

FKS Consulting

FINANCE | KNOWLEDGE | SOLUTIONS

Let's go back to standard

Rethinking the economics of SAP standardization

The hidden bias behind „SAP standard only“



Executive Summary

Many SAP transformation projects pursue one major objective

Reduce custom developments. The assumption:

- less complexity
- lower costs at all
- easier maintenance

But custom developments often exists for operational reasons. Removing them can reduce technical complexity – while increasing operational complexity.

The key question is not: „**How much standard can we implement?**“

But „**What happens to everything the standard does not cover?**“

Why „standard“ sounds attractive

The promise of simplification and lower cost

Executive expectations are often clear:

- cleaner system architecture
- fewer interfaces
- reduced maintenance effort
- lower dependency on individual developers

From executive level perspective, this is understandable.

Finance and operations experience the system differently.

The Hidden Assumption

Less custom code = lower complexity

Many transformation programs assume less custom code, less customizing reduce complexity. But complexity does not disappear automatically.

It often changes its location from

- systems

to

- processes

- manual activities

- reconciliation effort

Why Custom Developments Exist

Most custom solutions were not built accidentally

They were created because of:

- operational gaps existed
- processes needed support
- reporting logic was insufficient
- business models exceeded standard structures

Not always elegant but often business critical.

The Real Risk

Customized functionality

When custom functionality disappears:

- manual workload increases
- process consistency decreases
- transparency becomes harder to maintain
- closing time may extend
- auditor approval takes longer

The system may become technically cleaner – while operations become more fragile.

The Question Few Teams Ask

Looking beyond technical simplification

The discussion should not only focus on:

- **„What can be removed?“**

But also on:

- What functionality disappears?
- What operational effort replaces it?
- Who absorbs the new complexity?

Because someone always does.

Take Away

Standardization is not automatically simplification

If system-supported logic disappears, complexity often reappears elsewhere:

- in finance
- in operations
- in closing
- in reporting
- in internal / external reconciliation

The real challenge is understanding where complexity moves.

FKS Consulting Perspective

The broader picture

At FKS Consulting GmbH transformation is not evaluated only from IT perspective.

The focus is on:

- operational feasibility
- finance process integrity
- sustainable transparency
- Audit proof & reliable reporting

It requires structural understanding.

Turning complexity into transparency.

