

Fit to Standard

The Future,
or a Fad?



Change the way
you look at things,
and the things you
look at change.

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We've all heard the term 'Fit to Standard'. It is even advocated for, by SAP. But is this the future, or just a fad? Many people ask if this is even possible. Over the decade, this has become the approach to use when implementing any form of technology.

Why you ask?

The reason is the advent of Cloud. We do not ask for the apps on our phones to be customised, so why do we want specific requirements for corporate solutions? This approach has been adopted in the SAAS technology solutions – Salesforce, Ariba, Conur et al.

And it works! But it requires one big adjustment – for people to change their mindsets.

Humans initially do not like change. And yet, 'Fit to Standard' requires them to stop doing what they have known and start adapting to something new. We seem to be able to do this in our personal lives – every time Instagram or Facebook change their functionality, we just sort of get on with it despite the noise we might make.

But have others actually managed to make this happen in the corporate world? The answer is yes. There are several key success factors:

- 1. Lead by Example:** All levels of leadership need to buy in and sponsor this approach. Not just the CIO, but the full c-suite and below. This is not just saying "yes I sponsor that" and actively demonstrating support. This will mean educating and understanding the impacts of change and leading by example.



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2. **Show not Tell:** Do not expect to tell everyone of this, and they just change overnight. It is not that easy. Show them the future and ask, “why won’t this work?”. Get people engaged and excited from the start. Often, people do not know the art of the possible, and therefore want things to stay the same.
3. **Nothing influences people more than a recommendation from a trusted friend:** Identify the influencers in your organisation and win them over first. There will always be sceptics, but if you can show them that people can change, then it is much more powerful. This should not just be based on seniority or hierarchy in the organisation, but silent influencers who are trusted in the organisation as well.
4. **What gets measured, gets done:** You need to measure standardisation. Are you actually sticking to the principle, or letting it slip in the details? We believe in a standardised framework that should be used to measure, track, and create visibility of whether this is happening or not.

We believe ‘Fit to Standard’ is possible and is the future, but requires a different mindset and approach to making this happen. Yes of course, there will always be areas where the standard won’t work, but these should be well known, understood, and really challenged. Do not mindlessly throw away business values or benefits to accommodate ‘Fit to Standard’ religiously. There will be areas that doing something different could be a good thing but use your prioritised capability model to identify where these areas should be.

For example, being clear where you need unique capabilities to deliver your business outcomes (using a critical thread tool) is key, and this will allow you to access when it is necessary versus when it is just people refusing to change.

Therefore, start with educating and gaining alignment from the critical sponsors and programme leads. Do not make ‘Fit to Standard’ just a design principle you write down but never really adopt. Challenge yourself and your teams and start early.



“The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating.”

