SAP PS Issue Resolutions – Sample Copy

10 real-time SAP Project System support issues, each with the business scenario, the step-by-step troubleshooting, the final resolution and a ready-to-use interview answer.

At a glance

#	Issue	Area	Key tools
1	Availability Control (AVAC) Fails to Block a PO	Costs & Budgets	CJ30, CJ31, OPS9, OPTK, CJBN
2	Settlement (CJ88) Fails: "Sender Base is Zero"	Costs & Budgets	CJI3, CJ20N, OKO6, CJ88
3	Budget Return (CJ38) Blocked by Ghost Commitments	Costs & Budgets	CJI3, CJI5, CJ38, ME22N
4	Item Category 'L' vs 'N' (Missing Purchase Requisition)	Materials & Procurement	CJ20N, MM03, MD01N
5	Goods Issue (MIGO 281) Fails with "Deficit of Project Stock"	Materials & Procurement	MIGO, MMBE, 281 Q / 412 Q / 415 Q
6	Open Material Reservations Remain in MD04 After Final Network Confirmation (CN25)	Materials & Procurement	CN25, CN28, OPU7, MD04
7	PS Milestone Confirmation Fails to Lift SD Billing Plan Block (Fixed Date ID Trap)	Revenues & Earnings	CJ20N, VA02, VF04
8	Rejecting a Debit Memo Request (VA02) Locks Costs from Being Re-Billed in DP90	Revenues & Earnings	DP90, VA02, OVAG
9	WBS Coding Mask Fails to Format	Structures (WBS & Networks)	CJ20N, OPSK, OPSJ
10	Cannot Apply TECO / CLSD to WBS Element	Structures (WBS & Networks)	CJI5, CJI3, ME22N, CJ20N

Costs and Budgets

1. Availability Control (AVAC) Fails to Block a PO

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where a buyer created a Purchase Order that vastly exceeded the project budget, but standard SAP failed to block it?"*

You can explain like this:

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BUSINESS SCENARIO

A capital project had an approved budget of $50,000 entered in CJ30 (Original Budget). The Project Manager expected SAP Availability Control (AVAC) to prevent anyone from spending more than this amount. However, a buyer generated a Purchase Order for $75,000 assigned to the WBS element. The PO saved perfectly without even a warning message.

Because of this:

- ✓ The project budget was severely overrun
- ✓ Financial controllers lost trust in the system's governance

STEP 1: VERIFY THE BUDGET AND ACTUALS

First, I verified the math to ensure the system should have blocked it.

Checked in: CJ31 (Display Original Budget) -> Extras -> Availability Control -> Info

Verified:

- ✓ Budget: $50,000.
- ✓ Assigned Value: $75,000.

Found issue:

- ✓ The mathematical breach occurred. AVAC was completely asleep.

STEP 2: CHECK AVAC ACTIVATION STATUS

Then, I checked if AVAC was actually turned on for that specific project.

Checked in: CJ31 -> System Status

Found issue:

- ❌ The system status AVAC (Availability Control Active) was missing from the header.

STEP 3: CHECK BUDGET PROFILE (OPS9) AND TOLERANCE LIMITS (OPTK)

Why wasn't AVAC activated when the budget was saved?

Checked in: OPS9 (Maintain Budget Profiles)

Verified:

- ✓ Activation Type: '1' (Automatic activation during budget allocation).

Checked in: OPTK (Define Tolerance Limits for AVAC)

Found issue:

- ❌ The tolerance limit for the Controlling Area / Budget Profile combination was either missing entirely, or the "Usage %" was left blank, OR the "Action" was set to '1' (Warning) instead of '3' (Error message).

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Because of this: When the Project Manager saved the $50,000 budget, standard SAP checked OPTK to see what the rules were to activate AVAC. Finding no strict rules (or no 100% threshold trigger), it silently left AVAC deactivated.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ Went into OPTK configuration.
- ✓ Added a row for the Budget Profile: Usage 100%, Action 3 (Error message).
- ✓ Since the project was already broken, changing the config doesn't retroactively fix active projects. I had to execute transaction CJBN (Reconstruct Availability Control).
- ✓ The CJBN background job scanned the project, read the new OPTK rules, and violently flipped the system status to AVAC. From that moment on, any attempt to add even a $1 cost to the project threw a hard red stop, blocking the procurement. (We also had to deal with the existing $75,000 PO by either requesting a budget supplement in CJ36 or reducing the PO).

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS: AVAC failing to trigger usually happens due to:

- ❌ Missing or soft Tolerance Limits in OPTK (Action 1 instead of 3)
- ❌ Activation Type set to '0' (Cannot be activated) or '2' (Background job only) in OPS9
- ❌ Cost Elements being marked as "Exempt" from AVAC in OPTG —not system failure.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ AVAC is a sleeping watchdog. It does not wake up unless OPS9 allows it, and it does not bite unless OPTK explicitly commands it to throw an Error (Action 3).

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"When Procurement bypassed the project budget without triggering an error, I knew the Availability Control engine was dormant. By checking the project status, I confirmed the AVAC flag was missing. I traced this to the OPTK tolerance limits, which lacked a hard-stop configuration at 100% usage. Updating the tolerance limits and running CJBN instantly woke the watchdog, restoring strict financial governance to the project."*

2. Settlement (CJ88) Fails: "Sender Base is Zero"

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot an issue where month-end settlement for a WBS element failed with a 'Sender Base is Zero' error, even though there were massive costs on the project?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

During month-end, Finance ran CJ88 (Actual Settlement) for an R&D project. They expected $50,000 to move from the WBS element to a Research Cost Center. Instead, CJ88 threw an error: "Sender base is

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zero," and $0 settled. The Finance user verified in CJI3 that $50,000 of actual costs were indeed sitting on the WBS element.

Because of this:

- ✓ The $50,000 expense was trapped on the project
- ✓ Corporate P&L reporting was inaccurate

STEP 1: VERIFY ACTUAL COSTS ON WBS

First, I checked the financial ledgers.

Checked in: CJI3 (Actual Costs)

Verified:

- ✓ $50,000 posted to WBS RD-001.
- ✓ Checked the specific G/L Account (Cost Element) used: e.g., 400100 (Raw Materials).

STEP 2: CHECK SETTLEMENT RULE IN CJ20N

Then, I checked if the WBS knew where to send the money.

Checked in: CJ20N -> Edit -> Costs -> Settlement Rule

Verified:

- ✓ 100% to Cost Center CC_RD. Rule was perfect.

STEP 3: ANALYZE ALLOCATION STRUCTURE (OKO6)

Next, I checked the financial sieve that decides which costs are allowed to settle.

Because of this: CJ88 does not blindly settle everything on a WBS element. It filters the costs through an Allocation Structure. If a specific cost element is not explicitly included in the Allocation Structure, the settlement engine treats it as invisible.

Checked in: OKO6 (Maintain Allocation Structures)

Verified:

- ✓ Selected the structure assigned to the project (e.g., A1).
- ✓ Double-clicked the "Source" assignments.

Found issue:

- ❌ I reviewed the cost element groups/intervals maintained in the Source. The G/L Account 400100 (Raw Materials) was completely missing from the allowed ranges.

Because of this: CJ88 looked at the WBS, filtered it through the Allocation Structure, stripped out the $50,000 because 400100 wasn't on the VIP list, resulting in a mathematical "Sender Base" of exactly $0.

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FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ Escalated to the FICO team.
- ✓ They updated the Allocation Structure in OKO6.
- ✓ Added Cost Element 400100 (or its respective Cost Element Group) to the Source assignment.
- ✓ Finance re-ran CJ88. The settlement engine recognized the $50,000, successfully passed it through the allocation filter, and flawlessly settled it to the target Cost Center.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/CO: "Sender base is zero" errors (when costs exist) usually happen due to:

- ❌ Missing Cost Elements in the Source mapping of the Allocation Structure (OKO6)
- ❌ Costs posted in a different period than the settlement run parameters
- ❌ The costs having already been settled in a previous run —not system failure.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ The Allocation Structure is a strict financial bouncer. If a G/L account isn't on the source list, the money cannot leave the project.

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"When month-end settlement aborted with a 'Sender Base is Zero' error despite $50,000 in actual costs, I bypassed the project structure and audited the financial Allocation Structure in OKO6. I discovered the specific raw material G/L account used for the posting had not been added to the source configuration. Appending the missing cost element instantly opened the financial gateway, allowing the costs to settle smoothly to the target cost center."*

3. Budget Return (CJ38) Blocked by Ghost Commitments

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where Finance tried to pull unused budget back from a completed project, but SAP threw an 'Exceeds annual budget' error?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

A construction project was physically finished. The approved budget was $50,000, and the actual costs (CJI3) were only $40,000. Finance wanted to use transaction CJ38 (Budget Returns) to pull the unspent $10,000 out of the project and return it to the corporate pool. However, when they typed $10,000 into the return column and hit save, SAP threw a hard red error: "Return exceeds available budget."

Because of this:

- ✓ The $10,000 was trapped on a dead project

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- ✓ Corporate capital reallocation was blocked

STEP 1: VERIFY BUDGET AND ACTUALS

First, I verified the math on the ledger.

Checked in: CJI3 (Actuals) -> $40,000. CJ31 (Budget) -> $50,000. The math showed a $10,000 surplus. Why did SAP think it was unavailable?

STEP 2: CHECK COMMITMENTS (CJI5)

Then, I checked the other half of the "Assigned Value" equation.

Because of this: In SAP PS, Assigned Value = Actual Costs + Commitments. You cannot pull budget out of a project if standard SAP believes a vendor is still legally owed that money.

Checked in: Transaction CJI5 (Project Commitments)

Found issue:

- ❌ The report showed an open Purchase Order for $10,000. Three months ago, a buyer created a PO for scaffolding. The vendor delivered it, but Accounts Payable never processed the invoice (or the vendor gave us a discount and we only paid $8,000). Because the PO line item was still sitting "Open" in the MM module, AVAC mathematically locked that $10,000, protecting it from being returned.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ This is a procurement housekeeping issue, not a PS defect.
- ✓ I exported the CJI5 report and sent it to the Procurement team.
- ✓ The buyer opened transaction ME22N (Change Purchase Order), navigated to the specific line item, and ticked the "Delivery Completed" (and "Final Invoice") indicator.
- ✓ By explicitly telling the MM module that the PO was dead, standard SAP instantly destroyed the $10,000 open commitment. The Financial Controller returned to CJ38, entered the $10,000 return, and the system saved it flawlessly, safely transferring the capital back to the corporate pool.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/MM: Blocked budget returns on finished projects usually happen due to:

- ❌ Open Purchase Orders (CJI5) hoarding the budget
- ❌ Open Purchase Requisitions that were never converted to POs —not AVAC calculation errors.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ A budget is never truly available if a commitment is hovering over it. CJI5 is your radar for finding ghost commitments.

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STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"When Finance was blocked from returning a $10,000 surplus from a finished project, I knew the budget was being held hostage by the MM module. I ran the CJI5 commitments report and uncovered a lingering, open Purchase Order that had never been properly closed out. Having the buyer flag the PO as 'Delivery Completed' instantly eradicated the ghost commitment, unlocking the funds and allowing the budget return to proceed."*

Materials and Procurement Integration

4. Item Category 'L' vs 'N' (Missing Purchase Requisition)

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where a planner attached a material to a Network Activity, released the project, and complained that no Purchase Requisition was generated?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

A Project Coordinator attached a specialized, one-off industrial chiller to a Network Activity in CJ20N. They released the project (REL), expecting SAP to immediately generate a Purchase Requisition (PR) so the procurement team could place the order with the vendor. However, when the buyer checked ME53N (or the component's "Purchasing Data" tab in CJ20N), no PR number existed. The procurement team was completely blind to the requirement.

Because of this:

- ✓ Long-lead-time project equipment was not ordered
- ✓ The project critical path was delayed by weeks

STEP 1: VERIFY THE COMPONENT IN CJ20N

First, I checked the status of the project and the component in the Project Builder.

Checked in: CJ20N -> Network Activity -> Component Overview

Verified:

- ✓ The Network Activity was in 'REL' (Released) status.

Found issue:

- ❌ I looked at the "Item Category" (ICt) column for the chiller. The planner had selected 'L' (Stock Item) instead of 'N' (Non-stock Item).

STEP 2: ANALYZE SAP PS PROCUREMENT ARCHITECTURE

Then, I explained the fundamental difference between 'L' and 'N' to the Project Coordinator.

Because of this: In SAP PS, the Item Category is the absolute traffic cop for material procurement:

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- Item Category 'N' (Non-Stock): Tells SAP, "We do not keep this in the warehouse. The moment this activity is released, bypass MRP and fire a direct Purchase Requisition (Account Assignment 'Q', 'P', or 'N') straight to the buyer's queue."
- Item Category 'L' (Stock): Tells SAP, "This is a warehouse item. Do NOT create a Purchase Requisition. Only create an internal Material Reservation against the warehouse. Wait for the nightly MRP batch job (MD01N) to evaluate the warehouse stock and decide if a PR is needed."

STEP 3: CHECK MATERIAL MASTER (MRP TYPE)

Why didn't the nightly MRP run create the PR for the 'L' item?

Checked in: MM03 -> MRP 1 View

Found issue:

- ❌ Because the chiller was a rare, one-off engineering item, its MRP Type was set to 'ND' (No Planning). Therefore, the 'L' category created a reservation and waited for MRP, while MRP (set to 'ND') completely ignored the material. The requirement fell into a black hole.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ Instructed the Project Coordinator to open CJ20N, delete the component line, and re-enter the chiller.
- ✓ This time, they explicitly selected Item Category 'N' (Non-stock Item).
- ✓ Upon hitting Enter, SAP immediately prompted them for the mandatory Purchasing Data (Purchasing Group, Material Group, and Estimated Price/Cost Element). The exact millisecond they clicked Save, the system bypassed MRP and generated a direct, account-assigned Purchase Requisition, displaying the PR number directly on the component's Purchasing Data tab.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/MM: Missing Purchase Requisitions for network components usually happen due to:

- ❌ Planners selecting Item Category 'L' (which only creates a Reservation) instead of 'N' (which creates a direct PR)
- ❌ Using Item Category 'L' on a material whose MRP Type is set to 'ND' (No Planning) —not integration failure.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ Never use Item Category 'L' unless the material is actively planned by MRP (PD). If it's a direct buy for the project, it must be 'N'.

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"Procurement was blind to a critical chiller requirement because no Purchase Requisition was generating from CJ20N. I audited the network component and saw the planner had used Item Category 'L' (Stock) on a material configured with MRP Type 'ND' (No*

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> *Planning). This generated a passive warehouse reservation that MRP ignored. Re-entering the component with Item Category 'N' (Non-stock) instantly engaged the direct procurement engine, generating the PR upon save."*

5. Goods Issue (MIGO 281) Fails with "Deficit of Project Stock"

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where a warehouse clerk tried to issue a material to a Network Activity, and SAP threw a 'Deficit of Stock' error, even though MMBE clearly showed 50 units sitting in the warehouse?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

A technician needed 10 steel valves for Network Activity 0040. The warehouse clerk opened MIGO, selected Goods Issue -> Reservation, and typed in the Network Reservation number (Movement Type 281). When they clicked Check/Post, SAP threw a hard red error: "Deficit of Project Stock Q 10 EA." The warehouse clerk was furious. They opened MMBE (Stock Overview), took a screenshot showing 50 units of that exact valve sitting in the plant, and escalated a Priority 1 ticket claiming SAP inventory was corrupted.

Because of this:

- ✓ Physical materials could not be issued to the construction crew
- ✓ Warehouse operations were deadlocked

STEP 1: VERIFY THE RESERVATION REQUIREMENTS

First, I checked what kind of stock the Network Reservation was legally demanding.

Checked in: CJ20N -> Network Activity 0040 -> Component Details

Verified:

- ✓ The component was assigned to WBS Element PRJ-01-PHASE2.
- ✓ The Special Stock indicator was set to 'Q' (Project Stock). This meant Movement Type 281 Q was triggered: SAP was strictly looking for 10 valves inside the walled garden of WBS PRJ-01-PHASE2.

STEP 2: ANALYZE THE MMBE STOCK OVERVIEW

Then, I looked closely at the clerk's MMBE screenshot to see where the 50 units actually lived.

Checked in: MMBE (Stock Overview)

Found issue:

- ❌ Scenario A (Plant vs. Project): The 50 units were sitting in general Unrestricted-Use Plant Stock, NOT Project Stock.
- ❌ Scenario B (WBS vs. WBS - Very Common): The 50 units were in Project Stock, but when I right-clicked the Project Stock line in MMBE to view the WBS breakdown, the 50 units belonged

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to WBS Element PRJ-01-PHASE1 (the previous phase of the same project). Because Project Stock is strictly siloed by individual WBS Element, WBS PHASE2 cannot legally touch stock owned by WBS PHASE1, nor can it touch general Plant Stock.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ I explained the strict silo rules of Special Stock 'Q' to the warehouse clerk. You cannot consume stock across WBS boundaries without transferring ownership first.
- ✓ Instructed the clerk to open MIGO and select Transfer Posting -> Other.
- ✓ If moving from Plant Stock to Project Stock: Execute Movement Type 412 Q, moving 10 units from Unrestricted Plant Stock into WBS PRJ-01-PHASE2.
- ✓ If moving from WBS Phase 1 to WBS Phase 2: Execute Movement Type 415 Q, transferring 10 units from Sender WBS PRJ-01-PHASE1 to Receiver WBS PRJ-01-PHASE2. Once the 412Q / 415Q transfer posting was saved, the 10 valves appeared in the exact WBS bucket required. The clerk re-ran the 281 Q Goods Issue against the reservation, and it posted flawlessly.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/MM: "Deficit of stock" errors during project goods issues (when MMBE shows inventory) almost always happen due to:

- ❌ Stock sitting in general Plant Stock while the reservation demands Project Stock (281 Q), or vice versa (281 vs 281 Q)
- ❌ Stock sitting in Project Stock under WBS Element A, while the Network Activity is attached to WBS Element B —not database corruption.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ Memorize the Project Stock transfer movement types: 412 Q (Plant to Project), 411 Q (Project to Plant), and 415 Q (WBS to WBS). They are the daily lifeblood of project warehouse management.

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"The warehouse escalated a P1 ticket claiming SAP was broken because MIGO threw a stock deficit error despite 50 units showing in MMBE. By drilling into the Special Stock 'Q' segment in MMBE, I proved those 50 units were legally owned by the 'Phase 1' WBS element, whereas the network reservation was demanding stock from the 'Phase 2' WBS element. Guiding the clerk to execute a MIGO 415 Q transfer posting shifted the inventory ownership between the WBS elements, instantly unblocking the 281 goods issue."*

6. Open Material Reservations Remain in MD04 After Final Network Confirmation (CN25)

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where a Network Activity was 100% finished and set to 'CNF' (Confirmed), but its unused material reservations remained open in MD04, causing MRP to over-order stock?"*

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You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

A Project Manager planned Network Activity 0040 (Electrical Cabling) and reserved 100 meters of copper cable (Item Category 'L'). During physical execution, the electricians found a shorter routing path and only needed 80 meters of cable, which the warehouse issued via MIGO 281. Once the job was finished, the supervisor opened CN25 (Confirm Network Activity), ticked the "Final Confirmation" checkbox, and saved. The Network Activity status flipped to CNF (Confirmed). However, two weeks later, the MRP Controller complained that MD04 still showed an active, open Network Reservation for the remaining 20 meters of cable, causing MRP to buy extra stock for a job that was already finished!

Because of this:

- ✓ Warehouse inventory was bloated with unneeded materials
- ✓ Available-to-Promise (CO09) locked 20 meters of existing stock away from other active projects

STEP 1: VERIFY THE RESERVATION IN MD04 AND CJ20N

First, I checked the state of the reservation and the activity.

Checked in: MD04 & CJ20N -> Activity 0040 -> Component Overview.

Verified:

- ✓ Activity 0040 System Status was CNF (Confirmed).
- ✓ Component Requirement Quantity = 100 M. Withdrawn Quantity = 80 M.

Found issue:

- ❌ On the Component Details screen in CJ20N, the "Final Issue" indicator (KZEAR) was unticked! Because "Final Issue" was unticked, standard SAP MRP assumed the electricians were coming back tomorrow for the remaining 20 meters.

STEP 2: CHECK THE CONFIRMATION RECORD IN CN28 / OPU7

Why didn't the CN25 Final Confirmation automatically tick the "Final Issue" box on the components?

Checked in: Transaction CN28 (Display Network Confirmation) -> Looked at the flags selected during CN25.

Found issue:

- ❌ The supervisor had ticked "Final Confirmation", but they had left the "Clear Open Reservations" checkbox right next to it unticked!

Checked in: Transaction OPU7 (Define Confirmation Parameters for Network Type).

Verified:

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- ✓ Under the "Generally Valid Settings" tab, the "Clear Open Reservations" checkbox was not set as the default proposal when a Final Confirmation is entered.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ Immediate Fix: Opened CJ20N -> Activity 0040 -> Component Overview -> Selected the Copper Cable - > Ticked the "Final Issue" checkbox (or set the remaining requirement quantity to equal the 80M withdrawn) and saved. The 20M ghost reservation vanished from MD04 immediately.
- ✓ Systemic Fix: Went into transaction OPU7 (Confirmation Parameters for Plant & Network Type) and ticked "Clear Open Reservations" as the default proposal for Final Confirmations. From that day forward, whenever a technician or supervisor ticked "Final Confirmation" in CN25, SAP automatically ticked "Clear Open Reservations," setting the KZEAR (Final Issue) flag on all attached components and wiping any unused reservations from MD04.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/MM: Lingering reservations on confirmed (CNF) Network Activities almost always happen due to:

- ❌ Users ticking "Final Confirmation" in CN25 without ticking "Clear Open Reservations"
- ❌ OPU7 confirmation parameters not defaulting the "Clear Open Reservations" indicator —not MRP failing to read the CNF status.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ System status CNF only closes Capacity/Labor. It does not close Material Reservations unless "Clear Open Reservations" (or status TECO) is triggered!

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"The supply chain team was frustrated that completed network activities were still holding open material reservations in MD04 for under-consumed parts. By auditing the CN28 confirmation record, I proved that while the supervisor ticked 'Final Confirmation', they left 'Clear Open Reservations' unticked, leaving the component's Final Issue flag blank. After manually ticking Final Issue in CJ20N to clear MD04, I updated transaction OPU7 to automatically default 'Clear Open Reservations' on all future final confirmations."*

Revenues and Earnings

7. PS Milestone Confirmation Fails to Lift SD Billing Plan Block (Fixed Date ID Trap)

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where a Project Manager confirmed a PS Milestone with an Actual Date, and the 'Sales Document Date' indicator was ticked, yet the Billing Block in the SD Sales Order still refused to lift?"*

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You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

A heavy machinery manufacturer uses PS-SD Milestone Billing. On a $1,000,000 customer contract, 30% ($300,000) is billed when the "Factory Acceptance Test (FAT)" milestone is completed. The Project Manager finished the FAT, opened CJ20N, navigated to the FAT Milestone, entered today's Actual Date, and saved. However, when the Accounts Receivable team ran VF04 (Billing Due List), the $300,000 invoice did not appear! When I checked the Sales Order in VA03 (Item -> Billing Plan tab), the Billing Block 02 (Compl. confirm. missing) was still sitting on the milestone line—even though the PM proved that the "Sales Document Date" checkbox was ticked on the milestone in CJ20N!

Because of this:

- ✓ $300,000 in milestone billing was delayed
- ✓ The team thought the PS-to-SD workflow trigger was broken

STEP 1: VERIFY THE PS MILESTONE IN CJ20N

First, I verified the PS Milestone master data in the Project Builder.

Checked in: CJ20N -> Selected the FAT Milestone (000000002045).

Verified:

- ✓ "Sales Document Date" (MLST-VERTE): Ticked.
- ✓ Actual Date: Populated (14.10.2026). So why did the Sales Order ignore the confirmation?

STEP 2: INSPECT THE SD BILLING PLAN LINE ITEM IN VA02 (TABLE FPLTR)

Next, I opened the Sales Order Billing Plan to inspect how the SD line item was listening to the PS Milestone.

Checked in: VA02 -> Item Details -> Billing Plan tab.

Verified:

- ✓ The Milestone Number (000000002045) was linked on the line.

Found issue:

- ❌ Looked at two critical columns right next to the Billing Date on the Billing Plan line: 1. "Date ID / Fixed Date" (FPLTR-FKSAF / TETYP): A Sales Coordinator had manually typed a date into the Billing Plan and set the Fixed Date indicator to '1' (Fixed billing date) instead of '0' (Not fixed: Adopt date from Milestone) or '2' (Copy actual milestone date)!

2. Furthermore, during an earlier project restructure, the PM had deleted the original milestone and created a new milestone in CJ20N, leaving the SD Billing Plan pointing to the old deleted internal milestone key (MLST_ZAEHL)!

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

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- ✓ Opened VA02 -> Item -> Billing Plan tab:
- Re-selected the active PS Milestone (000000002045) via the F4 search help to refresh the internal milestone link.
- Changed the "Fixed Date" (FKSAF) indicator from '1' (Fixed) to '0' (Adopt planned/actual date from milestone). ✓ Saved the Sales Order (and re-confirmed the Actual Date on the Milestone in CJ20N). Instantly, the SD Billing Plan read the confirmed Actual Date from the PS Milestone, changed the Milestone Completion status to green, automatically deleted Billing Block '02', and dropped the $300,000 invoice into VF04!

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/SD: PS Milestones failing to lift SD Billing Blocks (02) when "Sales Document Date" is already ticked always happen due to:

- ❌ The "Fixed Date" (FKSAF) indicator on the SD Billing Plan line (VA02) being set to '1' (Fixed Date), which severs dynamic updates from PS
- ❌ Planners deleting and recreating a Milestone in CJ20N, which generates a new internal MLST counter and orphans the old Milestone number in VA02
- ❌ The Sales Order being locked by a user in VA02 (SM12) at the exact second the PM saved CJ20N! —not broken BAPIs.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ Never let users manually overwrite dates on an SD Milestone Billing Plan (VA02), as manual entry flips the Fixed Date (FKSAF) flag to '1' and blinds SD to CJ20N milestone confirmations!

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"Even though the Project Manager had ticked 'Sales Document Date' and entered an Actual Date on the milestone in CJ20N, the '02' billing block in the Sales Order refused to lift. By inspecting the Billing Plan tab in VA02, I discovered a sales coordinator had manually edited the billing date earlier, which flipped the 'Fixed Date' (FKSAF) indicator to '1' and severed the dynamic listener link to PS. Resetting the Fixed Date indicator to '0' (Adopt from Milestone) immediately pulled the confirmed actual date from CJ20N and lifted the billing block."*

8. Rejecting a Debit Memo Request (VA02) Locks Costs from Being Re-Billed in DP90

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a Resource-Related Billing scenario where a billing clerk rejected an erroneous Debit Memo Request in VA02, but when they reran DP90 to create a corrected bill, the costs were locked as 'Already Billed'?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

In a Time & Materials (T&M) consulting project, the billing administrator ran DP90 at month-end for $25,000 of engineering labor and clicked "Save" to generate Debit Memo Request (DMR) 60000450. Before creating the VF01 invoice, the Project Manager reviewed DMR 60000450 in VA02 and noticed

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the wrong pricing/tax date was used. To kill the bad DMR and start over, the billing clerk opened VA02, went to the Reason for Rejection tab, applied Rejection Code 01 (Cancelled by Customer/Admin) to all line items, and saved. Next, the clerk re-ran DP90 to generate a fresh Debit Memo Request for that $25,000 of labor. However, DP90 either threw error "No expenditure items found", OR in the DP91 Expenditure View, all $25,000 was sitting in the "Already Billed / Not to be Billed" column (Open Quantity to Bill = 0)!

Because of this:

- ✓ The $25,000 of labor was trapped—the old DMR was rejected, and DP90 refused to bill it again!
- ✓ The team thought they had to reverse and re-enter 300 engineer timesheets in CATS

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND HOW DP90 TRACKS BILLED DYNAMIC ITEMS (TABLES AD01DLI / VBPK)

First, I explained to the billing team why simply putting a "Reason for Rejection" in VA02 did not free up the costs in DP90.

Because of this: When DP90 generates a Debit Memo Request, SAP writes a hard link in the Dynamic Item Processor tables (AD01DLI / AD01DLIEF) marking those exact CJI3 cost line items as "Billed by DMR 60000450"! Why didn't rejecting DMR 60000450 in VA02 release the lock in AD01DLI?

STEP 2: CHECK THE REASON FOR REJECTION CONFIGURATION (OVAG)

Checked in: Customizing Transaction OVAG (Define Reasons for Rejection in Sales Documents).

Verified:

- ✓ Looked at Rejection Reason 01 (and all other rejection codes in OVAG).

Found issue:

- ❌ Looked at the "Resource-rel. bill." (FKERL - Open Resource Items Again) checkbox column in OVAG: • For Rejection Reason 01, the "Resource-rel. bill." (FKERL) checkbox was UNTICKED! Because of this: In SAP SD-PS integration, if the FKERL checkbox is unticked in OVAG, applying that Rejection Reason in VA02 tells SAP: "The customer refused to pay for these hours—write them off permanently and NEVER show them as open in DP90 again!" Only if the FKERL ("Not Relevant for Billing / Re-open Resource Items") checkbox is ticked in OVAG does rejecting the DMR line release the lock in AD01DLI so DP90 can bill the costs again!

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ Step 1 (Configuration Fix in OVAG): In transaction OVAG, created/updated Rejection Reason Z9 ("Cancel DMR - Re-open for DP90 Rebilling") with the "Resource-rel. bill." (FKERL) checkbox TICKED!
- ✓ Step 2 (Rescue the Active DMR): Opened DMR 60000450 in VA02, changed the Reason for Rejection on the line items from '01' to 'Z9' (or deleted the unbilled DMR completely in VA02), and saved.

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- ✓ The moment VA02 saved with Rejection Reason 'Z9' (FKERL = 'X'), SAP updated table AD01DLIEF and released the $25,000 of labor! When the clerk re-ran DP90, the full $25,000 reappeared as "Open / To Be Billed", allowing them to generate the corrected Debit Memo Request without touching a single timesheet!

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/SD (Resource-Related Billing): Costs remaining locked as "Already Billed" in DP90 after a Debit Memo Request is rejected in VA02 always happen due to:

- ❌ Using a Reason for Rejection (OVAG) that has the "Resource-rel. bill." (FKERL) checkbox unticked
- ❌ Cancelling an invoice in VF11 (which only re-opens the existing DMR in VF04), without subsequently rejecting the DMR with an FKERL-enabled rejection code in VA02! —not AD01DLI database corruption.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ Configure two distinct Rejection Reasons in OVAG for T&M projects:

1. "Permanent Write-Off" (FKERL = Blank): Kills the DMR and permanently closes the CJI3 costs so they are never billed again.
2. "Technical Cancel & Re-Bill" (FKERL = Ticked): Kills the DMR and sends the CJI3 costs right back into the DP90 open queue!

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"After a billing clerk rejected an erroneous Debit Memo Request in VA02, DP90 still treated the $25,000 of project labor as 'Already Billed' and refused to re-bill it. I audited the Reason for Rejection configuration in transaction OVAG and proved that the rejection code they used had the 'Resource-rel. bill.' (FKERL) indicator unticked—which instructs SAP to permanently write off the expenditure items. Configuring a dedicated rejection code with FKERL ticked and applying it in VA02 immediately unlocked the $25,000 in table AD01DLIEF for re-billing in DP90."*

Structures (WBS and Networks)

9. WBS Coding Mask Fails to Format

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a scenario where a Project Manager typed a WBS Element ID into CJ20N, but the system threw a format error or failed to apply the standard corporate dashes?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

During the kickoff of a new global capital project, the Project Manager opened the Project Builder (CJ20N). The corporate standard for Capital projects dictates that the WBS should look like this: CAP-26-US-001. The PM typed CAP26US001 into the WBS field, expecting standard SAP to magically format it.

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Instead, the system left it as a raw string or threw a hard red error: "WBS element CAP26US001 does not match any coding mask."

Because of this:

- ✓ Project creation was completely halted
- ✓ Reporting structures and hierarchies would be permanently misaligned

STEP 1: VERIFY THE USER'S DATA ENTRY

First, I checked exactly what the user was typing in the Project Profile.

Checked in: CJ20N -> Project Definition

Verified:

- ✓ The Project Profile being used was correct (e.g., ZCAP - Capital Projects).
- ✓ The user was typing CAP as the starting prefix.

STEP 2: CHECK PROJECT CODING MASK CONFIGURATION (OPSK/OPSJ)

Then, I investigated the central architectural rules governing Project IDs.

Because of this: In SAP PS, a WBS element is not just a free-text field. It is rigidly governed by a Coding Mask to ensure enterprise-wide consistency.

Checked in: Transaction OPSK (Define Special Characters for Projects)

Verified:

- ✓ The special character separating nodes was correctly defined as a hyphen (-).

Checked in: Transaction OPSJ (Define Coding Mask)

Found issue:

- ❌ I searched for the "Project ID" starting with CAP. The coding mask for CAP was defined as: CAP-00-XX-000 (where 0 means a number, and X means an alphanumeric character). However, the user was typing CAP26US without hyphens. More importantly, the "Edit" (Format) flag in OPSK was not ticked, or the prefix in OPSJ was strictly locked to 4 characters instead of 3.

STEP 3: ANALYZE THE MASK CONFLICT

Found issue:

- ❌ Actually, the specific error occurred because the business had recently created a new prefix (CAP26), but the Coding Mask in OPSJ was only configured to recognize the prefix CAP25. When the system evaluated CAP26, it fell into a black hole because no matching mask existed.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

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- ✓ Went into transaction OPSJ.
- ✓ Created a new generic Coding Mask using the overarching Prefix CAP (instead of hardcoding the year).
- ✓ Defined the mask strictly as: >CCC-00-XX-000 (where > indicates the start of the mask, and CCC allows a 3-letter project type prefix). When the Project Manager returned to CJ20N and typed CAP26US001, the system instantly recognized the prefix, parsed the logic, and beautifully auto-formatted the WBS Element to CAP-26-US-001, allowing the project to save.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS: WBS formatting and coding mask errors usually happen due to:

- ❌ Missing Prefixes in the OPSJ configuration table
- ❌ Mismatched string lengths (typing 4 numbers when the mask strictly demands 3)
- ❌ Overlapping masks causing the system to guess the wrong format —not system failure.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ The Coding Mask (OPSJ) is the rigid skeleton of SAP PS reporting. If the user's string doesn't perfectly fit the skeleton, the project cannot be born.

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"The Project Manager assumed the system was broken when it rejected their WBS element naming convention. I bypassed the transaction and went straight to the Project Coding Mask configuration in OPSJ. I discovered the architectural template for their new project prefix was completely missing. Adding the new masking rule instantly restored the automated formatting, unblocking project creation and ensuring global reporting consistency."*

10. Cannot Apply TECO / CLSD to WBS Element

> ***If the interviewer asks:*** *"How did you troubleshoot a month-end scenario where Finance was blocked from closing a project (TECO/CLSD) due to open commitments?"*

You can explain like this:

BUSINESS SCENARIO

The project was physically completed. The Project Manager handed it over to Finance. During month-end, the Financial Controller opened CJ20N and tried to change the project status from 'REL' (Released) to 'TECO' (Technically Completed) or 'CLSD' (Closed) to shut down the ledger and stop new charges. SAP threw a hard red error: "Project cannot be closed. Open commitments exist."

Because of this:

- ✓ The project remained active
- ✓ Rogue costs could still hit the project, risking budget overruns

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STEP 1: VERIFY THE STATUS ERROR

First, I verified the exact error blocking the status transition.

Checked in: CJ20N -> Status -> TECO

Verified:

- ✓ SAP was actively defending the financial ledger. You cannot close a project if someone still owes you money, or you still owe a vendor money.

STEP 2: CHECK PROJECT COMMITMENTS (CJI5)

Then, I investigated what "Commitments" were holding the project hostage.

Checked in: Transaction CJI5 (Project Commitments Line Items)

Verified:

- ✓ Entered the WBS Element and executed the report.

Found issue:

- ❌ The report generated a list of open Purchase Orders (POs) and Purchase Requisitions (PRs). For example: A PO was created for 10 laptops ($10,000). The warehouse received 10 laptops (MIGO), but Accounts Payable had only processed an invoice (MIRO) for 8 laptops.

STEP 3: ANALYZE THE FINANCIAL GAP

Because of this: Standard SAP logic dictates that a Purchase Order is an open commitment until the Goods Receipt (GR) perfectly matches the Invoice Receipt (IR). Because 2 laptops were still un-invoiced, SAP held a $2,000 commitment reserve on the WBS element. SAP will never let you close a project while a reserve exists.

FINAL RESOLUTION

After correcting:

- ✓ This is an AP/Purchasing cleanup issue, not a PS defect.
- ✓ I exported the CJI5 report and sent it to the Procurement team.
- ✓ Option 1 (Missing Invoice): Procurement chased the vendor for the final invoice and processed it in MIRO.
- ✓ Option 2 (Vendor won't bill): If the vendor gave us 2 free laptops and will never send an invoice, Procurement went into ME22N (Change PO), checked the "Final Invoice" and "Delivery Completed" indicators on the line item. This action instantly killed the open commitment, reducing the CJI5 balance to $0.00. The Financial Controller returned to CJ20N and successfully applied the TECO status without errors.

KEY LEARNING

In SAP PS/MM: TECO/CLSD blocks on projects usually happen due to:

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- ❌ Open Purchase Orders where GR != IR (Goods Receipt does not match Invoice Receipt)
- ❌ Unconverted Purchase Requisitions tying up the budget
- ❌ Unsettled costs (CJ88) leaving a balance on the WBS (specifically for CLSD) —not system failure.

As a Functional Consultant, important thing is:

- ✓ TECO is the ultimate financial gatekeeper. CJI5 (Commitments) and CJI3 (Actuals) are your diagnostic tools to find the exact document jamming the gate.

STRONG INTERVIEW ENDING

> *"When Finance was blocked from closing a project due to open commitments, I ran the CJI5 commitments report to audit the WBS element. I discovered a lingering Purchase Order where the Goods Receipt didn't match the Invoice Receipt. Having the procurement team apply the 'Final Invoice' indicator in ME22N instantly eradicated the ghost commitment, clearing the path for the project to be Technically Completed."*

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