



Advanced SAS Analyses Based on SAP Data: mayato Evaluates the SAS Data Surveyor for SAP for a Financial Service Provider

Management summary:

Goals

- ... Evaluate the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP* within the context of specific application scenarios for SAS access to data in SAP BW and SAP R/3 modules
- ... Create a use concept (architecture, operation, authorization)

Approach

- ... Install a test system
- ... Identify typical application scenarios and central requirements for the interface
- ... Implement application scenarios for test purposes

Results

- ... Interface tests integrated with in-house system landscape
- ... Sound basis for making decisions
- ... Clear recommendations for a use concept and its implementation

› Integration of SAS and SAP

In many companies, systems tend to grow historically, rather than being planned exclusively from a strategic perspective. At the same time, companies now strive to organize their IT landscape efficiently – and are therefore moving toward standardized platforms from a few large providers such as SAP. However, neither SAP nor any of the other major providers can meet all the requirements of today's enterprises. This particularly applies to the analytical and planning environment. Here, the SAS Institute offers a more comprehensive portfolio of market-leading tools, which companies are keen to deploy – and quite understandably so.

“SAS tools for statistics, data mining, and flexible ad hoc analyses are the first choice in making processes and applications in SAP even more intelligent. For me, SAP and SAS are a dream team.”

Dr. Marcus Dill
SAP BW veteran
mayato

For integration with SAP applications, the SAS Institute provides the *Data Surveyor for SAP*. This software, which is certified by SAP, enables the efficient modeling of analytical applications based on SAP data.

› The challenge

It is clear what the requirements are for integrating SAS tools with SAP applications: Extracting data from the SAP environment must be a performant, flexible, cost-effective, and straightforward matter. And it must be just as simple to transfer the analysis results to SAP. IT experts know that such requirements can quickly turn into substantial challenges: Processing huge quantities of volatile SAP data, understanding highly complex applications and data models, and adapting to constantly changing information needs require first-class technologies and mature concepts for the development and operation of analytical applications. And, of course, good consulting is also a must.

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› Project charter and initial situation

Commissioned by a financial service provider, mayato evaluated the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP* with regard to the qualities required (usability, performance, flexibility, development work) and drew up concepts for its practical deployment.

The financial service provider runs an SAP BW Data Warehouse, plus other SAP systems (ERP components and applications for banking). For complex analyses and flexible ad hoc evaluations, the company will continue to use the tools from the SAS Institute – and, as a result of increased requirements, will need them more than ever. For this reason, the company is preparing for the long-term coexistence of SAP and SAS technologies and is looking for suitable concepts to integrate the two.

› Findings and recommendations

Installing and configuring the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP* took around a week, but experience of both technologies was required, as was close cooperation with the system administrators.

The functional evaluation and performance measurements were carried out using praxis-oriented scenarios. The tests confirmed that, using the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP*, it is indeed possible to transfer SAP BW InfoCubes, DataStore objects, and master data within minutes and largely automatically to metadata in SAS. And, in combination with other tools such as the *SAS Cube Designer*, an SAS cube can be created right away. The license price is offset by savings made through efficient modeling in the development of new applications. Furthermore, thanks to the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP*, the SAS developer becomes largely independent from support provided by SAP IT.

“SAP data is transferred to SAS within a very short time and with minimum effort. However, a solid SAP base is an absolute must for this to happen.”

Armin Kita
BI consultant
mayato

The extraction of the data contained in SAP remained very good even with larger data quantities. Despite rapid read accesses, most companies do not opt for online accesses to SAP and prefer to replicate the data to SAS – and the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP* also provides an efficient delta mechanism for this.

Well-versed SAS users can use the *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP* intuitively. However, because the interpretation of SAP data and metadata requires a good understanding of modeling on the SAP side, we recommend setting up relevant libraries within the SAS environment. This means the objects, tables, and fields in the SAP system can then be mapped to views and tables on the SAS side, with the descriptions adapted to the expectations of the SAS users. The *SAS Data Surveyor for SAP* supports the fundamental SAP authorization concepts, including analysis authorizations in SAP BW 7.0. However, because data replication is desired in most cases, it will often be necessary to remodel access restrictions for expert users within the SAS environment in line with the rights in the SAP system. SAS supports access to any ABAP-based SAP system and has a range of helpful special functions for SAP BW. Wherever possible, SAP data should be extracted through SAP BW, because the SAP data already exists in an analyzable form there.

› Governance at the interface to SAP

Interfaces between SAP and other technologies contain many dependencies that need to be considered when setting up IT processes. Rules for design, maintenance, further development, and operations need to be devised to enable efficiency and accuracy with minimal effort and at a low cost.

For such purposes, mayato offers mature concepts that can easily be adapted to a customer’s individual scenarios. In the case of the financial service provider, this concept included:

- › A semantic layer in SAS with clearly defined responsibilities and design rules
- › A simplified authorization concept for data access by expert users

› mayato - expertise in business intelligence

The mayato consultants have many years of experience in designing and implementing business intelligence solutions.

For SAP BW, BusinessObjects, and SAS, mayato offers a full range of services, including tool selection, strategies and organizational concepts, architecture and design, data warehouse modeling, development of interfaces and enhancements, and the creation of reports and cockpits. Beyond the fields of SAP and SAS, mayato also has substantial project experience with other BI technologies and analyzes current trends and innovations in its capacity as a think tank.