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Inside SAP S/4HANA Episode 97: Getting Started with Extensibility in SAP S/4HANA Cloud, with LeverX



Harish: Hello and welcome to our podcast Inside SAP S/4HANA. There is no customer success without product success and project success. I'm Harish Mangtani from Cloud ERP Product Success Enablement, your host for this podcast episode. One of the key elements in SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition is the standardization of business processes in the cloud. However, we know that every customer is unique and may have different business requirements. To address this, extensibility can be a key solution which we will be discussing today in our podcast. Our guest for today are Ilya Bibik from SAP and Vitali Harlukovich from SAP's partner organization. Welcome to this episode. Now, before we begin, let's take a moment to introduce our guests to you, our audience. Ilya and Vitali, could you tell us more about yourself and your role in the organization?

Ilya: Hi, it's Ilya. Harish, thank you for having me, first of all. So I'm with SAP a quite a while, I guess 14 years. And my role is project management. And my mandate was with this particular project, together with my manager Camille Gammal, my partner Sunil Sethi, and from SAP side and from LeverX side, together with Alexei Eremenko, Gurlukovich and Vitaly Gordienko, to set up a team that will work on the topics of extensibility for S/4HANA public cloud, also for pre-sales, also for customer escalations. Basically, we are building prototypes to validate a certain scenario valuable. And that was amazing journey. Actually, we work across all the LOBs and it was a great experience and we had so much fun working with LeverX. So maybe Vitali, you can speak a little about yourself.

Vitali: Yeah. Hi, my name is Vitali. I'm a SAP technical architect at LeverX company at customer advocacy team. In this project, we are helping customers with any extensibility use cases for each SAP model in S/4HANA public cloud. So this is in really short terms. Thank you.

Harish: Well, great. Thank you and happy to have you in this episode. Let's now talk first about our partner LeverX. LeverX is an international company with extensive expertise in solving businesses worldwide. Vitali, could you please explain to our audience what services LeverX provides and how the company's partnership with SAP works?

Vitali: LeverX is a global system integrator that provides SAP implementation services and custom software development to companies of all sizes. We have about 14 offices in ten countries across four major regions: North America, Europe, Middle East and Central Asia. LeverX continues to show growth in digital transformation projects and S/4HANA migrations, and is seeing tremendous interest in ERP management, simplification, also data migration, AI and sustainability initiatives. So our dedicated work has helped the company earn the

honorable SAP Gold Partner, SAP global strategic supplier and SAP integrator statuses, affirming its strong experience and knowledge.

Harish: Yeah. Impressive journey and partnership. Well, extensibility is a key capability of an ERP solution that empowers businesses to tailor the software to their unique business requirements, fostering agility, efficiency and innovation. However, some of our audience may not be familiar with the current cloud extensibility model. So, Ilya can you briefly explain to us the current extensibility model in the public cloud, and how it is different from extending solutions in earlier legacy systems, and what various options are available today for the users?

Ilya: If you look at it, extensibility, if you think about terms of on premise, it's a way of doing custom dev on the cloud. That's the message. This way you can get the best of both worlds. So you also getting is advantages of the cloud where you don't have to maintain the infrastructure and it's plug and play. You start out of the box. At the same time, it gives you the flexibility of having your own solution, and also because of the way how extensibility is set, is that you don't have to worry about upgrades anymore. And it's a risk free solution. So maybe, Vitali, you can give a little bit kind of feedback on the both way on how we are doing extensibility?

Vitali: What I would say that the current extensibility is related to the clean core concept. Because of this, it's now easy to upgrade. As you mentioned, you are always on top of innovation technologies and your system is always stable and secured and you don't make changes to the core code. I can also point out is a learning curve for ABAP in cloud aka embedded steampunk. Also speaking about simplification using key-user extensibility, it is possible to have low code or even no code extensions. That's really cool.

Harish: We know how extensibility provides powerful capabilities to develop cloud ready and upgrade safe extensions, like you said. So based on your experience in the last few years with customers, what are unique opportunities you see that customers can leverage using the cloud extensibility model in the public cloud?

Ilya: So it's kind of the experience that we gained and what we're doing because, you know, we're doing it for some time and we have this repetitive process and some cases that we work on. They kind of come again from different customers and different scenarios. So we're using and sharing extensibility concept. This is one of them for us. We actually created a small work zone where we share all different scenarios we worked on. And then those

scenarios after setting the quantities that we accumulated as the business, it becomes repetitive. So if you are a customer or partner and you in this domain, obviously the first few iterations, you know, like you have to discover the wheel, but after some time it becomes a repetitive work and it gets easy. And also we recommend actually you can also get our experience and if you email me by my email ilya.bibik@sap.com. I can add you as a member to our work zone, and you might have a view of our use cases that we worked on and the POCs, and it will give you ideas what can be done. And maybe you can reuse some concepts. So easy learning curve to migrate existing dev capacity from on premise to public cloud developments already have developers and your organization that ABAP, it will be not too hard to move the skill set you have and implementing extensibility. A risk free, as I mentioned for the upgrade, I believe the customer that had the on premise custom dev and are afraid of the upgrades, they can relate to it and low code/no code opportunity with the key user extensibility.

Vitali: Yeah, since custom use cases encapsulated from the core. Based on this, I see visibility of reusing these business cases in extensibility that can be easily customized for each customer. And as you mentioned, we have more information regarding this in our work zone.

Harish: So I'm sure along with the opportunities, it could also be challenging in the beginning. So what are the main challenges? Typically in the beginning, when a customer or a partner can start using the extensibility model in the cloud according to you?

Ilya: There is basically, I would say not challenges, but this is the process, right? This is the process. How we tackle every problem, every task, every case. So we validate if we have required objects for our embedded development. Because as I mentioned, there is two ways of doing things you can do embedded development. You can do the key user extensibility, the low code. And maybe you can also do the side by side application where we basically develop the full application. So for embedded development you validate if you have the required objects, if there is opportunity to use key user low codes and you validate if you have the extension points for the key user, you try to always use the internal APIs whenever it's possible instead of external APIs. This is a SAP guidance, but obviously you can use also external if this is what you have for custom interfaces, UIs for the embedded ABAP that are not generated and available, but by default you will have to use the BTP subscription. This is something that you have to keep in mind when you have a use case, and you have complex interface that cannot be auto generated. And the most important point that I find many people, kind of many customers, partners don't realize that you can combine different

technologies in your use case. Also embedded ABAP, and also key user and side by side in one use case. And that gives you pretty good opportunity to solve various and complex use cases. And again don't give up. You know, you always go get back to business in any use case. And there is always a compromise. So far it's almost never happened that we were not able to solve to certain way the problem customer is facing.

Harish: That's good. So I see that for the end users there are various different options available, or depending on the business problem or the business need you have. So for now, let's move on to a real business example that would be interesting for our audience for sure. So let's take a look at how SAP and our partner LeverX have helped customers. So Vitali, could you provide us with some insights regarding a recent project where a customer successfully met their unique business requirements by leveraging our cloud extensibility model?

Vitali: One of our last proof of concepts was related to HR and service LOBs, and was named as Joint Time and Service Confirmation. In short, just imagine that service orders and projects can be done by the same person, but the processes of time reporting for project and time information for service orders, they are completely different, and it will be more convenient for the user to have all assigned work in one place and be able to report time for it. For these purposes, we created our proof of concept. We developed the application for this because in S/4HANA public cloud in the current release 2308, the person should confirm time and service separately in two applications with different structures and logic for confirmation. What I can say about our application? By using this application, the user can display all assigned projects and service orders in one screen, and he quickly can make and edit service confirmation. He can release items. He can be self assigned to an unassigned service order, for example, he can make and edit time reporting for a project. He can report time for an unstaffed project. Speaking about the project manager, he can manage team timesheet.

Harish: Now I can already feel that how end users could be project managers, consultant from customer side or partner side can achieve a lot. And to solve their business need by consuming the release objects from SAP and using the cloud extensibility model in the public cloud. So thanks for explaining. Now let's say for all our audience, whether they are customers, partners or project managers who are interested in learning more about this topic and exploring especially various possibilities to extend their solutions. So how can they actually get started with it?

Ilya: So my recommendation would be, as I mentioned already, start with us. So start with our work zone where we listed the different use cases we worked on. So obviously there is SAP help, but on top of it there is some useful blogs. So the overall blogs from Marco Valencia who is VP we work with and they give quite broad overview of the kind of topic in general, of the extensibility in general. It's very useful to read and to get a good idea. And also the two blogs from our side that we posted on key user and on an embedded steampunk from Kristina Adams. I also recommend as a good starter for developers, easy to read and easy to start. Yeah, I think that's quite useful resources you can start with. And of course SAP help. Yeah. You know, like this is the number one go to.

Harish: I would like to also add on this for our audience. As I told in the beginning, I'm coming from cloud ERP product success enablement organization very closely working on this topic. You can follow me on SAP community. My name is Harish Mangtani, once again. We have hosted some sessions along with Ilya and Vitali already and are planning to host more sessions where we demonstrate the business scenarios coming from various lobs on extensibility, showing how you can extend based on your business needs, a lot of more things to come. So one central place, also apart from the SAP work zone, which Ilya mentioned, is the SAP community, where I'm trying to put all the central information, I can assure you that there is enough learning assets and more trainings to come. Okay, good. So I move on now that the audience know how to get started, my next question is what recommendations would you give for key steps on, let's say, the best practices for an extensibility project?

Ilya: The key is to validate if you have the objects or extension point required for your project. So you build a business case. You understand from the business case what objects you need to extend. Then based on this, you decide are you going to use the embedded development or using key user extensibility or combined? Or you will have to use side by side. What are you missing? What you have is what you work. What APIs you need and what interfaces you will need. And this will pretty much drive your decision making on what technologies and what you can deliver. You work with business. It's, you know, like it's not development from the scratch. So it's not like the standard development team that pretty much you do exactly what customer needs, but you have certain kind of restrictions because it's still extensions. There might be more close collaboration with the business as you work with the product owner or with the business analyst or whoever gives you the requirements, and maintenance should be also considered with regards that basically you have a free pass with regards to upgrades. Syncs should be stable from when you upgrade the system, and it should be seamless from your side. And from the resources point of view always you can

reuse your existing resources to work on the extensibility topics, and the learning curve should not be a big problem for ABAP developers. We managed it with our local teams and with teams from LeverX where that were ABAP and the switch was not hard. And if you again reach out to us and go to the work zone and with those blogs that we have there, the switch and learning curve can be even more simple for you. There is also Extensibility Explorer that you can use to find different use cases on smaller scale.

Harish: Very interesting session and nice information too. If I have to also summarize it before I end, of course, in a nutshell, I would say extensibility is a key capability. Like I said, for every ERP solutions, giving customers or partners the power to customize their business processes based on their unique needs. And the public edition of SAP S/4HANA cloud provides as said a new upgrade stable cloud extensibility model so that allows you to consume SAP innovation smoothly, leading to future proof extensions that are life cycle compliant and require no adaptation during the innovation cycle. So with that, Ilya and Vitali, thank you very much for your valuable insights and expertise shared on this podcast episode. And of course, a big thank you to our audience for tuning in. If you have any suggestions for future topics you would like us to explore on the Inside SAP S/4HANA podcast, drop us an email at insides4@sap.com. Until next time, stay tuned and be inside SAP S/4HANA. Thank you.

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