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4 Tips to Tame Data Management

Get the Most Out of SAP Production Reports

Within each SAP module, there are hundreds of pre-defined production reports — including invoices, purchase orders, loading slips, inventory reports, and sales reports — that track day-to-day operations. These reports are the lifeblood of any organization. Users need to be able to easily access them, no matter the format, and break them down into smaller reports that can then be delivered automatically to appropriate users (or an archive).

Any effort to tackle this data management challenge needs to consider the old axiom, “garbage in, garbage out.” Organizations should ensure that the data populating these reports is well-formatted and divided into logical pieces. Furthermore, the entire data management process should be fully automated, from the point of creation to the archive. In this article, I’ll share four tips to help companies reach these goals.

Tip #1: Use an External OMS

Delivering production report data in the right format to the right place and then archiving it requires processing time — and therefore can affect system performance. However, a distributed, Windows platform-based output management system (OMS) can handle all of the duties associated with this process without significantly affecting SAP system performance; the OMS ensures that the workload remaining on the SAP system consists solely of exchanging raw spool data. An added advantage is that the OMS can be upgraded to take advantage of new technologies without upgrading the entire SAP system.

Tip #2: Use the Connection Architecture Best Suited to Your Needs

SAP created the BC-XOM protocol to facilitate external communication with OMSs, most of which are based on this protocol. Other systems use virtual printers or connect directly to the spool system. All three connection architectures have advantages and disadvantages; that’s why Symtrax’s Compleo Suite *for SAP solutions* includes an SAP-certified connector that supports all three. Each architecture can be implemented independently or combined to achieve specific goals.

Tip #3: Format, Enhance, Burst, Route, Deliver, and Archive

SAP production reports contain a wealth of detailed and valuable information. However, companies will only be able to get the most out of this information if they can effectively deliver, manage, and archive it. These reports need to be formatted, enhanced, and burst before being routed, delivered, and archived — and all of this should be done automatically.

Symtrax’s Supervisor module allows you to create scenarios that accomplish all of these tasks without manual intervention. In addition, it is important to be able to add external data that depends on information within the report. For example, you may want to add email addresses to support electronic data delivery or add external text files to provide detailed instructions on the proper handling of hazardous materials. To facilitate this, Compleo uses lookup variables during runtime.

Tip #4: Ensure Flexible Data Retrieval

A crucial part of data management is data retrieval. After all, data is only useful if users can easily access it. Companies should use software that supports legal and auditing requirements, minimizes archive size overtime, and optimizes retrieval time. Symtrax’s Archivor allows users to choose which fields in a document to index, and captures all available SAP-provided document metadata to ensure adherence to legal requirements. And by indexing only what is important, Archivor minimizes archive size. Finally, it optimizes retrieval through lookup scenarios that are unique to the document type.

Learn More

Symtrax is an SAP partner with over 3,000 customers and offices throughout the world. We have been helping companies improve data management, reporting, and forms creation for over 20 years. To learn more about this topic, download our white paper “Getting the Most from Your SAP Production Reports” at www.symtrax.com/Pages/en-us/Download-Compleo-Suite-Whitepaper-SAP-Production-Reports.aspx, or visit www.symtrax.com. ■

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