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INSIGHTS



BEFORE DAY ONE: WHY PHASE ZERO MATTERS

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Understanding SAP Phase Zero:

To understand Phase Zero, it helps to know where it ends. It ends when Phase One begins – when planning turns into action. By that point, the team should have a well-defined scope, a clear deployment strategy, stakeholder alignment, an approved budget, and the right partners in place. Phase Zero is about laying the groundwork for all of that.

While there is no system configuration yet, this phase is packed with critical thinking and decisions – clarifying business goals, assessing your current landscape, and making the strategic choices that lay the foundation for a successful S/4HANA project. Phase Zero is all about setting the stage so that when the real work kicks off in Phase One, the project moves forward with purpose and momentum.

The Approach:

Before diving into the activities of Phase Zero, it's worth asking, "Why do we need phases at all?" The answer: Phases bring structure to complex projects, helping teams focus, reduce risk, and keep progress on track. Phase Zero

is important for any SAP implementation project, but in the case of moving from ECC 6.0 to S/4HANA, it becomes especially critical. This transition

involves significant technical changes, process redesign, data migration, and often organizational change. This upfront planning helps reduce risks and sets the stage for a smoother, more successful migration.

Phase Zero Activities with Clean Core Focus:

As mentioned earlier, the key activities in Phase Zero are especially important when moving from ECC 6.0 to S/4HANA. This phase is where strategic planning happens, from clarifying business goals to assessing your current environment, with a strong focus on embracing the Clean Core philosophy. Let's take a look at the key activities that make up Phase Zero and how they create the Readiness Checklist, a way to validate that everything is in place to move confidently into Phase One.

1 Define Business Goals, Secure Executive Sponsorship, and Build the Project Team

Clarify measurable business goals and success criteria to align the organization, secure visible support from executive sponsors, and assemble a cross-functional team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

2 Assess Current ECC Environment with a Clean Core Focus

Conduct a structured analysis of your ECC system to identify what should move forward, and what should be left behind, by emphasizing standardization and simplification:

- Scope Analysis – Define what business processes and units are in scope for the migration.
- Simplification Items – Identify how S/4HANA changes or eliminates legacy functionality.
- Add-On Compatibility – Check SAP and third-party add-ons for readiness or required alternatives.
- Sizing – Estimate system requirements to support the new HANA-based landscape.
- Custom Code Analysis – Inventory and evaluate custom code to determine what can be retired or redesigned to support a clean core.





- Interface Analysis – Review integrations to other systems and identify necessary updates.
- Customer and Vendor Master Data Analysis – Evaluate master data completeness, accuracy, and duplication issues.
- Financial Data Quality Check – Validate the structure and quality of key financial data to ensure its migration-ready.
- Application Analysis – Review current applications and assess their role post-migration.

3 Select Migration Approach and Confirm Scope Priorities

Choose between Greenfield (new implementation), Brownfield (system conversion), or hybrid. At the same time, align on initial rollout priorities, including key modules, locations, or business units.

4 Engage Implementation Partners and Confirm Budget

Bring in experienced SAP S/4HANA consultants or system integrators early, and align budget expectations for licenses, consulting services, internal time, and infrastructure.

5 Develop Preliminary Roadmap and Timeline

Sketch out a high-level project plan with key milestones, including design, testing, training, and deployment phases, helping stakeholders visualize the path ahead.

For this paper, we chose to take a deeper dive into Activity 2 (Assess the Current ECC Environment with a Clean Core Focus), because it lays the technical and strategic foundation for everything that follows. Many of the critical decisions about what to keep, what to simplify, and how to position systems for long-term agility and maintainability are made during Activity 2. That being said, each of the core activities listed here could be explored in greater depth as well.

Phase Zero: Your Launch to Success

By working through these Phase Zero activities, teams set themselves up for a smooth and successful move from ECC 6.0 to S/4HANA. Early preparation helps minimize risks, define priorities clearly, and ensures everyone from business leaders to tech teams are aligned and ready to take action. Focusing on the clean core approach during this phase makes the migration simpler and opens the door for

more flexibility and innovation down the road. With a solid plan and the right partners in place, Phase Zero turns planning into real progress as the project moves from Phase Zero to Phase One.



How Titan Supports You:

Our team empowers you to get the most out of Phase Zero, whether it is evaluating your ECC setup, aligning your stakeholders, or getting your scope locked in. With our clean core mindset and hands-on experience, we will make sure you are set up for a smooth start to Phase One. Ready to get started? Visit titanconsulting.net and click on “Contact Us” or reach out to your Titan Consulting Director for more information.