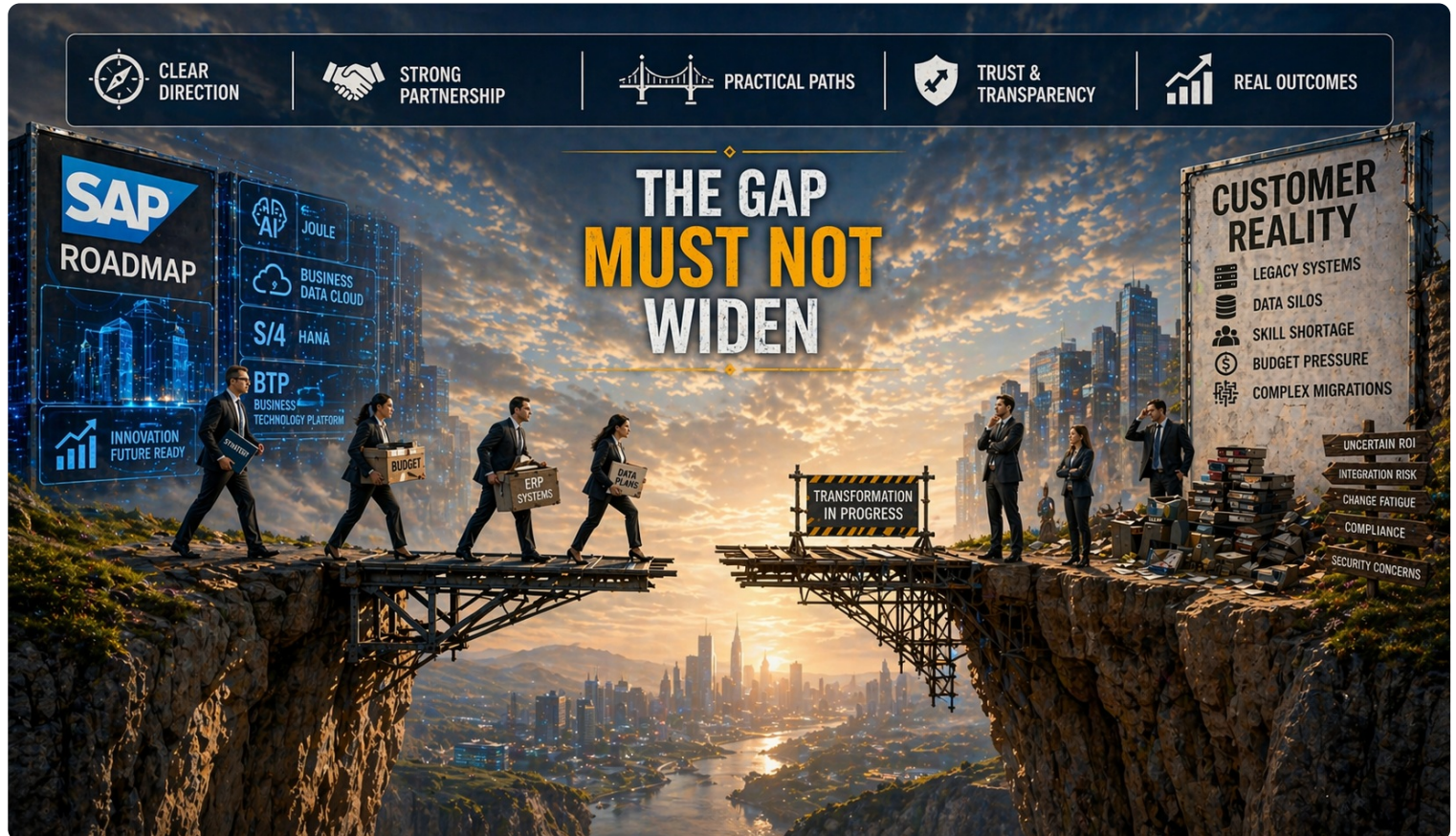


SAP's Real Risk Isn't AI - It's Losing Touch with Customers

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SAP's biggest challenge may not be AI itself, but maintaining customer trust, execution clarity and realistic transformation paths amid growing complexity.



SAP does not have an AI problem.

It has an execution clarity problem.

At the recent [DSAG Technology Days](#), German-speaking SAP customers delivered a message many enterprise vendors should study carefully:

Vision is welcome.

Vagueness is not.

Customers are asking sensible questions:

- How does SAP's AI roadmap create measurable value now?
- How does Business Data Cloud coexist with Snowflake, Databricks, and existing investments?
- How are security, governance, and explainability handled?
- What is the realistic migration path for midsize organisations with limited budgets and people?
- How much complexity is being removed - versus added?

DSAG board member Stefan Nogly summarised the core concern well:

The gap between SAP and its users must not widen further.

That gap is rarely about technology alone.

It is usually about timing, maturity, commercial reality, and trust.

Where SAP Is Right

To be fair, SAP is directionally right on several fronts.

1. AI Inside IT Before AI Inside Everything

Using AI to accelerate:

- migrations
- interface remediation
- testing
- code support
- UI generation
- documentation

...is often a smarter first move than pushing autonomous AI into core finance or supply chain processes.

Internal productivity use cases usually create faster ROI with lower operational risk.

2. Platform Standardisation Matters

BTP, Fiori, CDS Views, cleaner extensions, and reduced customisation are the right long-term direction.

Every CIO who has lived through patch trauma knows why.

3. Data Foundation First

No serious AI programme scales on fragmented reporting layers and poor master data.

SAP's emphasis on trusted data layers is strategically sound.

Where Customers Are Frustrated

This is where many enterprise software firms lose credibility.

1. Customers Already Invested Elsewhere

Many organisations already built modern data estates using:

- Snowflake
- Databricks
- Azure
- AWS analytics stacks
- Power BI ecosystems

So when a new "strategic" platform arrives late, the question becomes:

Is this additive value - or additive cost?

2. Mid-Market Reality Is Different from Keynote Reality

Large showcase customers can move faster.

Typical mid-market SAP customers are dealing with:

- ECC to S/4 journeys
- scarce SAP talent
- budget pressure
- technical debt
- competing priorities

They cannot transform everything simultaneously.

3. AI Trust Is Still Immature

Boards want AI speed.

IT teams know they still need:

- governance
- data controls
- explainability
- security models
- ownership clarity
- human accountability

That tension is everywhere.

The Pragmatic CIO View

Most SAP customers do not need another slogan.

They need:

- practical migration paths
- transparent commercials
- interoperable architecture
- realistic timelines
- measurable use cases
- investment protection

In short:

less theatre, more tooling.

The Uncomfortable Truth for SAP

SAP's biggest competitor may not be Oracle, Microsoft, or AI.

It may be customer patience.

If customers feel the roadmap is expensive, late, unclear, or disconnected from operational reality, they will increasingly build around SAP rather than through SAP.

And once that behaviour becomes normal, platform gravity weakens.

Final Thought

Enterprise customers do not expect perfection.

They do expect honesty, maturity, and clarity.

The vendors that win the next decade will not be those with the loudest AI message.

They will be those who help customers modernise safely, pragmatically, and profitably.

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