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Introduction to SAP Business Network

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Introduction to SAP Business Network

This guide describes the benefits of the SAP Business Network service for both buyers and suppliers.

SAP Business Network is a hosted service that connects suppliers to buying organizations, allowing them to conduct transactions over the internet.

This guide applies to:

- SAP Business Network
- SAP Business Network for Supply Chain

Related guides

[Enabling suppliers on SAP Business Network](#)

[Messaging on SAP Business Network](#)

[About SAP Business Network \[page 3\]](#)

[Benefits of using SAP Business Network \[page 6\]](#)

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About SAP Business Network

SAP Business Network is a hosted service that enables suppliers and buyers to form relationships and conduct transactions over the internet.

As a supplier, you might already have an existing relationship with a customer who invites you to form a relationship on SAP Business Network. As a buying organization (buyer), you use SAP Business Network to enable electronic processing of orders and invoices with your existing suppliers. You might also search for new suppliers on SAP Business Network Discovery.

After a supplier accepts an invitation, the buyer can see the supplier's catalogs and place orders. Suppliers receive the orders and can then create and send order confirmations, advance ship notices, and invoices if the buyer accepts these documents. The buyer can then send payment documents (remittance advices) to the supplier to document the payment transfer.

Buying organization view

Buying organizations can use SAP Ariba Procurement solutions such as SAP Ariba Buying and Invoicing to create purchase orders and send them through SAP Business Network to their suppliers.

Buying organizations can also use SAP Ariba Commerce Automation to transmit cXML documents between their external ERP system and SAP Business Network.

Each buying organization has access to a buyer account on buyer.ariba.com. Buying organizations can use SAP Business Network to do the following:

- Search for suppliers with products and services they need
- Invite suppliers to form a trading partnership
- Send purchase orders and receive invoices
- Receive order confirmations and ship notices
- Send payment documents
- Run reports on their suppliers

Using SAP Business Network Discovery, buying organizations can search for suppliers, publish postings for goods and services, receive bids, and then award and rate suppliers.

Supplier view

A supplier is an organization that sells any type of product or service.

Suppliers can have more than one account on supplier.ariba.com, each one possibly connecting to different buying organizations. Suppliers use SAP Business Network to:

- Access a network of high-volume buying organizations.
- Connect with specific buying organizations that are interested in the supplier's products or services.
- Publish catalogs containing information and pricing that is customized for specific customers.
- Categorize products and services so that customers can find them when searching by category.
- Select a routing method for the documents that best fit the supplier's business needs—suppliers can receive documents through email, fax, online (using your SAP Business Network inbox and outbox), cXML, or EDI, and send documents online.
- Conduct transactions electronically by sending purchase order confirmations, invoices, and other documents. SAP Business Network provides fast transmission, tracking, and processing of transactions.

When suppliers set up their SAP Business Network account, they provide extensive information about their company—from the company address to the specific business policies. To communicate product and service offerings to buying organizations, suppliers can store catalogs on SAP Business Network using one of several different formats. Alternatively, suppliers can specify a link that enables customers to punch out from their procurement systems to their website and shop for products and services there.

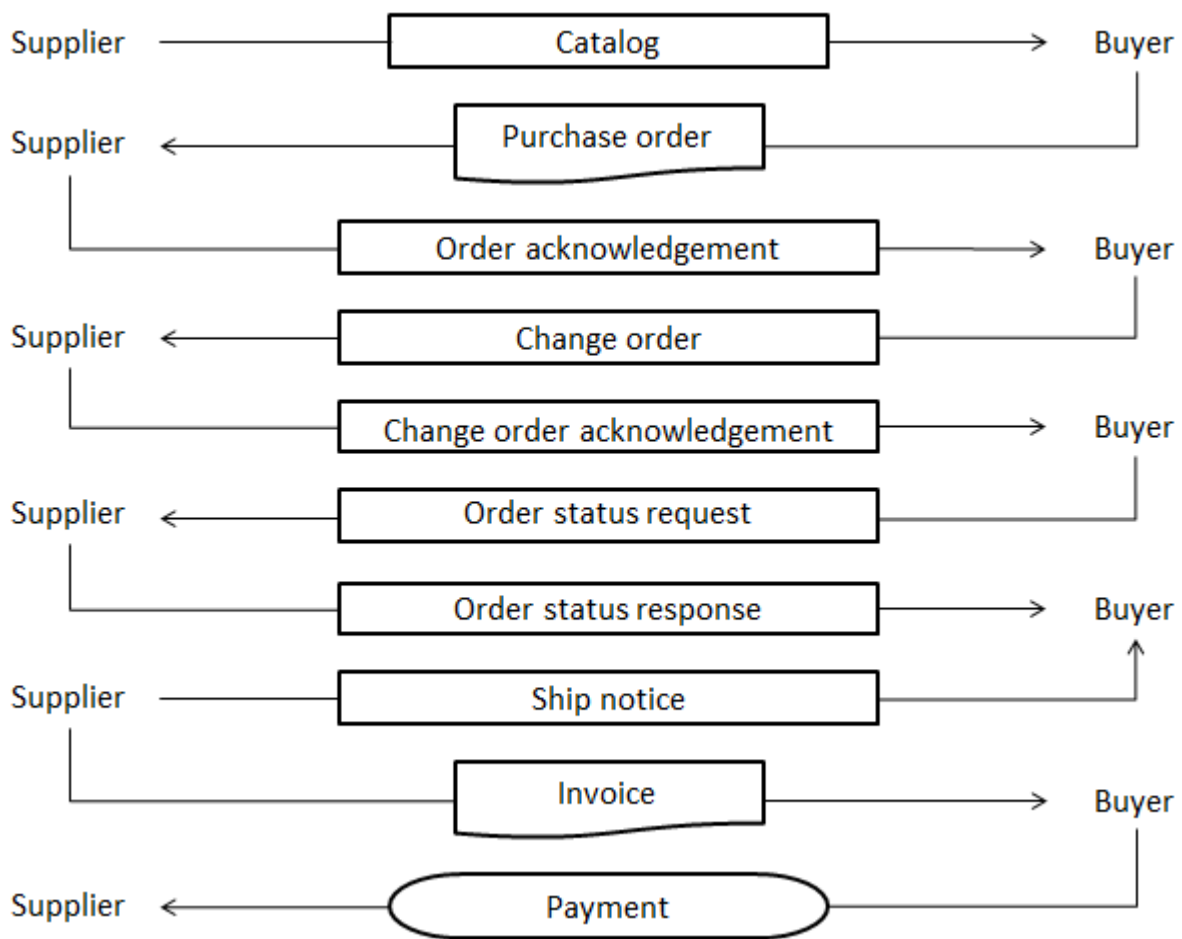
The purchase order life cycle

After a supplier creates catalog files that describe the products and services and upload them to SAP Business Network for validation, they can publish the catalogs to specific customers. SAP Business Network then notifies

those customers by email that new catalogs are available. The customer downloads and approves the catalogs for use with their procurement solution.

Once a supplier has made a catalog available:

1. Their customer uses their procurement application to browse catalogs for products and services and initiate purchase requisitions, which are routed through their organizations for approval.
2. Upon approval, the customer's procurement application automatically converts the requisitions to purchase orders and sends them in cXML format to SAP Business Network.
3. SAP Business Network sends the purchase orders to the supplier's account where they can view them in their online inbox and receive them according to the selected routing method.
4. If the customer's business rules allow suppliers to send order confirmations, ship notices, and invoices through SAP Business Network, suppliers can then send order fulfillment information and invoices electronically to their customer.



Signing in to SAP Business Network using SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service

Buyer users can sign in to SAP Business Network buyer accounts by using Single Sign-On (SSO) authentication with SAML 2.0 via the SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service. SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service provides you with secure authentication and single sign-on access for users in the cloud.

This feature supports only new buyer users onboarded using SAP Identity Access Management. SAP Business Network validates the username and distinguishes between native SAP Business Network users and users from the SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service. Non-native users are redirected to the SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service for authentication. Native SAP Business Network users have to enter their password and sign in as usual.

A highlevel workflow of buyer users signing in to SAP Business Network is as follows:

1. A user enters the username in the SAP Business Network sign-in page and clicks **Next**.
2. SAP Business Network distinguishes between native and non-native SAP Business Network users and redirects them to the relevant sign-in page.
3. Non-native users:
 1. Users are redirected to the SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service for authentication
 2. SAP Cloud Platform Identity Authentication Service validates the user-entered credentials and redirects the user to SAP Business Network.

Native SAP Business Network users:

1. Users are redirected to an SAP Business Network sign-in page.
2. SAP Business Network validates the user-entered credentials and displays the home page.

Benefits of using SAP Business Network

Registering on SAP Business Network provides suppliers with access to a network of high-volume buying organizations that can download the supplier's product and service catalogs and decide which products to purchase.

Suppliers and buyers can use SAP Business Network no matter what they sell or buy.

Publish and control access to electronic catalogs

Catalogs describe the products and services that a supplier offers.

Buying organizations search by company type, industry type, and product type to find catalogs that offer the product or service they need. They then download and import catalogs into their procurement application to allow their staff to search for products and services, or they configure their procurement application to punch out to a supplier's website.

- Control access to published catalogs. Suppliers control which customers have access to each of their catalogs. This enables suppliers to create catalogs that contain special items or contract prices for specific customers.

- Describe any type of product or service. Catalogs support commodities, services, and complex or simple products.
- Produce catalogs in a standard format. Because SAP Business Network supports a standardized catalog format, catalogs are universally accessible by all customers. Suppliers can produce catalogs in-house or contract with third-party content providers.
- Offer catalogs with additional content. Suppliers can also create PunchOut catalogs, which reside on the supplier's website and interact with the buyer's procurement applications to provide rich, descriptive data and configurability.
- Create and publish catalogs with ease. Any company, regardless of its technical sophistication, can create catalogs.
- Ensure published catalogs are error-free. SAP Business Network automatically validates the format and syntax of all catalog files when supplier's upload them. If it detects errors, it tells the user where they are so they can fix them.

Respond to business opportunities

SAP Business Network Discovery enables suppliers to search for and participate in online sourcing opportunities created by buying organizations.

A business opportunity might be a request for information (RFI), a request for quote (RFQ), a request for proposal (RFP), or a negotiation.

By clicking **Leads** in the SAP Business Network for Suppliers dashboard, suppliers can search for and participate in business opportunities. As a best practice, as a supplier, make sure your organization's company profile has been configured with specific product and service categories that represent the goods and services you sell. SAP Ariba uses product and service categories based on the UNSPSC (United Nations Standard Products and Services Code) commodity codes to classify postings and supplier organizations. If a supplier account is configured to receive business opportunity notifications, SAP Ariba will send a daily digest email notification of postings published by a buying organization that match the product and service categories specified in the supplier's company profile.

Automate business processes

SAP Business Network enables the automation of certain aspects of the business relationship, providing improved business practices and reducing business costs.

- Track order status. SAP Business Network enables buyers and suppliers to track the status of purchase orders in real time. Real-time tracking increases customer confidence.
- Generate electronic invoices. Suppliers can generate invoices electronically and send them to their customers. Suppliers can also see invoice status updates as their customer receives, approves, and pays them.
- Eliminate manual processing. By automating the process of sending and receiving purchase orders, SAP Business Network eliminates unnecessary steps and manual processing of routine transactions, speeds order execution, and increases accuracy.
- Route documents using your preferred protocol. SAP Business Network automatically routes purchase orders and payment documents to suppliers through cXML, email, fax, or EDI. It can send them directly to the automated order receiving system, or it can store them for online viewing. As a supplier, you specify how you want to receive them, and SAP Business Network takes care of format, protocol, and delivery details.

Conduct business in a secure and reliable environment

SAP Business Network is a secure e-commerce service and offers security and reliability features.

Security and reliability features offered include:

- **Catalog security.** Because catalogs contain sensitive data, suppliers can keep them secure by controlling which buyers can see which catalogs.
- **Transaction security.** SAP Business Network communicates using HTTPS, which is HTTP over SSL (Secure Sockets Layer). SSL is the industry-standard method for protecting web communications. The SSL security protocol provides RSA data encryption, server authentication, message integrity, and optional client authentication for TCP/IP connections.
SAP Business Network servers use a Verisign Class 3 server digital certificate to enable SSL connections. SAP Business Network is secured by using 128-bit encryption as a minimum and 256-bit encryption if the client browser supports it.
- **Transaction reliability.** SAP Business Network has built-in reliability and error-detection features to ensure that all orders are available the instant they are sent from the buyers. SAP Business Network runs redundant copies of all critical software subsystems related to transaction routing. This redundancy enables automatic fail-over in the event of an error so that there is no disruption of service. Even if automatic fail-over for order routing does not work, suppliers can view orders online on SAP Business Network.

Registering on SAP Business Network

Companies must be registered on SAP Business Network before they can send and receive documents.

How suppliers connect with customers

To create an account and connect with buying organizations, suppliers must register their company on SAP Business Network.

Registration on SAP Business Network takes only a few minutes—all that's needed is basic company information such as the company name, address, and a business contact.

Any supplier can register with SAP Business Network. However, a supplier cannot obtain a fully transactional account until at least one customer (a "sponsor") approves a relationship with the supplier organization.

Registering with assistance from your customer

Typically, your company is already in contact with a customer that transacts with their suppliers through SAP Business Network. The customer logs in to SAP Business Network and invites your company to join. SAP Business Network sends an email message to you that contains a link for starting the registration process. SAP Business Network notifies you through email when the account is active and ready to transact with your customer.

Registering without assistance from your customer

If you are not already in contact with a buying organization on SAP Business Network, you can create a free, standard account at supplier.ariba.com. You can use this account to learn how to conduct e-commerce through SAP Business Network, create a company profile, and find new business through SAP Business Network Discovery.

Completing a company profile allows buying organizations to locate your company when searching for suppliers by product and service category, industry, ship-to or service location, or other criteria. After reviewing basic company information, a buying organization can then request a relationship with your company. After you accept a relationship request, your account is ready to transact with the buying organization.

How to register as a supplier on SAP Business Network

You register an SAP Business Network account in order to transact with your customers and potentially find new business opportunities.

Context

i Note

To avoid potential confusion, SAP Business Network checks for duplicate accounts as part of the registration process. This applies to both standard and enterprise accounts as well as accounts created in SAP Business Network Discovery (so called walk up registrations).

Suppliers can register non-public email domains to get notified whenever a new account is created or a relationship is established using this email domain.

Procedure

1. You can use one of the following methods to register a new or existing seller account on SAP Business Network:
 - If you received an email invitation from a buying organization, click the link in the email message. When SAP Business Network shows the welcome page, do one of the following:
 - If you already have an account, click **Log in**.
 - If you don't already have an account, click **Sign up**.
 - If you received a purchase order welcome letter that contains a temporary ID and secure code, you can use a web browser to go to the web address contained in the welcome letter. Enter your temporary ID and secure code to activate the account. After you activate your account, the temporary ID becomes your username.
 - If you received a purchase order or other first-time document from your customer, click the action button in the email, such as **Process order**. From the landing page, choose **Sign up** to register a free, standard account, or choose **Log in** to add the document to your existing SAP Business Network account.

i Note

You must be the account administrator to move the document to an existing account.

- If you didn't receive an invitation, you can use a web browser to go to supplier.ariba.com. Click **Register Now** to register a free, standard account on SAP Business Network.
2. Follow the steps in the registration wizard.

SAP Business Network asks for basic information about your business, such as your company name, address, and email address. You also create a username and password.

The wizard performs automatic address validation to detect and correct any wrong or misspelled portion of a mailing address. A pop up window shows a recommendation, which you can accept or reject.

There is an ISO-based country- or region-specific drop-down list for state/province in the address section of the supplier profile. Select from the drop-down list (where available) instead of entering free text.

i Note

The person whose name is entered in the user account information section becomes the account administrator automatically. Account administrators can transfer the administrator role to another user later.

i Note

When double byte non-Latin characters (such as Chinese) are detected in an address, a warning displays and a Latin character translation has to be provided by the user which is then also validated for correctness.

3. Read the terms of use, and choose the check box if you agree to the terms.
4. (Optional) Print the **Summary** page for your records. You can also print the terms of use.
5. Click **Continue**.

Ariba shows the **Activate Your Account Now** page.

SAP Business Network sends you an email confirming registration of your account. You must click the link in the email to activate your account and start transacting with your customer.

If you change your email address, SAP Business Network sends an email to the newly updated email address requesting you to confirm the email address. You must use the link in the email to activate and log in to the account.

You can also resend the email containing the link to activate your SAP Business Network account in case the previous email did not reach you. If for any reason, you are unable to launch a browser using this link, you can copy the link and paste it into the address bar of any of the supported Web browsers to form a single-line URL.

6. To activate your account, click the link in the email sent to you.

SAP Business Network shows the **Welcome to Ariba** page, where you can view your company profile completeness meter.

7. Choose one of the following options:
 - Click **Go to Company Profile** to enter additional information about your company.

i Note

To increase your visibility to buying organizations, be sure your company profile is completed accurately, and consider subscribing to the SAP Business Network Discovery Advantage Program to further distinguish your organization in SAP Ariba's publicly-accessible supplier directory.

When registering on SAP Business Network following an invitation initiated from SAP Ariba Supplier Lifecycle and Performance or SAP Ariba Sourcing, the **Product and Service Categories** and **Ship-to or Service Location** fields listed under **Tell us more about your business** are mandatory.

- Click **Complete my Company Profile later**, to access the **Home** dashboard.

Related Information

[SAP Business Network duplicate account check process \[page 11\]](#)

SAP Business Network duplicate account check process

SAP Business Network supports embedded search and account matching, along with the ability to contact account administrators to prevent account confusion and duplication.

In essence, SAP Business Network:

- Searches for and flags potential matches for any registration scenario (walk up and by invitation) to establish a trading or sourcing relationship.
- Allows user driven searches for existing accounts during registration and post registration.
- Allows you to contact an existing account administrator to clean up and sort out duplicates.
- Allows suppliers to block new account registration in the context of a procurement collaboration request or a trade relationship request.

Process

The duplicate account check process flow differs a bit depending on how the Ariba Network relationship is established: ad hoc (buyer sends a collaboration invite), upfront (buyer loads supplier related data and sends a Trading relationship request (TRR) invite), or walk up (supplier self registers).

Suppliers can "register" email domains to get notified if new accounts are created or if a new relationship is established using a registered email domain.

Optionally, suppliers can select to block new accounts when created during procurement (fulfillment) relationship request. Full blocking is not supported nor blocking of sourcing relationships.

i Note

In this case, walk-up suppliers are not blocked, and a buyer can establish a trading relationship with them by buyer requested method.

Registration (and blocking) is only available for "validated user emails" and for non-public domains.

An Email domain can only be registered once on Ariba Network. In case the same domain is used for various accounts, the account administrator who registered the domain can be contacted via an online form.

To register an Email domain, you need the "Id Registration Access" user permission.

Account search and match mechanism

The search and match is based on various fields such as: the supplier name, email, DUNS number, supplier Ariba Network ID and so on. All matches are non case sensitive. The search evaluates a field value from left to right. A partial string results in a hit, but not a partial word.

For example: Microbrew Corporation

Value entered	Result
Micro	No match
Corporation	No match
Microbrew	Match
Microbrew Corporation	Match
Microbrew Corporation ABC	Match

How suppliers connect to SAP Business Network

Suppliers can connect to SAP Business Network by fax, email, online, using SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway, through EDI, or using cXML.

SAP Business Network supports suppliers at any level of technical sophistication. How a supplier connects to SAP Business Network depends on the order volume and the amount of automation they want. For example, suppliers with minimal technical resources can easily connect to SAP Business Network using only a fax machine, email, or by logging into their account directly.

Suppliers can use SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway, a self-service gateway, to seamlessly integrate with SAP Business Network buyers and send and receive non-native transaction documents.

More technically savvy suppliers can choose to obtain orders through EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), which allows direct order entry into an order processing system. This method requires an account with an EDI provider and an order processing system. The most sophisticated suppliers can implement a web commerce site that receives orders as cXML documents and routes them directly into an order processing system. This process requires a cXML-enabled website and an order processing system. The website can be used to support PunchOut, which enables users to view content and configure products through direct interaction with the supplier's site.

Regardless of the routing method a supplier chooses, SAP Business Network stores all transactions (including purchase orders) online.

Connecting to SAP Business Network by fax

The SAP Business Network can send purchase orders to fax machines. The fax is similar to the purchase order sent to the online inbox.

Connecting to SAP Business Network by email

The SAP Business Network can send purchase orders as email messages. The message is similar to the purchase order sent to the online inbox.

Connecting to SAP Business Network online

This is the default routing method. SAP Business Network displays all incoming documents, such as purchase orders, payments, and notifications, in the appropriate menu in the supplier portal.

Connecting to SAP Business Network using SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway

The SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway is a self-service gateway that allows suppliers to configure and integrate to SAP Business Network and transact with buyers seamlessly.

Using the SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway, you can:

- Configure your integration between SAP Business Network and your ERP application to manage one or more buyer-supplier trading relationships.
- Specify the mapping configuration.
- Validate and self test transaction documents.
- Monitor and track the integration lifecycle overall.

Connecting to SAP Business Network through EDI

The EDI routing method enables suppliers to automate order processing and connect their order management, shipping, and invoicing systems with their customers through SAP Business Network. To successfully integrate an EDI order receiving system with SAP Business Network, suppliers need to know how documents flow through SAP Business Network.

Buying organizations generate electronic purchase orders in an SAP Ariba Procurement solution such as SAP Ariba Buying and Invoicing, which transmits them to SAP Business Network as commerce eXtensible Markup Language (cXML) documents. SAP Business Network receives the cXML documents and authenticates and validates them. It then looks up the document routing settings of the supplier. If a supplier configured their account for EDI routing,

SAP Business Network converts the cXML documents to either ASC X12 or UN EDIFACT documents, depending on the preference, and sends them to the supplier's backend system.

Document flow is bidirectional (incoming and outgoing). Suppliers can send documents such as acknowledgments, order confirmations, and invoices back to their customers. SAP Business Network converts those EDI documents to cXML as it routes them.

SAP Business Network supports multiple transports and transforms for EDI documents: the cloud integration gateway, which supports OAGIS in addition to ASC X12 and UN EDIFACT, VAN (Value Added Network) and EDIINT (EDI over the Internet). Suppliers decide which method to use when they configure their SAP Business Network account.

Related Information

[EDI configuration guide](#)

Connecting to SAP Business Network using cXML

Commerce eXtensible Markup Language (cXML) is a well-defined, robust language designed specifically for B2B e-commerce. It allows buying organizations, suppliers, service providers, and intermediaries to communicate using a single standard, open language. cXML transactions consist of documents: simple text files containing values enclosed in predefined tags.

To use the cXML order-routing method, suppliers must implement a website that can initiate and accept XML posts. For details, see the [cXML solutions guide](#). When a supplier chooses cXML as an order routing method, SAP Business Network sends purchase orders as cXML posts to their website. SAP Business Network connects in secure mode so all communication is encrypted.

SAP Ariba subscriptions

SAP Ariba subscriptions help you to maximize the benefits of SAP Business Network for your business by providing functionality and services tailored to the financial volume you transact on SAP Business Network.

Your [Ariba subscription](#) is determined by the volume of documents you transact on SAP Business Network and by the extent of the automation technologies and support that your business requires.

Getting started with the SAP Business Network user interface for suppliers

The SAP Business Network application user interface for suppliers has the following key components:

1. **Home page**—The default page you see when you log in to SAP Business Network. Click **Home** to access your home page from anywhere in the application.
2. **Menu bar**—Provides access to the various pages in the application. Some menus go directly to a page, while others provide a dropdown list of commands. The menu bar that you see may vary depending on your account's entitlements.
3. **Header bar**—Provides helpful menus, commands, and information about you and your company.
 - Use the dropdown on the top-left corner of the header bar to switch between different SAP Ariba web applications.
 - Click the **Account Settings** icon to choose one of the following commands from the dropdown:
 - **My Account**—Specify account information, preferences, and contact information.
 - **Link User IDs**—Link multiple user IDs together, which allows you to log in to all your accounts using one username and password and to switch between accounts.
 - **Contact Administrator**—View contact information for your account administrator.
 - **Switch Account**—Change from the current account to a linked user account.
 - **Switch to Test Account**—Change from production to test account modes.
 - **ANID** (SAP Business Network ID)—A number that uniquely identifies your company on SAP Business Network. You might need this number to contact some support services.
 - **Company Profile**—Configure your SAP Business Network profile.
 - **Service Subscriptions**—Manage your SAP Business Network service subscriptions.
 - **Settings**—Configure your account settings.
 - **Logout**—Exit SAP Business Network when you're done with your session.
 - Click the **Help** icon to view the access in-app help or to contact SAP Ariba Support.

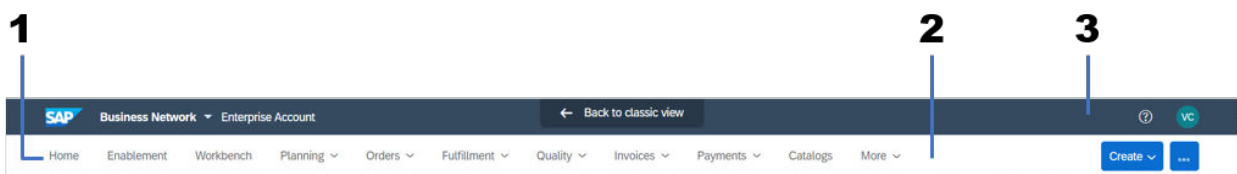


Figure 1: SAP Business Network user interface for suppliers


The label on the banner displays one of the following account types:

- **Standard Account**
- **Enterprise Account**

Related Information

[Managing your user account](#)
[Seller account settings and profile configuration](#)



SAP Business Network information sources

The help center is the central resource for all SAP Business Network product documentation, tutorials, and support content. Access the help center by clicking the **Help**  icon in the right corner of the header bar, then clicking the Support tile.

As a supplier, if you access the help center from the logon page (<http://supplier.ariba.com>), the available content is limited to information about logging in and registering, as well as topics of general interest.

Buyer and supplier users have full access to the respective SAP Business Network product documentation after they have logged in.

As a supplier, if you are new to SAP Business Network, familiarize yourself with the following information sources and product documentation:

If you want to know...	See...
about new features and enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's new in SAP Ariba
more about the Supplier Membership program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing subscription services
how to administer and configure an account	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seller account settings and profile configuration• Configuring document routing
how to create and publish catalogs for customer use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating and managing catalogs• Catalog format reference
how to manage your user account and notification settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing your user account
how to work with purchase orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receiving and fulfilling orders
about the invoicing process in SAP Business Network and how to create and manage invoices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAP Business Network guide to invoicing• Creating and managing invoices, credit memos, and debit memos
how to collaborate with your customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborating with customers• Topics about contract-based invoices
about opportunities to optimize your cash flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing discounts
how to create and interpret cXML documents for use with SAP Ariba applications, or integrate your application with SAP Business Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cXML solutions guide
how to implement a PunchOut site, and send and receive cXML documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting Started with cXML • cXML Reference Guide 

If you want to know...**See...**

how to transact with customers using EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) documents, and add support for specific EDI documents

- [SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway configuration guide](#)
- [SAP Ariba Cloud Integration Gateway configuration guide for ERP integration for suppliers](#)
- [EDI configuration guide](#)
- [Ariba Network for Suppliers Integration resources \(ANSI X12 and EDIFACT implementation documentation\)](#)
- EDI troubleshooting information (search for “EDI” in the Support Center)

where to find frequently asked questions and answers, tech notes, and articles



- Search for the information you need in the Support Center
-

Important Disclaimers and Legal Information

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