

# CLOUD HERALDS SPEED AND AGILITY FOR SALES & OPERATIONS PLANNING

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With so many variable components, supply chains are inherently chaotic - rendering them virtually impossible to manage effectively with traditional, fragmented products. But, understandably, that hasn't stopped the enterprise from trying. Like Dark Age alchemists trying to derive gold from lead, effectively managing sales and operations planning (S&OP) on legacy platforms is something of a dark art that will thankfully soon be forgotten.

In the meantime, attempts to match supply to demand with piecemeal products and error-ridden spreadsheets is still an all too familiar story in the enterprise, with potentially catastrophic consequences. Put simply, if a company over produces there are significant costs, while if it under produces there are significant opportunity costs - and neither outcome is desirable.

A truly real time, closed loop data system (see Figure 1.) has been the Holy Grail for S&OP and decision making, and it is 'The Cloud' that has now enabled this to become a reality. While the cloud can securely support just about any enterprise function virtually, perhaps the most important constant worth remembering is that the cloud is only as effective as the applications you choose to deploy on it.

This is key, because with the rise in popularity of cloud-based software for the enterprise there are a growing number of vendors in the market offering cloud services. In fact there is now a thriving and dedicated cloud segment: from old legacy on-premise system providers trying to migrate their traditional products, to the cloud 'natives' with products designed solely and specifically to perform effectively on the cloud.

With more choice and new cloud-based technologies available, how do you decide what the best S&OP system for your business is? For our customers, whether they are in a 'hyperchange' mode looking to transform their business, or 'hypergrowth' phase looking to exceed double-digit growth, 'time to value' is consistently the most important equation for comparing S&OP products - in fact, any technology product for that matter.

The key question to answer is: How quickly, from the point of project initiation, can the enterprise derive full value from the software's ability to reduce costs and improve efficiencies to maximise resource utilisation?

Cloud-based S&OP applications can not only be deployed very quickly, with no capex and ongoing infrastructure maintenance required, but

they also increase efficiencies as sales and data can be sent securely to the cloud, from anywhere at any time, improving planning effectiveness. With cloud, companies can now proactively capture market opportunities with real-time visibility and agility to truly be demand-driven, capturing all the opportunity and investing in just the right amount of supply - which, ultimately, increases profits. That's the essence and power of effective cloud applications - one flexible and scalable planning platform that planners can

time from supply to demand and from customer to partner, and the second is that it empowers planners to perform real-time scenario analysis on new product pricing, competitive actions, supplier risks, supply-side changes, new product volumes, change in demand versus forecast, and many more critical aspects of the supply chain, and use it to their business advantage. While S&OP is a business-critical process, it is worth noting that the cloud can support fully integrated and flexible business planning systems to enhance

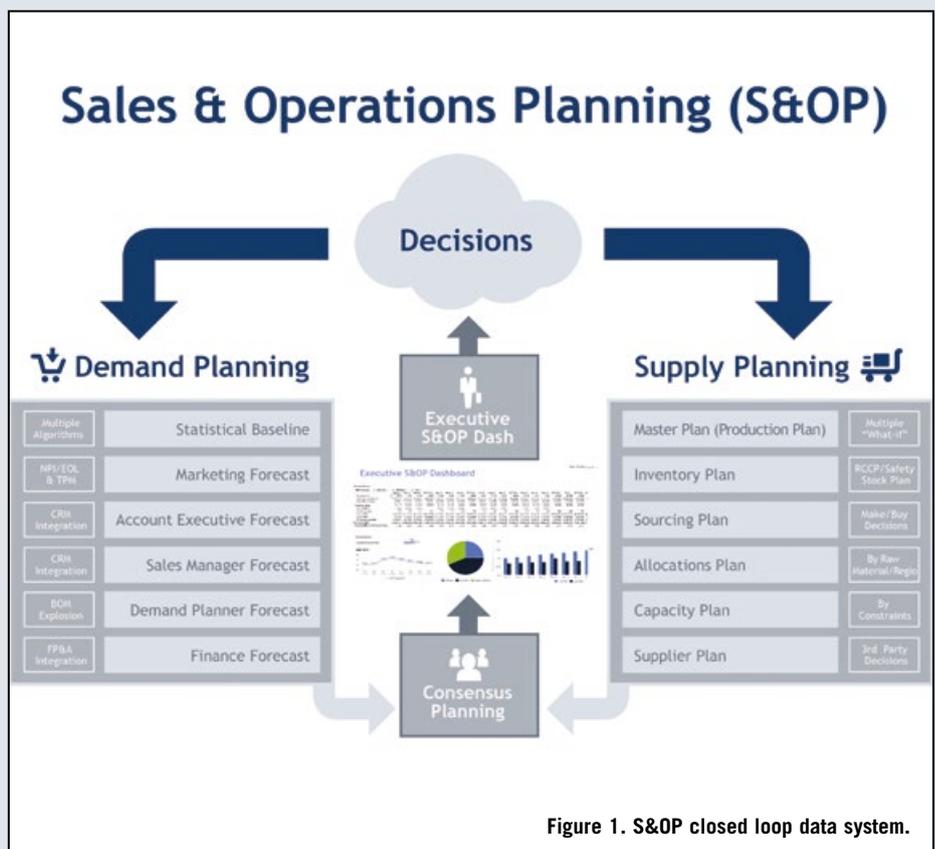


Figure 1. S&OP closed loop data system.

autonomously adjust without heavy reliance on IT systems and staff. The enterprise effectively no longer needs to rely on either the vendor, or any third-party system integrator, to configure the product to meet its needs on demand.

Many companies have envisioned this utopia for more than a decade, but the technology to address such prolific pain points across the S&OP process just wasn't there to achieve it. Until now. For example, Anaplan's integrated and flexible closed loop S&OP planning platform delivers two major competitive benefits to companies: the first being able to see all your plans connected in real

collaboration, focus, and secondly, alignment across the entire enterprise as well.

When it comes to supply chain planning, the cloud, somewhat paradoxically, is a beacon for enterprises captured in the dark, fragmented mire of legacy S&OP products. If this sounds too familiar, the time has finally arrived to realise the true potential of your business with cloud-based software that reduces costs, whilst enhancing scalability, usability, flexibility and integration of supply and demand planning.

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