



SAP Data Excellence Guide



The SAP Data Excellence Guide

Assess how ready your Business Partner data is for what comes next

S/4HANA, Clean Core, automation and AI all promise faster and smarter processes. Each of them depends on the same foundation: the Business Partner records that tell SAP who your customers and suppliers are. When that foundation is weak, every process built on top of it inherits the problem.

And it is often weaker than it looks. Duplicate records, outdated addresses and missing registration numbers turn into manual work, rejected e-invoices and compliance checks on the wrong legal entity. The later an error is found, the more it costs: fixing a record takes ten times more effort than getting it right at entry, and working with a wrong one costs a hundred times more. Migrating to S/4HANA does not change this. It moves the problem along with the data, while the habits that caused it keep running in the background.

This guide helps you find out where you stand. Across five themes, from knowing your landscape to turning trusted data into better decisions, a short checklist shows how mature your Business Partner Management really is. You finish with a maturity score, a clear view of the gaps in your processes and a roadmap for the next step, whether you are preparing for S/4HANA or already running on it.

Along the way, keep one question in mind: would you trust AI to make a decision based on your Business Partner data today?

1

Clear visibility into your Business Partner process builds a stronger foundation

Does your organisation:

- Have clearly defined ownership of who creates, validates and maintains Business Partner data?
- Apply the same processes and standards across customer and supplier teams, countries and business units?
- Know which systems, data sources and entry points feed your Business Partner records?
- Know where manual steps, errors, delays and duplicate records most often occur?
- Know which Business Partner data each team needs for its own processes?

In SAP, one Business Partner can hold both a customer and a supplier role. That makes it the natural foundation for all your master data, provided everyone builds on the same version.

Start by mapping where Business Partner data enters your organisation: sales, procurement, accounts payable, local subsidiaries and data imports. Each entry point is a place where records are created, and where inconsistencies can creep in.

Then agree who does what. A simple ownership model makes responsibilities clear:

Role	Creates	Validates	Maintains	Can make changes
Sales	Yes	No	No	No
Procurement	Yes	No	No	No
Master Data	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finance	No	Yes	No	No
Marketing	...	...	...	...

Example ownership model. Roles and responsibilities will differ per organisation.

Finally, connect everything with one key. The D-U-N-S Number gives every legal entity a unique reference that links SAP, CRM, procurement tools and compliance systems. dataxess for SAP brings this trusted company information directly into the processes where Business Partners are created and managed.

One Business Partner. One owner. One key.



2

Clean Business Partner data starts with knowing who is behind every record

Does your organisation:

Know the quality of its Business Partner data today?

Use a standard core data set across all Business Partners?

Identify duplicate records?

Identify outdated or inactive records?

Distinguish headquarters, branches and subsidiaries?

Recognise the same company across different systems?

Link every Business Partner to the correct legal entity?

Preparing for S/4HANA? Have you:

Decided which Business Partners should actually be migrated?

checked whether your customer and supplier data is ready for Business Partner conversion?

A Business Partner record is only valuable when you know exactly which company it stands for. Over time, Business Partner data tends to get messy: duplicates, outdated addresses, companies that have merged, moved or stopped trading.

We can help you clean this up and bring back order by matching every record against the Dun & Bradstreet database in three steps:

- **Cleanse and standardise:** names, addresses and phone numbers are parsed and normalised to postal standards, so every record can be compared like for like.
- **Find the best candidates:** optimised match keys retrieve the most likely companies from more than 600 million entities.
- **Decide with confidence:** each match receives a MatchGrade showing how well every element (name, address, phone, postcode and more) lines up, plus a Confidence Code from 1 to 10.

You set the thresholds: accept high-confidence matches automatically and route the rest for review. Records that share the same D-U-N-S Number instantly reveal your duplicates, and every verified record is enriched with up-to-date company data. The result is a Business Partner base you can trust, and with datatess for SAP it stays clean going forward.



3

Getting onboarding right keeps bad data out of SAP

Does your organisation:

- ☐ Know who can create Business Partner records in SAP?
- ☐ Detect duplicates during onboarding?
- ☐ Make sure the Business Partner is linked to an actual company?
- ☐ Standardise names and addresses at the point of entry?
- ☐ Check company identifiers automatically?
- ☐ Enrich missing data where possible?
- ☐ Apply the same validation rules across all teams?
- ☐ Still need employees to research companies manually outside SAP?

Why it matters: the 1-10-100 rule

The longer bad data goes unnoticed, the more it costs. The 1-10-100 rule, developed by George Labovitz and Yu Sang Chang in 1992, shows how quickly that cost grows.

1 • Prevention

Creating a Business Partner from verified sources, with a duplicate check at entry, is the cheapest moment to get it right. The data enters SAP correct, standardised and linked to a unique identifier.

10 • Correction

Fixing a record later takes ten times the effort. Without a unique identifier, someone first has to work out which legal entity it represents and whether it already exists, before anything can be corrected.

100 • Failure

Working with wrong data costs the most. An incorrect VAT or registration number means a rejected e-invoice and a delayed payment. Screening the wrong legal entity puts compliance at risk. And every error multiplies with each process the record touches.

Every euro spent on prevention saves ten on correction and a hundred on failure.

Where to start

Define the core data set your Business Partners need to support your processes. dataxess for SAP validates and enriches that data before a record is saved.



4

Business Partner data stays reliable when you keep it up to date

Does your organisation:

- ☐ Check Business Partner data after onboarding?
- ☐ Detect changes in company information automatically?
- ☐ Track changes in legal status and addresses?
- ☐ Identify changes in corporate relationships?
- ☐ Share important changes with the teams that need to know?
- ☐ Use changes to trigger actions or workflows?
- ☐ Know when each Business Partner record was last verified?
- ☐ Rely on periodic clean-up projects to restore data quality?

Companies move, merge and change ownership every day. Not every change matters equally, so start by listing the critical fields in your Business Partner records: the ones that affect invoicing, compliance or risk. That shows where monitoring adds the most value.

Then decide how updates are governed. A change can have a bigger impact than the field itself, and may need to trigger an action or a process. Decide which changes can be processed automatically, which need a manual review, and who owns that review before the core SAP record is updated. For example:

Field or Event	Why it matters	What the change should trigger	Handling	Owner
Company name	Invoices and contracts must show the legal name	Inform account manager	Automatic	Master data team
Registered address	Invoicing, VAT, delivery	Check open orders and invoices	Manual review	Finance
VAT number	Tax compliance	Validate before next invoice	Manual review	Finance
Change of ownership	...	...	...	...

Example change governance model. Fields, handling and owners will differ per organisation.

dataxess for SAP monitors your Business Partners continuously and flags the changes that matter, so data quality no longer depends on the next clean-up project.



5

Trusted Business Partner data leads to better decisions

Does your organisation:

- ☐ Work from one shared Business Partner identity across all teams?
- ☐ Have relevant company information at hand when decisions are made?
- ☐ Integrate financial and risk information into Business Partner processes?
- ☐ Use Business Partner data to trigger workflows?
- ☐ Base decisions on current information?
- ☐ Keep the source of its data traceable?
- ☐ Make sure decisions can be explained afterwards?
- ☐ Trust automated processes to act on its current Business Partner data?
- ☐ Is your data ready for AI automation?
- ☐ Would you trust AI to make a decision based on your Business Partner data today?

Clean and complete data is a starting point, not the goal. The real value comes when it supports the decisions your teams make every day, from accepting a new customer to selecting a supplier.

Start by identifying the decisions that depend on Business Partner data. Then look at what information those decisions need. Depending on the process, this can include:

- Company identity
- Financial information
- Payment behaviour
- Risk indicators
- Corporate relationships

Make sure that information is available inside the process, at the moment the decision is made, and that its source is traceable. That is what makes decisions consistent and explainable, and what prepares your data for automation and AI. With dataxess for SAP, this Dun & Bradstreet information is available directly in SAP.



What is your SAP Data Excellence score?

Count the questions you answered with “yes” across all five chapters. The S/4HANA questions in chapter 2 are an extra check and don’t count towards your score. Your total, out of 38, shows where you stand today and what to focus on next.

0–7 • Fragmented

Processes and data are largely manual and disconnected. Your priority: gain visibility and clean the foundation.

8–15 • Controlled

Standards exist, but processes still rely heavily on manual validation. Your priority: standardise and automate identification.

16–23 • Connected

Trusted external data is connected to your Business Partner processes. Your priority: integrate enrichment across the lifecycle.

24–31 • Continuous

Business Partner data is continuously maintained and monitored. Your priority: use changes to drive proactive processes.

32–38 • Intelligent

Trusted Business Partner data supports automated workflows, analytics and AI. Your priority: turn trusted data into automated business action.

The chapter where you answered “yes” least often, relative to its number of questions, shows where your biggest gains are.

Make trusted data part of your SAP processes

Your score shows where your Business Partner data stands today. Start with the area where you answered “yes” least often, then build on each improvement:

Identify the company behind each Business Partner. Clean duplicate and outdated records. Enrich them with trusted company information. Monitor changes throughout the relationship. Evaluate customers and suppliers using reliable data. Then automate workflows and AI on a foundation you can trust.

Business Partner maturity is about having the right data, at the right time, inside the right process.

Make trusted data part of your SAP processes

dataxess for SAP brings trusted Dun & Bradstreet company information into SAP Business Partner processes. From onboarding and enrichment to monitoring and evaluation, it helps you create a data foundation that stays reliable as businesses change.

Whether you’re preparing for an S/4HANA transformation or already working in S/4HANA, you can turn the priorities revealed by your score into lasting improvements across your Business Partner lifecycle.

Ready to take the next step?

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