In this White Paper

- Project Management Methodology on Solution Manager Roadmap
- Project blueprint repository in Solution Manager
- Managing and Executing Configuration, Development and Testing
- Training planning and execution with e-learning platform
- End-to-End Solution Operation
- QA integration in implementation process
- Evaluate your choice
- About Lodestone
SAP Solution Manager used to be known in previous years for its small functions such as generating installation key, download Support Packages, or using it for monitoring purposes. Nowadays, SAP Solution Manager has proven itself as a platform to manage the solution through out the entire life cycle from project management, designing blueprint, implementation, to operational support for complex system landscape.

**Figure 1** Solution Manager is an application management platform for the entire solution

1. Project Management Methodology on Solution Manager Roadmap

A successful project starts with the right methodology which defines proper framework, supplies tools and accelerators for the project. Solution Manager provides Roadmap functionality which delivers Standard AcceleratedSAP methodology (ASAP) with its accelerators for SAP projects of any kind; e.g. implementation, template project, roll-out projects, upgrade projects and various SAP solutions; SAP ERP, SAP SRM, etc.

Lodestone, with our experience in leading numerous successful SAP projects, has consolidated the expertise on top of ASAP methodology into IDEA methodology. IDEA consists of 4 phases and work streams running across.

**Figure 2** Lodestone’s IDEA Methodology in phases and cross-phase work streams
Based on Solution Manager Roadmap platform, IDEA roadmap, together with special tailor made accelerators, will be transferred to our client's system to fuel up the project. As document/collaboration platform for the project, members can work directly in the organized roadmap work packages, using the accelerators and upload their work back into the structured packages in Solution Manager.

Figure 3 IDEA Methodology with our experience is a jump start for your project

2. Project blueprint repository in Solution Manager

Beside the project management aspect from Roadmap, each SAP Solution implementation needs a tool to manage the implementation itself. Solution Manager provides structured folders to accommodate the implementation; Organizational units, Master data, and most importantly business scenarios, and business processes; once a project is created. There, the blueprint, configuration, development, testing, further activities and all the documents related can be organized on the same basis, through this process driven approach.

Within the project structure, business scenarios and processes including standard transactions can be pulled from SAP business process repository in Solution Manager; provided in various business scenarios e.g. ERP – Sales and Service processes, CRM – Enterprise Marketing, etc. For the assessment purpose, the mock-up solution can be easily composed this way.

During blueprint phase, business scenarios either selected from repository or custom made, together with the inner folders - business processes and process steps are structured in the project. If the processes are selected from standard repository there are already some documents provided. Other work documents such as blueprints, process documents, functional descriptions, and other additional documents can be attached to the appropriate folder level.
Solution manager also provides also document management features, including:

- Customizable status management (e.g. editing, released, approved, etc)
- Document template can be set as standard for each type of new document creation
- History of changes in attribute of each document including possibility to display old files
- Check-in/check-out functionality
- Digital signature and etc.

The listed features are considered sufficient and fit most SAP project. However some organizations with strict documentation approach may find this lacking of proper versioning.

To have the business process structure and documents stored in a project is also very useful in Global roll-out scenario, given following features;

- Business processes and documentations are copied from template project to roll-out projects, keeping the template structure.
- It provides feature to adjust restrictive level of manipulation to selected processes, documents, down to configuration e.g. global processes and their documents are not allow to be changed when inherit to roll out project, but local processes are not forbidden.
- Based on inherited content, roll-out project can quickly adjust, remove or add local processes and documents according to their need.
- Changes made to template project could also be updated into child rollouts after initial copy, with possibility to accept/reject each process/document change from template.

Figure 4 Example of an ERP implementation project with business processes structure
3. Managing and Executing Configuration, Development and Testing

After the blueprint is done, the working documents and execution of configuration, development and testing can be managed as well from the solution manager project using the same business process structures.

Figure 5 Configuration, Development and Testing are managed on the same basis

Following the same concept, documents and objects of each business process/steps could be stored in the tab for configuration, development and testing. For configuration, besides configuration documents, other objects can also be recorded; e.g. IMG object, BC set, Dynpro application, NW content, Roles, etc. The development objects like Program, includes, function modules, transaction can be recorded in development Tab. As for Testing, test documents, CATT, eCATT, test cases, etc are choices of object type.

From each object recorded, project members can jump directly to the object in Development system (pre-defined system landscape), to customize their recorded IMGs, develop programs and access eCATT, etc. Each object record also contains responsible owner together with progress status which can be updated. This help project management and team leads to pin down the progress to the very detail level.

For testing, Solution Manager allows business process structure with test documents or objects recorded, to be pulled into the SAP standard Test workbench tool. This tool manages test plan, and provide testers their test list. The advantage here is Test workbench in solution manager is integrated with Service desk engine. This means, testers can report test error as a ticket which also tied that test step. The ticket is then managed as problem message; assign to the right processor, solving, sending back to retest. This testing environment provides a single point of contact, storage for testing material and test results for cross-component test in the complete landscape.
Solution Manager also provides flexible options for project analysis and reporting. The detail information of statuses, deadlines, of selected phase or cross-phase, for cross-project or just for a project, could be extracted into the report. The results presentation format can also be adjusted to the needs.

4. Training planning and execution with e-learning platform

E-learning module is an integrative part of the Solution manager and designed to support the training activities of the project. Using this module one can link training materials (documents, presentations, SAP tutor recordings etc.) to the processes and roles and afterwards create a role based html training map with all the relevant training materials inside. Afterwards training maps could be distributed to users for self training or to trainers for training sessions with the end users. This approach allows, among others, single point of update for the materials and all standard document management abilities e.g. statuses, document history, check-in/check-out function. The module provides, in addition, embedded feedback functionality, where users can record the training results or to communicate requested changes to the training team.

5. End-to-End Solution Operation

Solution Manager is a foundation to support mission-critical operation. It provides functionalities to complete operational support framework, from incident management, solution monitoring, change control management, root cause analysis, etc. Especially during the incident, Solution Manager also acts as a gateway for SAP to get necessary information about the systems as well as performing problem analysis to ensure quickest respond and resolution to the problems.

- **Solution Monitoring** is probably the most known feature of Solution Manager. It provides centralized, real-time monitoring for the “solution”. This means besides the traditional system monitor, it provides interfaces monitoring and most importantly business process monitoring (BPM). BPM is focuses on the business side of the solution by providing process oriented monitoring of the most critical business. The setup requires deep understanding of business processes and monitoring items mapped to them. But once it is setup, it capture the errors, triggers automatic notification which speed up problem resolution before it becomes a lost to the business.

- Solution manager brought up **System administration** to one single point of access. Administrative tasks which are mainly executed in involves system can be pre-defined as a list with recurring frequency in central administration console. This helps also to retain tailored administrative knowledge even when the team is changed.

- **Service level management and reporting** provides an easy defined automatic reporting of the whole solution which helps inputting important information for IT strategy.

- **Service Desk** provides an incident management engine where support messages are handled centrally inside the organization and also to SAP support. Support messages
can be created web-based or directly from problematic transaction, routed message by components to appropriate support group and level to support organization.

- **Change Control Management** functionality controls software and configuration changes for the entire solution to ensure quality and traceability of all changes. This includes approval process of the change requests which works on top of the service desk engine. Deployment of the change uses control over traditional Transport Management System (TMS), or could also work over “CTS-Log” (Lodestone’s enhanced TMS tool).

- **Root cause analysis** provides diagnostic function which allows problem analysis and resolution in heterogeneous landscape. It helps identifying root cause problem; point out performance related problem, exceptional situations, changes in productive environment and also able to trace problem from recorded user or process session.

6. QA integration in implementation process

SAP Solution manager quality management provides, for all operational units across the various organizations of a company, an integrated and consistent quality process and ensures the full control of all software change processes. SAP Solution Manager QM module provides:

- A fast entry point to get a project and status overview for the different projects
- Central administration interface for all types of transports and system landscapes
- Integrates the various development workbenches into a central transport and change control system
- Synchronizes the software distribution in the different software stacks
- Synchronized changes to business processes which run in ABAP and Non-ABAP
- Control the quality of software changes by quality gates

![Figure 6 Solution Manager QA cockpit overview](image-url)
7. Evaluate your choice

Solution Manager is a good SAP project platform considering the help of document management together with roadmap and “project” repository where business processes and all the documents are structurally stored. From there, the implementation, testing, even training in the later phase could be easily driven. A remark for document manage, if the organization needs perfect version management – like Pharmaceutical industry, they could custom develop one on top of what provided. Otherwise, other tools like Documentum or Sharepoint could manage complex version management, except that they do not provide integration with Solution Manager.

Testing together with integration of Service desk also provides a good test management environment but this also requires a bit of training for project team and testers. Additionally, 3rd party tools, like HP Quality Center, is a great test management tool worth looking at, with loads of capabilities including standard interface to Solution Manager for test cases, as well as test message.

Change Control Management is very good in operation phase. Using the full blown change request approval workflow brings traceability and transparency change framework. On another hand, the tool needs proper governance defined and the whole process would also add up overhead to a single change. Bringing this into a project phase, one should evaluate if it fits the nature pace of individual project. Organization governance (best with ITIL compliance) is however crucial for either project phase or operational. Lodestone is one of the best consulting firms that offer service to design governance processes to ITIL standards with best practice for SAP management.

Looking at operational features in general, they are designed to accommodate SAP solution nicely. Solution monitoring and administration does a good job but you could as well evaluate other choices if you want some special features or need complex monitoring integration for non-SAP products. Service desk is a good ticketing system designed in favour of managing SAP problems, nice for a start or to manage only SAP related matters. But if you want to have a central ticketing system to cover everything in the organization from phones, networking, hardware/software, there is a license cost and integration interface to consider for this extension. Otherwise, central ticketing system from 3rd party like Remedy, could also be a good option to evaluate.
Additionally, in 2009 SAP announced its offer for Product Support for Large Enterprises that offers enhanced support without increasing the maintenance charge if the customer can meet stringent support certification requirements. Understandably using the full functionality of SAP Solution Manager strongly supports the fulfilment of these requirements. It is possible to meet certification even if only using SAP Solution Manager for its basic functions but it will make certification a difficult challenge.

Solution Manager is a powerful platform with various features. It can very well be an integrated and collaborative SAP project support platform. However, an organization could evaluate their project management requirement against what to use in Solution Manager and to which extent in order to maximize the benefit of having it as a platform.

About Lodestone
Lodestone Management Consulting (Lodestone) was founded in Switzerland in 2005 and has it’s headquarter in Zurich. Lodestone is a global management consultancy, committed to designing and delivering solutions that enable international companies to thrive in today’s complex business environment. We help our clients to define the measurable business benefits that we will achieve together, using our teams of client-focused consultants, who combine a passion for excellence with strong process and SAP skills and deep experience of transformational change in their industry.

Lodestone Management Consultants AG
Obstgartenstrasse 27, Kloten, 8058 Zürich, Switzerland
Phone +41 44 434 11 00, Fax +41 44 434 11 01, www.lodestonemc.com