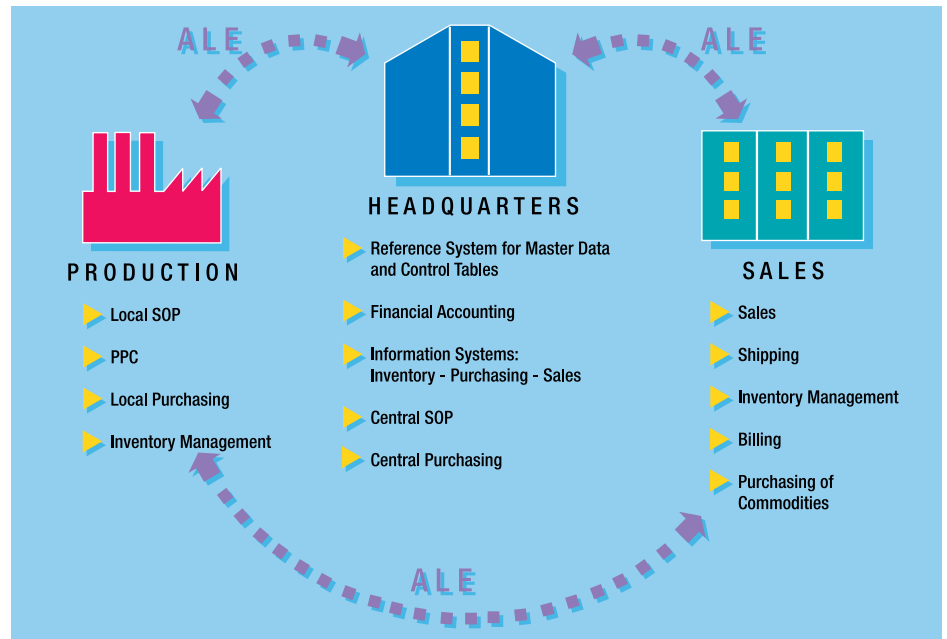# R/3 SYSTEM

Application Link Enabling (ALE) offers a new per-spective in information management for distribu-ted systems. ALE links disributed SAP® applica-tions with one another, as well as with applications from other vendors.

IN FOCUS...

A NEW TOOL FOR STRATEGIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

HEADQUARTERS

▷ Reference System for Master Data and Control Tables

▷ Financial Accounting

▷ Information Systems: Inventory - Purchasing - Sales

▷ Central SOP

▷ Central Purchasing

PRODUCTION

▷ Local SOP

▷ PPC

▷ Local Purchasing

▷ Inventory Management

SALES

▷ Sales

▷ Shipping

▷ Inventory Management

▷ Billing

▷ Purchasing of Commodities

LINKAGE OF DISTRIBUTED APPLICATIONS

Many enterprises are turning their attention to the chal-lenge of loosely linking stand-alone application systems, to take advantage of time- or business-driven information exchange. Some companies need to control commu-nication between local systems in their sales offices and manufacturing plants, with central systems running from their headquarters. Other enterprises are looking to loosen linkages and improve performance of tightly coupled systems. This means that while linked systems operate independently, they still remain loosely coupled with one another. To meet these needs, SAP has developed Application Link Enabling (ALE) techno-logy.

UNIFORMITY OF DATA - CONTROLLED EXCHANGE

Application Link Enabling expands the strategic model to allow uniformity and controlled exchange of business data in distributed systems.

Communication among loosely coupled applications is controlled by configura-ble distribution mechanisms. These mechanisms coordinate exchange of business information and update of master data among technically inde-pendent systems.

ALE IN ACTION

What does ALE look like in action? The R/3 System at a company's head-quarters, for example, may take care of central applications like accounting, human resources management, central purchasing, or sales planning. In local manufacturing plants, autonomous R/3 applications plan and control produc-tion, and organize materials manage-ment. While other local R/3 Systems handle order entry processing, ship-ping, and invoicing on-site in local sales offices.

Within an ALE-linked group of distribu-ted applications, each application receives the information it needs from the others in that group. For example,
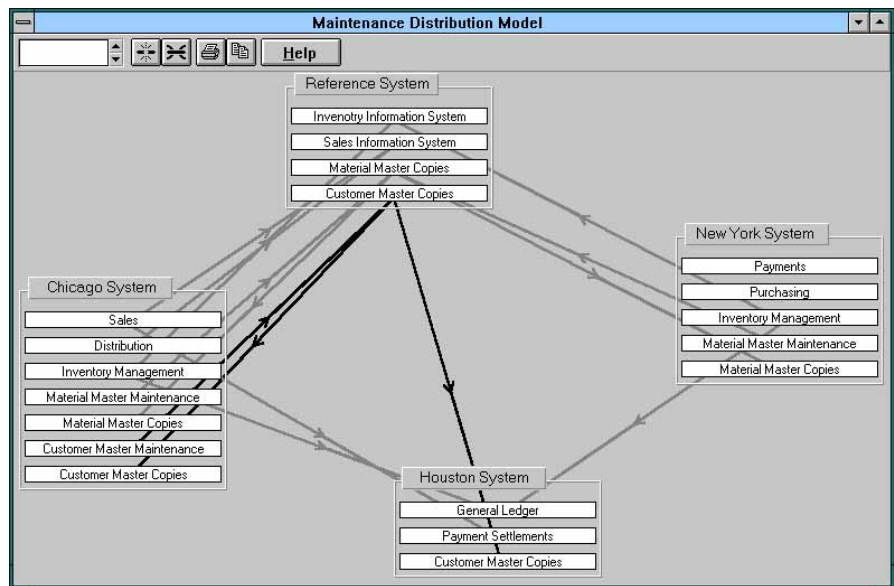
headquarters receives performance data needed for global planning from local manufacturing sites, and invoicing data from sales offices is transferred to central accounting. The communication volume with this kind of periodic transfer is much smaller than for line item transfers. In the other direction, central applications provide local systems with data that are needed on-site.

To send business information across distributed systems, SAP has created distribution models within ALE technology that meet the requirements of large numbers of customers. These schemes include:

- linking local sales with central shipping;

- distributing profitability analysis between central and local units;

- supporting cross-system information sytems in the areas of logistics control (manufacturing, materials management, sales and distribution, and plant maintenance);

- centrally managing purchasing contracts, and procurement processing with local applications;

- linking central financial systems with local logistics solutions.

THE BENEFIT: LOOSELY COUPLED FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE
ALE allows loose coupling of R/3 Systems with other R/3 Systems, with R/2 solutions, or with non-SAP applications, avoiding permanently, tightly-linked systems. This concept paves the way for integration of business proces-

ses across different systems, and even ensures communication between systems with different release dates.

ALE helps users decouple their application systems. Major advantages include parallel and local introduction of applications, independent upgrading of linked sytems, and avoidance of data processing bottlenecks.

ALE ARCHITECTURE
Technically, ALE services are performed in three steps:

- Application services support integrated workflow by packaging the incoming information into messages, for further processing.

- The distribution level links the business and technical levels.This includes defining the message recipient, and filtering and converting messages.

- The communication function enables technically secure data transfer.

TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICE
The R/3 System is based on client/ server architecture. R/3 is designed as an open system for use on operating systems from a variety of vendors. Along with our software, SAP offers you a complete spectrum of services: professional consulting in organizational and technical issues ranging from project planning to system implementation, as well as qualified staff training, and 24-hour hotline support.

SAP's quality management system for software development meets the international ISO 9001 standards.

To find out more, simply call or write us.