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SURVIVAL GUIDE TO SAP TECHNICAL MANAGED SERVICES

HOW TO BRIDGE THE BASIS SUPPORT GAP

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HOW TO BRIDGE THE BASIS SUPPORT GAP

Are your internal resources versed in the entire SAP® portfolio? Do you have the budget to bring a part-time consultant on site every time there's an issue? Don't stay up at night worrying about available resource coverage, system performance, expensive outsourcing or preparing for the "what ifs." Partnering with the right managed services provider that guarantees around-the-clock coverage, affordable pricing and proactive monitoring from SAP certified consultants can bring you that peace of mind.

Many have heard IT horror stories of managed support services and are fearful to engage in an outsourced basis managed services model. Thinking that onshore resources are expensive, and laced with hidden costs that continue to mount. With the alternative of offshore solutions not being any better with issues of language barriers, time zones, and long wait times from a generic help desk.

To combat these support issues, some companies have opted to go with internal basis teams, however, that option can come with its own challenges. Internal support can limit availability

of ongoing support needed to optimally run your environment and is subject to coverage issues such as sick leave, vacation or turnover. Internal teams are also limited in knowledge base. SAP technologies continuously change and require ongoing training to keep up, in additional to the daily support required to optimally run; often times leaving both the company and employee feeling very overwhelmed. Internal resources should be dedicated to meeting business goals, not managing a highly complex SAP environment.

This survival guide was purpose built to help you navigate through the search criteria for a SAP basis managed services provider and how to establish a long lasting outsourced partner strategy.

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BUILD THE BRIDGE –
ESTABLISH A LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP

When you out-task with the right SAP Basis partner, your business should expect a responsive, value-added extension to your support team – not a vendor with limited capabilities, limited hours and unreasonable pricing. Finding a company that can be your dedicated long-term partner is key. You need one that has the ability and experienced to provide expert support to your SAP ecosystem, around the clock…and around your unique business demands.

Whether it's short-term coverage while a staff member is on vacation, additional check-and-balance services or total Basis support, establishing a partnership vs. as a resourced-based vendor relationship is critical. The right basis managed services partner will put your mind at easy knowing they are proactively monitoring your mission critical SAP system with daily and customize our managed services based on their specific landscape and operations.

SAP is a very complex enterprise application, having the years of knowledge, team approach, and constant training to keep up with SAP technologies is key to optimally supporting your mission-critical environment. Don't just "keep the lights on" with your ERP system, ensure you embark on a journey to a true partnership.

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YOUR COMPASS –
TOP CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A MANAGED SERVICES PARTNER

Localized partners provide a level of support that cannot be achieved with an off-shore model

Eliminate time zone issues, language barriers,long help desk waits and short term contractors that plague the offshore managed services model. In addition to the distance gap being solved, onshore teams meet more industry compliances by employing full time consultants such as ITAR. From localized offices, consultants possesses the resources and team skill set to complete your task on the spot. Do not rely on short-term consultants that require extraneous travel overhead for flight, accommodation and billed in-transit hours, only pay for the work that is done.

A wide expanse of knowledge – certified experts in more than just SAP applications

Having a team that is certifiably trained and can handle any issue that may arise, no matter the platform, is invaluable. With a team of experts, you get the value of the team not just one consultant.

Find a partner well-versed in SAP and beyond to include:

– Applications

– Data

– Security

– Runtime

– O/S

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A team-based approach means more economic value for you

Get a dedicated team that really understands your environment. More than that, though you may work with that team on a daily basis, you also need a true partner approach to provide flexible support and answer any kind of question. By leveraging a *team* of basis consultants you're gaining the broad and deep expertise in all facets of SAP product lifecycle development, and management that comes from working with a valued partner as a true extension of your internal teams.

Cost Savings

Did you know the cost of one full time employee can be more than 25% versus an outsourced partner? After salary and benefits are accounted for, having one full time resource can cost a company much more than the team approach provided through a basis outsourced model. The benefits of out-tasking are getting the knowledge you need, without delays or difficulties finding and retaining employees. Cost savings include:

– No turnover (time and money)
– No benefits
– No vacation or sick leave
– No time off for training
– No training costs
– No management of internal personnel
– No overtime fees

REDUCE TIME TO RESOLUTION BY 80% OR MORE

Chances are you're no stranger to the black hole of SAP ticketing. It's also only worthwhile to submit system bug issues, as how-to questions typically require a consultant in the end.

But whether it's a consultant or an internal resource, the clock is ticking. Some onsite consultants may even days to weeks get to you, once arrangements and negotiations have been made. On the other hand, you can't expect your valuable internal resources to have knowledge across all SAP system applications, releases and platforms...nor have the availability for research.

When you add up the time in either case, you're likely facing a scenario where waiting for resolution is costing you weeks of lost production.

It has been found that issue to resolution time was reduced by 80% when leveraging an outsourced team approach. With a valued partner it can take mere hours. Having a skilled team of IT professionals on staff, ranging in all SAP specialties, your issues are resolved immediately in – hours, not days, or worse, weeks.

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A flexible solution, backed by a flexible execution

Knowing your solution should be backed by flexible execution is key when choosing an outsourced partner. You should be assured by the stability of upfront pricing per their particular environment demands, so there are never any surprises or hidden fees. A partner should have these best practices established in managed services methodology and built into the contract so you don't have overages. Your partner should be accountable for the quality and efficiency of their work. It is in our best interest to ensure that the job is done right the first time, on time and within budget.

Whether it's standard maintenance work by day, or a production issue at night, evaluate a partner who provides 24x7 direct access to an extensive technical team. Symmetry handles your system without delay, no waiting, no additional after-hour costs. As you know, when there's a production issue, your operations can't be put on hold. Whether you call at 2:00 p.m. or 2:00 a.m., you'll speak directly with your consultant that has deep knowledge of your SAP environment. That means no help desk queues or middle man getting in the way of getting the problem resolved – which can cause more than ust frustration, but cost your company valuable time and revenue loss.

Availability to your systems – performance reports

Through proactive monitoring and customized reporting, your partner should know there is a potential issue in your environment before you do. Plus, should you need availability to your systems and performance, you should have that visability. Trusting that a partner is monitoring these reports and providing steps to remediate any issue is half the battle. The other half is knowing that there are state of the art tools in place, with proactive monitoring and dashboards, so you never feel out of touch with your systems.

Expert support that your company can depend on

On average, the system down occurrences cost a company $5,600 per minute! Why gamble with your mission-critical system and business vitality? Having expert support in place with a trusted partner is key. After all is said and done, you want the peace of mind knowing your most mission-critical systems are up and running, and your business will not suffer for unnecessary outages with sub-par support.

Grows with you

As your business continues to grow, so should your partner. Ensure the partner you choose is in for

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the long haul, with a long history of SAP support, and progressive plan to help you meet your business needs (plus stand shoulder to shoulder with you). A Basis team can be a daily check box for daily support, or they can advise you of upcoming SAP technologies and help your organization plan a roadmap to success to leverage upgrades, and new features as SAP releases them.

Vitality of the company is also something to take into consider. With many IT consultant businesses popping up daily, ensure that your outsourced partner has a strong track record and plans to be with you for years to come. What will your environment and support need be in 6,12,18,24, and 36 months? There is nothing more frustrating than establishing a relationship that is cut short, leaving you to engage in the partner search once more.

Customer support

The technical and certified skillset needed to provide continuous support and customer service should be a top consideration when deciding to outsource. You need dedicated resources familiar with your systems that you can call at any time for issue resolution, project support or just to 'check in'. Proactive, professional customer service is a key factor that should be under consideration when looking for Basis support. The outsourced team should feel like an extension of your own team, that you can rely on.

ADVANCED SECURITY

Did you know that 75% of hackers are in systems for 8-9 months before attacking?

Having advanced security procedures established and "smart hands" monitoring your SAP systems regularly should be a best practice that is well established for your outsourced partner. Ask the tough questions when evaluating partners, to ensure your systems are not left vulnerable.

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DUE NORTH –
STRATEGIES TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR SAP BASIS RELATIONSHIP

Write a contract that meets your needs

Make sure that you and your partner have clearly defined your specific business requirements. Interview the consultants that you'll be working with and establish a Statement of Work that meets your RFP. Your business's circumstances will change along the way, so make provisions for it. Make provisions that are not too rigid, but not too loose, either. Make them fit your business's needs.

Establishing the partner relationship

Be upfront about your partner expectations and eliminate any assumptions so you're clear with internal staff about the Basis partner's role. Have a good understanding of where the relationship is headed in terms of project support, long-term goals, etc. Your consultants should not work in a vacuum; you should work side-by-side with your partner to establish a partnership. Think about items like email communication, weekly status meetings, performance reports, customer portals, and more.

Avoid the pitfalls

Plan, plan and plan. Sure, you'll also have check-ins with your partner, but you also need to make sure you're still planning ahead. Secondly, choose a partner with a successful track record and promise of healthy business longevity.

Managing a long-term relationship that suits your needs

Once in a rhythm with your partner, communications may only need to be weekly, or monthly – it's up to you to determine how often you'd like to check in. Have a plan in place to discuss upcoming SAP project support, beyond SAP Basis support. Keeping an open dialogue and strategy in place will help your internal teams to budget properly.

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YOUR COMPLETE
PARTNER CHECKLIST

NO MEASURE OF SUPPORT SHOULD FALL SHORT

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2
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When looking to outsource your most mission-critical ERP systems, make sure the partner you choose can support you in the following ways:

– 24x7x365 availability to your systems

– 24x7x365 support from a dedicated team of consultants

– Certified consultants, monitoring, tuning your SAP landscape for optimal performance

– Complete SAP administration – fixed price contracts with no hidden fees

– After-hours support or designated hours per week support

– Backup and recovery capabilities

– On-the-ball response to miscellaneous requests

– Customized operations reporting of system performance

– Affordable, flexible pricing built around your service plan

– Proactive monitoring to ensure a stabilized SAP environment

– Project Support – support packs, change and transport systems, client copies and refreshes,

– Strong security and compliance standards in place

– Determine the right Infrastructure and Tools needed to be in place

– Understand the holes in the architecture and avoid nasty surprises

– Lease vs. buy when equipment is needed for hosting of your SAP environment – can your partner provide you a hosted solution?

– If purchasing a "solution", determine if services (along with capital items) can also be rolled into the agreement

– Consider hosted applications for future needs to avoid adding infrastructure

– Can new or existing tools improve efficiency or reduce headcount

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SURVIVE TOGETHER

Finding the right SAP technical managed services outsourced partner can be challenging, but is also just as rewarding when executed correctly. The key is establishing a partnership, not just a vendor relationship. Make sure your potential search includes the basics, but goes beyond that to provide value as a partner, not a short team ERP engagement project.

You do what you do best – and that's running your business. Let the experts do what they do best.

Let the right partner guide the way...

SAP Basis Managed Services has been Symmetry's deep-seated expertise from day one. Since our inception in 1996, Symmetry has become one of the largest SAP technical firms and has the highest SAP Basis client satisfaction rating in the industry of 96%. At Symmetry, quality isn't a goal or just a deliverable, it's an approach. Symmetry's service methodology is characterized by a commitment to expertise, clear and open communication, as well as a focus on utilizing talented people to manage our customers' SAP environments.

Symmetry provides a range of SAP outsourcing support models, from handling all your SAP administration to short-term coverage during staff vacation time or after hours. Your dedicated Symmetry team focuses on your business requirements and develops a comprehensive understanding of your SAP environment, resulting in seamless and smooth interactions.

We have lead hundreds of upgrades and implementation projects, optimizing more than 2,500 SAP environments. Our state-of-the-art monitoring tools and customized reporting help to ensure that you have high availability to your systems. Plus, you'll always have direct access to your dedicated consultant 24×7.

SAP BASIS MANAGED SERVICES

Partner with Symmetry for complete Outsourcing of SAP Basis Administration to include:

– OS, DB, and application administration

– 24x7x365 support on production systems

– 24x7x365 automated monitoring and alerting

– 100% in-house team of dedicated consultants and Client Managers

– Flexible service levels

– Support for your entire environment or a single landscape

– Customized reporting capabilities

– Augment current staff with Symmetry to support larger maintenance initiatives

With Symmetry you can expect:

– 24×7x365 direct access to the largest team of SAP technical consultants

– Affordable, fixed price support without offshore staffing

– High quality services backed with SAP certified hosting, cloud and SAP HANA Operations and SSAE 16 certification

– State-of-the-art tools and expert SAP certified consultants

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# ENHANCED CAPABILITIES AND CUSTOM REPORTING

As part of Symmetry's commitment to upholding the highest level of customer satisfaction, we continuously reinvest, expand and improve our tools and resources for our valued customers. The supplementary Symmetry monitoring and reporting service follows through on our aim. With this business goal in mind, Symmetry's monitoring service offering extends the comprehensive SAP Basis Managed Services, providing additional value to our customers.

SAP Basis Managed Services Portal

- 24x7x365 automated monitoring and alerting

- Real-Time custom alerting via SMS and E-Mail

- Single pane of glass client dashboard with real-time statistics

- Trend-based reporting to track usage on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis

- Included as part of Symmetry's Basis Managed Services

- Alleviates low-value daily activity of logging into systems and checking on past-days' events

- Allows Symmetry consultants to focus on what matters most: the management and maintenance of SAP

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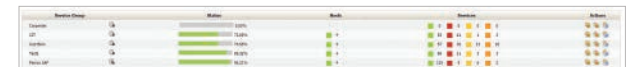
CLIENT STAMP OF APPROVAL

Kubota

Client John Congdon, Senior IT Executive at Kubota Engine America Corporation, lends his vendor experiences versus a Symmetry partnership.

Real customers vouch for our best-in-class service and high-performing solutions, with Symmetry as a partner, our customers give us a stamp of approval. Client John Congdon, Senior IT Executive at Kubota Engine America Corporation, shares his previous vendor experiences versus a Symmetry partnership.

"Basis Complete service saves us at least 25 percent on salaries and benefits compared to maintaining a new full-time Basis employee. After a bad outsourcing experience, I didn't even want to look at options for outsourcing our Basis support. Three years into a five year contract and suddenly costs were going up and we were running into some serious issues. The support itself wasn't bad, but we ran into continuity issues every time we were assigned a new consultant because they didn't understand our environment. Off-shoring was not an option for us either; our primary concerns were language barriers and time zone issues."

However, Kubota had a change of heart. "Symmetry had really proven themselves through their block of hours contract; for us it was like a 'try before you buy' test.

The value proposition for moving to Symmetry's Basis Complete service was clear. Basis Complete service saves us at least 25 percent on salaries and benefits compared to maintaining a new full-time Basis employee."

"Basis Complete is a fixed monthly charge, so we know what the impact is going to be on our budget. The savings are probably even greater when you consider the hidden costs of ongoing Basis training. We know that Symmetry's staff has gone through dozens, if not hundreds, of upgrades; they've got the training and they're up to date with the latest changes to SAP products."

Client peace of mind

At the end of the work day, our clients' improved staff morale is the most gratifying pat on the back. Congdon confirms, "We don't have to deal with unhappy staff being over extended on nights and weekends. We have a consultant and back-up team assigned to us who know our system inside and out. And we have access to the full range of expertise at Symmetry when we need it. What more could you ask for?"

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GET
STARTED
TODAY

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About Symmetry™

Symmetry Corporation is a leading enterprise hosting and managed services provider. An SAP certified partner since 2005, Symmetry is certified in SAP Hosting, Cloud and SAP HANA® Operations. As a true extension of your team, Symmetry places a laser focus on our customer's experience and is one of the only managed IT providers with flexible solutions built to meet each customer's unique business needs. Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wis., Symmetry supports global customers through its 24x7 operations support model and its extensive worldwide data center network. With a proven methodology for delivering technical managed services and complete hosting solutions, Symmetry delivers flexible, high-quality solutions that help reduce the total cost of ownership and enable high-performing and secure environments of customers' most mission critical systems. Learn more http://symmetrycorp.com.