

TRANSFORM THE WAY YOU STANDARDIZE MATERIAL NUMBER

[DECEMBER 21, 2017](#) [KAUSTUBH SATPUTE](#) [LEAVE A COMMENT](#) [EDIT](#)

The Material Number you use in your SAP ERP system is arguably one of the most important data element as it goes on for years. Years and decades passes and depending upon type of material there are hundreds or thousands of documents created – Purchase Orders, Production orders, Sales Orders, Deliveries, Material Documents etc. What would you do when you need to rename keys for several Material masters? Whatever be the reason – be it due to a new deployment planned for MDM or MDG system, or simply because you want the Material key to speak for itself with new intelligent naming or decide to standardize the use of material keys to match with a buyer company post an M&A, or you were using less digits earlier and now want to add a couple more in the alphanumeric key.

Companies have tried methods to overcome the problem, albeit the solution have proven to be sub-optimal.

For example , a lesser known method that is in use is based on Supersession of parts. For example – You have a Material Number ‘A’ for which you want a new number key ‘B’ to be used going forward. In such case a new Material Master is created with new Number Key ‘B’. The relationship is maintained in Material Masters for substituted and superseded material. The whole process of new number key replacing old material number may take some time. For this, the older Material’s stock need to get exhausted and it should not be purchased or sold any longer. Easy as it may sound, there are some disadvantages such as when you have to analyze you always have two Material Numbers to look at and consolidate for any reporting or analysis on historic data. Plus, certain enhancements are required in application such as in Material Requirement Planning to execute runs on new Material Number.

This could be a nightmare for companies with long historical usage of material to work with multiple keys for one material number, not to mention confusion this will add when working with other stakeholders like customers and suppliers in the ecosystem.

Material Number Rename Solution using SAP Landscape Transformation 2.0 (LT 2.0) provides a cleaner and efficient way to handle this requirement. We can perform the conversion/Rename of material number in SAP system based on 1:1 material rename mapping (old Part number: New Material number). This tool driven transformation takes care of changes in customizing data, master data and transaction data for each material rename that is needed.

As a pre-requisite, it is important to identify all the Material numbers which require renaming. You can combine this activity with identifying materials which are no longer needed and are obsolete. Material Numbers which need standardization are listed, whereas, non-active material masters can be discussed for archiving or Status change.

Next, a standard naming for Material need to be decided. This new naming should be intelligent nomenclature that your team of experts decide with the objective to provide solution to original problem that triggered this requirement of renaming.

Data conversion/renaming of Material Number is handled in systematic way in SAP system using SAP LT2.0 licensed software procured and installed. SAP LT2.0 assists with useful system analysis. Analysis include runtime analysis to estimate time required to run conversion or downtime required; Analysis to identify hard coding of old Material number in ABAP objects etc. After analyzing the impact and resolving any actionable tasks in ABAP or in customization, test conversions are carried out in test environment using the material mappings. Success is verified using Standard reports which are run before and after the conversion of material number rename. After repeating the testing in SIT and UAT phases the data conversion is performed in production system generally over a weekend.

Most important benefit that you get using SAP LT2.0 driven Material Number Rename is that the system after conversion is in a state that end user feel as if system always had the new Material number key in usage. In customizing data, master data, open transaction data, and historic transaction data everywhere new material key reigns. Old key is replaced completely. During the conversion, it is possible to save original material number key in 'Old Material Number' field in Basic data view of material master. This facilitates the search of Material Master using old Material key.

Take the right step by choosing tool driven SAP Transformation Services by in your data harmonization needs.