

Bayforce: To Drive Stronger ROI In SAP Transformation, Keep the Customer In the Driver's Seat



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When an SAP transformation starts showing cracks, Kim Snow is often one of the first calls organizations make. As Senior Vice President at Bayforce, a boutique consulting firm where she's spent nearly three decades, Snow has watched countless large-scale programs veer off course when timelines slip, scope balloons, and somewhere along the way, the business realizes it handed over too much control to an outside partner.

Bayforce occupies a distinct space in the SAP ecosystem. The firm doesn't try to own entire transformation programs the way large systems integrators do. Instead, it deploys senior consultants to fill gaps, stabilize troubled initiatives, or support organizations that

want to run their own projects. It's a model built on a simple premise: the customer should stay in the driver's seat.

Snow, who manages the company's ERP and cloud solutions and services, brings an operator's perspective to questions about SAP program delivery. She's overseen teams of more than 200 consultants across the U.S. and Canada, built executive relationships with clients navigating high-stakes technology investments, and shaped the delivery and recruiting processes that underpin Bayforce's model.

In a conversation with ASUG, Snow candidly discussed how to spot a program that's stalling, the overlooked gaps that derail even well-resourced initiatives, and why leaders shouldn't be afraid to push back or chart their own course.

This interview has been edited and condensed for length and clarity.

Q: At a high level, what are some of the key challenges you see organizations navigating in today's business environment as they approach complex, large-scale SAP transformation programs?

Large-scale SAP transformations today are rarely just an IT upgrade. They're major business decisions. Organizations have to sort through big choices right away, like whether to move quickly with a brownfield conversion or use a greenfield approach to clean up years of customization and technical debt. They also have to decide on the right delivery model, whether that's partnering with a systems integrator, building internal expertise, or something in between.

At the same time, leaders are under pressure to make a clear case for ROI. Even with new AI capabilities in SAP that promise efficiency gains, it can still be tough to translate those into hard numbers. All of this means that success depends less on the technology itself and more on alignment, planning, and keeping the business engaged throughout the journey.

Q: Often, such organizations will turn to large systems integrators to support transformation journeys — but that doesn't always guarantee projects, especially complex SAP programs, will be delivered on-time or on-budget. In your experience, what kinds of pitfalls do organizations experience when they rely too much on large SI partners?

Large systems integrators can play an important role in big SAP programs, but relying on them too heavily often creates blind spots. One of the biggest pitfalls I see is when organizations assume the SI will ‘own’ the transformation end-to-end. That can lead to a loss of internal control and oversight. If the business isn’t actively engaged in defining outcomes, making decisions, and challenging assumptions, then programs tend to drift, and that’s when timelines and budgets slip.

Another issue is that SI teams don’t always bring the industry context needed to make the right design decisions. Strong technical skills alone aren’t enough, and when design happens in a vacuum, rework becomes inevitable. We also see resourcing challenges: teams that are too junior, high turnover, or consultants who are learning on the job, all of which slow the program down. This is especially true for more niche SAP skill areas where the large SIs struggle to deliver strong consultants.

And finally, there are often critical areas the SI doesn’t truly own, things like data cleansing and migration, change management, reporting, end-user training, and go-live support. When those gaps aren’t covered, they can quickly put the entire timeline at risk. At the end of the day, SIs are looking out for their own best interests, not yours, which is why organizations need to make sure they have the right expertise and accountability model in place.

Q: Bayforce specializes in supporting organizations at critical program junctures. In what kinds of scenarios do organizations typically approach you, and what makes Bayforce unique for organizations in the SAP ecosystem?

Organizations typically come to Bayforce at a few critical moments in their SAP journey. Sometimes they approach us instead of hiring a large SI altogether because they already have strong internal SAP capabilities and want to truly own their project. In those cases, we provide senior functional experts and/or SAP project leadership where we have shared responsibility for the project, but the organization stays in control.

Other times, companies bring us in after they’ve already engaged an SI but start seeing the classic warning signs: timelines slipping, scope creeping, design concerns, or an SI team that’s too junior for what the program really requires. We might step in to provide QA oversight, reinforce a specific workstream, or supply industry specialists where the SI’s expertise isn’t deep enough. We can also quickly deliver niche SAP Consultants that the SIs often can’t because they don’t have someone available with those skill sets.

What makes Bayforce unique is that we can deliver platinum-level SAP consulting talent at a much lower cost than the large integrators, and we’re genuinely comfortable taking on the roles that big SIs don’t want, whether that’s gap coverage, targeted expertise, or supporting a customer-led model. We embed an Engagement Manager and Consultant Relationship Manager and are actively engaged in the project’s success, but we’re not trying to ‘own’ the project; we’re there to make sure the customer retains control, gets the right expertise at the right time, and ultimately delivers a successful program. We also let our customers convert our consultants to retain that knowledge in-house.



Q: When you're asked to support a program that's already underway, what kinds of warning signs, conditions, or patterns usually indicate that a client needs additional expertise or a different type of delivery support?

By the time organizations call us, there's usually a sense that the program has lost traction - milestones aren't lining up, decisions are getting bottlenecked, or the design isn't holding together the way it should. We also see symptoms like unclear ownership, inconsistent quality across workstreams, or business teams feeling disconnected from the project.

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Q: Stepping into complex initiatives, what steps do your experts take to assess a client's pain points and set priorities for the early phase of your engagement? How do you work to quickly regain stakeholder trust in these scenarios?

When we step into a complex program, our first priority is to quickly understand what's really happening beneath the surface. We start with a focused assessment of the areas that typically create the most friction, such as governance, design decisions, resourcing, data readiness, and how closely the business is connected to the program. From there, we identify the true bottlenecks, clarify ownership, and set a short list of priorities that will stabilize the program fastest.

To rebuild stakeholder trust, we're very transparent about what we're seeing and what needs to happen next. Our senior experts engage directly with business and IT leaders, reset expectations, and establish a cadence of communication that gives everyone confidence that the program is back under control. Showing progress quickly, closing gaps, improving

quality, and bringing clarity to decisions goes a long way in helping teams feel aligned, supported, and re-energized.

Q: Bayforce is often engaged to provide focused, senior-level support on major programs. How does that approach influence the way you structure your teams and collaborate with client stakeholders, and what balance do you seek to strike between providing specialized experts and building SAP skills or capabilities within client organizations?

Because we're typically brought in to provide senior-level, specialized expertise, we structure our teams to be highly experienced, hands-on, and tightly integrated with the client's own people. Our goal is always to work ourselves out of a job. That means knowledge transfer, documentation, and training aren't afterthoughts; they're built into how we work from day one.

We also take a very collaborative approach with stakeholders, so the client's team is learning alongside our experts, not watching from the sidelines. And when it makes sense for both parties, we even allow clients to convert our consultants at no additional cost so they can retain that expertise in-house long after go-live.



Q: For organizations that have established a global template for an SAP program, what key considerations could conceivably be overlooked during rollout and adoption?

Even with a strong global template, organizations often overlook how much regional variation needs to be addressed during rollout. Local regulations, tax requirements, process nuances, and reporting needs can expose gaps that weren't visible at the global design level. Change management is another common blind spot - training, communication, and support must be tailored to each region or adoption suffers.

Lastly, teams sometimes assume data, integrations, and governance will scale globally without validating that early. Those issues tend to show up late, right when the project is trying to go live.

Q: Large SAP programs accumulate scope and complexity quickly. In your experience, what practices help keep these initiatives disciplined, efficient, and centered on the outcomes that matter most?

The best way to keep large SAP programs disciplined is to get very clear up front about what's truly required for go-live versus what can wait for a later phase. When teams distinguish must-haves from nice-to-haves early, it prevents scope creep and keeps everyone focused on the outcomes that matter most.

It also requires a mindset shift. Business and IT need to see the program as an opportunity to rethink processes, not replicate every legacy workaround. If a standard best-practice approach will meet the need, that should be the default; customizations add cost, risk, and long-term complexity. Strong change management from day one helps reinforce this thinking and encourages teams to simplify, challenge assumptions, and design for the future rather than the past.

Q: Looking across the transformations you've supported, what guidance would you offer leaders who want to manage risk effectively, maintain stakeholder trust, and maintain momentum throughout multi-year SAP roadmaps?

For leaders navigating multi-year SAP roadmaps, the biggest advice I can give is to stay actively engaged and not be afraid to take a non-traditional path when it's in the organization's best interest. Some of the most successful programs I've seen are the ones where the business isn't afraid to manage more of the project themselves, challenge assumptions, or push back when an SI's approach doesn't feel right.

Maintaining stakeholder trust comes from transparency and clarity, being clear about priorities, honest about what's working or not, and grounding decisions in the outcomes that truly matter. And when early warning signs appear, leaders shouldn't hesitate to bring in additional expertise or fresh eyes. Sometimes, targeted outside support can stabilize a program faster than forcing a struggling model to keep going.

Ultimately, leaders who stay hands-on, stay curious, and stay open to different delivery approaches are the ones who keep their programs aligned, resilient, and moving forward over the long haul.

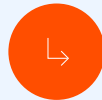
Q: Controlling costs and preventing project "bloat" is essential. One of the biggest pain points ASUG members consistently report in navigating digital transformation pertains to budget; how does Bayforce ingrain cost efficiency into your engagement with customers?

Cost efficiency is built directly into the way we work. The beauty of partnering with Bayforce is that our customers get some of the most experienced SAP consultants in the industry at nearly half the rate

they're paying large SIs. Because we don't carry the overhead, layers of management, or internal bloat that big firms do, we're able to pay our consultants more, charge our customers less, and still deliver top-tier expertise.

Because we're comfortable supporting targeted workstreams or customer-led models, we help organizations avoid unnecessary spend on services they don't need. Our entire approach is designed to maximize value and minimize waste from day one.

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Bayforce is a boutique IT consulting firm that has supported enterprise transformation for nearly three decades. Since 1996, we've delivered high-impact solutions across ERP, Cloud, CRM, HRIS, and core enterprise IT functions. Our clients range from mid-market innovators to Fortune 500 leaders across industries such as manufacturing, consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, and energy. We are not a traditional staffing agency or a bloated systems integrator. Bayforce exists to fill the gap – providing flexible, strategic consulting with experienced professionals who understand technology and business in equal measure. Our model is simple: experienced consultants, collaborative partnerships, and an unwavering focus on results. Whether you need support on a multi-year SAP rollout, a CRM adoption challenge, or a targeted digital initiative, Bayforce delivers with purpose, precision, and people who care. Learn more at <https://bayforce.com/>.



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