

# The Skeptic's Guide to SAP Third-Party Support



# Table of Contents



**CLICK** when you  
see this icon

3

It's okay to be a skeptic.

5

Answers for the Skeptics

16

Recommendations for How to  
Win Over other Skeptics

16

Still Looking for answers?

18

Additional Resources



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# It's okay to be a skeptic.



## SKEPTICAL

ADJECTIVE [skɛp-ti-kəl]

Not easily convinced; having doubts or reservations.

We all know skeptics. Whether family, friends, or fellow employees, these usually vocal individuals may be suspicious of certain topics or just about everything. It's natural to question ideas and processes, especially when many of us are uncomfortable with the new or unfamiliar. The challenge for a skeptic is to express reservations but remain open to explanations that can neutralize doubts.

Here at Spinnaker Support, we often speak with skeptics of third-party support. After all, it's very different from SAP's traditional support model. You may be a third-party skeptic yourself, or you may have a few on your team. Skeptics are beneficial because it's vital to ask revealing questions as part of any due diligence process for a technology partner.

Alternative software support is not a new fad or innovation. The market has existed for over 15 years, and the top providers deliver award-winning support through experienced teams and established processes. Gartner has recognized the importance of the market and publishes an annual Market Guide for independent third-party support.

While individual vendors will vary in quality and culture, the overarching proposition is essentially the same: a rejection of SAP's expensive, semi-automated support by returning personalized, comprehensive services at a fair price.

We meet with skeptics of third-party support all the time. Our most productive conversations with prospective customers often begin with their healthy dose of skepticism. Questioning the fundamentals usually leads to more open discussions for better informed and satisfied customers.

# Direct Answers for Direct People

We know that skeptics want straightforward, honest, and fact-based answers. It's why we appreciate them! But only some have the time or desire for a long conversation. So, with all that in mind, we created this Skeptic's Guide as a shortcut to help educate a wider audience.

The guide addresses the most common questions we hear from prospective customers. Throughout this guide, we offer resources and recommendations to help you determine if third-party SAP support (SAP 3PS) is a good fit for your organization.

**If you are a third-party skeptic, this guide is for you.**

We'll avoid fancy jargon or business buzzwords and instead drive home our points through facts and the words of our customers. If you're not a skeptic but have one or more on your team, please share this guide with them. You will find additional advice at the end to help win them over.

**NOTE:** While Spinnaker Support is proud to represent the third-party (or independent) software support market, we do not speak for vendors other than ourselves. The answers in this guide only reflect our perspective and cite our resources, processes, and statistics as evidence.



Interactive links enrich your reading experience.

**Tap the number to take you to the answer page**

## QUESTIONS ADDRESSED IN THIS GUIDE:

- 1 Is third-party support legal and accepted by the market and SAP?
- 2 Who can provide better support than the publisher who wrote the software?
- 3 How can you offer a higher quality of support than SAP does?
- 4 How can you guarantee a faster response than SAP?
- 5 How can you lower the cost and improve support quality?
- 6 How can you provide support if you're outside my country?
- 7 Won't our productivity suffer if we can't access SAP Solution Manager?
- 8 Won't we lose all our upgrades?
- 9 Why is this better than patching?
- 10 How can a third-party resolve issues without access to the SAP source code?
- 11 Don't audit and compliance frameworks mandate patching?
- 12 How do you handle customizations?
- 13 How about integrations with other systems?
- 14 I want to make use of SAP BTP, can I do that within Third-Party support?
- 15 What about my server operating system, can I patch it?
- 16 Won't we fall behind in our global tax and regulatory compliance?
- 17 Won't my SAP relationship suffer if I leave SAP Support?
- 18 Isn't all this just begging for an SAP Audit?
- 19 Won't my employees be unhappy without SAP?

# Answers for the Skeptics

## 1 IS THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT LEGAL AND ACCEPTED BY THE MARKET AND SAP?

While other software vendors are embroiled in multiple lawsuits with another third-party support provider (the details of this are easy to research online), software providers actively litigate for a competitive advantage and are likely to insinuate that alternative support may not be legal. However, court documents from these suits and a research paper published by Gartner affirm that there is no legal reason why a third-party cannot provide vendor replacement support for customers. Furthermore, executives publicly acknowledged that third-party support is legally viable if the software publisher's intellectual property (IP) rights are respected and observed.

**So, regarding legal risk, you're right to be skeptical because not every third-party vendor follows the same policies.** However, since its inception in 2008, Spinnaker Support has delivered SAP support the right way to over 1,200 customers. We understand precisely what practices and processes have been deemed unlawful and have always taken significant precautions to provide the support that observes and respects SAP's IP rights.

**When assessing vendors, set aside time to discuss how the firm's processes and practices conform to SAP's IP and copyright requirements.** For example, every process at Spinnaker Support is ISO- 9001:2015 certified, highlighting our strong commitment to transparency and quality management principles. In addition, we have proven that third- party support is a safe alternative to SAP-provided support.

## 2 WHO CAN PROVIDE BETTER SUPPORT THAN THE PUBLISHER WHO WROTE THE SOFTWARE?

SAP wants you to ask us this question because they want you to believe they are superior in all aspects of their business. But product development and technical support are two separate SAP divisions, and to our knowledge, SAP has never proven that they're equally strong in both areas.

Furthermore as SAP shifts its focus to its cloud products, the focus for its support teams naturally follows the same path. This leaves a smaller pool of resources with fewer experts to service the customers who continue to pay the same, or increasing, support fees every year.

Dissatisfaction with SAP support, pricing, responsiveness, automation, and coverage has driven thousands of global organizations of all sizes to switch to third-party vendors. **In its latest 2024 revision of document G00795147, Gartner recommends that SAP customers**

**consider third-party support to maintain their critical SAP systems while allowing time to evaluate future transformation strategies.**

Many SAP customers are frustrated by the knowledge that SAP could lower fees, offer more personalized support, or even deliver new innovations to on-premise users—if it chose to. But as a software company, SAP has moved on to new objectives. It's using the high-profit margins from your on-premise support fees to develop the next generation of cloud technologies, not improve your current experience. Their goal is to lock you into their roadmap rather than to support you on your existing software.

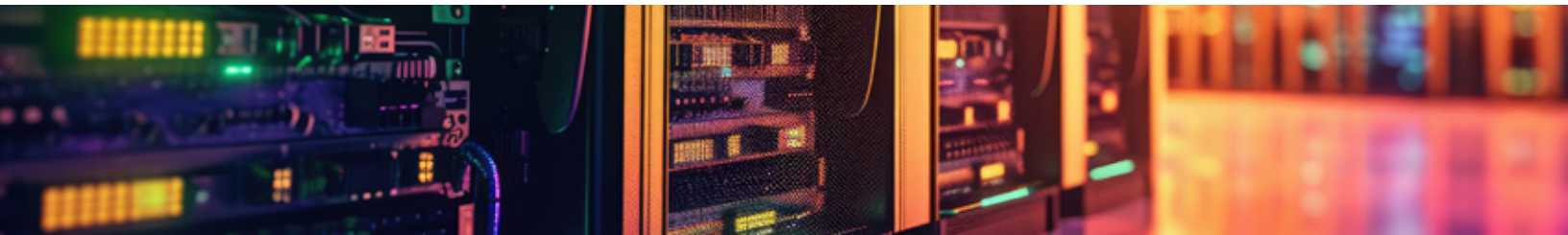
SAP rarely highlights that customers can shape their own cloud strategy—leveraging hyperscalers like AWS, Azure, or GCP to create platforms that are not only equivalent, but often more flexible for hosting systems and adopting innovations like AI.

### 3 HOW CAN YOU OFFER A HIGHER QUALITY OF SUPPORT THAN SAP DOES?

SAP's support is bound by a rigid lifecycle policy with service tiers: standard, extended, and customer-specific maintenance. Many SAP ECC 6.0—and even some early S/4HANA—customers are facing customer-specific maintenance as early as the end of 2025, not 2027. And despite paying the same fees, they'll lose access to new bug fixes, security patches, and tax or regulatory updates. For finance teams, that's a clear audit risk.

Many IT teams are already frustrated by the limits of SAP support. These include no support for custom code (where most support issues originate), only partial coverage for interoperability, shallow security protection delivered in the form of patches, and the need to justify why certain issues should be considered the highest priority (P1) issues. As a result, end users often settle for working with unsolved minor bugs that will never be fixed, or they develop their own customizations to address issues in the base software.

In contrast, third-party support for SAP takes a **"support driven."** approach that emphasizes customer service over software development. Under a standard contract, Spinnaker Support will cover your entire SAP entire, regardless of version.



#### HERE IS WHY WE PROVIDE MORE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT THAN SAP:

##### EXTENDED COVERAGE

Standard support includes break/fix service, interoperability, customizations, security and vulnerability management, global tax and regulation compliance, and sound technical advice. Our goal is to resolve the issue, no matter what the source.

##### FASTER RESPONSE

Third-party support focuses on diagnosing and solving issues quickly by responding to issues in minutes, not hours or days.

##### LIFETIME SUPPORT

We will support whatever versions you use for as long as you need.

##### SHARED OWNERSHIP

We deliver far more personalized support through an assigned team of senior engineers who know you and your technology stack.

##### HIGHLY QUALIFIED ENGINEERS

We hire only the best in the business, with an SAP engineering team averaging 20+ years of software experience.

##### CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL TEAMWORK

When a technical issue requires individuals on separate teams, our processes are designed to quickly alert whoever is required to weigh in on the solution.

Providers of Third-party Support for SAP have different business objectives than SAP. At Spinnaker Support we focus on the quality of our service, delivering an exceptional customer experience and minimizing any risk to your environment. This ethos delivers the customer (and employee) retention that drives our business growth and the expansion of our delivery teams to adopt the increasing number of customers moving to our service.

#### 4 HOW CAN YOU GUARANTEE A FASTER RESPONSE THAN SAP?

SAP-provided support is notorious for its slow replies to Service Requests (SRs), often taking hours or even days. Most SAP products don't publish firm Service Level Agreements (SLAs); they're described as guidelines rather than commitments. Say goodbye to time-consuming searches through My SAP Support.

Spinnaker Support offers something SAP doesn't: a true guarantee. Backed by our [Ultimate Support Guarantee](#), we contractually commit to fast, expert help, available 24/7/365. Our SLAs mandate a response time of under 15 minutes for Priority 1 and 2 issues. In reality, our global support team treats every ticket with P1-level urgency, and the **average response time is usually five minutes or less.**

Escalations can happen at any time—whether by our team, your team, or leadership—to ensure the fastest path to resolution.

**Speed is only half the equation.** We also resolve issues faster. With ISO-certified processes, a unified IT Service Management (ITSM) system, and no silos between engineering, development, security, and interoperability teams, we get the right experts on the problem right away.

With Spinnaker, you're not just hoping for good support. You're guaranteed to get it.



## 5 How can you lower the cost and improve support quality?

It's easy to be skeptical when a deal sounds too good to be true.

In fact, it's not hard to offer premium support at a reasonable price when SAP is overcharging. Unlike SAP, we don't inflate our fees to fund cloud development, acquisitions, or R&D for products our customers may never use. Instead, we tailor pricing to your specific environment—factoring in your technology roadmap, unused licenses, and system stability. On average, our customers save between 62% and 67%.

**THE HIGHER QUALITY DESCRIBED EARLIER IN THIS GUIDE IS SIMPLE TO EXPLAIN. WE FOCUS ON BUILDING THE KIND OF SERVICES WE WOULD WANT OURSELVES:**

- We hire experienced support engineers who are intelligent, courteous, and care about solving your technical problems.
- We construct efficient internal processes focusing on transparency, accountability, and shared ownership.
- We deploy modern technology to track issues, communicate with customers, and facilitate the fastest resolution.

In addition, we align our services to your individual needs, so you only pay for what you use. And we reinvest our profits into operations to ensure they are as high in quality as possible.



### RESOURCE

[7 Steps to Evaluating a Third-Party Software Support Vendor](#)

6

## HOW CAN YOU PROVIDE SUPPORT IF YOU'RE OUTSIDE MY COUNTRY?

While many organizations prefer local support resources, the industry no longer works that way. Today almost all support consists of offsite engineers who assist your needs through email, phone, chat, and virtual conferencing. With the proper infrastructure, established processes, and talented engineers, a business can provide quality, cost-effective global support from anywhere and anytime.

So why do companies remain skeptical about support performed from outside their country? Most likely because they want the assurance of a fast response in their preferred language(s) during their established business hours. The genuine concern is not where the remote support originates but how effective it is.

As mentioned earlier, we offer effective support worldwide through stringent SLAs and a highly connected global network of engineers in eight regional locations who speak more than 14 languages. We handle all tickets from wherever they are sent to and when they arrive. If a customer requires a specific specialty within a particular country, we will hire for that need.

## 7 WON'T OUR PRODUCTIVITY SUFFER IF WE CAN'T ACCESS SAP'S SOLUTION MANAGER?

SAP is proud of its 40+ years of delivering software support. But that service is not what it was even a decade ago. Longtime SAP customers have seen SAP support shift from live, responsive help from engineers to self-guided research on the *SAP for Me* portal.

As SAP charges you more for support every year, they have shifted the heavy lifting of problem resolution to your staff. So, in a way, your productivity is already suffering from poor vendor support. In addition, when you do not renew the SAP maintenance contract, you no longer have software usage rights to SAP Solution Manager. This may cause fear of loss for DBAs, analysts, and other users because SAP has trained them to see Solution Manager — often seen by DBAs and analysts as a core troubleshooting tool.

But what are they really losing? Solution Manager is built to monitor, self-diagnose, and resolve issues, but in practice, its complexity often causes delays and frustration. It provides little help with interoperability or custom code, and it requires regular patching and updates, adding more burden to already stretched technical teams.

If you still rely on Solution Manager, we've got you covered. Spinnaker works with several industry-leading tools that can replace Solution Manager's functionality. We'll help you identify and implement the right-fit solution for your environment.

Meanwhile, SAP continues to automate its support portal, making it harder to reach a real person and slower to start any meaningful issue resolution. While that may help SAP, it slows you down, making it harder to open service requests and delaying the start of real issue investigation. And getting live, on-demand help from an engineer? Nearly impossible.

**With Spinnaker, support becomes personal and productive again. You get a dedicated team of senior engineers who know your technology stack and take full ownership of every issue. No account managers. No ticket games. Just real experts resolving real problems—fast.**

When your team no longer has to sift through SAP's portal or justify every request, they can stay focused on their strategic goals instead of fighting support fires.

DURING ONBOARDING  
WITH SPINNAKER SUPPORT,  
WE ENSURE A SMOOTH AND  
EFFICIENT PROCESS BY:

### 1. Performing a detailed knowledge transfer.

We review your unique application environment, technology stack, customizations, ticket history, geographic footprint, IT staff capabilities, and more. Spinnaker Support uses this information to assign you a team of engineers who understand your needs and can provide the fastest possible response.

### 2. Building you an accessible archive.

Our team downloads an easily searchable archive of software media, SAP notes and knowledge base articles you are legally entitled to from SAP's Support Portal to your network. See the next section for additional detail.

## 8 WON'T WE LOSE OUR CAPABILITY TO UPGRADE?

SAP's innovation is now focused on its cloud-based solutions. New features are no longer added to on-premise products, and upgrades have largely shifted from delivering business value to simply maintaining SAP version compatibility. Migrating from ECC to S/4HANA typically requires relicensing and can be as complex and expensive as a full reimplementation.

Real upgrades for SAP software products with perpetual licenses are limited, with often poor value propositions. The Continuous Innovation model only covers a subset of products, offering a slow drip of incremental improvements over a long period of time. Many companies that switch to third-party support have decided to remain on their stable version and refrain from spending budget and resources on upgrades that would deliver minimal advantage.

You will indeed lose access to the publisher's support portal (*SAP for Me*). However, as mentioned in the previous section, Spinnaker Support provides customers with an archive of the legally entitled SAP software media, patches and upgrades available up to your maintenance contract end date. Therefore, you can retain, access, implement, and use these upgrades as needed. An example could be an upgrade to ECC 6.0 EHP 8 from your current ECC 6.0 EHP 5, would use the files stored in your archive area created by Spinnaker Support during your onboarding.

For customers already on S/4HANA, SAP has announced that future innovation will occur only in its cloud offerings—not in on-premise versions. As a result, most S/4HANA upgrades are focused on keeping pace with support compatibility, not delivering new functionality. In response, many organizations are pursuing hybrid strategies—innovating on-premise while connecting to best-of-breed cloud solutions to modernize where it matters most.

Spinnaker Support has performed this service for hundreds of customers, using an ISO 9001:2015-certified archiving approach and ISO 27001:2022 processes for data security.

### If you can't offer security patches, how can you protect my applications?

Perhaps the most common concern of skeptics is security, because SAP will not provide security patches to customers who cancel their maintenance contract. We are often asked whether we can provide adequate software and application security. SAP says we cannot because only they can access the source code and find and address existing bugs or vulnerabilities within its software. While this argument is valid concerning the low-level binary code, the majority of SAP products that run on SAP's Netweaver application runtime (such as SAP ECC) are actually written in SAP's proprietary programming language known as ABAP. Since ABAP is an interpreted language, its source code is modifiable directly within your SAP systems, making it possible for code correction in the case of security or even simple break/fix issues. This ability to modify the code is one of the fundamental features that makes an SAP system so customizable in the first place. It is misleading, at best, to say that security of the system cannot be maintained when operating within third-party support.

**In fact, proper security is multi-layered and complex, not a reactive, one-size fits all patching model.** Spinnaker Support deploys a Proactive Security Solution (described below) that allows us to personalize our approach to address each specific issue in its unique environment.

## 9 WHY IS THIS BETTER THAN PATCHING?

**First, patches are far from perfect.** SAP delivers security patches (notes) monthly to address critical vulnerability exposures (CVEs). Unfortunately, these SAP Security Notes have issues themselves: they are reactive, time consuming to implement, block only known threats, come well after a vulnerability has been actively exploited or discovered, and may not be successful, requiring multiple revisions.

## SECOND, PATCHING IS NOT ALWAYS DEPLOYED WELL.

While it is best practice to deploy patches in a timely manner, many businesses fall behind or decide not to do it. This is because patching using SAP's CVE approach can be costly, involve time-consuming testing, and often result in unintended consequences, like issues with customizations and interoperability with other systems.

It's important to understand where your IT and security teams stand on this practice. Have they actually installed the latest SAP Security Notes? In our experience, the users most committed to staying on SAP's maintenance contracts often aren't applying patches regularly—they just like knowing they're available. In many cases, the promise of patches becomes more of a checkbox exercise or a comfort blanket than a true security measure.

**This is why Spinnaker Support implements Defense-in-Depth, a more effective and robust full-stack security.** Common vulnerabilities and exposures (CVEs) now come from various external and internal sources, so effective security must address the full technical stack. **True security is a process, not a patch.**

Spinnaker Support's global security team adheres to a Proactive Security Solution that covers the core security concepts of **Discover and Harden**, Incident Response, and Threat Intelligence which comes standard with support at no extra cost. This approach combines timely fixes, configuration changes, or other operational workarounds to remediate any security issues you encounter (we call these **"compensating controls"**). The security solution can include products for virtual patching, intrusion detection, and prevention services like proactive monitoring.

**Does this approach work?** When we surveyed our customers on this topic, over 98% of respondents indicated that our security and vulnerability protection is at least as good or better than that delivered by the publisher.

OVER 98%



### RESOURCE

[Our security page and solution briefs on patching](#)

10

### HOW CAN A THIRD-PARTY RESOLVE ISSUES WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE SAP SOURCE CODE?

Before we answer, let's begin with a basic understanding of the difference between the two support models. As with any issue, there is always more than one way to solve the problem. What SAP does, applying a patch at the binary code level, is certainly one of them. However, this takes time to develop and test, and it may or may not impact your customizations in an application. Also bear in mind that for most critical issues, SAP usually issue a workaround initially, before eventually releasing a code change.

Our engineers also review issues for the source and context of the problem. Then, after considering the most applicable approach, they provide an equal or superior solution based on how you are using the technology. In the majority of cases, the fix can involve a software reconfiguration tailored to your specific needs and system requirements, but in some very rare cases it is possible a patch from your archive created for you during the onboarding process, can be utilized.



So, this question is misleading. It is true that as the software provider, SAP is the only vendor that can access the SAP product's source code and provide changes at the software's base or binary code level. But they are not the only vendor that can perform root cause analysis of a newly discovered issue or vulnerability detection and provide a resolution.

For example, with break/fix type issues in the database and other technology products, we triage the issue to understand precisely why it is occurring. Once we know the exact source, we can develop a solution that causes the defective code not to be executed, effectively bypassing the bug or defect. The solution could be a parameter change, a change to application code (where possible), or even execution plan changes to control the issue.

For security issues (see the previous question), our methodology and approach are to mitigate the vulnerability (i.e., make it non-exploitable) by focusing on hardening against the weakness rather than producing a code fix for the vulnerability. This approach protects the system more thoroughly, including areas of the periphery, especially against zero-day vulnerabilities. SAP primarily focuses on resolving specific security issues in binary executables.



## 11 DON'T AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORKS MANDATE PATCHING?

Many of our customers operate within strict regulatory guidelines and frameworks to ensure compliance. In fact, some of our customers are designated as UK Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) or need to comply with pharmaceutical sector levels of data protection and compliance. When an audit requires proof of security patching, Spinnaker Support can provide the necessary documentation to show how our mitigations meet those requirements.

Contrary to common belief, most industry security and compliance frameworks do not require patching as the only method for addressing vulnerabilities. The language is intentionally flexible to allow for compensating controls and alternative mitigations, especially for older software systems.

## 12 HOW DO YOU HANDLE CUSTOMIZATIONS?

SAP support does not cover support issues that involve custom code—even though every product instance consists of some level of customization. SAP support engineers are instructed to stop working service requests until customers prove that the issue is not caused or impacted by customized code.

In so many words, SAP is saying that if you mess with its out-of-the-box functionality, be prepared to fix it yourself. For the latest cloud products, SAP strongly discourages using any customizations. **Third-party support is dedicated to working with customers to troubleshoot and resolve all issues, including when they are in custom code.**

At Spinnaker Support, we follow SAP's best practices for code changes for customizations. During onboarding, we run a coordinated knowledge transfer between your team and ours to become familiar with your customizations before resolving technical issues. This is a clear example of how we deliver both comprehensive and personalized service.

## 13 How about integrations with other systems?

Just as we support code customizations, Spinnaker Support also investigates issues involving integrations with your other systems. Whether you're using iDocs, HTTP, or other integration technologies, we work to identify and resolve the root cause. If your SAP system connects to a SaaS product, we can investigate up to the point of integration. While we can't troubleshoot within the SaaS environment itself, we aim to pinpoint where the issue may reside and provide guidance accordingly.

Many of our customers use SAP middleware solutions like SAP Process Integration, Process Orchestration, or the newer SAP Integration Suite. **Spinnaker Support can assist with integrations across a wide range of platforms—helping you protect and extend the value of your SAP investment.**

## 14 I WANT TO MAKE USE OF SAP BTP, CAN I DO THAT WITHIN THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT?

Customers understand that SAP tools and platforms can still serve important needs. At Spinnaker Support, we don't dictate your strategy—we support it.

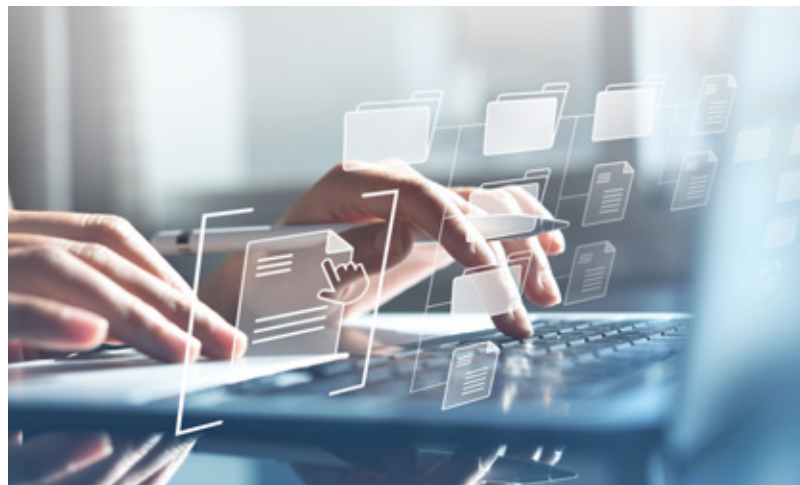
SAP BTP is typically managed under a separate cloud contract, and many of our customers successfully integrate SAP BTP with their on-premise SAP ECC systems, even while operating under third-party support. While we don't perform tasks directly within SAP BTP, we fully support the integration from the ECC side, helping ensure stability and continuity across your environment.

## 15 WHAT ABOUT MY SERVER OPERATING SYSTEM, CAN I PATCH IT?

If your operating system is still under vendor support, applying patches as usual shouldn't be an issue. Challenges arise when customers want to upgrade to a newer OS version that was never officially certified by SAP for their system. That's why we always recommend taking a strategic view before transitioning to third-party support.

As part of our onboarding process, we include later-version SAP kernels that are typically certified for more current operating systems. However, for some of our long-term customers, their software stack may never have been certified by SAP at all. That's where our interoperability service, Spinnaker Link, comes in.

Spinnaker Link is a dedicated expert team that provides guidance on interoperability between SAP binaries, operating systems, and databases, as well as peripherals like printers, scanners, encryption protocols, and browser compatibility. We investigate issues, provide detailed recommendations, and even help deploy solutions that remediate the issue, allowing the SAP system to continue to run even on operating systems for which it was never certified.



## 16 Won't we fall behind in our global tax and regulatory compliance?

Not true. Unlike SAP, third-party vendors provide Global Tax and Regulatory Compliance (GTRC) data tailored to the customer's specific needs, delivering updates on a regular schedule to be less intrusive and easier to apply. At Spinnaker Support, we include GTRC updates as standard for the required products, no matter how old the software release.

SAP typically provides broad GTRC updates for customers under Standard and Extended Support, while those in Customer Specific Maintenance receive little to no personalized attention. SAP's patches and updates are a one-size-fits-all approach to GTRC that requires additional work on behalf of the customer.

In comparison, Spinnaker Support keeps you compliant by delivering monthly and year-end updates tailored to your unique geographic reach and software environment requirements. Our GTRC team alleviates the challenge of changing tax, legal, and regulatory requirements by continually researching, monitoring, and gathering specific requirements from governing authorities in dozens of countries and all 50 U.S. states. We've designed our back-end systems and ISO 9001:2015-certified process to scale as we add new customers and jurisdictions.

You get timely and comprehensive updates designed to cover the breadth of tax and regulatory environment compliance issues and keep you compliant while minimizing the impacts of these changes to your systems. As a trusted partner, we work directly with customers to schedule and implement all required changes.

### 17 WON'T MY SAP RELATIONSHIP SUFFER IF I LEAVE SAP SUPPORT?

Even a hint at leaving SAP support, and your account manager will tell you it will damage or end your overarching relationship with SAP. They may say you can't purchase new licenses or must pay reinstatement fees and penalties to re-engage. They certainly won't be happy about the lost revenues.



**RESOURCE**  
[Spinnaker Support's GTRC Offering](#)

However, ask yourself this: is your current relationship with SAP all that great? Likely, they are slow to escalate support issues, aggressively pressing you to upgrade or move to the cloud, and refuse to alter their price structure to accommodate you on shelfware and unused licenses.

Many SAP customers that have switched to third-party support have successfully returned to SAP when they were ready to upgrade to a new version or migrate to a cloud product. To date, we know of no Spinnaker Support customers who paid reinstatement fees. Everything is negotiable, especially when SAP knows you're planning to invest even more in its products.

In fact, when returning to SAP after several years, you're treated as a new customer. This puts you in a better future negotiating position than if you had stayed current on SAP support. We recommend negotiating with the license sales rep, not the support sales rep, to get the best possible deal.

## 18 ISN'T ALL THIS JUST BEGGING FOR AN SAP AUDIT?

On average, SAP customers can expect to be audited every 3-5 years, so it's best always to be prepared in the event your organization is selected randomly.

SAP on-premise customers typically complete an annual self-assessment using SAP's tools to report license usage. While SAP may threaten audits when customers move away from support, the Global License Auditing and Compliance (GLAC) team can't mandate one unless there are discrepancies in recent declarations or a major business event like a merger or acquisition.

So yes, switching to third-party support is a known audit trigger, but contrary to what your SAP account manager might say, it's low on the list.

### RESOURCE

[Will You Be Audited More After Switching to Third-Party Software Support?](#)



It is essential to review your SAP contracts (original, renewed, and amended) to understand specific terms and clauses. If you have virtual environments, you must know how they are configured and how, or if, they utilize SAP programs. You must also determine if any unlicensed SAP products or features were inadvertently activated. Spinnaker Support has experience and partners to help with license review and compliance.

## 19 WON'T MY EMPLOYEES BE UNHAPPY WITHOUT SAP?

This concern usually comes from leadership—not the hands-on users. Why? Because very few customers *love* SAP support, even those whose careers are tied to SAP products. They are already unhappy with slow responses, lack of escalation, and time wasted on self-researching issues. You will always have employees who dislike change, prefer **“the devil I know,”** and don't care how much it costs the organization each year.

### But how do Spinnaker Support's customers feel about our SAP services? In their words:

"Spinnaker is an amazing third-party support provider service that helps in providing **accurate** and **responsive solutions** to customers."

"My points of contact are always **very helpful, knowledgeable and very efficient**. We have developed an awesome working relationship."

"They have a **deep understanding** of the tools and they are very much able to deliver **unrivalled technical support**."



These are direct quotes from [independent—verified reviews posted on the Gartner Peer Insights review site](#).

In dozens of published reviews, you can read why actual customers prefer our services. It is highly likely that, just like you, many of these individuals started out as third-party support skeptics. Remember that while third-party support is a direct replacement for SAP support, it is an entirely different model: support- driven not software-driven.

# Recommendations for how to win over other skeptics

So maybe we've won you over with our responses, or you weren't skeptical from the start. If you're a third-party support champion, you may still have to sell this to your SAP user and IT team.

## HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS THAT HAVE WORKED FOR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

### START EARLY TO IDENTIFY THE SKEPTICS.

Each department or individual may have a separate set of concerns. The sooner you identify these, the more time you'll have to address them. Companies that do not convert skeptics soon enough may miss contract deadlines and even see their support initiative stumble or fail.

### UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH (OR LITTLE) YOUR TEAM HAS BEEN USING SAP SUPPORT.

Gather a two to three year history of tickets issued to SAP (types, priority level, etc.). This data can support your cost/benefit analysis, substantiate claims of poor support, and justify the third-party support discovery phase.

### BE FAMILIAR WITH YOUR SAP SOFTWARE LICENSING.

As your procurement or sourcing department will tell you, SAP contracts are nothing, if not complex. Gather specifics of your software application landscape: product lines that are in scope, language requirements, countries requiring tax and regulatory updates, used versus unused licenses, etc. Know your rights, end-of-maintenance dates, and how to cancel as contractually required by SAP. This information will help eliminate surprises and build your case for leaving SAP.

## BUILD CONSENSUS ON WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION.

Organizations that choose to move to third-party support fall into one or more categories: they want to sustain their existing products, they eventually plan to migrate to a new system, or they are in financial distress. Be clear on the drivers, and make sure that it's first and foremost in your discussions. This focus can counter minor concerns skeptics can use to derail your decision.


### IF IT HELPS, LEAD WITH PRICE.


If you're struggling to win over skeptics, focus on the full business impact—not just cost savings. Switching to third-party support avoids the massive spend and disruption tied to a RISE migration, where subscription costs are just the beginning. The real expenses come from implementation, consulting, and the strain on internal resources. With third-party support, the hard savings are immediate, and the avoided costs and risks free up budget for what matters most—whether that's transformation, staffing, managed services, or boosting the bottom line.

## SHARE THIS GUIDE WITH EVERYONE WHO NEEDS IT.

Whether in IT, legal, procurement, or senior management, you can win over the skeptics!

### STILL LOOKING FOR ANSWERS?

**Remember:** It's okay to be a third-party support skeptic. If we haven't covered your area of uncertainty, or haven't answered one of the above questions to your satisfaction, feel free to search through our [FAQs](#)  sections on our website.

Or better yet, [reach out directly and contact us for more information.](#)  Our team is glad to provide answers to any of your inquiries.

# Customer Satisfaction Survey

In our annual customer survey, we reported a 98.1% overall satisfaction. Survey results are based on more than 500 customer responses.

- OVERALL 98.1%
- RESPONSIVENESS
- FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE
- TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE
- ISSUE FOLLOW-UP
- UNDERSTANDING OF CUSTOMER
- SERVICE QUALITY

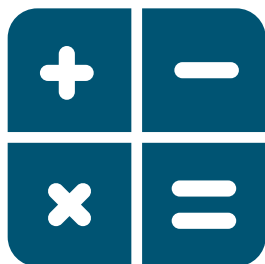


## Additional Resources

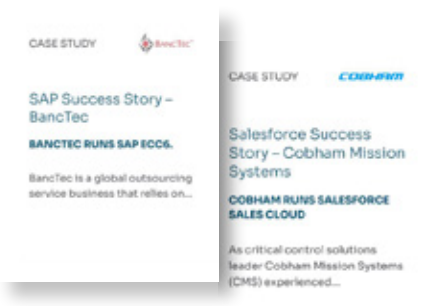


Click on any item below  
to open the resource

Estimate your cost savings  
with our [Online Calculator](#)



Customer Success Stories



A-to-Z Guide for  
[Third-Party Support](#)



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## ABOUT US

Today's leaders are navigating an increasingly uncertain and ever-changing world. They can't be held back by restrictive, ineffective, or complicated software systems as they move their organizations forward. Spinnaker optimizes software ecosystems through services designed for sustainable transformation, maximizing software investments and freeing up the capital and resources leaders need to navigate the future with certainty.

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