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## **Sapience2009 – The Second Pioneer Event**

**8-9 December 2009, USA**

The Recession calls for new thinking.

After successfully staging a novel event concept in Berlin (March 31st/April 1st), we dared to do the unthinkable: take the concept to the US.

What is the concept? Well, it is actually very simple: according to SAP (and never contested by anybody), customers spend too much on running SAP applications thus being unable to innovate. SAP prides itself on having increased their share of customers' IT spending to 24%. Take these two statements together and you have the concept of Sapience/Sapientia: Why not find new ways to cut SAP related costs and use the savings to innovate?

Innovate? Does that always have to mean to buy more from SAP? Not at all. At Sapience, customers could find lots of ideas on how to leverage their past investments using alternate sources for innovations.

As it turns out, customers who want to save money around SAP have to make some conscious decisions:

- ▲ You either keep all options regarding future developments from SAP open. As a consequence, you lose all options for saving that deviate from SAP recommendations like staying on stable but back-level versions.
- ▲ Or you rather opt to become the master of your own destiny. As a consequence, you may not always be able to adopt newer versions or products from SAP.

Discussing such options, and kicking the tires on related offerings has had no forum so far. SAP user groups concentrated on improving SAP offerings, SAP focused on shoving more software down the throat of their customers and all the other IT-analyst companies had way too much business with SAP to embark on such "heresy".

Sapience has, like planned follow-up events, a very distinct architecture. It stands on two legs – cutting cost and innovating with non-SAP sourced alternatives. Providing inspiration and fostering a climate of free discussion are the two other hallmarks we want to associate with this concept.

The launch event in Berlin successfully leveraged the authority of "veterans". Rather than relying on interpretations of the original intents by people that generations later try to figure out what ERP actually was about we rounded up a panel of key players that were on the spot when the ERP bandwagon started to move. In Boston, the panel consisted of such high caliber figureheads as

- ▲ Craig Conway, ex CEO of PeopleSoft
- ▲ Jan Baan, ex CEO of Baan Software
- ▲ Paul Wahl, ex CEO of SAP America and ex COO of Siebel
- ▲ Bob Ridout, ex CIO of Dupont and one of the first large SAP customers in the US
- ▲ Neil Herman, Financial Analyst covering ERP vendors for almost 20 years.

The panelists, moderated by Helmuth Gumbel, who has an equally long track record watching the industry, explained the original aspirations, the business model, and the user expectations. Bottom line: the ERP industry is past its hey day and has reached an inflection point. The future is heterogeneous and will embrace the cloud.

**Cloud?** Check it out! Another first at this conference was a “shootout” between two cloud offerings. SAP Business by Design and NetSuite OneWorld were the contenders. Using a common script covering three business processes, the two systems were demoed on stage by 2 experts who had good ERP knowledge but not deep product expertise. They came from two reputed German government financial institutions with no vendor relation. The jury, consisting of three ERP analysts from three different organizations voted NetSuite the winner – albeit not by a very wide margin as one of the jurors factored some of the improvements promised by SAP into the verdict.

Is that result cast in concrete? Absolutely not! The goal was to inspire and to make users compare.

The once so popular one-stop-shopping paradigm has amounted to a voluntary submission of users to a quasi-monopoly. If you decide to buy only from one source, then there will be no choice and no way to leverage competition.

All attendees enjoyed networking and the networking dinner was a great success - as it was in Berlin. Boston, however, attracted also another crowd: coincidentally 2 other events happened at about the same time. SAP hosted its “Influencer Meeting” for analysts and media; and SUGEN, the international SAP user board, met discussing matters like KPI-based maintenance pricing. We had attendees from both groups: many of the media representatives wanted to learn more about this novel event and spent the evening and day two at Sapience. Otto Schell from SUGEN came also by acknowledging and endorsing the need for a view beyond the vendor’s propositions.

There was a lot of media activity afterwards on the event and even more blogging and twittering. The resonance was overwhelming and without a single exception two statements were made all over: Sapience delivered excellent value – please do it again!

Visit [www.sapience2009.com](http://www.sapience2009.com) for information on future events

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