

Why Always-On Visibility is the Foundation of Scalable SAP Operations

WHITEPAPER

Welcome to the Fully Operational Future: The Autonomous Enterprise

The future arrives on a Tuesday morning at 6 a.m. A shipping corridor closes overnight. Twenty thousand SKUs across eight thousand stores need their replenishment logic rebuilt before doors open. Nobody calls a war room. The supply chain agent reroutes through alternative ports.

Procurement renegotiates with pre-positioned backup suppliers. Finance updates the forecast. Merchandising rebalances the assortment. Shelves stay stocked. All without a single human lifting a finger. The CEO learns about it during the morning briefing: one paragraph, ending: "NO ACTION REQUIRED". The people who once managed logistics crises are now designing the company's global sourcing strategy for the next decade.

The Day Nothing Goes Wrong

ECC still runs three regions. Cloud ERP runs the rest. BTP, now part of the SAP business AI platform, sits between them. Agents move across all of it as if it were one system, because underneath them, something is making it behave like one: SysOps keeps configuration consistent and performance continuously optimized, SecOps applies patches automatically while auditing access policies, and FinOps maintains utilization within policy without constant oversight.

The Basis team has shrunk from sixteen people fighting fires to four architects designing the company's next acquisition integration. The CFO is in Lisbon at a customer event. She isn't worried about the books; She's three quarters ahead, designing the operating model of the company she wants to run in 2033.

This is the future: Autonomous agents running the routine, at a scale that frees people to run the business and focus on higher-value work.

The Foundation Underneath

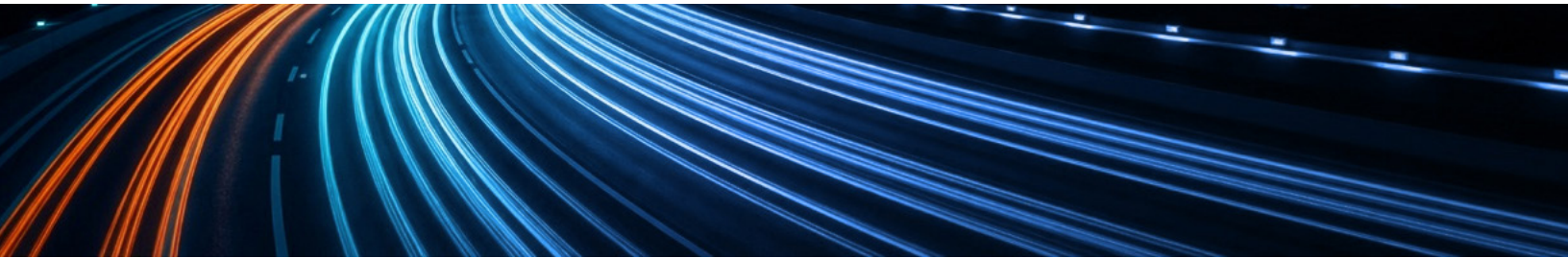
This future depends entirely on the foundation underneath it. Durable operations. Automated updates. Configuration management. Performance monitoring. Security patching. Efficient resource utilization.

Without a reliable, continuously managed foundation, the Autonomous Enterprise stalls before it starts. Because AI agents do not invent operational capability—they invoke it.

Road to Autonomy

At Sapphire 2026, the industry collectively embraced a new destination: the Autonomous Enterprise. This vision represents a fundamental reimaging of how businesses operate. One where insight flows into action without friction, where autonomous agents handle the routine work at a scale no human team could match, and where people are finally free to focus on the more inspired work that only people can do.

SAP has put its full weight behind this vision. The question every serious enterprise is now asking is the same one it asked at the last major shift: what does it take to get there, and what does it take to stay there?



The Autonomous Enterprise is a compelling vision. It's no longer a question of whether to adopt AI, but a question of how to unlock AI's value through SAP's Autonomous Enterprise.

The challenges enterprises will face are not entirely new. Cloud ERP migration continues to offer important lessons as organizations modernize alongside SAP's rapid pace of innovation.

Even as enterprises migrate to Cloud ERP for greater agility and standardization, most continue to operate hybrid landscapes. The majority of SAP production systems still run on ECC, regardless of their ultimate cloud destination. Core ERP systems remain tightly coupled with third-party integrations and decades of customizations. Many enterprises have first-hand experience with the difficulty of maintaining a durable, reliable system baseline.

The enterprises who succeed in this transition are those who learn early that a deep, stable operational foundation ensuring continuous observability and system hygiene is essential to scaling innovation without disrupting the business.

A Tale of Two Enterprises: A Familiar Pattern, Written in SAP History

If we look closely, this story feels eerily familiar. A few years ago, the destination was Cloud ERP. Now, it's the Autonomous Enterprise. Both represent exactly the kind of bold, forward movement SAP has always inspired its ecosystem. And as with every major SAP transition, the operating model reveals what it requires, and a pattern begins to emerge.

One major European city's ("The City") journey with Cloud ERP is a clear example of what large, complex enterprises discover when shared responsibility meets real operational accountability. Their story is also the best preparation for what comes next.

1 SAP Evolution Meets Operational Complexity in A Major European City

The City manages complex, highly regulated public administration and municipal infrastructure with a lean SAP Basis team. They are accountable for public funds, data sovereignty, and uninterrupted public services. Their operational bar is high, and their margin for error is low.

When SAP launched Cloud ERP, The City saw real opportunity: one platform, one contract, a cleaner path forward. They were after scalability, streamlined citizen services, a simpler vendor relationship, native cloud benefits, and a leaner IT footprint. As part of the move, the City streamlined its toolset. Avantra had served the City in the legacy environment, and the assumption was that Cloud ERP would replace its operational role. It was a reasonable thesis, quickly tested in practice.

As the City migrated across hybrid environments, they encountered rising operational complexity. Manual system management, security updates, and weekend work became the norm. The team was under pressure. The challenges will be familiar to enterprises navigating the Cloud ERP shared responsibility model with their own complex landscape:

- › Extending visibility into business processes, integrations, and custom workflows
- › Need for cross-system observability beyond what any single platform is designed to cover
- › Operational strain on a lean team, limiting capacity for innovation

Although Cloud ERP beautifully manages the platform, delivering the reliability and precision of a modern cloud solution, and Cloud ALM provides strong native visibility across SAP-managed components, making it precisely the right tool for many enterprises, the City was not many enterprises. Their estate was bigger, older, and more complex than most, complete with decades of legacy systems, non-SAP integrations, and strict regulatory constraints.

The City's operational scope extended well beyond what any single platform contract is designed to cover, and yet, their environment reflects something most large enterprises will recognize because it is unusual in scale only, not in kind.

Building The Right Foundation with the Right Partner

The City responded by reintroducing Avantra -- not to replace SAP's native tooling, but to extend it. The impact was immediate: Within weeks, the City had onboarded new systems with a plug-and-play experience. Avantra's automation enabled custom use case development without external support.

With Avantra, the City discovered:

- › Automation drastically reduced system onboarding time and improved security remediation speed from weeks to days
- › Real-time monitoring delivered significant annual cost savings and reduced overtime
- › Internal teams rapidly developed new automation use cases, improving adoption, innovation, and engagement

The City's experience makes one thing clear: the foundation does not manage itself. Cloud shifts infrastructure burden, not accountability. Enterprises must still secure the foundation. This has held true through every SAP transition in the past, it holds true for Cloud ERP today, and it will hold true for the Autonomous Enterprise tomorrow.

Today, the City owns the foundation that Cloud ERP runs on, and side by side with Avantra they are scaling automation across their environment and consolidating legacy monitoring into a dependable unified platform.

Radisson proved a simple point: a stable, automated foundation is a competitive advantage.

2 Radisson Hotel Group: When Foresight Meets Operational Discipline

Radisson Hotel Group ("Radisson") understood what the journey required before they began. They knew getting the foundation right was critical, and they built from that realization day one. Where The City refined its operating model mid-migration, Radisson started with the foundation already in place. They deployed the Avantra AIOps platform to protect uptime and stability in a business where minutes of downtime carry real cost. Avantra brought real-time monitoring across 57 SAP systems and 150 servers, shifting Radisson from reactive maintenance to proactive management. The results came quickly:

- › 100% elimination of unplanned downtime
- › Over €400K in annual cost savings
- › Cloud migration accelerated with minimal disruption

Radisson proved a simple point: a stable, automated foundation is a competitive advantage. Because they never lost sight of it, they realized the full breadth of SAP's Cloud ERP promise: scalability, agility, and stable, reliable operations.

Two Paths, One Lesson

There is a pattern worth recognizing in how the SAP ecosystem adopts new technology. Customers move toward the promise, correctly and ambitiously, then refine the operating model as the reality of running it sets in. The City is one of the clearest examples of this. As their architecture shifted across complex environments, managing the mixed estate proved harder than expected. They acted quickly, adding the observability and automation their landscape demanded and proving that independent visibility is a hard requirement of public-sector governance.

Radisson took a different path and built that visibility on day one. Instead of managing reactively, they partnered with Avantra at the outset, stood up a proactive AIOps platform, and never fought chronic performance drift in the first place. Both are instructive for any organization weighing what Cloud ERP demands now, and what the Autonomous Enterprise will require in the future.

The first step is an honest look at where you are and what your environment requires.

If your organization:

- ☑ Runs a complex or heavily customized SAP landscape
- ☑ Depends on extensive integrations and extensions
- ☑ Operates in a hybrid estate spanning legacy and cloud
- ☑ Carries high-stakes compliance or uptime requirements

Then, you need independent, always-on visibility and automation.

At every stage, the answer is the foundation. And because the Autonomous Enterprise runs on the same foundational layer as Cloud ERP, the foundation question doesn't go away; it only gets bigger.

The Foundation Doesn't Reset. It Scales.

Autonomous execution doesn't compensate for an unsteady foundation. It inherits it, amplifying whatever conditions already exist at machine speed. Securing your foundation now is the best preparation for what comes next.

The journey to the Autonomous Enterprise follows the same pattern as every major SAP transition before it: the operational thinking matures, and the foundation required to support it expands. An organization that can get this right under Cloud ERP will be able to anchor autonomous systems as well. They will understand that observability, security, configuration, identity, operations, and cost don't get replaced when the agents arrive; they simply operate at greater scale and scope.

Consider the table below as we trace that evolution, illustrating how the disciplines that make Cloud ERP reliable are the same disciplines that will make the Autonomous Enterprise possible:

CLOUD ERP		AUTONOMOUS ENTERPRISE
Observability	Focused tooling for Cloud ERP operation and reliability ensures the availability of key business systems.	Extended observability required across all systems where business data lives, context is derived, and agents execute.
Security	Consistent application of SAP Notes and security patches plus policy monitoring maintains a compliant, stable runtime environment.	Coverage extends to the API and agent-execution surface, so autonomous actors only ever invoke trusted, patched services.
Configuration	Configuration monitoring across SAP layers keeps system behaviors predictable and compliant.	Continuous configuration assurance gives agents a consistent, well-defined system state to execute against.
Access & Identity	Segregation of duties and credential hygiene protect authorized access.	Identity governance extends to agent identities and entitlements, ensuring every autonomous actor operates within defined authority.
Operations	Automated system refreshes, and database operations reduce manual overhead and accelerate delivery.	The same operational automation underpins reliable coordination across many agents working in parallel.
Cost	Real-time visibility into cloud and BTP (now part of the SAP Business AI Platform) consumption keeps spend within defined parameters.	Cost intelligence extends to autonomous workloads, keeping dynamically scaled agent activity within governed financial guardrails.

SAP built the Autonomous Enterprise to be auditable, accountable, and reliable. Enterprises must do their part. SAP's design means agents execute the same transactions, query the same databases, and depend on the same landscape your teams manage today, with all its complexity. The difference is that they do so at AI speed and autonomous scale. That is exactly why a durable, well-run foundation matters more now than ever.

The Operational Truth: Agents Invoke, They Don't Invent.

Wherever you are in your SAP journey, Cloud ERP migration, hybrid steady-state, or preparing for the Autonomous Enterprise, the visibility challenge is the same. It isn't a temporary migration problem. It's a permanent operating condition. The architecture behind it is simple:

AI agents don't invent capability. They invoke it.

They don't rewrite your systems. They act as high-speed orchestrators of what's already there, executing transactions through standard SAP mechanisms like BAPIs, RFCs, and ABAP programs, and they depend entirely on the stability, configuration, and integrity of the foundation underneath them. The agents inherit the discipline. Or the absence of it.

The foundation must be secure. Get that right and avoid serious business impact and capture the full value of SAP's innovation.

SAP gets this. They understand that large enterprises can't move to the clean core overnight, and they accept that many will run hybrid for some time. At Sapphire 2026, SAP extended ECC customers a hand: select AI scenarios in exchange for a Cloud ERP transition commitment. SAP is prioritizing customer success, services, and partner execution as part of its AI operating model, because it understands the extensions and special needs its critical customers carry.

SAP built the AI to invoke the work. Avantra secures the foundation and makes sure the work is actually there to invoke, keeping systems patched, configured, monitored, and compliant so autonomous execution doesn't stall on an unstable foundation. Keeping the lights on is the first prerequisite for Cloud and autonomous success.

Companies like Radisson, and now the City, see this clearly. They can look to the future without losing sight of their past and the essential value of a reliable, independent foundation that keeps the baseline unified and core business systems running. There is a direct link between operational discipline today and the capacity to run autonomous AI tomorrow. Securing SysOps, SecOps, and FinOps now build the launching pad for everything that comes next.

Secure the Foundation, Free the People

Wherever you are in your journey, migrating, running clean core, or heading toward the Autonomous Enterprise, the goal is the same: liberate your people to do higher-value work. When humans step out of the daily activity loop and become strategic business actors, the whole organization shifts upward.

Look Who's Running Now

The former Tuesday-morning logistics crew built that global sourcing strategy, and the agents now run it across every corridor and supplier. No war rooms required. The CFO closed the books from Lisbon without a second thought, and the 2033 operating model she sketched is live today. They reached the autonomous future SAP promised, because they secured the foundation it runs on. The enterprises who see the pattern arrive at this insight early, scale with SAP's innovation, and come out ahead. The ones who reach it late wish that they'd arrived there sooner.

That's the impact of Avantra. They were built for this moment. Only Avantra lets you observe in real time, optimize in no time, and innovate all the time. Avantra provides a dependable AIOps foundation layer at your core, keeping the systems those agents depend on stable, secure, and cost-efficient across SysOps, SecOps, and FinOps.

Observe in real time. Unified visibility across SAP systems, BTP services, SaaS apps, and infrastructure, so problems are caught before they impact the business.

Optimize in no time. Intelligent automation handles routine tasks, controls costs, and frees your experts from firefighting.

Innovate all the time. With real control over your landscape, you modernize safely and at speed, on a foundation built for clean core, Cloud ERP, BTP expansion, and the Autonomous Enterprise.

The future of the Autonomous Enterprise is genuinely exciting. But the pattern is clear: no enterprise scales SAP transition cleanly without a secure foundation built on what's already in place. Strategic architecture and disciplined foundation stewardship are what sets the most successful enterprises apart from the pack. They've learned from the past while keeping their eyes on the future, and in the end, they are the ones who successfully arrive.

Let Avantra secure your foundation and guide your evolution the rest of the way.



Now you're *really* running.™

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