

# SURVEY REPORT

State-of-the-Market Survey on Sybase/ASE Users  
Facing 2025 End of Maintenance Deadline

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A survey of 97 Sybase/ASE users uncovered insights into how the end of mainstream maintenance will play out. While SAP is pushing for a direct migration to SAP HANA, many companies are weighing their options. Choices include maintaining or upgrading their Sybase/ASE system through in-house maintenance or third-party support, or migrating to another solution, such as SAP HANA, Oracle Database, Postgres, or another SQL database.

Key survey findings:

- Most Sybase/ASE users are happy with their systems and would prefer to keep them.
- Almost a third of companies planning to migrate to another system will do so within a year, while nearly half are committed to migrating within the next five years.
- Oracle Database is a more popular choice than SAP HANA among those planning to migrate.
- Postgres is another popular choice, particularly among retailers.
- Users' support type also influences their planning. Most companies who've replaced SAP support with third-party support plan to maintain their Sybase/ASE installations for as long as possible.

Below, readers will find a brief review of Sybase/ASE history, user community dynamics, and a deeper analysis of the survey findings.

# SAP ASE/SYBASE EoMM IN CONTEXT

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## END OF MAINSTREAM MAINTENANCE FORCES A DIFFICULT DECISION

Adaptive Server Enterprise (ASE), also known as Sybase, has been part of SAP's portfolio since 2010. When the last update was released in 2014, SAP advertised a [97% customer satisfaction rate](#), with the relational database management system implemented at 45 of the top 50 banks and security firms.

Despite this success, in 2018 SAP announced the end of mainstream maintenance (EoMM) for Sybase/ASE.

*EoMM FOR SYBASE/ASE VERSION 15.7 IS SET FOR DECEMBER 31, 2020; EoMM FOR VERSION 16.0 WILL OCCUR ON DECEMBER 31, 2025*

Some users and industry observers were surprised, while others saw the [writing on the wall](#): there had been a lack of innovation, updating, and promotion over the preceding four years.

Plenty of Sybase users like their solution. Some have been running one version of Sybase/ASE or another since the late 1980s. These companies have sunk significant time and money into their ASE/Sybase setups, orienting their IT efforts around the use of the system only to find the official roadmap closed.

A portion of Sybase/ASE users don't possess any other SAP solutions, which makes these businesses Sybase/ASE customers more than SAP customers, for all intents and purposes. Regardless, with the EoMM around the corner, users will need to decide how they wish to move forward. The main options include in-house maintenance, third-party support, switching to SAP HANA, or migrating to another database solution.

*OPTIONS INCLUDE IN-HOUSE MAINTENANCE, THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT, SWITCHING TO SAP HANA, OR MIGRATING TO ANOTHER SOLUTION*

This report on SAP Sybase/ASE EoMM focuses on the opinions of 97 Sybase/ASE users and businesses who generously took the time to respond to our survey. The findings point to a user base that prefers to remain with their current Sybase/ASE solution, which will require ongoing support via in-house, third-party, or a blended maintenance plan.

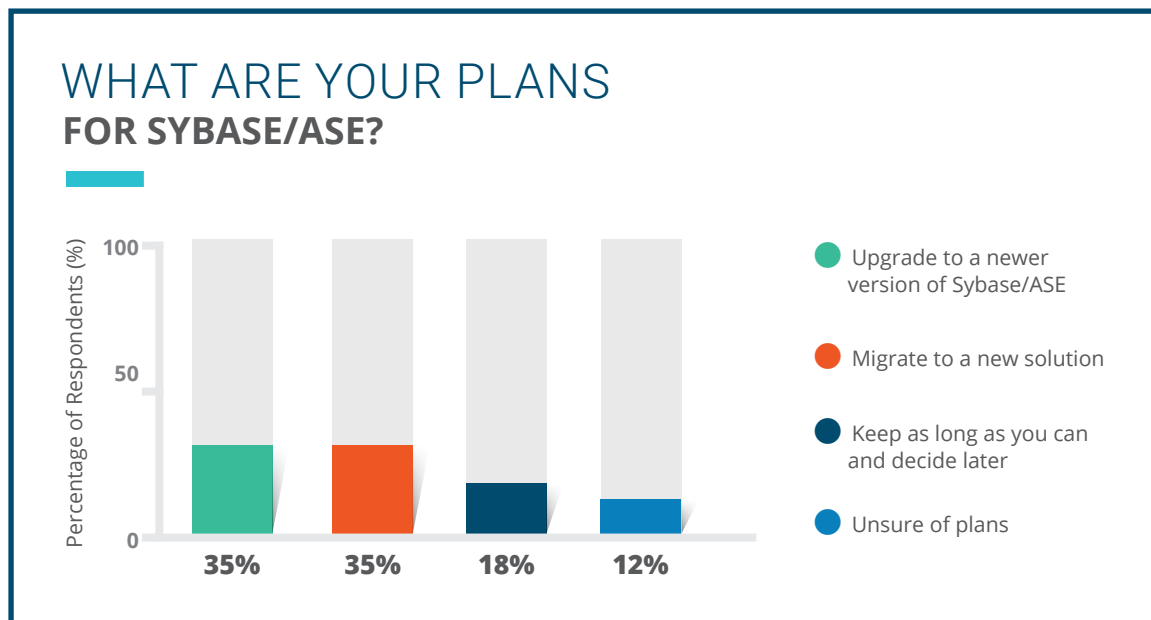
## FIVE KEY FINDINGS FOR SAP SYBASE/ASE EoMM

### 1. CUSTOMERS REMAIN LOYAL TO SYBASE/ASE

Despite the lack of new versions and the end of mainstream support, Sybase customers form a loyal user base: 53% of respondents have decided to stay with the system, a finding that aligns with the high level of customer satisfaction reported by SAP in 2014.

A third of those companies will delay any major decision by maintaining their current Sybase installation as long as possible, while two thirds are opting to upgrade to the latest version of the database server. This popular option among the Sybase-devoted remains available only for companies who haven't yet implemented version 16.0. At the very least, version 16.0 users will have until December 31, 2025 before official support ceases, reducing the urgency (for now).

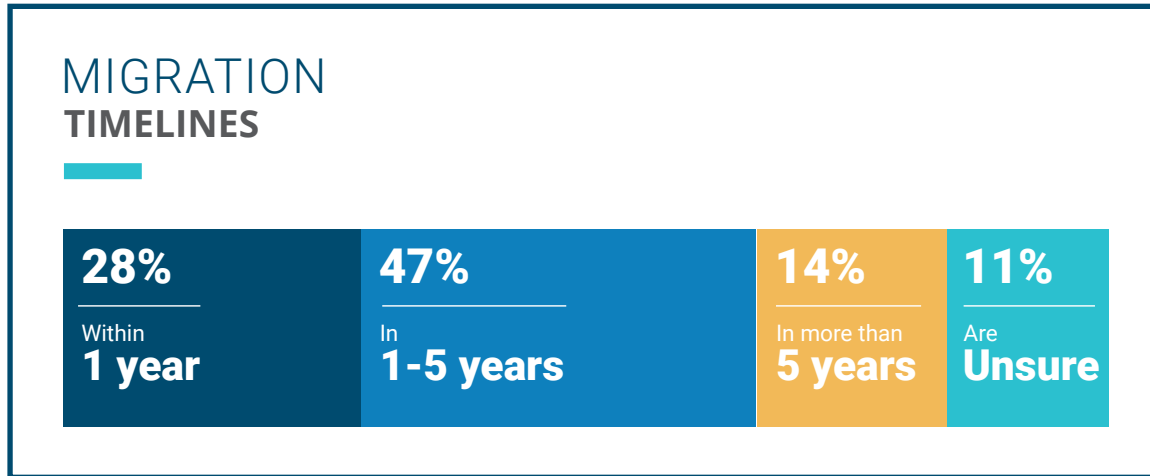
Only 35% of respondents signaled a definite migration to a new solution when SAP maintenance ends, while the final 12% are unsure of their plans.



Regardless of how you slice the numbers, many customers like the idea of keeping Sybase, despite potential complications on the horizon.

## 2. TIMELINES ARE TIGHTENING FOR DECIDING ON A MIGRATION PATH

Very few Sybase users report the luxury of an extended migration timeline for their solution. Three-quarters of respondents who are committed to migrating indicated a timeline of five years or less, including 28% who foresee a timeline of less than a year. Indeed, only 14% of migrating Sybase respondents communicated a timeline of more than five years to make a final decision and take action.



One would expect that the users of the most recent Sybase release would feel the least urgency. However, 33% of migrating respondents with version 16.0 indicated a move within one year, compared to 18% of migrating users with version 15.5 and 29% of users with version 15.7. This would seem to hint at a popular upgrade path provided by SAP HANA, but the next major finding of this survey suggests otherwise.

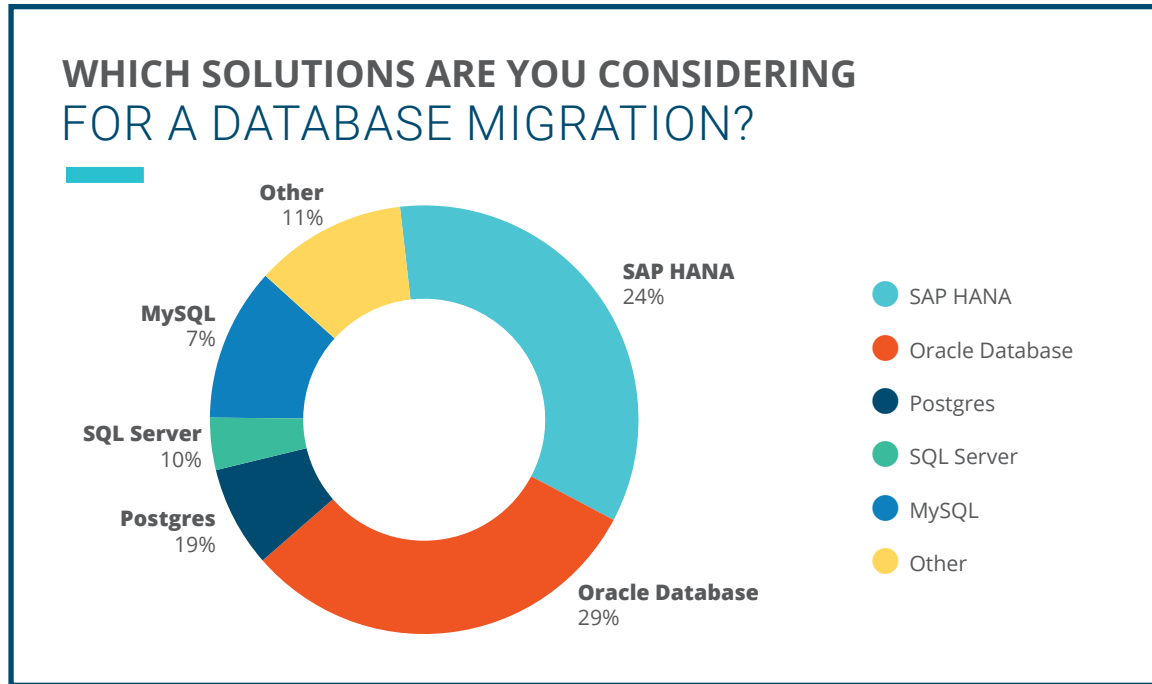
## 3. EoMM FOR SYBASE - POTENTIAL LOSS FOR SAP, POTENTIAL WIN FOR ORACLE

Less than one in four Sybase users expressed an interest in migrating to SAP HANA, which is the only viable way to remain with an officially-supported SAP system.

This low retention rate might signal frustration with the loss of SAP updates and maintenance and a sense of forced obsolescence for a product with a high percentage of user-reported satisfaction. As well, the portion of users who purchased Sybase prior to the SAP acquisition may be more loyal to the solution than to the brand that owns the software.

For those intending to select a new solution, Oracle appears to be the most popular migration path, with 29% of respondents selecting Oracle Database over SAP HANA. Postgres, an open source SQL database, also performed well in this survey, with 19% of respondents showing interest in migrating to Postgres rather than SAP or Oracle.

More respondents also selected Postgres over MySQL and SQL Server combined.



#### 4. THE EARLIER THE SYBASE VERSION, THE LESS THE INTEREST IN HANA

Sybase users who have version 15.5 are the second-least likely group to choose SAP HANA. Only 9% of version 15.5 users indicate an interest in migrating to HANA, but this doesn't mean that Oracle's the chosen solution among this respondent cohort.

Postgres and SQL Server solutions were tied for the most popular migration choices among version 15.5 users, with MySQL slightly behind. Oracle Database was the fourth most popular choice, with SAP in fifth.

Version 16.0 users were the most likely to consider moving to HANA, with 35% of respondents selecting SAP for migration. This was one of the few cohorts to choose SAP over Oracle at a greater rate. These companies have been moving forward with each SAP update to their ASE/Sybase product, and are more likely to be committed SAP customers. HANA is therefore the de facto choice.

It is also possible that these are the larger of SAP's Sybase/ASE clients, and thus may have received more dedicated service. If so, it follows that they may be more open to SAP's next offering. This is speculation, however, as the survey did not request company size or revenue data from respondents.

Version 15.7 respondents were right in the middle in terms of HANA adoption, with 29% considering a migration to a HANA database. However, Oracle remains the preferred choice among version 15.7 users, with 38% casting a vote of confidence for Oracle Database.

## **5. THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT ENABLES GREATER FREEDOM OF CHOICE**

A majority of companies that have replaced SAP support with third-party support for their Sybase/ASE solutions are planning to stay with the database, with 54% of these respondents planning to upgrade to a newer version or keep Sybase as long as possible. This implies that third-party support provides a viable path to maintaining a well-regarded solution without mainstream maintenance and support.

### **THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT PROVIDES A VIABLE PATH TO RETAINING SYBASE/ASE**

Official SAP support and in-house support methods don't specifically prevent businesses from creating their own IT roadmap. However, people who earn SAP commissions or internal staff who rely on servicing SAP solutions for their livelihood are more likely to introduce bias towards a migration path that accommodates a "business as usual" approach. A third-party support group capable of maintaining multiple brands of database software is less likely to be biased towards a specific brand, whether it's SAP, Oracle, or another vendor.

Typically, companies consider third-party support because of the potential for lower costs and a higher quality of maintenance and assistance. Greater flexibility and freedom of choice aren't usually at the forefront of decision-making processes when choosing an ally for support, because cost and quality tend to overshadow other concerns.

Compared to all other respondent cohorts, those who receive third-party support show the least interest in staying with SAP, with only 8% of them considering a migration to HANA. Oracle and Postgres were tied for first at 33% each, combining to form the preferences of two-thirds of all third-party support respondents. Remarkably, among this respondent group, HANA was the fourth most popular choice for migrating to another solution, with SQL Server sneaking into third place above SAP.

## SYBASE USERS MUST CHOOSE THEIR OWN PATH

The EoMM for Sybase/ASE draws closer every day, with many businesses facing a tightening timeline should they choose to migrate. This certainly forces a decision for businesses sooner than later, regardless of when support will be withdrawn. However, businesses still control their own path moving forward, and that path includes forks in the road with numerous database options to consider.

A surprising number of respondents from nearly all cohorts indicate a preference for Oracle Database over SAP HANA, reflecting a potentially low retention rate for SAP-branded solutions after official Sybase support is withdrawn.

Respondents using earlier versions of Sybase or relying on third-party support show the least interest in SAP HANA. Most respondents would prefer to maintain the status quo, regardless of whether they're currently receiving support by SAP, through in-house means, or via a third-party provider.

Third-party support appears to provide additional flexibility and longevity for Sybase users, with many planning to extend the lifespan of their Sybase/ASE systems through unofficial, external assistance. This type of support also aligns with a greater sense of freedom in terms of choosing a path forward for businesses that have a stated preference for either remaining with Sybase or moving to a non-HANA solution. The reduced cost of third-party support also factors into migration strategy, allowing businesses to dedicate funds for the purposes of purchasing new tools and licenses.

Discover more about third-party support and managed services for Sybase/ASE and other SAP and Oracle systems by visiting [Spinnaker Support](#).

**MOST RESPONDENTS WOULD PREFER TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO**



# SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Technology Evaluation Centers, with the assistance of Spinnaker Support, a third-party SAP and Oracle support provider, surveyed 97 active Sybase/ASE customers. Questions included the version of Sybase in use, method of software support, decisions surrounding the Sybase EoMM, future database preferences, and pertinent demographic queries. All individual respondents and responses remain confidential.

# ABOUT

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