expect. This happens when you -

- Define “user experience” beyond the interaction with the technology.
- Think about the total business experience.
- And know that no one really wants to serve themselves. But what they do want is access to information.

Technology is the enabler of your people, of your processes, of your business. The “consumer experience” is not about automating everything. It’s about ASKS: access, speed, knowledge, and service.

**ACCESS.** Effective management demands data – data beyond KPIs – data that can help understand total costs, the talent pool and the talent pipeline. I would want data that would help me make decisions about the future: data that is also known as predictive analytics.

**SPEED.** Managers want speed. They want their staffing needs fulfilled with as little delay as possible. They want the person they hired to be able to start work day one, hour one, minute one. Speed in this manner equates to productivity – which equates to lower costs – which equates to business success.

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**Real-time data, Real-time management**

Here’s an example: Push one button and see your entire workforce and who is doing what. Quickly identify opportunities to realign work among the staff. Be alerted immediately when overtime kicks in. Or, better yet, **predict** if overtime will kick in and avoid it. Quickly determine if your 24x7 rotations are really needed.

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*We live in a real-time data world.*

In our personal lives, we’re accustomed to having information at the push of a button, anytime, anywhere.

And employees want that same experience at work.
KNOWLEDGE. As an employee, I want career growth through knowledge and experience. I want exposure to the rest of the organization beyond my own department, engagements outside of a traditional hierarchy and frequent and open conversations about the company, my place in the company and my future potential. I need to know where I stand in your organization. I need to know I am valued.

SERVICE. Employees desire a “consumer experience.” That is, they want to be treated as valued assets. They also want timely and efficient responses. They want to know that when they request time off their request will be answered promptly. If they’re ill, they want their benefits to kick in without a delay. If they’re injured and will need to be out of work, they want to know that disability pay will begin as quickly as possible. Most of all, they want to know that they can get answers anywhere, anytime.

Finding the job, Landing the job, and Doing the job Are different experiences

You apply for a job with the click of a button. But the experience for a new hire is often markedly different. Paperwork and disconnected processes, lack of education on company policies, benefit plans, and career development plans all can result in miscommunication and – eventually – job dissatisfaction. Systems and processes and make onboarding simple and comprehensive.

The acid test of a satisfying employee-employer relationship is rooted in a set of specific behaviors along the “me-to-we continuum.”

The best employers help us each achieve our personal “me” goals and dreams on the one hand, while simultaneously collaborating with us to solve more generalized “we” worries about the economy, the environment, the world on the other hand.

The Intangible Things Employees Want from Employers,

Let it go

Think of this journey to cloud like letting go of the tether that keeps your hot air balloon so safely on the ground. And know that just as every hot air balloon ride is different, this journey will have unexpected turns.

Cloud software deployments typically attack implementation in very aggressive timelines. You will think the timeline to be impossible. You will want to change those deadlines. It’s important to stick to the plan. In the same way as consistently heating a hot air balloon enables the balloon’s flight to reach high altitudes, a constant focus on meeting implementation milestones will ensure that user adoption and engagement will flourish.
PepsiCo recently completed a multi-year journey to deploy Employee Central to 87 countries and over 250 employees. They moved through country by country, until finishing with the last country deployment – the U.S. - last month. The momentum was important in their journey from on-premise to SAP® SuccessFactors® cloud.

Brigette McInnis-Day, Executive Vice President of Human Resources at SAP® shared a similar experience with SAP®’s own implementation of SuccessFactors® during a recent ASUG Recharge HR event. SAP®’s mandate was to use the system as delivered as much as possible. That meant some tough decisions on existing processes – causing the business to prove why they needed to continue to do things the same old way. Brigette avowed that maintaining the progress on their journey –despite hurdles – has been pivotal to successful change.

*People get engaged around the change when you announce it and you don’t want to lose that enthusiasm or interest.*

-Brigette McInnis-Day, EVP of HR, SAP®

**It’s a map, not a blueprint**

Common project methodology *used to be* to “blueprint” your processes to the new system. For those of you who have an HR on-premise implementation already, you know that the blueprinting process was never foolproof and – let’s be honest – it resulted in some drawn out delays in projects as we debated option, choices, and stood ground on what we insisted could not change.

In moving your SAP® HCM data to SuccessFactors® Employee Central cloud, your starting point will be your workbooks delivered by SAP® SuccessFactors® and managed with you by your systems implementation (SI) partner.

Something our ASUG members say has helped them to mentally move thru the transformation to cloud is to understand how key fields in their on-premise system – the fields upon which make decisions are made – will map to your Employee Central database.
For example, on-premise HCM customers know their “Enterprise Structure” is key. In many cases, customers have designed their on-premise systems so that Personnel Area is used for location. Where is the concept of location in SAP® SuccessFactors®? It’s in Employee Central’s “Foundation Objects.” These are the types of general conversations occurring member to member in ASUG’s Employee Central special interest group.

**Who’s running the system – IT or HR?**

Part of the sales pitch for SaaS (Software as a Service) or Cloud is that you no longer need IT. This could be true if your implementation is very simple, is not integrated with other components, is deployed without any add-ons or extensions, and if you have some capabilities for managing future changes through your HR department.

One thing is certain: Roles and responsibilities of both your IT and your HR teams will change with a move to cloud. But both IT and HR are needed.

SAP® SuccessFactors® has excellent training programs for your HR staff to learn to be SuccessFactors® system administrators. Companies have found that much of the day-to-day support and configuration of Employee Central can be done someone in HR or in an HR Center of Excellence or Shared Services Center, instead of by IT.

Some of these companies are frustrated. They have a lengthy list of enhancements they would like to deploy and in many cases, IT holds the key to making changes.

It’s true that SAP® SuccessFactors® basic functionality can be easily “extended.” However, to date, most extensions are created in HANA Cloud Platform – a system to which IT holds the development key. Skills may be another reason for IT to be involved in managing your system.

For example, adding a field to an SAP® SuccessFactors® portlet requires some advanced skills – using Meta Data Framework (MDF).

Some extensions are relatively easy to create and can be built thru the SAP® SuccessFactors® Extensibility Center to which admins will have access. We’re just not quite all the way there yet with functionality and training of admins in the Extensibility Center.

Where is it better for general day-to-day support to reside? This is a conversation you should have early in your transition to a cloud architecture to be sure that staff is trained and ready to take control day one. HR transformation advisor, Mike Molinaro of HRISON Advisors, would rather take an HR person and teach them new skills (i.e., to manage the system) than take an IT person and teach them HR processes. In general, this seems to be the path that companies are taking.
A Shift in Staffing for Your Cloud System

A good read on staffing for a SAP® SuccessFactors can be found in the 3D Results blog, “Supporting Your SAP® SuccessFactors® System.: How Many Admins Do You Need?”

The role of administrator can vary greatly in terms of the responsibility, breadth of support, and level of involvement they will have when it comes to managing the system.

- Del Rae Grose, 3D Results

“Supporting Your SAP® SuccessFactors® System.: How Many Admins Do You Need?”

IT will be needed for integration, interfaces, and, certainly, in many cases for extending your system. Your staffing, your deployment of your talent that is currently managing your on-premise system, however, will shift into new directions.

**HR operational centers of excellence (COEs) – or Shared Services centers** - are being created in many organizations. The COE allows HR to become true HR business partners, while consolidating transactional events in a centralized, specialized cost-effective environment. The COE enables people interaction with the system in a simplified and streamlined fashion. In the COE, specialists become SAP® SuccessFactors® system administrators, process transactions, maintain system configuration, monitor integration points internally and with external suppliers and are the experts create simple interactions.

Wherever your SAP® SuccessFactors® administrator resides, he or she should be monitoring all quarterly releases to (1) understand the impact to the current environment; (2) coordinate any testing of releases to see the impact of the release before it hits production; (3) become knowledgeable on any enhancements to the system that are optional to implement and (4) be the expert who can communicate and recommend the implementation of enhancements.

And what about IT skills?

**A basis team** is no longer needed. Truth is: quarterly updates are applied to your system automatically and an administrator can coordinate testing of the changes before they are moved into production by SAP® SuccessFactors®. You probably still need at least some infrastructure support for the integration between systems.

**ABAP skills** are no longer needed. Customizing infotypes, adding fields, these are outdated concepts with SuccessFactors®. IT programmers will build interfaces to external suppliers and between internal systems.
Modifying the product beyond the delivered best practices is possible. How this is done varies depending on whether the function is written in MDF – Metal Data Framework – or if it is still in XML. SuccessFactors® is moving all functions to MDF – but not everything is quite there yet.

The SuccessFactors® Extensibility Center, will allow administrators to take advantage of some relatively simple ways to customize a process beyond basic configuration.

The App Center has over 140 pre-built apps that can also be purchased and used to extend functionality.

HANA Cloud Platform allows you to build your own apps for use as extensions of SAP® SuccessFactors® functionality.

In all cases, these extensions, theses apps live outside of your core cloud deployment and continue to work seamlessly within your SuccessFactors® deployments as updates and enhancements are released. They do, however, require payment of an additional licensing fee. And, in many cases, they require a more technical level of expertise.

Change Management by IT and HR is Key to Future Success

Whatever technology you use to optimize your people and processes, it’s smart to have a strong IT-business relationship jointly managing your system. Cloud software – or SaaS systems – are intended to save IT operational expenses by having only one version of the software and that single version is controlled by the software vendor. There is no need for an IT basis team to apply support packs or to move a set of transports.

Yet – still – there are changes happening to your system. There’s a cloud-wide outage to import those changes.

And what about opportunities to enhance your system? Cloud delivers enhancements that are not automatically enabled – but must be enabled by the customer. How is all this accomplished with low risk and coordination with other SaaS or in-house systems your company may be using?

Some of your IT processes should remain alive after cloud. These result in a discipline to ensure all systems and processes are aligned and that HR systems administrators, HR itself and IT are communicating with each other.

1) Release management. SAP® SuccessFactors® delivers changes quarterly. Two of the releases are “do no harm” releases with maintenance changes only. The other two releases include enhancements. You need a process and people to
   a. **Review and understand the impact of required changes**
   b. **Review, understand enhancements and identify which enhancements would benefit your organization.**
c. Prioritize and create a plan for implementing enhancements

2) **Change Management.** On a quarterly basis, you will have changes for SAP® SuccessFactors® moving into your live production environment. The scope of these changes may be minor – but it is still change. Ideally, both HR and your IT team will be aware of the change.
   a. **What is the change – and how significant is it? Who might it impact?**
   b. **When will the changes move into Production?**
   c. **How will the change impact my work?**
   d. **Who do I call if I experience negative impact?**
   e. **What will the system outage be?**

3) **Landscape management.** Earlier versions of cloud software provided only one environment – the productive environment – to customers. More recently, SAP® SuccessFactors® has provided a staging environment in which customers can test standard changes and experiment with enhancements before the change appears in the live production environment. You’ll want some controls over what is being developed in the staging environment and what is moved into production and when. At the very least, you will want to communicate changes.

ASUG Volunteer and CEO of IXerv, Luke Marson discusses [Five Features that will help you take charge of SuccessFactors Employee Central](https://techtarget.com/it新闻/article/0,289817,sid1-ctinews-ctiadmin_01,00.html) in his TechTarget blog. It’s a good read on the capabilities of customizing Employee Central and will give you an insight into the types of changes your administrator may handle.

I also highly recommend you listen to Steve Bogner’s, Insight Consulting Partners, podcast [Ideas on Structuring Your Cloud HCM Support Model](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ideas-on-structuring-your-cloud-hcm-support-model/id1401952572). This podcast features what I call my “brain trust” of partners discussing their customer experiences in establishing support models for cloud.

**Structural Security is Role-Based Permissions in SuccessFactors®**

In SuccessFactors®, users are permitted to access data elements through role-based permissions. While this may sound similar to structural security, you should know that the role-based permissions are not consistent across all SAP® SuccessFactors® functions. In fact, some of the products have very distinct ways of managing security as the products were initially developed separately and acquired by SuccessFactors® over time.

Administrators may need to create separate role-based permissions for separate functions. I can’t say whether this is good or bad – but it is a change from on-premise security management. Role-based permissions has the potential to be a simpler form of applying rules and perhaps more straightforward and with fewer possibilities for conflict between roles. However, it probably means more administrative effort than that to which an HR operations staff is accustomed. And where control points are critical, it may be best to centralize this function in IT.
Who rang that bell!? (or Who made that change?)

When something suddenly stops working or behaves differently in a system, I am reminded of the “Wizard of Oz” poking his head out of the porthole in the grand emerald doors to ask “Who rang that bell!” – but my refrain has been more like “who made that change?” In the on-premise world, we have transactions that allow technical users to track the changes made, the date the change was made and the user ID who made the change. These audit logs do not (currently) existing in SAP® SuccessFactors®.

This makes it even more important to have discipline around who has permissions to be a system administrator and how that systems administrator manages changes like this.

More to learn

I’d like to say that your ride is coming to an end, that you can unbuckle your seatbelt and step out of the car. But really – your journey to cloud should be a ride that never ends. The idea of cloud is to give you a platform for continual change – to allow you to stay ahead of your competitors in the pursuit of talent, in the engagement of your workforce.

As many of us would have said during our first forays into ERP, “we don’t know what we don’t know.” You just need to keep connecting to others and learning.

Register to be part of our Employee Central Special Interest Group (SIG), launching via virtual webcast on April 27th and having our first face-to-face meeting on May 18th at Sapphire Now | ASUG Annual Conference in Orlando. The goals of this SIG are to share information – issues like the items mentioned above – and to ultimately be the voice back to SAP® to influence future enhancements. Members of our Special Interest Groups get first shot at Beta testing, customer engagement opportunities, and early adoption programs.