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Practical Guide to SAP® Profit Center Accounting

- ▶ Fundamentals of SAP Profit Center Accounting (PCA)
- ▶ Concepts, master data, actual data flow, and planning basics
- ▶ Differences between PCA in classic and new GL
- ▶ Reporting for Profit Center Accounting (PCA)

Table of Contents

Preface	7
1 Introduction to profit center accounting	11
1.1 Business requirements for profitability management and reporting	11
1.2 PCA versus COPA	12
1.3 Evolution of profit center accounting	17
1.4 Summary	20
2 Master data in PCA	21
2.1 Profit center	21
2.2 The dummy profit center	30
2.3 Profit center standard hierarchy	31
2.4 Profit center group	34
2.5 Revenue/cost elements and accounts	37
2.6 Account groups	38
2.7 Statistical key figures	39
2.8 Profit center assignment	43
2.9 Summary	55
3 Planning in classic PCA	57
3.1 How profit center planning fits	57
3.2 Planning version concept in SAP	59
3.3 Integrated revenue and COGS planning	60
3.4 Integrated cost planning	64
3.5 Statistical key figure planning	71
3.6 Manual planning in classic PCA	73
3.7 Summary	87
4 Profit center planning in the new GL	89
4.1 How new GL planning fits	89

4.2	Planning version concept in new GL	90
4.3	Integrated revenue and COGS planning	92
4.4	Integrated cost planning in the new GL	94
4.5	Statistical key figure planning in the GL	98
4.6	Manual planning in the new GL	98
4.7	Summary	107
5	Profit center actual postings	109
5.1	Flow of actual values in classic PCA	109
5.2	Manual posting in classic PCA	121
5.3	Flow of actual values in the new GL	123
5.4	Actual statistical key figures	132
5.5	Periodic processes	136
5.6	Summary	136
6	Profit center transfer pricing	137
6.1	Transfer pricing scenarios in SAP	137
6.2	Transfer pricing setup	138
6.3	Transfer pricing in practice	146
6.4	Summary	150
7	Reporting in profit center accounting	151
7.1	Reporting in classic PCA	151
7.2	Profit center reporting in the new GL	161
7.3	Report painter and drilldown options	165
7.4	Summary	173
A	The Author	176
B	Index	177
C	Disclaimer	180

2 Master data in PCA

One way of classifying data in SAP is to differentiate between items that are considered master data and items that are considered transactional data. In SAP, master data is relatively static data that is usually defined once and is shared throughout the application. Examples include: vendors, customers, materials, general ledger accounts, cost centers, profit centers, etc. This master data is then used in transactional data such as invoices, billing documents, and material movements. In an SAP implementation project, the structure and definition of master data should be thoroughly planned to properly reflect the needs of the business. Careful consideration should be given to such factors as numbering and naming the master data, permitted field values, and the ultimate reporting aims of the business. In this chapter, I show the relevant master data available in profit center accounting.

2.1 Profit center

As discussed in the previous chapter, the structure of the profit centers is meant to define a responsibility reporting view of the organization. Once the master data is defined, the profit centers are arranged in a hierarchy to represent the responsibility structure of the enterprise. During the design of the system, the nature of that responsibility structure should be determined. Along what lines does the business divide itself? Is it on a geographical basis, a functional basis, a product line basis, some other method, or a combination of some of the above?

Technically, the name of this hierarchy is defined first in the configuration settings and assigned to the controlling area before the profit center masters can be created. This is the case for both classic PCA and for PCA in the new GL. In classic PCA, it is also required to create a dummy profit center before you can start using the standard hierarchy. The concepts of dummy profit center and standard hierarchy are discussed more fully in the following sections.

The creation of the profit center master data is essentially the same regardless of whether you are using classic PCA or new GL PCA. Transaction KE51 is used to create profit centers (see Figure 2.1).

Create Profit Center	
Master Data	
Profit Center	500010
Copy from	
Profit Center	<input type="text"/> <input type="button"/>
CO Area	5000

Figure 2.1: Create profit center initial screen

Set the controlling area



Often, when entering transactions in the controlling module in SAP, you are presented with a preliminary screen asking you to enter the controlling area. Having to constantly enter the controlling area can become aggravating, especially when you may only be working with one area. The solution to this is to set your controlling area using transaction OKKS. Enter the controlling area that you work with and press the **SAVE** button. The value is now stored in your user parameters and remains until you set it to a different value.

It is important before you start creating pieces of master data, such as profit centers, to understand how you are going to name or number them. Unlike some master data objects in SAP, profit center numbering is not driven by a number range object. In fact, it is pretty much free form. You are limited by the field size of up to 10 characters and there are a few special characters such as * that will be rejected; otherwise you can use any alpha-numeric combination you choose. You should also be aware that the

profit center, like the cost center, exists in the controlling area, so it is not possible to have a duplicate value within the same controlling area.

Since your profit centers will be tied in some way to other organizational objects in SAP, such as company codes and cost centers, it is prudent to have an overall numbering strategy for these objects before you start creating them in the system. This should reflect the responsibility structure of the organization and be designed to facilitate reporting. Often, the structure or the nature of your business will lead you to a certain strategy in profit center numbering:

- ▶ An organization with a primary focus on manufacturing may be largely concerned with results at a plant level, so may wish to reflect the plant structure somehow in the profit center numbering and hierarchy.
- ▶ An organization with a primary focus on re-selling may be more concerned with results at a regional or product line level so may want to reflect that in the numbering and hierarchy.

In the fictional example, you are setting up profit centers for an organization that manufactures and sells toys and games. They are interested in looking at their results regionally. They operate in four regions; United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. They are also interested in results by product line. These are: video games, board games, and card games.

Copying master data



Many master data objects will have a COPY FROM or CREATE WITH REFERENCE option to allow you to use an existing piece of master data as a template for your new entry. This can significantly speed up the creation of new pieces of master data.

When you have decided on your profit center number, you can go ahead with transaction KE51 (see Figure 2.2).

The most important information about the profit center is contained on the BASIC DATA tab.

General Data						
Controlling Area	5000	Smarter Sisters				
Basic Data		Indicators	Company Codes	Address	Communication	History
Descriptions						
Profit Center	500010	Status	Inactive: Create			
Analysis Period	01.01.2010	to	31.12.9999			
Name	Video Games - US					
Long Text	Video Games US Market					
Basic Data						
User Responsible						
Person Respons.	Sally Goround					
Department						
Profit Ctr Group	5000	Smarter Sisters				
Segment	5000					

Figure 2.2: Create profit center basic data

The profit center is considered to be a *time-based* object in controlling, which means it is created with a validity period and you can create different data for different time periods. In configuration, certain fields on the master data can be flagged as *time dependent*, resulting in SAP storing a new master record whenever a time-dependent field is changed on a profit center. The ability to create time-based objects is a very important aspect of controlling since it allows you to view master data values at different time periods. For example, the *person responsible* for the profit center may change next year. If *person responsible* is a time-dependent field, then you will have a view of the profit center master when Sally was the person responsible, and then a new view starting when *person responsible* is reassigned.

Defining time-dependent fields



Since every change to a time-dependent field causes SAP to write a new master record for the data object being changed, you should be very careful in defining fields as time dependent in the system configuration. By defining many time-dependent fields, the data volumes can become large and match-code searches can become confusing for the user, as a piece of master data with more than one time range will appear multiple times in a match-code search. The SAP-delivered configuration should be sufficient for most situations.

The time dependency of the profit center is checked when you create another object with a relationship to it, such as a cost center. If you created your profit center to be valid from 01/01/2015 onwards, you will not be able to create a cost center assigned to that profit center with a valid-from date earlier than 01/01/2015.

Valid-from dates and other master data



It is best to be aware of other master data requirements when you are setting up validity dates for profit centers, cost centers, and other CO objects. There may be requirements from other modules, such as HR or fixed assets, that the cost centers should exist for a certain time in the past to allow historical data to be loaded. It is good to know that before you create your cost centers and profit centers to avoid a lot of extra rework extending the validity periods after the fact.

Other key fields on the BASIC DATA tab are person respons, this is the person responsible for the results of the profit center. There is also user responsi bl e, which links to the user master in the SAP system. This field is not mandatory since it is possible that the person responsible for the profit center does not exist as a user in the SAP system. The department field is a free text field that can be used to store an external department number. There is no validation on the entry in this field, so the user creating the profit center can enter any value they choose.

The field profit ctr group makes the link between the profit center and its place in the standard hierarchy. The *profit center group* selected here is a *node* in the hierarchy. In the initial setup of the profit center structure, there are several different approaches to populating this field. If you are creating other master data, such as material masters which may be dependent on a profit center number, you may want to load or create all the profit centers before you have fully thought out all the levels in the hierarchy. In this case, you may wish to create all the profit centers and assign them to the top hierarchy node and then distribute them later. Alternately, you may have your hierarchy in place and may choose to directly assign each profit center to its correct level during the initial creation.

B Index

A

- Access sequence 141
- Activate plan integration for secondary cost elements 97
- Activities 67
- Activity-Based Costing 46
- Actual SKF postings – Settings 132
- Alternative hierarchies 34
- Assessment 69

B

- Balance sheet adjustment 116
- Business process 46

C

- Classic PCA 17
 - Accounts 37
 - Activation 17
 - Balance Sheet Accounts 110
 - Balance Sheet Planning 80
 - Copy Planned Data 83
 - Flow of actual data 109
 - P&L accounts 110
 - Plan Allocations 82
 - Plan Balance Carryforward 82
- Constant for unassigned processes 126
- COPA
 - Costing based 13
 - Purpose of 12
 - Revenue Planning 60
 - Valuation 14
- Costing run 142
- Costing type 143
- Costing variant 142
- Costing versions 145

D

- Depreciation and interest simulation 70
- Distribution 69
- Distribution key 80
- Document splitting 125
- Drilldown reporting 168
 - Basic Report 168
 - Form Based 168
- Dummy profit center 30

E

- Entry view 129

F

- FIN_PCA 18
- FIN_SEGM 26
- Formula planning 84

G

- General ledger view 129
- Generic file 76
- GL Plan Copy 106
- Group valuation 137

I

- Integrated excel planning – Steps 75

- Interactive reporting 152

L

- Ledger concept 90
- Legal valuation 137
- List-oriented reports 152

M

Mandatory field 126

N

New GL PCA 17

Accounts 37

Balance Sheet Planning 103

Benefits 20

Migration 19

Planned CO allocations 95

Planning Layouts 98

SAP recommendations 19

Scenarios 18

Versions 90

O

Online transfer of data to PCA
64

P

Plan Integrated Order 66

Plan Integration-Projects 66

Plan versions 59

Planned allocations 67

Planner profile 73

Planning layout 73

Pricing procedure 141

Profit Center

Activate 30

Business defintion 15

Company code assignment 29

Numbering 22

Profit Center Accounting

Possible situations 18

Purpose of 12

Profit Center Assignment

Business Process 46

Cost Center 43

Fixed Assets 52

Internal Order 44

Material Master 47

Plant Maintenance 52

Production Order 49

Project Systems 45

Repetitive Mfg 50

Sales Order 50

Through substitution 50

Profit center standard hierarchy
31

Profit center valuation 138

R

Reference variant 144

Report Painter

Basic Structure 165

Library 166

Report Group 166

S

S/4HANA 16

Sales order substitution 50

Segment 26

Change value on profit center
27

Standard costing 142

Statistical Key Figure

Definition 39

Fixed value 41

Totals value 41

T

Templates 84

Transaction 1KE4 – Assignment
Monitor 54

Transaction 1KEK – Transfer
payables and receivables 117

Transaction 3KEH – Additional
BS & P&L Accounts 111

Transaction 7KEX – Upload from
excel 77

Transaction 9KE0 – Profit center
posting 121

- transaction F.50 – P&L
 Adjustment 120
- transaction F.5D – Balance sheet
 adjustment 116
- Transaction GLPLUP – Upload
 from Excel 102
- Transaction KCH1 – Create profit
 center group 34
- Transaction KCH1 – Create
 standard hierarchy 32
- Transaction KCH5N – Change
 standard hierarchy 32
- Transaction KDH1 – Create
 account groups 38
- Transaction KE1V – Transfer plan
 data from COPA 61
- transaction KE1Z – Transfer
 COPA Plan to GL 92
- Transaction KE51 – Create Profit
 Center 22
- Transaction KE59 – Dummy
 Profit Center 31
- Transaction KK01 – Create
 statistical key figure 40
- Transfer control 144
- V**
- Variation 157
- W**
- WIP calculation 113
- Z**
- Zero balance 125