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Podcast Inside SAP S/4HANA - Transcription

Episode 88: An SAP Champion Learning Journey to SAP S/4HANA Cloud, Public Edition



Yannick: Hi everyone and welcome to our podcast Inside SAP S/4HANA. There is no customer success without product success and project success. I'm Yannick Peterschmitt, the Head of the Enablement Team in Cloud ERP Product Success at SAP Engineering. And today I have the great pleasure to host Luzian Kern, the Vice President of SAP Product Learning for ERP & Finance, and a very special guest Marsssel Andrade Bourbon Villaça, SAP ERP and SAP S/4HANA consultant expert in Financial Accounting and an SAP Champion from Brazil. So if you're now wondering what is an SAP Champion, stay tuned because we'll dig into that in two minutes. But I would like first of all to welcome our two guests. And I suggest that we start with a little icebreaker with both of you guys. Let's start with you, Luzian. Can you tell us something special about you? Something that I, although I know you for a couple of years now, might know yet about yourself.

Luzian: Hi Yannick, hi everybody. Yeah, welcome. What should I say? I mean, it would be a bit boring just to say learning is my passion, but to make it a bit more interesting, I can say I started playing a new instrument just a couple of weeks ago, so I said something new, a new challenge for me. So and it's the guitar. So I started playing guitar in my young years. So that is a funny thing about learning and the funny thing about me.

Yannick: Cool. I did not know, obviously, and I will remember that. Thanks. Thanks for sharing, Luzian.

Luzian: But don't ask for a concert.

Yannick: We do the next podcast a musical podcast, probably. Marsssel, what about you? What would you like to share with us?

Marsssel: Hello, everyone. Thanks for having me here. I really love to spend a weekend at the coast here. Since the pandemic, I moved from the big town here from Brazil. I mean, 3000 km up the map. And then I'm at northeastern coast here. I like to visit different beaches and coast. I took my dog. I have a golden retriever. We spend all the morning 1 or 2 hours walking along the sea. It's really great to see how he can swim. He loves water. I used to work out every day. I like to run, make exercise. I changed my mindset of life. I'm trying to pursue a more healthy way of life, food and something like that. This is what I would like to share besides SAP career.

Yannick: Thanks for sharing. Very inspiring. Thanks a lot, Marsssel. I think we are all curious about knowing what is exactly SAP Champions because of course, this sounds very special. Are you the only SAP Champion? What is an SAP Champion? Can you explain that in more details, Marsssel, please?

Marsssel: SAP Champions is one of the SAP group of influencers. It was created in 2019, SAP Champions group. There is another SAP influencer group which is SAP Mentors. Since 2004, SAP Mentors used to provide feedback to SAP about SAP products. They used to be super users of the product, and then every kind of person is very active in SAP Community. It is different from an influencer, from the social media and networking, where people have only followers, used to provide some funny videos or something like that. SAP Champions used to be special because those individuals in SAP Community used to do blog post, good content and establish a really proactive and useful communication from SAP products to the community. SAP Community used to receive, every month, over than 3 million visitors in the

website. It is really huge and lots of good content are there, such as blog posts, we have SAP groups. And SAP Champions used to provide locally SAP Community events. Here is a tip if you are any of our listeners in a different location around the world, you can reach out an SAP Champion from the website and ask for an SAP event in your location. We can use to provide helpful management on that. We can do a knowledge transfer to try to implement and bring good professional to speak about SAP in your region. This is a very good activity to meet each other, to know the better ecosystem in your location. So SAP Champions used to be a connection from SAP Community to the wide public.

Yannick: Very interesting. So you said Champions, plural form. So you're not the only champion. So the question, of course, I know quite well the SAP Mentor group, but not as well the SAP Champions Group. So how are Champions selected? How were you selected? I think the subsequent question is all about customer and happy customer. How is this additional role SAP Champion helping you build the bridge to customers and their project?

Marsel: We are over than 60 SAP champions. We are growing quite fast in terms of pandemic. Things were a little bit held. We were prevented to provide on-side events. But right now we are expanding situation here because of the influencer program. To become an SAP Champion is not a hard task. We need to be a very good profile in SAP Community itself. As I had mentioned before, it's different to be an influencer in any social media, just sharing or reposting content. SAP Champions are content creators and the good communication and proactive, in order to help in an altruistic way, help other members to collect good content, to participate, to interact in SAP Community platform to help people, to build a good blog post, and something like this. We used to have meetings very often with SAP Community, we have town halls meetings, internally meetings. We have a management group from SAP Community handling everyone of different parts of the world. So we have SAP Champions in Mexico, in US, mainly those are located in Europe, as Germany, United Kingdom, Turkey, and then there's a lot of SAP Champions in Australia as well, not focused on all in Europe. And then the main point here is we used to share our knowledge in altruistic way to better communicate SAP products to the SAP Community visitors and members.

Yannick: So I assume that being selected as an SAP Champion requires not only the right DNA, but a lot of work, daily work and of course, education. You need to be always on the latest and greatest technology, especially in the tech industry, which probably means that you, Marsel, probably had a learning journey with SAP. We like to call us lifelong learners, I like the term in the IT industry. I've heard that you've had several SAP certifications, maybe you can talk about that later, including, of course, SAP S/4HANA Cloud, for the public cloud product. Curious to know how this process was for you. But before that, I think it's important to explain to our audience about the certification process and if everyone thinks about certification learning for ERP & Finance, you should all think Luzian Kern. Luzian, could you please explain why it's so important nowadays to have a certification such as SAP S/4HANA Cloud?

Luzian: In its essence, a certification is the starting proof point for a dedicated knowledge and skill set. So the basis for certification is the acquisition of the knowledge and skills. And with the certifications, we make this visible, right? With the certifications, we bring certain quality into the market and we help that the projects run better. So actually it is not too much different than having a degree at a university or from school or somewhere else. It is not

showing everything what people can and know, but it's a minimum set. It's a minimum standard so that it is comparable and that we also drive quality in the market and in the projects. And with our stay current keeping it up to date approach, we also secure that people follow us on our journey with the latest information or the latest status.

Yannick: Marsel you are so to say, the customer of an SAP Learning organization. I'm really interested in knowing about the truth. Can you share a bit about your very own learning journey? And maybe in a second phase we can talk about the challenges. What would you like to give back as feedback to Luzian, to the SAP organization? But let's start about your learning journey.

Marsel: I agree with the certification. Certification is the key to have a good implementation. In our consultancy ecosystem, we use to mainly put more focus on experience only. As long we have a career, lots of ERP, mainly consultants, SAP ECC consultants feels that are comfortable to go ahead and implement S/4HANA. And then as we know in the project definitions, this is not enough because along we are defining our next steps in S/4HANA project, we have to have the total visibility which kind of components we need to implement. There are a lot of obsolete components from SAP ECC and then people that is focusing on the ECC, inside S/4HANA miss stuffs like that. I have a YouTube channel where I provide some contents, I provide some live presentation. There is a topic that I always speak is get your SAP certification. SAP experience is really important, but to get the fundamentals of the tool is as important as the experience because we need to know how the path to be selected, which component is the best for that customer and only with the SAP certification you are up to date to have this kind of decision. Regarding the perspective of SAP certification, switching to perspective of the customer as a solution, we don't have so many flexibility in SAP Public Cloud. This is why some customer is pursuing that with SAP RISE, the S/4HANA Private Cloud Edition where the system accommodates more customizations and flexibility in the new solutions in the company. This is important as well to tell the clients, get to know the business and we need to understand very well the mindset in SAP usage because people are trying to implement, as is business process, into S/4HANA. When you talk about S/4HANA, we talk more about fit to get. We have ready solution to use. We have to try to understand as much as we can by the Learning Hub trainings and the Sapphire events. I really encourage people to visit those events, watch as much as sessions the client can onsite or virtually, to get more information as possible because get in SAP S/4HANA, not only cloud but as well as SAP Private Cloud Edition, with the old mindset is not the best solution, it's not the best choice to do. We have to think S/4HANA and understand the best projects in S/4HANA to have a good implementation.

Yannick: Thanks, Marsel. So you talk about the mindset, about the tool knowledge, about the process knowledge. And of course you probably have feedback because you've went through the certification process. So anything you'd like to share? Because we have the head of education here for ERP. So what would you like to give as a feedback? Let's be honest and transparent. I think Luzian is up to the task.

Marsel: Well, my feedback in all the training process is Learning Hub is used to provide content, but is a tool that is hard to manage with. We have many over there, so much text to explain new stuff, and then the clients need to have an easy access to the content. So people use to get the Learning Hub platform to use SAP Community to reach out the videos or blogs with the current steps in the solutions ready to use. It is different when we are talking

about a core solution rather than a implemented solution. When we are doing some implementation and want to understand some business process, we will need to check in a paper or in a course or in a training the right steps to do. What is first, what is second, what is ahead. In Learning Hub, my perspective as a feedback is we have a kind of overview of everything. We have a very good explanation about the applications and the usage of applications. But steps to build a solution definitely is not clear. And then currently in clients implementation, we are having lack of knowledge of SAP content. Because this for example, in this current client, we have so many process automation solution, people are not using any of this and they decided to skip from the public cloud to private cloud. As we know, public cloud is a good solution as well, and very accommodatable in the size of that company. But the lack of information by using all the features and in a different selection, and they decided to implement another system. Then it starts from the knowledge transfer. I think SAP must think more about knowledge transfer as virtual classes, more availability. I think openSAP is a really good tool and precisely the Learning Hub we must focus not only in get the certification. Learning Hub is the best content to get the certification, but the answer is, is it the best to build the solution? And then this is my final comment on this.

Yannick: Luzian, you want to react to that, obviously.

Luzian: Thanks a lot for your feedback and very happy to hear it. I think I have good news for you because we are basically reworking our learning platform and how we offer the content. So overall, the message is we have a new platform that is learning.sap.com. This platform is already live. It is growing day by day. It's not yet the final stage, but the point is here we have all the content on this platform is for free, meaning pure content, everybody can consume for free. Furthermore, we have on this platform link to live access meaning to system that you can get your hands dirty and get hands on experience. But we also have the connection to the communities with the hot topics to see what is going on. And with this content you can prepare yourself for the certification. And as I said, this offering of the content is for free. But the good news is also Marssel, and I think this is also an important point that you made, it is not just describing the application and the features and functions. That is a legacy where we came from, but we are rebuilding the whole content towards role and skills specific. So main focus, for example, or one of the main target groups is the consultant for sure, for ERP S/4HANA. So we really slice and dice the content not from feature and function point of view, but from your point of view, from your point of as a learner, what do you need to build the solutions? And this is basically what we are going to do. And as I said, the new platform is already live, so everybody can test this learning.sap.com and there will be some really nice and interesting announcement during Sapphire 2023 during May. So little spoiler alert here. Please stay tuned. And I just can say that these are great news for all the learners in the SAP universe.

Yannick: Thanks. Well, so that was the double invitation to go to Sapphire, one from Marssel and one from Luzian. So let's all meet there, at least virtually. I'm looking forward to the announcement regarding learning.sap.com. And this leads me to my next question. So I assume on that podcast will probably have two to three thousand software professionals listening in, hearing about Marssel's experience, listening to what you said, Luzian. So simple question: What is the first step? What is the must do for getting an SAP certification? Where should I start?

Luzian: Let's quickly mentioned really the starting point also from now is go to learning.sap.com. Pick your learning journey. Pick your topic. We have the product pages, there you will find the content. Start your learning there and, after completion, you are prepped to do your certification. To deepen your knowledge, we have, for example, demos and recordings of exercises and solutions, but also, as I said, the options to access sandbox systems, to practice what you have learned. And by doing this and learning on this platform, you are prepped for the certification, you register for it, and then it's an easy step basically to go to your exam. It's online, it's virtual so that you can be certified in your respective solution.

Yannick: Clear call to action. Easy to understand. Hopefully, after the Sapphire announcement, even easier to execute. We are reaching the end of this podcast already. And last word of course go to you, Marsel. We'd like to know a bit more. Do you have a project? You want to say a few words about that? You talked about, you know, the mindset, etc. A few closing words for you.

Marsel: Really glad to speak about SAP here. That was really great. I strongly recommend people to go ahead in these events. I mentioned about SAP Community events on site, visit some blog posts. Good in SAP Community is you are checking real life, real time content from the people that is actually having some issues and get it solved by the blog post and describing step by step. This is really good. Spend some minutes by day, five to ten minutes to read one or two blogs on that. Go ahead and visit the SAP Sapphire event. This is one of the greatest events in IT in the world, as well as SAP TechEd, are really great, really awesome to have good knowledge because knowledge is the key during this innovation time. New solutions such as process automation we are having, we are being requested a lot to implement process automation tools. By the way, we are going to have a virtual event at the end of this month. Follow me on my social media such as LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter as well. To find me is Marsel with double S and then you can find me and see my content. And then we are going to have a virtual event regarding process automation. Lots of good stuffs on that because SAP is improving in a short term. The process automation tools with ready-to-use robots out of the box solution. So the main thing is to get knowledge is the key to have a very good times during the innovations.

Yannick: Thanks a lot. Great closing words and thanks for the invitation to follow you. I'm already following you, but I'm sure after this podcast, a couple hundreds additional people will follow you as well. Luzian, Marsel, thanks a lot for joining us on the podcast episode. Thanks also to our audience. We got a clear call to actions, which is to attend the Sapphire, even if it's virtually, to hear about the news on learning.sap.com. And you all got an invitation to follow Marsel, like I'm doing already, to learn about his journey to the cloud, to learn about his project insights and to learn about the product expertise he's sharing via those different channels. Thanks for being with us today. Feel free to send your feedback email to insides4@sap.com. Share your opinion with us, engage with us and share ideas for the next podcast episodes. We are always happy to host here another expert regarding project or product expertise. Tune in next time and be Inside SAP S/4HANA. Goodbye everyone.

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