



SAP SuccessFactors 

SAP Solution in Detail
Quarterly Release Process Overview

The Road to the Release: Make the Most of Every Quarter

Table of Contents

- 3** Release Frequency
- 5** Release Approach
- 6** Universal Versus Optional
- 7** Release Event Schedule
- 9** Production Release
- 10** Training Content

Release Frequency

SAP SuccessFactors updates our products with **four software releases every year.**

RELEASE TYPES

- SAP SuccessFactors solutions provide four **major quarterly releases** each year. Q1 and Q4 releases focus on system stability and security while Q2 and Q3 releases focus more on major feature upgrades.
- SAP provides **regular patch updates** for defect fixes. Patches are non-disruptive and do not occur every week. There is a patch schedule and list of customer-reported patched defects on the Customer Community found on the Patch Schedule on the [Product Updates](#) page.
- Patch updates can occur during either of the weekly maintenance windows listed below and customers will NOT receive a specific notification.
- Finally, we provide occasional “**hot fixes**” – unscheduled updates to fix critical application or security issues.

MAJOR RELEASES

- Major quarterly releases take about seven hours to deploy. During this time, jobs and reports will pause. In addition, end users will not be able to access your SAP SuccessFactors solution during this time.
- Deployments are made during the contractual maintenance windows. These vary slightly per DC as per the below listing.
- Release deployments typically start on Friday nights, and customers will receive a specific notification.
- UTC is used in the listing as this does **not** vary for Daylight Savings time changes.



SAP SuccessFactors solutions provide **four major quarterly releases** each year.

Data Center Location and Region

Contractual Maintenance Window

APJ

Australia

- Friday 3:00pm UTC - Friday 10:00pm UTC
- Saturday 3:00pm UTC - Saturday 10:00pm UTC

China

- Friday 3:00pm UTC - Friday 10:00pm UTC
- Saturday 3:00pm UTC - Saturday 10:00pm UTC

EMA

Russia

- Friday 10:00pm UTC - Saturday 5:00am UTC
- Saturday 10:00pm UTC - Sunday 5:00am UTC

Amsterdam

- Friday 10:00pm UTC - Saturday 5:00am UTC
- Saturday 10:00pm UTC - Sunday 5:00am UTC

St. Leon Rot

- Friday 10:00pm UTC - Saturday 5:00am UTC
- Saturday 10:00pm UTC - Sunday 5:00am UTC

Biere

- Friday 10:00pm UTC - Saturday 5:00am UTC
- Saturday 10:00pm UTC - Sunday 5:00am UTC

MENA

United Arab Emirates

- Friday 7:00pm UTC - Saturday 2:00am UTC

Saudi Arabia

- Friday 7:00pm UTC - Saturday 2:00am UTC

Americas

Brazil

- Saturday 4:00am UTC - Saturday 11:00am UTC
- Sunday 4:00am UTC - Sunday 11:00am UTC

United States/Canada

- Saturday 4:00am UTC - Saturday 11:00am UTC
- Sunday 4:00am UTC - Sunday 11:00am UTC

Release Approach

System prerequisites: SAP SuccessFactors HCM Suite is web-based. An up to date list of the HCM Suite End User [System Requirements](#) is available.

PRE-RELEASE TESTING

We recommend that customers review the “Release Summary” document when it becomes available and take note of any features (optional or non-optional) that could affect your company’s strategy, system or end users.

Find further information about features in the “Release Details” document. You can enable and explore the upcoming changes within the Preview release environment 4 weeks before the Production upgrade. Take notes and screen-shots to help you prepare your end users for the upgrade.

PREPARING END USERS

To prepare end users for quarterly releases of SAP SuccessFactors solutions, we recommend communicating with them about the following:

- Anticipated system downtime – typically around seven hours, outside of normal business hours
- Major feature changes, if any, that will impact end users
- High-level benefits of upcoming changes

MINIMIZING THE IMPACT OF RELEASE TIMING

Here are a few tips for handling the seven hour system downtime during releases:

- Communicate to end users about expected downtime, localizing the time zones if possible
- Understand that scheduled jobs and reports will temporarily pause and restart
- Ensure mission critical items are not due on the same date as the release for end users who may be working on such tasks late Friday evening or Saturday morning (depending on the location of your data center)

Quarterly Releases

Quarterly releases of improvements and innovations contribute significantly to the value of SAP SuccessFactors solutions. Consider the offerings below to manage and benefit from each quarterly release. Please note that many of the resources to which this document refers are currently only available in English



Universal Versus Optional

NEW FEATURES CAN EITHER BE:

- **Universal** – Automatically applied to your system
- **Optional** – Requiring an administrator to enable the feature in Admin Tools or through Support

Your company needs to decide whether to apply optional enhancements based on its business goals and HR strategy. Some customer administrators review the major features upcoming each quarter and then plan meetings across IT, HR, and C-suite leadership to review which are appropriate to enable.

The “Release Details” document will help you configure features in ways that achieve those business goals. Some of the optional features are installed by default at release but can be switched off by following the steps in the release documentation available on the [Product Updates](#) page.

The “Release Summary” provides information on the configuration type of each feature. Details related to activating or deactivating optional features are available in the “Release Details.” Continue reading for more information about these two different documents.



Your company needs to **decide whether to apply optional enhancements** based on its business goals and HR strategy.

Release Event Schedule

RELEASE SUMMARY

60 DAYS BEFORE PRODUCTION RELEASE

The “Release Summary” is a document (Excel and PDF) provided 60 days before the Production release. It conveys the scope of the release at an individual-feature level.

Use the “Release Summary” to:

- Filter for modules that you do not have or optional features that you do not want
- Add columns to the worksheet for planning purposes
- Begin planning activities you will execute during the Preview period

Find the current (when available) and previous “Release Summary” documents on the [SAP SuccessFactors Release Information page](#) of the SAP Help Portal site.

RELEASE INFORMATION WEBINARS

ONE TO TWO WEEKS BEFORE PREVIEW RELEASE

The “Release Information” Webinars are presented by product managers for SAP SuccessFactors solutions and cover the details of each product’s upcoming release. These are delivered within a two-week window prior to the Preview release.

Use the “Release Information” Webinars to:

- Ask the questions that you have from your review of the “Release Summary” document
- Make a final decision about whether you wish to adopt any particular feature

We maintain information about upcoming and past “Release Information” Webinars on the community’s [Product Updates](#) page.

RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS

28 DAYS BEFORE PRODUCTION RELEASE

The “Release Highlights” is a PDF document that provides a high-level overview of the release. It is intended for executive audiences.

Use the “Release Highlights” to:

- Show key stakeholders the major, high-level features expected from the release
- Understand the overall narrative of the release

Find the current (when available) and previous “Release Highlights” on the community’s [Product Updates](#) page.



SAP Help Portal

Click the padlock icon in the top right-hand corner of SAP Help Portal to be logged in for full visibility, and set the version to the quarter for which you are looking.

Find the current (when available) and previous “Release Details” documents on the SAP SuccessFactors Release Information page of SAP Help Portal.

RELEASE DETAILS

28 DAYS BEFORE PRODUCTION RELEASE

The “Release Details” document expands on the “Release Summary” and contains information about how to configure and activate new features.

Use the “Release Details” to:

- Remind yourself of concepts discussed in the “Release Information” Webinars such as limitations and rules
- Learn more about enabling and configuring your desired features in your Preview environment

Find the current (when available) and previous “Release Details” documents on the [SAP SuccessFactors Release Information page](#) of SAP Help Portal.

PREVIEW RELEASE

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE PRODUCTION RELEASE

The Preview release is applied to the Preview environment at least four weeks prior to being applied to Production.

The Preview period can be used to perform variety of tasks such as:

- Regression testing of key configurations that support business-critical processes
- Verification testing of anticipated defect fixes committed to the upcoming release
- User testing of universal features to support change management activities
- Familiarization with new functionality and any other new changes

Since SAP SuccessFactors is highly customizable, no-one will know your instance and integrations as well as you and your colleagues. We highly encourage you to explore the new release in Preview to ensure it meets your high expectations and standards. Historically, this approach has yielded the best outcomes for our customers.

- Any issues or concerns with Preview can be logged with Support through the normal ticketing channels knowing we give extra attention to any tickets during the Preview period.
- Our rigorous software development processes require a 2 week cycle to instigate prioritized changes, thus changes to be included in the Production release would need to be communicated to us during the first two weeks after the Preview deployment.

Production Release

The Production release is deployed to the live Production environment four weeks after the Preview release is deployed to the test Preview environment. It is important to note that these two releases are essentially the same code set deployed to different environments at different times. The Preview release section describes the uses that customers with appropriate access may make of the Preview release.

A BETTER RELEASE!

During the four weeks of Preview, minor changes may be made to the Preview release based on issues reported by customers. The Preview environment may receive weekly Friday night patches, or even emergency immediate patches until the day of the Production release. The most up-to-date version of the Preview environment is then deployed to the live Production environment, so the Production release is more robust than the Preview version.

A single version of our product deploys to all customers on the night of the Production release.

ABOUT SAP SUCCESSFACTORS SOLUTIONS PATCHES

Weekly patches

SAP SuccessFactors may deploy a weekly patch, which does not require downtime. These are not deployed every week. Such patches undergo the same engineering and quality assurance processes as all of our software changes. Typically, they are both minor and high-priority defect fixes. These are deployed to Preview and Production at the same time.

There is both a patch schedule and list of customer-reported defect fixes on the Customer Community found on the Patch Schedule on the [Product Updates](#) page.

Additionally, the “Reported Issues and Release Fixes” document lists customer-reported issues that have been resolved in the patches since the last quarterly release, as well as other customer-reported issues that have been fixed in the latest release.

Emergency Patches

Emergency patches resolve business-critical issues that prevent the software-as-a-service environment from being operational. These might need to be deployed at times other than the scheduled weekly patch window on Friday nights; affected support contact administrators will be notified through the standard outage communication process.



A single version of our **product deploys to all customers** on the night of the Production release.

Training Content

28 DAYS AFTER PRODUCTION RELEASE

To ensure that our customers stay current with quarterly releases, we update the following training materials to reflect product updates:

- **Project Team Orientation (PTO)** – Intended for the stakeholders who make decisions regarding individual products, these provide training about the basic capabilities of the software. They are updated following the Q1 and Q3 releases.
- **Administrator Training** – Intended for system administrators responsible for overseeing the daily management of their company's SAP SuccessFactors solutions, these are updated following the Q2 and Q4 releases.
- **Job Aids** – End-user training provided in the form of job aids, these are updated following the Q2 and Q4 releases.
- **SAP SuccessFactors Exams** – A set of exams to accredit customer administrators as trained and capable in SAP SuccessFactors solutions, these are updated following the Q2 and Q4 releases.

All of the above training content is available (in English) and can be found through the SAP SuccessFactors HCM Global Training page.



To **ensure that our customers stay current** with quarterly releases, we update the following training materials to reflect product updates.

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