



From Chaos to Control

Navigating Your Supply Chain
With Actionable Insights



Introduction

Ever feel overwhelmed by how complex your organization's data is? You're not alone! Many companies struggle to turn the raw numbers into clear reports that help them make actionable decisions. This guide is here to break it down, step-by-step.

Considering a migration toward SAP's cloud-based ERP, S/4HANA, adds an extra layer of complexity, so it's no surprise that teams like yours might feel lost. Don't worry, you're not alone – no matter if you're just starting out with SAP or are planning a migration.

How do you get the insights you need to succeed? This judgment-free guide will show you exactly how to transform your SAP data into actionable intelligence that drives your business forward. Let's get started!



What Are Actionable Insights?

Imagine this: you're drowning in numbers—sales figures, expenses, inventory reports, budgets—but they're just a jumble, or worse, you're left to manually export or enter data into a spreadsheet. With all the time it takes to manually generate reports, you can't quite see the bigger picture or what it all means for your company's overall health. That's where actionable insights come in.

Here's the simple breakdown:

- › **Actionable** is more than just a number—it's a clear finding that allows you to make sense of your data. For example:
 - › **Spending is trending upwards in a specific department.** This could signal a need for budget adjustments or a deeper dive into that department's activities.
 - › **Customer acquisition costs are rising.** This might prompt you to re-evaluate marketing campaigns or pricing strategies.
 - › **Inventory levels are consistently too high.** This could be a red flag for potential cash flow issues or indicate overstocking.

- › **Insights** are what you find when you look beyond the data to find patterns, trends, red flags, or KPIs. They're the "why" behind the numbers. Think of them as a story your data is trying to tell you. For example, if you see a sudden drop in sales, the insight might be that a competitor just launched a similar product, or there's a seasonal shift in demand.

Actionable insights are the bridge between data and decisions. They give you the clear picture you need to make informed choices. No more guesswork, just solid operational intelligence.





The Pain of Pointless Reports:

We all know that operations teams pull long hours. When working with SAP data, out-of-the-box reporting tools don't do much in the way of saving time or providing interactive reports.

The Roadblocks on Your Reporting Highway

Standard SAP reports have their place, offering a pre-built foundation for common reporting needs. But let's face it, the way your organization operates isn't as standardized as ERP-native reports. Here's why you might be feeling the lag:

- ▶ **Slow Speeds:** Extracting and manipulating data from SAP can be cumbersome. Imagine waiting for reports to run during month-end close—which throws a wrench in these processes.
- ▶ **Limited Flexibility:** Standard reports are designed for specific purposes. Need a report with a unique twist? You might be out of luck, forced to cobble together multiple reports, or rely on IT for custom and ad hoc reports tailored to your business.
- ▶ **Error-Prone Manual Work:** The need to export data to Excel for further analysis opens the door to human error. Copy-pasting formulas and manipulating data points can lead to inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

Don't fret – there's a better way to create even the most customized reports more efficiently. Here's how to get started:

- ▶ **Break Down Data Silos:** Standard reporting tools often operate within individual modules, limiting the ability to connect data from various parts of your SAP system. Explore solutions that allow you to create a more unified data environment for a single source of truth.
- ▶ **Consider Third-Party Solutions:** Seek out a vendor that offers reporting tools specifically designed for SAP environments. These tools can offer faster processing times, user-friendly interfaces, and pre-built reports for specific needs.
- ▶ **Invest in Training:** Empower your team with the knowledge to use the tools at their disposal to generate the reports they need. The right reporting tool will also ensure anyone on the team can use it, even without any technical expertise.

By taking these steps, you can overcome the limitations of standard SAP reporting and unlock a world of faster, more accurate, and insightful analysis. Remember, time is money, and streamlining your reporting processes can free up valuable resources for strategic thinking and drive business growth.



Action Steps:

- › **Identify Your Reporting Pains:** What are the biggest challenges your team faces with standard reporting tools? Prioritize areas for improvement.
- › **Research Hands-On, Uncomplicated Reporting Options:** Explore tools that give anyone in your team the ability to generate recurring and custom reports without having to reach for IT. Consider your team's specific needs and the functionalities offered by each option.
- › **Invest in Training:** Equip your team with the skills they need to easily generate reports.

Conquering the Cloud: Streamlining Your SAP Migration to S/4HANA

Managing operations means overseeing a variety of moving parts. For SAP users, that complexity is amplified. Gathering data, reconciling accounts, and chasing down discrepancies can feel like a never-ending puzzle. Then comes the looming task of migrating to S/4HANA, the next generation of SAP. While the benefits of cloud-based data management—from anytime, anywhere access to enhanced collaboration—are undeniable, the transition can seem daunting.

By taking a proactive approach, you can transform your team from weary travelers to intrepid reporting explorers, navigating the world of SAP with speed and confidence.



The S/4HANA Migration Challenge:

Despite SAP encouraging its users to migrate to S/4HANA, a [recent SAPInsider report](#) revealed that only 29% of businesses have completed their S/4HANA deployment. Migrating on-premises data, especially data stored in the SAP FI module, to the cloud can be a complex undertaking. Furthermore, how will you access your legacy data once you migrate? Before migrating, ask yourself these questions:

Will you be able to access your cloud data in the format you need?

Before moving to S/4HANA, it's vital to ensure your information is in alignment. When your company houses data in different types of programs and reports, it's inevitable that there will be differences in the way it's presented.

Before you make the move, ensure that your data appears in a consistent format. For example, in your Excel reports, make sure your columns appear in the same order across the board, as in "name, address, city, state." When you make your move to the cloud, this allows you to search for and access critical information more easily.

Another option is to use technology that can interpret data in different formats. Bringing information into a data warehouse may require you to combine source systems that are not using data in the same format. For example, perhaps the dates are recorded in a 'dd/mm/yyyy' format.

Will your cloud vendor let you connect any additional tools you require?

According to Productiv data, the average company has an impressive [254 SaaS apps](#) – and enterprises have 364. When your business contends with so many different moving parts, adopting a solution that works seamlessly with multiple tools saves time while providing much-needed consistency.

How will you reconcile that your data has successfully moved to the cloud?

When migrating to S/4HANA, it's essential to ensure you successfully and accurately copy existing data across. Backing up data is crucial before migration. Keep servers and information retrievable in case of setbacks to ensure a more seamless transition.



Taming the Supply Chain Beast: Gaining Control Amid Uncertainty

In today's globalized world, supply chains are complex ecosystems. For SAP-powered teams, siloed data across departments and outdated systems can make managing these intricate networks a constant battle. This lack of visibility leads to a ripple effect of problems: inaccurate forecasts, inefficient inventory management, and missed opportunities.

This chapter equips you with actionable insights to transform your supply chain from a murky labyrinth into a well-oiled machine. Here's why traditional approaches fall short:

The Supply Chain Visibility Challenge:

Fragmented data across various applications and departments hinders your ability to see the big picture. Without a unified view, proactive decision-making becomes a guessing game, leading to:

- **Inaccurate Forecasts:** Limited visibility into inventory levels and supplier performance within the SAP Materials Management (MM) module makes accurate demand forecasting nearly impossible. Imagine constantly chasing inaccurate sales forecasts, leading to excess finished goods in your warehouse or stockouts that delay production.
- **Inefficient Inventory Management:** Blind spots in your supply chain can lead to overstocking or understocking, impacting cash flow and customer satisfaction. For example, without real-time insights into raw material stock levels, you might delay production runs due to perceived shortages, even if materials are tied up in slow-moving finished goods.
- **Missed Opportunities:** Hidden insights within your data could reveal new sourcing strategies or cost-saving measures buried in purchase orders or supplier contracts. Traditional reporting might not capture these nuances, leaving you blind to potential savings on transportation costs or alternative suppliers with better lead times.





Actionable Insights for Supply Chain Mastery:

The key to unlocking control lies in leveraging technology that provides actionable insights. Here's what to look for:

- **Data Unification:** Consolidate data from disparate sources like warehouses, manufacturing plants, supplier portals, and even external market data. This creates a single source of truth that enables informed decision-making.
- **Near Real-Time Analytics:** Move beyond static reports generated from SAP and embrace near real-time analytics. Gain insights into inventory levels, supplier performance, and market trends—all at your fingertips. Imagine being able to drill down into purchase order data to identify potential delays from specific suppliers, allowing you to proactively source materials elsewhere.

- Although supply chain chaos has calmed in the past year, technological advancements and geopolitical changes keep operations professionals on their toes. But with robust reporting tools and a unified data landscape, your SAP-powered team can navigate the unexpected with confidence. Proactive decision-making fueled by actionable insights—that's the key to taming the supply chain beast and achieving operational excellence.

Unlocking the Potential: Angles Enterprise for SAP

When you're on the market for a reporting tool that will increase accuracy, efficiency, and will help simplify your S/4HANA migration, look no further than [Angles Enterprise for SAP by insightsoftware](#). Angles seamlessly integrates with your SAP system. With Angles, you can

- **Unlock Hidden Insights:** Angles dismantles the complexity of SAP data structures. It translates complex SAP data formats into user-friendly language with clear business terms so that anyone on your team—even dummies—can gain actionable insights.
- **Reduce IT Over-Reliance:** The ability to generate reports without the need for technical expertise empowers your team to independently access the information they need, reducing reliance on IT for data extraction and interpretation.





› **Automate Supply Chain Reporting:**

To save time from time-consuming manual steps and the limitations of static reporting. With report automation, the reporting process can be shortened from weeks to days or even hours.

› **Achieve Self-Service Analytics for Everyone:**

Angles empowers your operations team and non-technical users to become data analysts. It provides them with the tools to create their own reports and dashboards, all without needing extensive technical expertise.

› **Show the Facts With Rich Visualizations:**

The interactive dashboards and visualizations that Angles offers can also help key decision-makers and stakeholders more easily analyze data to support their most important, business-driving decisions.

By venturing beyond standard SAP reporting tools, you can unlock a world of possibilities for your operations team. Increased efficiency, faster insights, and empowered team members – that’s the power of finding the right tools for the job in your SAP environment.

A 3-Step Guide for Data Success

Managing operational data can feel overwhelming. But buried within this data lie valuable insights, waiting to be unearthed and transformed into strategic decisions for your organization. Here’s your three-step process to navigating your SAP data.

Step 1: Identifying Your Goals

What are you trying to achieve with your operational data? Here are some examples to get you started:

- › **Goal:** Reduce overall operational costs by 5%.
- › **Goal:** Improve cash flow management by optimizing inventory levels.
- › **Goal:** Increase profitability by identifying high-margin product lines.
- › **Goal:** Enhance budgeting accuracy by analyzing historical spending trends.



By clearly defining your goals, you know what questions you need to answer with your data. For instance, if your goal is to reduce operational costs, you might ask:

- › In which departments are we seeing the highest spending?
- › Are there any recurring expenses that can be renegotiated or eliminated?

Step 2: Choosing the Right Data

In the data world, you'll need to identify specific pieces of operational information relevant to your goal.

Let's revisit our example and identify some data points:

- › **Goal:** Reduce overall operational costs by 5%.
 - 1: **Data Points:** Expense reports by department, inventory levels by product category, supplier costs, and historical budget vs. actual spending data.

Remember: Don't get bogged down by collecting every piece of data. Focus on the information most relevant to answering your specific questions and achieving your goals.

Step 3: Visualize and Analyze

Visualizing your data allows you and your stakeholders to see the data from a new perspective to identify patterns and trends.



There are many tools available to help you visualize raw data, like dashboards that offer visual tools like charts and graphs. Here are some examples:

- › **A line graph** can track inventory levels over time, helping you identify potential stockouts or excess inventory that could impact costs.
- › **A pie chart** can illustrate how your budget is allocated across different departments, allowing you to see if spending aligns with your goals.
- › **A scatter plot** can reveal relationships between variables, such as cost per unit and purchase quantity.

By elevating your data with visualizations, you can start to uncover insights hidden within the data. Your employees, stakeholders, and board will also have an easier time reading your data. These insights can then be used to make informed decisions that support your goals.

Turn Data Into Action **With insightsoftware**

Achieving actionable insights doesn't have to be for top players or members of your team with the most technical expertise. With Angles Enterprise for SAP, your team can generate comprehensive, detailed, and eye-catching reports that will help you smoothly access your legacy data during an S/4HANA migration, keep a close eye on inventory and supply chain, and turn your SAP data into insights that can turn the tide for your business.

Ready to learn more?

[Request a Demo >](#)

About insightsoftware

insightsoftware is a global provider of comprehensive solutions for the Office of the CFO.

We believe an actionable business strategy begins and ends with accessible financial data. With solutions across financial planning and analysis (FP&A), accounting, and operations, we transform how teams operate, empowering leaders to make timely and informed decisions.

With data at the heart of everything we do, insightsoftware enables automated processes, delivers trusted insights, boosts predictability, and increases productivity.

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