

Design UX strategy with new age SAP UI Solutions – A Point of View

Abstract: How SAP's new age UI solutions like FIORI, Screen Personas and Custom UI5 can help customers realize value faster from their investment in SAP software.



1 Background

Accustomed to the usability of smart phones and apps in their leisure time, employees expect to have the same features and flexibility in the workplace. Business must meet worker expectations in order for employees to be more productive and enable them to serve customers more effectively.

Realizing that return on investments [ROI] made in a software has a direct relation to their adoption by key stakeholders and users in general, business has been asking software vendors to offer solutions that not only are cost effective but are also agile and flexible to ever changing user experience needs.

Customer expectations are shaping the current trends in UI space and SAP too has realized that great user experience has an impact on business value in terms of the following:



Gain Productivity



Increased user adoption



Decrease user errors



Save training costs

In contrast to conventional SAP deployment strategies, which involve high level of change management due to complex software design and therefore use of multi-screen transactions, the deployment strategy today calls for focused attention to user's operational comfort. Simplistically it means making the business user feel that the 'day-in-life now is not just pretty easy but pretty and easy'...

In this point of view, we explore how a UX strategy can help businesses realize the value by dramatically improving operational experience for leadership, key business users and end users alike.

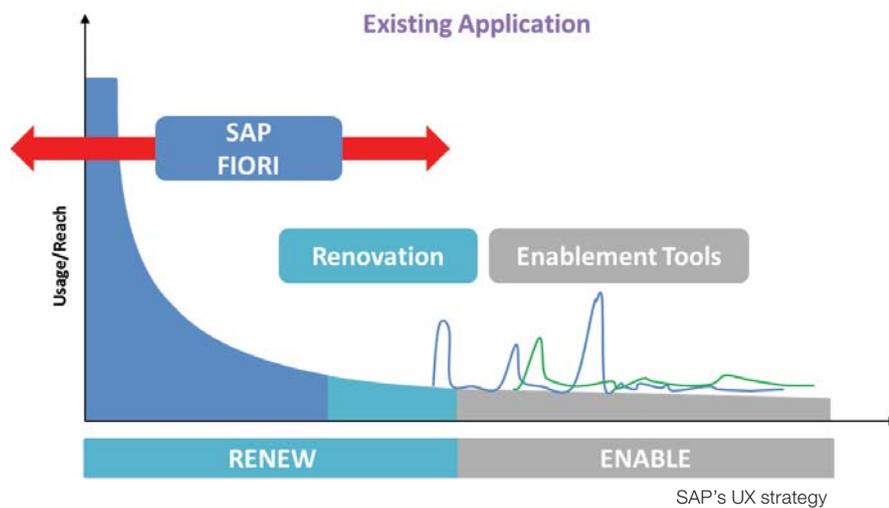


2 Analysis

Based on market requirements and trends, SAP continuously enhances its offerings. However, due to the massive amount of business applications provided by SAP, it is obvious that enhancement process is gradual and is to be expected in phases.

SAP is focusing their UI enhancements on those use scenarios that affect all or most customers in order to provide the biggest value.

With SAP's new age UI solutions available in the market today, businesses can now devise their own UX strategy to deal with challenges in change management specially on the usability front.



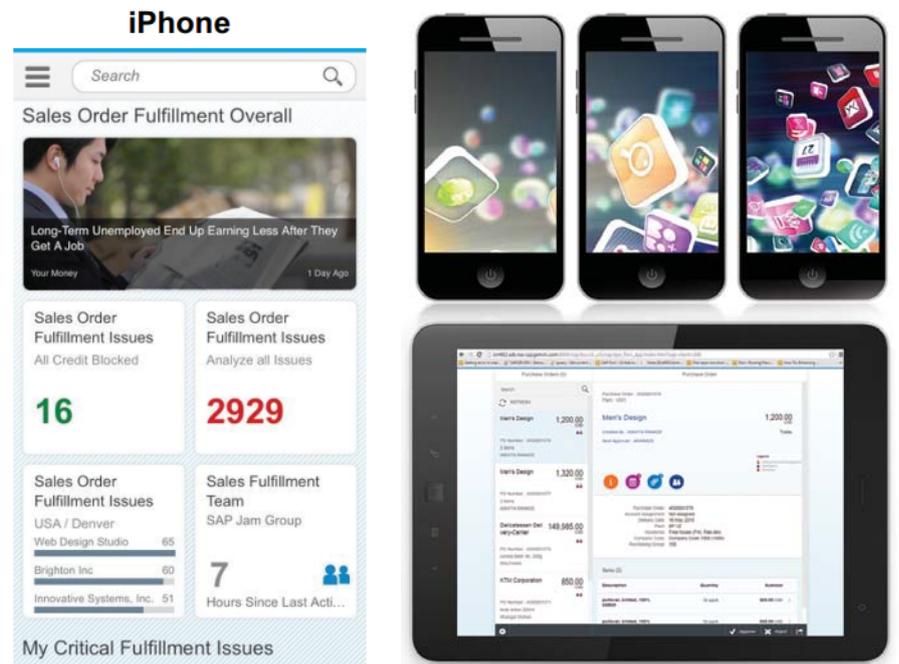
Devices

1. For some of the business functions or applications, which are at the core of SAP ERP and are most commonly used [i.e. their usage or reach is the highest at any customer] are offered through **FIORI apps**. These Apps provide **Renewed** experience to the users for such existing functions.
2. For those functions involving tasks of repetitive in nature and also involve processes traversing multiple transactions or screens, SAP offers **Enablement** tools such as **Screen Personas**, which offer flexibility in personalizing screens with very little or no programming effort.
3. For the business requirements which are generally complex in nature and also require heavy customization of standard FIORI apps that focus on productivity gain combining multiple transactions on a single screen using latest screen design trends, **UI5** to be used to build the **New** applications.

We take a look at following UI solutions from SAP today:

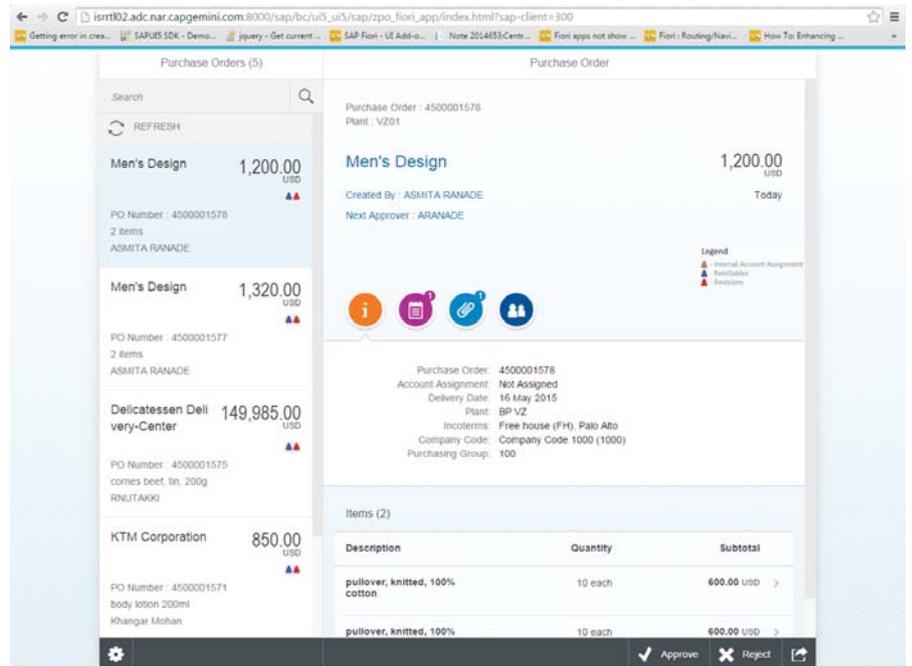
SAP FIORI

FIORI is a collection of apps with a simple and easy to use experience for broadly and frequently used SAP software functions that work seamlessly across devices – desktop, tablet or smart phone.



Apps accessible on multiple mobile platforms [Android or iOS]

Devices



Easy accessibility on Desktop / Laptop through browser

It applies modern design principles for a completely re-imagined user experience. SAP Fiori UX represents a personalized, responsive and simple user experience across devices and deployment options.

SAP has introduced 470+ role based FIORI apps that provide enhanced user productivity and personalization for customers using SAP Business Suite on any database and SAP Business Suite powered by SAP HANA.

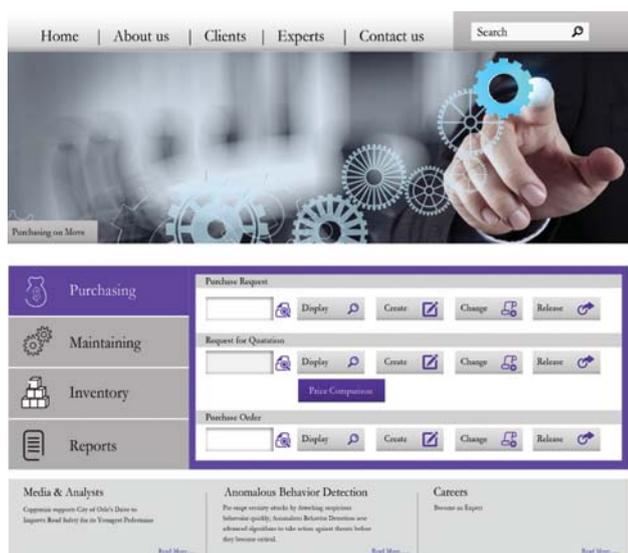
SAP Fiori Apps support a variety of roles in lines of business including HR, Finance, Manufacturing, Procurement, and Sales.

There are three app types including transactional apps [e.g. Approve Purchase Orders] that allow users to perform transaction tasks, analytical apps [e.g. Open Purchase Orders] that provide users role-based insight into key performance indicators, and fact sheets [e.g. Material] that display contextual information and key facts about central objects used in business operations. However the limitation with FIORI apps is that most of them, especially Factsheets and Analytical apps, mandate use of either the latest enhancement pack or HANA as database platform, which necessitates customers to move to the new age database platform from SAP.

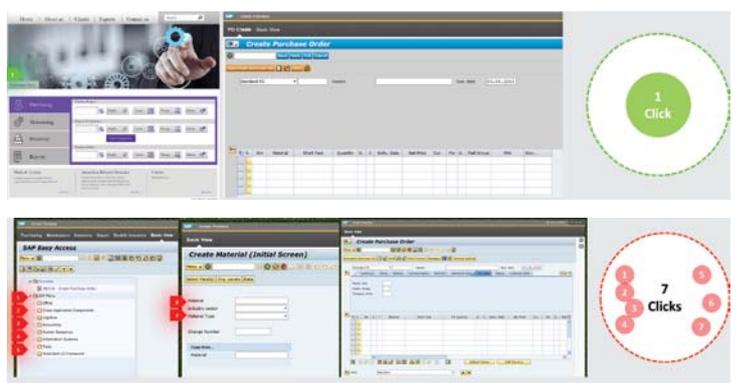
SAP SCREEN PERSONAS

Screen Personas is a UI tool that provides the ability to meet business user needs for rapid screen changes, delivering improved user experience, and increased work efficiency for desktop or laptop users.

It makes personalization of SAP business application screens (16000 distinct transactions, 300,000 screens) as easy as changing a PowerPoint slide. This solution provides consumer-grade personalization features that enable IT professionals and end-users to simplify their user interface quickly and easily in order to improve the visual appeal, end-user productivity, and performance of SAP through browser based rendering system. This solution requires no programming skills or knowledge of SAP systems.



Launch Pad developed in Personas simplifies access to multiple SAP functions



Verify Sales Order task simplified using Personas

Custom UI5 (SAPUI5)

SAP UI5 (SAP user interface for HTML 5) is a collection of libraries that developers can use to build desktop and mobile applications that run in a browser. With SAP's SAPUI5 JavaScript toolkit, developers can build SAP web applications using HTML5 web development standards.

SAPUI5 framework can be used for building unique applications which cover the scenarios or processes that involve highly complex transactions or screens and are required to be operated through any device.

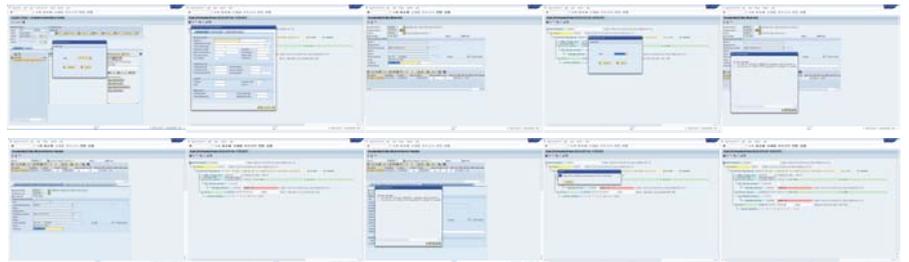
Applications developed using SAP UI5 have the ability to transform user experience, by using User Experience designers to ensure it is a user centered design, rather than a process orientated design. This brings productivity gains in reduced processing time through the use of single screen interaction as opposed to multiple screens and tabs with minimal input. The example below reduced the process time from 2 minutes to 30 seconds.

Customers can use SAPUI5 or OpenUI5, to build "SAP Fiori-like" applications. Of course, they need to have a data provider to retrieve the data. Since SAP has not created many OData-based REST services on top of SAP NetWeaver Gateway that can easily be re-used customers and partners have to build their own Rest services. This however is using the traditional SAP programming language ABAP, therefore is not a major limitation.

OpenUI5 is the Open-Source-licensed version of the UI Development Toolkit for HTML5 (SAPUI5) and is available for free under the Apache 2.0 Open Source license. It can be used to develop applications or screens that can pull data from not just SAP systems but non SAP as well – hence provide flexibility in building UI apps that can behind the scenes connect heterogeneous systems to provide unified experience.



Devices



Desktop Web Browsers



Application developed in SAP UI5

3 Key Findings

Our study of SAP's UX strategy reveals that each UI solution offered by SAP addresses pain points on usability front for different needs of customer i.e. the UI solutions like SAP FIORI, Screen Personas and UI5 are positioned as complementary solutions and not as competing approaches.

Our learning from delivery of these solutions to different clients:

FIORI apps are intended to target transactions or functions that are most commonly used i.e. keeping in mind the applicability to a larger customer base (with no device dependency).

Screen Personas tool is designed to be used primarily for transforming screens of specialized transactions that are performed repetitively by set of users (on a desktop or laptop) representing a function group for example purchasing or sales.

UI5 technology is seen more suitable to build own (device independent) app(s) that say presents to the user a single screen [gives web look and feel] with minimal input for a highly complex task or process that otherwise may involve multiple transactions, screens or even systems.

Customers can use a combination of off-the-shelf solutions (Fiori apps), fast personalization (Personas), and in-house or partner development (SAP UI5 libraries) to optimize deployment time and cost.

“
After delivering enhanced UI to clients using these solutions from SAP, we endorse SAP's view that none of these solutions should be compared with one another as they cater to distinct business requirements in terms of usability

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Sachin Kagliwal
Capgemini Ulsmart, Capability Lead

4 Recommendations

Customer UX strategy aligned with SAP's UX strategy

We believe that customers should develop their own UX strategy that is based on the value outcomes they require from using SAP. This enables business and IT to jointly develop a UX roadmap that is aligned with the UX strategy.

It is important for new or existing customers of SAP to understand SAP's UX strategy to be able to devise their own.

There are several other major drivers that are also very important and needs full consideration by the customer when defining their own UX strategy.

These are some examples:

- Existing and current strategies (e.g. Organisation, IT and SAP strategies)
- Business requirements
- Current user environment and user pain points
- Existing IT and SAP landscape

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