

**SAP Solution Brief
SAP NetWeaver**



USER PRODUCTIVITY ENABLEMENT WITH SAP NetWeaver™

**Enabling Users Through Portals, Collaborative
Tools, Knowledge Management, and Mobile and
Voice Access**

Organizations equipped with the SAP NetWeaver™ platform can meet their business requirements and boost productivity by implementing crucial IT practices in a flexible, step-by-step approach that lowers costs and reduces organizational risk. User productivity enablement with SAP NetWeaver is an IT practice that specifically helps organizations improve personal and group productivity. That can be done through streamlined Web-based portals, mobile devices and natural voice interfaces, enhanced collaborative tools, and an optimized knowledge management approach.

During the retrenchment that followed the late 1990s stock market collapse, many companies embraced strategies based on cutting costs and consolidating operations. Now CEOs have returned to a growth strategy – so innovation, new products, increased productivity, and top-line growth are back on the menu. Innovation and growth in turn require competitive execution, and competitive execution requires better and faster decision making at every level. This sweeping acceleration requires a new level of support from IT. Timely and accurate information has therefore become one of IT's most important mandates. IT must translate, filter, and distill a vast range of data into accessible information and interfaces that users can make their own. Today's IT must support increasingly diverse and fluid user communities that need highly tailored, easy-to-use, unified, and customized solutions and do this without disrupting existing business processes. Making applications easier to use and focused on the role workers play in a process is no longer just a convenience; it has the potential to become a driver of competitive advantage.

To take just one example, attempts to accelerate new product development are driving closer collaboration across companies' extended supply chains. R & D teams, marketers, designers, consultants, suppliers, and manufacturers are working across organizational and geographic boundaries to simultaneously generate, sort, share, and act upon information crucial to the project at hand. To successfully manage that information and speed the nascent product's time to market, all of the users involved need immediate and secure access to relevant, role-specific information and applications. They need user-friendly interfaces combining data and functions from a dozen enterprise applications, dynamic collaborative environments,

and efficient knowledge management capabilities to group structured and unstructured data. All of these capabilities are essential for eliminating the information latency and loss that can compromise the success of a distributed development process.

The Need to Empower End Users

To eliminate those delays and boost both individual and team productivity, users need personalized solutions that directly address their needs within the enterprise. The overwhelming majority of IT solutions are still organized around technology silos that force users to unnaturally adapt their day-to-day process to compensate for the solutions' limitations. End users waste time and energy navigating a cluttered, disorganized, and frequently overwhelming array of fragmented information sources, each with its own inconsistent interface and tool set. It is up to IT to adopt a new strategy that is centered on evolving user requirements rather than technology silos. But the trip to the role-based interface that boosts productivity has been a long one for most organizations.

The importance of empowering end users extends well past an enterprise's boundaries. Jump-starting innovation and productivity in a more competitive and cost-sensitive environment requires new tools for collaborating and communicating more effectively beyond a company's brick-and-mortar walls in order to embrace customers, partners, and suppliers. Customers and partners are accustomed to commercial Web sites with intuitive and personalized interfaces and expect nothing less from you. The loyalty of your customers and extended supply chain is directly connected to your company's ability to quickly and painlessly support their changing needs. As IT increases user productivity based on the flexible approach of the Enterprise Services Architecture blueprint that is enabled by the SAP NetWeaver™ platform, it must both preserve and extend the value of strategic IT investments and set the framework for increased flexibility and responsiveness to a rapidly changing business environment.

The Solution: User Productivity Enablement with SAP NetWeaver

The user productivity enablement capabilities of SAP NetWeaver offer the possibility of increased individual productivity and greater overall business agility. These capabilities maximize the individual user's ability to recognize and exploit opportunities and address problems through targeted and timely knowledge delivered in a personal, actionable environment. For the enterprise as a whole, these capabilities offer a means of gaining more value from institutional knowledge and existing IT systems while optimizing ad hoc and distributed work processes.

User productivity enablement is implemented through practical and flexible activities that can be easily adapted to your organization's needs. This modular approach can help you address specific requirements today and also provide a pragmatic path to Enterprise Services Architecture. You can use these activities to implement user-friendly and highly scalable enterprise portals for role-based access to tailored information and functions, to create virtual work spaces for the efficient sharing of diverse information repositories, and to establish seamless collaborative communities.

And companies with highly mobile workforces – whether knowledge workers in transit, telecommuters, or an IT-enabled field force – increasingly need customized and secure solutions to maximize their employees' productivity outside the office. The SAP® Mobile Infrastructure (SAP MI) component of SAP NetWeaver adds yet another dimension of accessibility to the user productivity practice by enabling mobile-device-specific user interfaces, as well as always-connected and occasionally connected applications, to run securely on a broad array of device types. Finally, the SAP NetWeaver voice component provides the ability to create natural voice interfaces that can access back-end system applications.

Enterprise Portal Operation

Enterprise portals are the emerging “dashboards” for users of IT. As underlying business processes and applications are transformed via Web services and application integration, portals promise a single, seamless, personalized view of the resulting functions. Employees, partners, and customers alike are enabled to collaborate through Web-based interfaces to information, applications, and communities. Making all of that possible is the portal’s extensive abilities for role-based personalization; real-world, process-oriented application integration; and single sign-on access to all of the above. Role-based interfaces will proliferate. SAP Enterprise Portal is the component that will accelerate this process but also manage the growth at a reasonable cost.

More sophisticated portals may share information with partners or customers located beyond the firewalls and can help pave the way for a global network of portals sharing content and functions from geographically distributed back-end systems. Think of them as the next-generation face of the business – a face that can morph its appearance and abilities to suit the visitor, whether it’s the CEO, the CEO’s assistant, a supplier, or a customer.

Workplace Knowledge Management

Whether it’s structured data spilling out of a data warehouse, or a series of spreadsheets and e-mails zipping back and forth between in-boxes, crucial information can suddenly arrive from the least-expected source. The art of knowledge management is to reconcile structured and unstructured data into a single integrated work space. This becomes a personalized control center for users, who see the knowledge landscape from a single view. Those views are offered as a wide range of predefined user roles, allowing organizations to quickly and easily build an environment where users can securely create, distribute, classify, and locate a wide range of information.

Collaborative Execution of Business Processes and Tasks

Collaboration rooms can be built on a project, team, or self-service basis that allows users to effectively access and share that data in pursuit of the task at hand. They can leverage both portal and knowledge management features in these rooms, equipping them with project calendars, task lists, online discussions, and real-time collaboration tools like chat and application sharing – in short, using IT to aid and streamline their natural approach rather than straining to work around its limitations.

Mobile Infrastructure

Employees can tap into the heart of the enterprise while away from their desktops using the capabilities of SAP MI. SAP MI provides a framework for linking role-appropriate mobile hardware and software to core systems, granting both IT and the end user the ability to develop a tailored mobile solution that offers just the functions needed for tasks in the field. The corresponding voice recognition capabilities of SAP NetWeaver can even provide data and transaction processing functions over the phone, empowering a previously underserved segment of employees, partners, and customers who otherwise lack an everyday need for IT systems access.

Business Benefits

User productivity enablement with SAP NetWeaver increases IT’s ability to streamline business processes and increase productivity, beginning at the level of the individual. Users have enhanced abilities to make better-informed decisions faster, enabling them to accelerate the pace of innovation and create competitive advantage. When users have better access to information and applications, a complete understanding of their place inside business processes, and better communication across organizational and geographic divisions, the ultimate result is reduced waste and inefficiency, cross-organization alignment, and enhanced partner and customer loyalty.

Enterprises that realize productivity gains through SAP NetWeaver are more effectively able to tap into their institutional knowledge and enable their knowledge workers to glean more value from existing IT systems. The standardized interfaces of SAP NetWeaver reduce the need for end-user training and support, lower learning curves, and speed the deployment of business solutions to new user communities.

User productivity enablement helps you realize these business benefits without disrupting or replacing current and legacy systems and helps extend their life span. By providing a standards-based development platform that is independent of underlying technology, SAP NetWeaver lowers IT retraining and retooling costs and promotes code reuse. A key long-term benefit of this practice is the incremental deployment of Enterprise Services Architecture that allows IT to become, once again, a driver of innovation and growth across the enterprise.

The Power of Productivity

Through user productivity enablement with SAP NetWeaver, IT organizations can empower their users and streamline business processes and communication with a set of tools which can be incrementally implemented. This flexible strategy provides an immediate business impact by reshaping the IT environment to serve users' needs rather than vice versa. The complementary abilities of SAP MI promise to further extend that environment into the context of the real world. At the same time, the implementation of all of these capabilities also help lower IT costs and create a strong foundation for future growth and innovation through Enterprise Services Architecture.

Find Out More

Contact SAP to learn how you can use SAP NetWeaver to implement user productivity enablement to address your immediate business needs while establishing Enterprise Services Architecture for your future growth. Additional information is available on our Web site at www.sap.com/netweaver.