



Interview with Gerhard Kuppler, Vice President SAP Alliances, Oracle

Working Closely to Benefit Thousands of Joint Customers

E3 Magazine spoke to Gerhard Kuppler, Vice President SAP Alliances at cloud provider Oracle, about topics such as collaboration with SAP, the Oracle database, and much more.

E3: How has the ECC/NetWeaver/Database relationship between Oracle and SAP evolved over the past five years?

Gerhard Kuppler, Vice President SAP Alliances, Oracle: Our collaboration dates back more than 30 years and continues to be strong, as evidenced by SAP's recently-announced commitment to extend support for SAP NetWeaver-based solutions until at least 2030. Further extensions cannot be ruled out given the large number of SAP customers still running SAP ECC and associated NetWeaver applications.

E3: There seem to be fewer activities between Oracle and SAP lately. Is there still an active collaboration between the two companies?

Kuppler: We continue to work closely to benefit our thousands of joint customers. We have a significant number of Oracle Database and OCI (Oracle Cloud Infrastructure) developers based in the SAP Development Center at Walldorf, as well

as Oracle support engineers embedded in SAP teams around the world. We are collaborating closely to certify the latest versions of Oracle Database, Oracle Cloud, Oracle Engineered Systems, and Oracle Linux technology as these become available. For example, currently we are working to certify Oracle Database 23ai, the latest long-term release of Oracle's converged database.

E3: How do you perceive the global SAP community's development?

Kuppler: The results of the latest 2024 DSAG Investment Survey show that a large number of SAP customers are still running SAP ECC/NetWeaver. Many of these customers might have highly customized ECC systems which cannot be easily migrated to other ERP solutions, or they might not be able to justify the spend for a complete ERP system replacement. We will continue to support Oracle Database for these customers as long as SAP continues to support NetWeaver.

E3: Many SAP customers are beginning to move their systems to cloud providers, hyperscalers, and SAP itself. What would you recommend to SAP customers running ERP/ECC 6.0 with Oracle Database? How is the market developing?

Kuppler: Many forward-looking customers are choosing to move to the cloud. Oracle offers Exadata as a cloud service on OCI, so that customers running Exadata on-premises can easily move to Exadata Database Service on OCI.

E3: Are there other options?

Kuppler: For customers who need to maintain continuity or have specific requirements around data residency or latency-sensitive workloads, Oracle Exadata Cloud@Customer—where the entire Exadata cloud infrastructure is deployed in the customer's own data center—is a good choice. With this type of deployment, as with any cloud deployment model, the customer subscribes to the infrastructure without having to purchase the hardware.



Gerhard Kuppler,
Vice President SAP Alliances,
Oracle

E3: Can you give us a more detailed roadmap and some recommendations for SAP customers using Oracle Database?

Kuppler: SAP customers can look forward to the certification of Oracle Database 23ai to enable them to smoothly transition from Oracle Database 19c. Oracle Database 19c is currently under premier support until at least April 2026, and will be under extended support until at least April 2027. Therefore, customers would have sufficient time to upgrade their databases to the new long-term release.

E3: Where are you seeing more adoption of Application Continuity for Oracle Database?

Kuppler: We are seeing adoption by SAP customers who need to ensure zero disruption to active online users while performing downtime maintenance for one or more database nodes in RAC (Real Application Clusters) configurations.

E3: Will Oracle Database skills be still useful given SAP's move to RISE and Public Cloud editions of S/4 Hana?

Kuppler: Yes. Besides SAP NetWeaver applications, Oracle Database is used in thousands of non-SAP applications. Oracle Database skills are also portable between on-premises and cloud deployments of Oracle Database, and across different operating systems, hardware platforms, and hyperscaler environments beyond OCI.

E3: Could you specify which hyperscalers?

Kuppler: The sharp rise in adoption of Oracle Autonomous Database, the significant investments by Microsoft and Oracle in the Oracle Database@Azure service, and the recently announced investments by Google and Oracle in the Oracle Database@Google Cloud service, present opportunities for those with Oracle Database skills. Due to the complexity of RISE and of moving to Hana, many customers are considering alternative solutions.

E3: What would be your advice to customers still running ECC 6.0 today who have not yet decided on their next step?

Kuppler: Thousands of large enterprise customers still operate on ECC 6.0, and the application won't stop running come 2030. Our advice to these customers is to first stabilize and optimize their NetWeaver applications on a modern platform and long-term supported Oracle Database—whether Exadata on-premises, on OCI, or on Exadata Cloud@Customer. Once this is running smoothly, the customer can then assess and decide on next steps—whether that involves S/4 Hana or a different platform—without concerns for performance or stability issues in their ECC 6.0 environment.

E3: What do you make of the recent DSAG Investment Survey results?

Kuppler: SAP customers are a highly sophisticated audience. They demand to understand the concrete business benefits of migration before making a decision. I don't think it's helpful to confront them with an end-of-life deadline. Ultimately it is a business decision.

E3: What are the most significant benefits you would highlight to customers considering moving to the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure and why?

Kuppler: The biggest benefit is peace of mind. We currently run the world's largest ECC IaaS deployment on OCI. There is no need to worry about performance, as we have Exadata technology available in the cloud. We also offer reliability as we offer the only SAP-supported RAC setup in the cloud, as well as value with the inclusion of the Oracle Linux Premier Subscription.

E3: Thank you for the interview.

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