IBM Information Server: Managing data quality in SAP Customer Relationship Management

Highlights

- ***Helps ensure that a complete, clean and accurate view of information gets loaded into the SAP® Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM) application***
- ***Cleans up difficult data quality issues, reducing the risks associated with bad data***
- ***Creates a single view of customer data from across complex heterogeneous sources***
- ***Controls data quality at the point of entry inside SAP CRM to help ensure that data stays clean over time***
- ***Accommodates tight batch windows while handling the massive volumes of data typically found in enterprise systems***
- ***Makes it easy to visually design complex cleansing and integration logic to get clean information into SAP***

Information within enterprise resource planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems is supposed to be clean and accurate. It seems logical that the natural controls exerted by these applications should help ensure that bad data never makes it into the system. However, the truth is that bad data often finds its way into these systems, eating away at the return on investment these systems are expected to provide.

It is possible to load bad data into these systems at the initial implementation, which often has long-standing detrimental effects. It is even more likely that bad data will be entered by the hundreds or thousands of users of these systems as a natural consequence of human error. Industry studies show that data entry by employees contributes to more than 75 percent of all data quality problems.

The problem is that bad data, as long as it is structured correctly, looks completely acceptable to ERP systems, making it likely that bad data will get into the system unless specific measures are taken to stop it. What is needed is an information platform that can address data quality problems during the initial implementation, and then enforce those same quality rules on an ongoing basis as users enter new data into the system.

IBM® Information Server provides a proven foundation for helping companies ensure that only accurate, high-quality information makes it into SAP CRM. It also helps ensure that information entered into SAP Business Suite applications is matched in real-time against data already in the system, so that duplicate information is not re-entered.

Bad data equals bad results

When bad data enters an ERP system, it immediately begins to cause problems. A duplicate customer record, for example, can be linked to new transaction activity, beginning immediately to split the view of that customer and dilute your knowledge of the customer.

Duplication of customer records is one of the single most damaging barriers to effective target marketing and selling. It erodes customer satisfaction because customer support lacks a coherent view of customer activities and it also complicates fraud and risk management practices.

Even worse, once the bad data is in your system, it becomes nearly impossible to root it out, since finding and removing the problems requires extensive rework of the data.

Loading clean data at implementation

The best solution to the problem is to not let it happen in the first place. A rigorous approach to data quality at system implementation can dramatically reduce the amount of bad data that gets into your system. Data quality can be ensured only with a process that involves sifting through mountains of source data to identify exactly where the problems are and removing them before they corrupt the system.

IBM Information Server helps accelerate the time to value from the enterprise application migration and helps remove the risk from such a large project by taking data off the critical path of an application migration or consolidation. With IBM Information Server, you can quickly understand existing data sources, cleanse, correct, and standardize information, and transform and load the data into a new or existing enterprise application (see Figure 1). These processes help ensure that complete, accurate and de-duplicated information are loaded into your SAP CRM environment the first time, avoiding problems in the future.

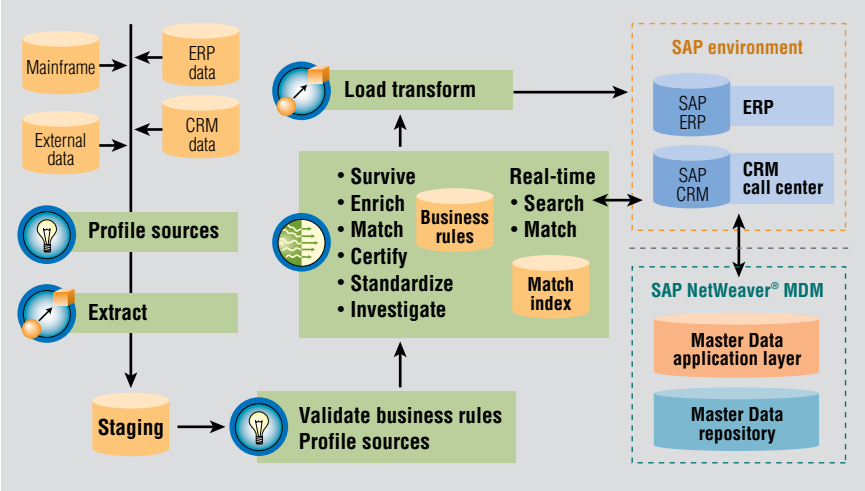

Figure 1. IBM Information Server cleanses, transforms and loads data into the SAP CRM environment

Keeping data clean

Getting clean data into the system initially is not enough—not when more than 75 percent of data quality issues, which are the result of human error, come after the initial load processes. A complete strategy for data quality in SAP CRM requires not only an initial scrubbing, but also an ongoing program for data cleansing and matching.

Ideally, the same rules that were used during the initial load could be applied—but applied in real-time as data is entered through the portal interfaces. Since this involves human interaction, the incorporation of fuzzy search capabilities would ensure even better odds of keeping data clean.

IBM Information Server provides this functionality, directly into SAP R/3® software and SAP CRM, providing real-time customer search and matching directly through the SAP user interface (see Figure 2). This process reduces the human error component and provides continuous data quality management for your SAP investment.

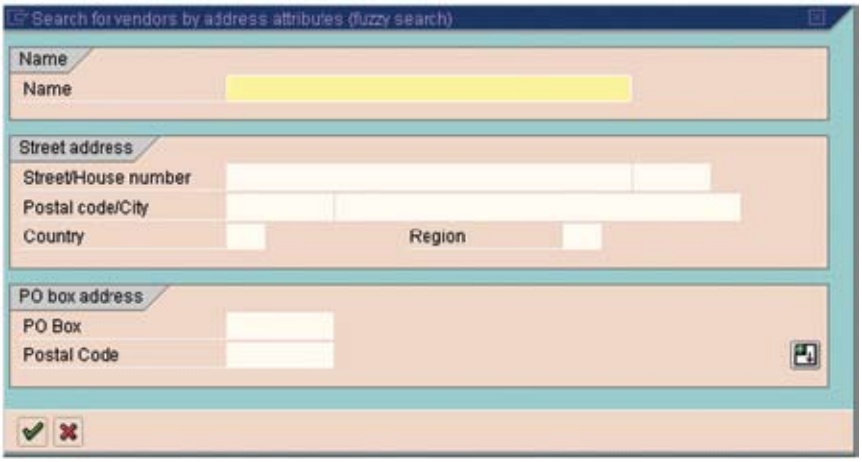

Figure 2. IBM Information Server provides real-time customer matching directly through the SAP user interface

A platform tailored to SAP software

IBM Information Server complements SAP R/3 and SAP Business Suite by helping customers graphically connect to complex heterogeneous operational data sources and create reusable mappings and transformations to convert the data into SAP software target objects. IBM Information Server supports complex data formats and offers packaged connectivity to competing enterprise applications that facilitate loading data into SAP R/3 and SAP Business Suite applications. It also supports the easy addition of in-line customizable quality rules, helping to ensure that data is clean and accurate as it is loaded.

The IBM WebSphere® DataStage™ Pack for SAP R/3 provides graphical connectivity to SAP R/3 software that makes it easy to stream data into and out of SAP systems. The WebSphere DataStage Pack gives IBM Information Server SAP Certified Integration and supports the latest version of SAP software.

For real-time data quality, IBM Information Server Data Quality Module for SAP provides an SAP-certified real-time interface to data quality logic. This module provides fuzzy search capabilities for candidate retrieval within SAP CRM as data is entered into the system, along with industry-leading customer matching capabilities to help ensure that duplicates never make it into your systems.

IBM Information Server provides:

- *Simple, graphical and packaged way to extract and load data into SAP software via BAPI® programming interface*
- *Non-SAP metadata import, including creation of InfoObjects, InfoSources, InfoPackages and source systems*
- *Scalable performance for increasing data volumes*
- *In-line data cleansing and de-duplication*
- *Unicode support*
- *Real-time matching and fuzzy search capabilities from SAP R/3 and SAP Business Suite*

Figure 3 shows IBM Information Server infrastructure for data integration into SAP software.

IBM Information Server delivers trusted information

Organizations face an information challenge beginning with locating information, getting it when it is needed in the form needed, and once it is found, discerning further insights from it. Information validity and control are additional concerns. The challenges only mount if businesses cannot ensure access to authoritative, consistent, timely and complete information.

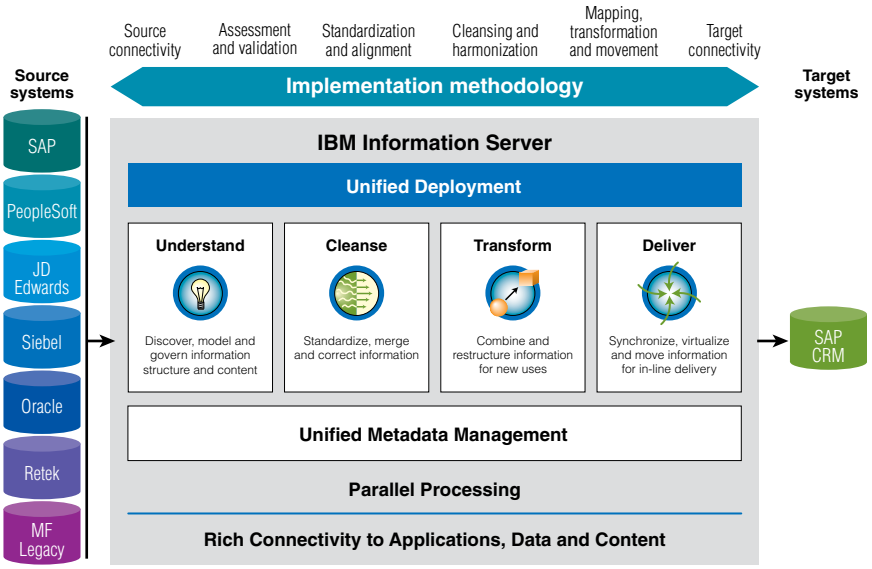

Figure 3. IBM Information Server infrastructure

IBM Information Server is a revolutionary new software platform that helps you derive more value from the complex, heterogeneous information spread across your systems. It enables your organization to integrate disparate data and deliver trusted information wherever and whenever needed, in line and in context, to specific people, applications and processes. It helps business and IT personnel collaborate to understand the meaning, structure and content of any type of information across any source. It provides breakthrough productivity and performance for

cleansing, transforming and moving this information consistently and securely throughout the enterprise, so it can be accessed and used in new ways to drive innovation, increase operational efficiency and help lower risk.

For more information

To learn more about IBM Information Server, contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit **ibm.com**/software/data/integration

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