BlackLine Extends Your SAP Investment

Product Comparisons & Common Questions

BlackLine Complements SAP

The BlackLine Finance Controls and Automation Platform complements any ERP environment by automating processes, strengthening controls, and streamlining core close tasks.

The cloud-based platform is purpose-built for the financial close. It addresses aspects of the record-to-report process that are still being performed manually (Figure 1) by accountants and retained in disparate locations in nearly 60% of organizations.[1] BlackLine's core functionality includes such use cases as balance sheet substantiation, journal entry processing, and intercompany accounting.

With BlackLine, companies can be confident that they're running the most integrated, complementary, and trusted financial close solution available for SAP.

More than 2,400 companies around the world trust BlackLine, including over 500 running SAP.

FIGURE 1

Product Comparisons & Common Questions

1

My organization is making/considering a significant investment in SAP to upgrade/implement our ERP environment across the entire enterprise. One of the goals of this initiative is to simplify the IT landscape and reduce the number of software vendors. Why should I still consider BlackLine?

Purpose-Built.

While the ERP is enterprise-wide, BlackLine is purpose-built for the financial close—adding visibility, control, and automation to traditionally manual processes.

ERP-Agnostic.

Your BlackLine platform will remain consistent regardless of changes to your ERP landscape, even allowing users and auditors to leverage BlackLine for testing in the process of an ERP upgrade.

Complementary.

BlackLine complements and fills the white space between the transactional ERP and the consolidation and reporting processes.

SAP-Endorsed.

BlackLine is the SAP-recommended solution in this space.

Centralized & Consistent.

BlackLine helps centralize data and processes across disparate systems and locations, impacting end-to-end close activities which are often performed outside SAP in Excel, shared drives, etc.

Integrated Platform.

BlackLine is a single, integrated platform, which means it may replace numerous legacy processes and systems.

2

My SAP S/4HANA implementation will change my finance master data (company codes, cost centers, profit centers, etc.). If I implement BlackLine first, will there be significant re-work involved?

No. BlackLine has a simple process that can accommodate these types of changes.

This process:

- Maps historical data to future-state structure using an Excel-based tool that looks and feels the same as other BlackLine implementation templates

- Can handle multiple relationships between legacy and new data (one-to-one, many-to-one)

- Limits or eliminates re-work resulting from these changes to your finance master data

In addition, BlackLine can simplify the testing and data validation cycles of your SAP project. Specifically, BlackLine:

- Contains historical financial information, including pre go-live GL balances, charts of accounts, and entity structure in an already accepted format

- Replaces manual and time-consuming Excel- or Access-based data validation practices and reduces testing efforts

- Provides a single platform that stays consistent regardless of ERP changes and is familiar to auditors

BLACKLINE

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If I have SAP S/4HANA and/or capabilities like the Universal Journal do I still need BlackLine Journal Entry?

Yes. SAP may automate certain entries and reduce overall volume. However, no ERP solution will eliminate an organization's need to record, support, and approve manual journal entries.

SAP Universal Journal	BlackLine Journal Entry
• Simplifies financial master data, combining transactional data previously stored in multiple tables into one large table	• Automates certain journal entries, posting them directly into SAP
• Streamlines certain processes and allows accounting and finance professionals to generate real-time insights for better decision-making	• Delivers intelligent workflow based on user-defined logic managed by accounting and finance
• Eliminates the need to reconcile subledgers to the general ledger or reconcile data between tables in SAP	• Integrates with other BlackLine solutions to reduce duplicate work, increase automation, and accelerate processes where journal entries are a dependency
	• Simplifies the audit process surrounding journal entries by capturing all manual entries and related supporting documentation in a single platform—eliminating the challenge of isolating/identifying manual journal entries in SAP
	• Permits reportable fields not supported in SAP, adding visibility into the types and reasons of entries being made (i.e., information often captured in the text or reference field in SAP)
	• Allows additional validation beyond standard SAP validations (i.e., prevent users from posting to specific accounts, cost centers, etc.)
	• Offers auto-population of fields based on logic (i.e., populate text or assignment field based on account and cost center information)

How does BlackLine Journal Entry compare to SAP's "Park and Post" functionality?

SAP Park and Post

- Allows documents to be stored in SAP prior to posting to ensure appropriate review and/or segregation of duties

- Documents can be routed to approvers using workflow embedded in SAP

- Add-on solutions are available for Park and Post, allowing customers to attach supporting documents to individual entries

BlackLine Journal Entry

- ERP-agnostic and can manage the journal entry process across multiple instances of SAP or multiple ERPs

- Integrated with other BlackLine solutions, allowing for additional automation and reduction of overall close effort

- Provides real-time feedback and validation as if the entry were created directly in the ERP

- Accounting and finance can access live dashboards on completeness, timeliness, and rejection reasons, among other criteria

- Audit trail is easy for external/internal auditors to access—via a unique auditor role—after all approvals have been completed

- Cloud-based and user-friendly interface

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How does BlackLine's Finance Controls and Automation Platform (Figure 2) compare to SAP Financial Closing cockpit?

SAP Financial Closing Cockpit

- Centralized monitoring and control of close tasks

- Template-driven environment to increase standardization

- Provides dashboards for tracking and visibility

- Automated execution of SAP programs

BlackLine Platform

- Multiple, integrated solutions with the ability to post journal entries and clearing documents directly in SAP, creating a "closed loop" process with dependencies between BlackLine products

- Products can be leveraged to centralize tasks across multiple ERPs

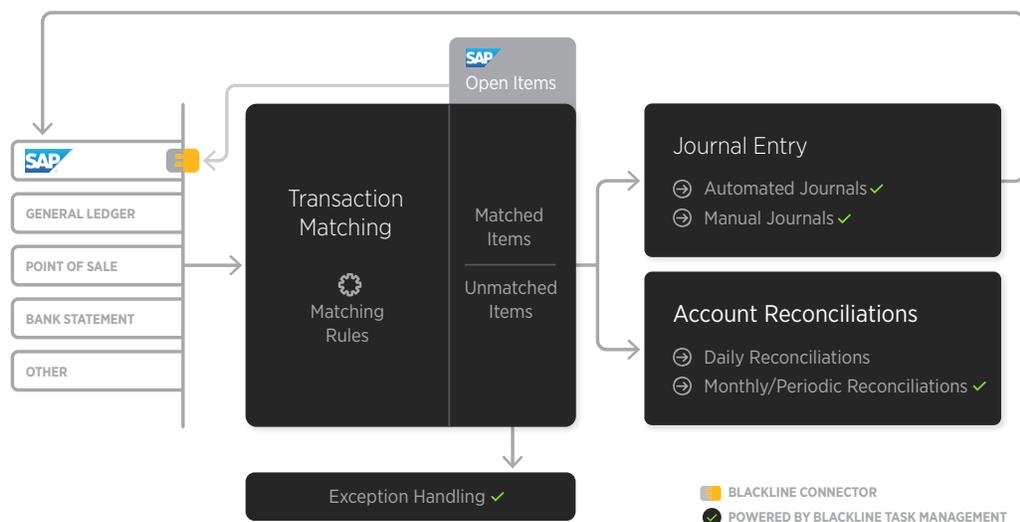- End users globally benefit from significantly reduced manual effort

SAP Open Items

SAP

GENERAL LEDGER

POINT OF SALE

BANK STATEMENT

OTHER

Transaction Matching

Matching Rules

Matched Items

Unmatched Items

Journal Entry
- Automated Journals ✓
- Manual Journals ✓

Account Reconciliations
- Daily Reconciliations
- Monthly/Periodic Reconciliations ✓

Exception Handling ✓

BLACKLINE CONNECTOR

POWERED BY BLACKLINE TASK MANAGEMENT

FIGURE 2

6 How do BlackLine's Transaction Matching and Open Item Automation solutions compare to SAP Cash Application?

SAP Cash Application

- Applies machine learning to automate manual aspects of matching invoices and receivables with customer payments

- Reduces effort required in daily operations of customer-facing accounting teams

- Solution is specific to cash application use cases

BlackLine Transaction Matching & Open Item Automation

- Many use cases within the financial close and beyond, including accounts payable, accruals, other receivables, credit cards, etc.. Automation is based on user-defined rules and can address high volumes of transactions in minutes.

- BlackLine's Open Item Automation solution pairs the Transaction Matching product with the BlackLine SAP Connector; through this solution, BlackLine matches and sends clearing documents to be posted in SAP automatically

- Flexible and compatible with multiple ERPs and data sources beyond SAP sources

- Transaction matching rules are managed by accounting and finance within BlackLine

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How does BlackLine's Finance Controls and Automation Platform compare to SAP Central Finance?

SAP Central Finance

- Combines transactional data from disparate sources for a single source of the truth

- Allows for corporate-level, real-time visibility and decision-making

- Limits need for central users to log into local ERPs or other data sources for information

- Provides visibility into intercompany positions throughout the period

BlackLine Platform

- Combines many types of financial data from disparate sources

- Single platform for both corporate visibility and local end-user execution

- Promotes automation, collaboration, and visibility across local entities

- Provides visibility into financial close-specific information and audit trails

How does BlackLine Intercompany Hub compare to SAP's intercompany functionalities?

SAP Intercompany Functionality

- Automates posting of financial documents associated with intercompany transactions in SAP

- Pairs with Central Finance to allow for visibility into global intercompany balances

- Facilitates cross-company posting with unique document numbers

BlackLine Intercompany Hub

- An end-to-end solution providing both visibility and automation to the entire intercompany process

- Closed-loop process that integrates with balance sheet reconciliations and can automate required adjustments

- Proactive solution that prevents intercompany "out of balances" from occurring

- Configurable fields are not limited to SAP master data and can support BEPS and other intercompany reporting

- Business-driven solution: limits IT involvement required to manage or change intercompany relationships

- Allows for exception tracking and visibility into settlements

- Robust reporting includes settlement dashboards and facilitates compliance activities

Certified ERP Connectors

BlackLine works with your SAP and non-SAP landscape across instances and deployment models.

Whether you're running:

- SAP S/4HANA
- SAP ECC
- SAP R/3
- Any other ERP

And whether your landscape includes:

- A single instance of SAP
- Multiple instances of SAP
- Multiple ERPs
- Planned ERP upgrade(s)
- A plan to upgrade

You can be confident that BlackLine will work with your current and future SAP environments. Our completely pre-configured integration supports the full range of SAP data, from GL balances to subledgers, transactional data, and currency rates.

Easily integrate accounts, profit centers, business areas, trading partners, company codes, and open items to BlackLine for account balance reconciliation, transactional reconciliation, or open items clearing. Bidirectional integration even posts journals automatically back into your SAP environment.

Streamline Your Move To SAP S/4HANA

Sequencing BlackLine before an SAP S/4HANA upgrade allows for:

1	A "quick win" that delivers time savings and ROI
2	Designing processes that are "desired state" rather than replicating "current state"
3	Automation of manual tasks within SAP
4	Identifying balance sheet risk and analyzing trends before the upgrade
5	Easier validation of financial data before, during, and after cutover

[Download this white paper](#) for more information about how BlackLine complements and enhances your SAP ecosystem, from SAP R/3 to SAP S/4HANA.

BLACKLINE

Trust is in the Balance™