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Blueprint for master data governance that lasts



Five chapters for business and IT leaders: why master data matters, the challenges that stall programmes, and the practices that keep governance alive long after go-live.



Sappy's 30-second version

- Master data is the shared foundation every process, report and AI agent depends on.
- Governance fails quietly: specialists own it, the business stops trusting it, people go back to spreadsheets.
- Make it visible, make it business-owned, and measure it after go-live.

Written for: Chief data officer, IT head, Process owners, Data stewards

Chapter 1 · Master data runs the business

Master data is the small set of records every transaction depends on. When it is wrong, everything downstream is wrong too.

Customers	Who you sell to, and on what terms.
Products	What you sell and how it is built.
Vendors	Who you buy from and how you pay them.
Employees	Who does the work and with what access.

Chapter 2 · Five reasons governance stalls

We see the same patterns in most stalled programmes.

✓ Only a few specialists can configure or change the solution
✓ IT runs it, so business goals drift out of view
✓ Bad data is migrated in during implementation
✓ It went live, then nobody kept governing
✓ The business cannot see inside it, so it stops trusting it

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Chapter 3 · Practices that keep it alive

Small, repeatable habits beat a big launch.

1. Own it in the business	Process owners approve rules, not just IT.
2. Use templates	Start from proven data models per domain.
3. Write rules in plain words	Validation and derivation rules everyone can read.
4. Draw the workflows	Visual flows people can follow and change.
5. Gate new data	Quality checks run when data is created.
6. Measure monthly	Track quality, cycle time and exceptions after go-live.

Chapter 4 · Before and after

What the change feels like to the people who use it.

Black-box governance	Changes need a specialist; requests sit in queues; documentation lives in old slides.
Visible governance	Rules and flows on screen; owners adjust them; the system itself is the documentation.

Chapter 5 · Your first 90 days

A simple path to show value early.

1. Days 1–30	Pick one domain, assess quality, agree owners.
2. Days 31–60	Agree rules and workflows; clean the backlog.
3. Days 61–90	Go live for one region or plant; measure and adjust.

Talk to the author



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Sources and further reading

SAP, SAP Master Data Governance product overview — https://www.sap.com/products/data-cloud/master-data-governance.html
SAP, SAP Master Data Governance features — https://www.sap.com/products/data-cloud/master-data-governance/features.html

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