

# SUGEN

SAP User-Group Executive Network

# DIGEST



## Foreword - SUGEN F2F April 10-12, 2024

by Gianmaria Perancin, Chairman SUGEN CLT, Chairman *Utilisateurs SAP Francophones*, *USF*

On April 10-12, our community has taken the time, once more, to meet in-person in Heidelberg and Walldorf for another F2F. These moments are key, for strengthening our network, and for exchanging on best practices and discussing about future roadmaps that SAP intends to deliver.

Clearly, the future is focused on Artificial Intelligence and Cloud adoption. This shouldn't really be anything new for us, as SAP has been describing such topics as key to ensuring the digital transformation of the companies we represent for some time now.

Nevertheless, it is key that SAP supports us in our journeys, and it is important for us that SAP has stressed so clearly, in front of all of us, how much effort they put in training all their employees, especially to give to all of them the same content that we receive as users (customers or partners). For us, it was also key to understand that their salespersons are trained with portfolio-oriented content to increase their effectiveness in explaining us why SAP solutions could be a source of value for our businesses. All of this was pointed out by Andre Bechtold and also discussed with Thomas Saueressig, Sebastian Steinhäuser and Christian Klein.

The main message out of this F2F is the ambition of SAP to provide all people (internal and external) with the same vision, the same content and the same understanding in order to pave together, editors & partners & customers, the most valuable digital transition and increase the business value out of SAP solutions, products and services.

**Gianmaria Perancin**



**SUGEN Group Picture April 2024**



## **Best Practice Session - Working with Partners & Social Responsibility**

by Craig Dale, CEO, UK & Ireland SAP User Group, UKISUG

The recent SUGEN Best Practice Day was focused on two pivotal themes: “Working with Partners” and “Social Responsibility”. The first part of the day was dedicated to “Working with Partners”. Many SAP User Groups across the globe shared their approaches, experiences, and best practices in this regard.

Australian SAP User Group (SAUG) highlighted the significance of partner sponsorships as a crucial revenue stream alongside membership fees. The introduction of Partner Connect sessions provides a valuable networking opportunity for partners, while the formation of a Partner Advisory promises to further strengthen collaboration and alignment with partners. Their innovative concept of SAP Partner Rankings & Reviews system underscores their commitment to transparency and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships.

African SAP User Group (AFSUG) emphasised the importance of fostering strong partner relationships and leveraging partner expertise to drive community support and engagement. While acknowledging potential threats such as lack of alignment with SAP’s direction and dependency on key partners, AFSUG remains proactive in ensuring partner involvement in key events like the bi-annual conference SAPHILA.

Dutch SAP User Group (VNSG) inclusive approach treats all members, including SAP and SAP partners, as equals. By acting as sponsors for major events and adhering to partnership criteria that ensure active participation in the Dutch market, partners play a crucial role in VNSG's ecosystem. The partnership with SAP positions VNSG as a critical friend, fostering constructive dialogue and collaboration.

Spanish SAP User Group's (AUSAPE) introduction of an "Employment Portal" demonstrates their commitment to facilitating connections between young professionals and potential employers, many of whom are SAP partners. This initiative not only fosters talent development but also strengthens ties within the SAP community.

While partners can't become regular members, the French-speaking SAP User Group's (USF) initiatives, such as "Le Lieu Partenaires" as a dedicated portal for partners and the Hack4Green Event, are providing dedicated spaces for partner collaboration and fostering innovation around sustainable solutions. The active involvement of partners in events like the annual conference and dedicated feedback sessions underscores USF's emphasis on engaging with partners constructively.

Swedish SAP User Group's (SAPSA) partner network, comprises of 72 partners with over 1,000 employees, underscores their significance in event sponsorship and community leadership. Partners' involvement in Special Interest Groups (SIGs) further enriches the collaborative ecosystem.

UK & Ireland SAP User Group (UKISUG) is uniting the SAP ecosystem by bringing together SAP, customers and partners. Partners have the opportunity to execute exclusive marketing activities that increase brand awareness, improve visibility, and encourage growth. Moreover, they can promote their profile, share information, their SAP expertise and experiences to the User group members. Knowledge-sharing opportunities for partners are possible through webinars and blogs. By driving such activities, partners are significantly enriching the UKISUG community.



**Best Practice Day at the SAP AppHaus in Heidelberg**

## **The second part of the SUGEN Best Practice Day focused on Social Responsibility - Charity, Environment, Wellbeing, Diversity & Inclusion**

The French-speaking SAP User Group USF exemplified a steadfast commitment to charitable giving, annually donating to associations such as the Red Cross. Moreover, USF's decision to provide a stand to a selected association during their Convention underpins their support for charitable causes. Their focus on recycling and waste limitation during conventions emphasizes their dedication to sustainable practices.

UKISUG demonstrated a multifaceted approach to sustainability, with conference charities raising funds for noble causes like cancer research. The measurement of carbon footprints for UKISUG events highlights their proactive stance on environmental conservation. Initiatives such as the Cycle to Work and Electric Car salary sacrifice scheme, with plans to plant trees around Teesside underscore their commitment to innovative solutions with regards to Sustainability. In addition, partnerships with organisations like "Thrive" focusing on positive mental health reflect UKISUG's holistic approach to social responsibility.

VNSG adheres to the principle that all user group activities should have a positive social and environmental impact. Their decision to theme the annual conference around sustainability with a "Green Theme" in 2024 demonstrates their dedication to having a positive impact on the environment. Initiatives like offering internships and attracting Gen Z members further emphasise VNSG's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering inclusivity within the SAP community.

AFSUG's efforts extend to diverse events, including the Mandela Day Blanket Donation, showcasing their commitment to giving back to the community. Additionally, AFSUG's focus on organizing sessions around well-being and women shows their commitment to a holistic community development. The introduction of the SAP Educate to Employ Student Program in partnership with UNICEF highlights their emphasis on driving social impact through education.

**Craig Dale**



## SAP Global User Groups Organization - A Live Experiment on April 11

by Yasmin Awad, SVP, *SAP Global User Groups Organization, SAP*

During the spring SUGEN F2F meeting, Yasmin Awad used her session to conduct a live experiment together with all user group representatives that had come to Walldorf. To kick things off, she made use of Mentimeter, asking the user group executives, what they believed was the user group service providing **greatest value for members today**. This question clearly indicated that user groups are today focusing on:

- Providing knowledge and learning sessions
- Collaborating with SAP
- Facilitating human connections

After this initial analysis, Yasmin used her slot to draw attention to the potential impact that AI can have on the working world, particularly in the context of SAP. The discussion shed light on the fact that most SUGEN members think AI will primarily provide solution proposals, how-to guides, best practices, and overall guidance to problems. They also anticipated that AI would help structure and locate SAP information quickly and ensure the relevance of the information it provided.

Looking further into the future and what this impact of AI then means for the value proposition of a user group in 2030, a lively discussion erupted on how user groups themselves must adapt in order to remain relevant. There was broad consensus that while AI would clearly enhance operations and make knowledge provision easier, it will not be able to replace human interaction. SUGEN is certain that the exchange between member organizations will remain a crucial element that AI simply cannot replace. An interesting fact to mention is that the group acknowledged that the younger generation might have different perspectives on this matter.

Following the vivid conversation, Yasmin again asked the SUGEN audience what they believed will be the user group service providing **the greatest value for members - but this time in 2030!**

The results speak for themselves. Up on top were now:

- Facilitating human connections
- Offering memorable experiences to members
- Providing knowledge and learning sessions

This ranking showed a shift towards more human-centric services, emphasizing the continued and probably even higher importance of human connections and experiences in the digital age.

**Yasmin Awad**



## SUGEN Executive Exchanges on April 11

by Joan Torres, SUGEN CLT Member, *Spanish SAP User Group, AUSAPE*

### Executive Exchange on Move to the Cloud

The session on “Move to the Cloud” was led by Uwe Grigoleit, Senior Vice President of the SAP Customer Evolution Program. Uwe underscored the aspiration to simplify processes with RISE with SAP. He noted that the available innovations were currently being consumed only rarely, a reason therefore is that upgrades are not being done on a regular basis on customer side.

RISE with SAP now includes a [Clean Core Dashboard](#), which facilitates easier upgrades. Uwe also announced the launch of the [Migration and Modernization Center](#), which aims to provide guidance and incentives for customers. The [SAP S/4HANA Cloud Safekeeper](#) was introduced as a tool to ensure upgrades to the latest release while maintaining the current running release. Another highlight was the unveiling of the [Business Case Calculator](#), which requires a one-week engagement, and the results can be used to justify projects to top management.

He also shared that the main adopters of SAP S/4HANA Public Cloud are net new customers, customers with a two-tier approach, and professional services customers. Some are also moving parts of their operations, such as Finance, into the Public Cloud.

Additionally, further information was shared on the topic of [SAP S/4HANA Compatibility Packs](#).

### Executive Exchange on SAP’s Learning Strategy

The Executive Exchange session with Andre Bechtold, Senior Vice President and Head of Solution & Innovation Experience, was focusing on SAP’s Learning Strategy. Andre stressed that learning should commence earlier than the product launch on the user side and emphasized the importance of the partner ecosystem in SAP’s learning strategy.

The consolidation of various learning platforms and offerings was discussed, which leads to more consistency. He highlighted the significance of the modularization and connection of learning offerings to ensure a seamless experience.

The learning focus for customer-facing SAP colleagues was also mentioned as an important pillar of the strategy. Andre Bechtold spoke about how SAP solutions could be experienced via [trials](#). A possible access to non-commercial licenses for training purposes was part of the discussion as well.

Joan Torres



## SUGEN Executive Exchanges on April 12

by Gianmaria Perancin, Chairman SUGEN CLT, Chairman *Utilisateurs SAP Francophones, USF*

### Executive Exchange on SAP's Artificial Intelligence Strategy

In the first session of the second day of the SUGEN F2F event, Dr. Philipp Herzig, SAP Chief AI Officer, emphasized the huge economic potential of artificial intelligence over the next three years, equating it roughly to the GDP of Germany.

While AI is still in its early stages, over 27,000 customers already rely on AI solutions from SAP, he noted. In addition, he stressed the importance of SAP's approach to delivering trustworthy AI solutions: Relevant, reliable, and responsible are the guiding principles for SAP Business AI. Philipp also explained that SAP does not intend to develop an own large language model (LLM), as the company combines market-leading LLMs with SAP's business data and process context to build valuable AI scenarios for customers.

By the end of 2024, SAP will deliver more than 100 generative AI use cases across the product portfolio, with 50 having been delivered to date. To ensure reliability and responsibility, all AI cases are reviewed by the AI Ethics Committee. Philipp also introduced [Joule](#), SAP's generative AI copilot, which will be integrated across SAP's cloud portfolio.

### Executive Exchange on SAP's Customer Services & Delivery Strategy

Thomas Saueressig, Executive Board member of SAP's newly introduced board area Customer Services & Delivery, emphasized the mission to help customers with business transformation through new programs and offerings. Among additional topics, SAP's new board area includes private and sovereign cloud services, customer support, cloud infrastructure, and escalation management.

The company aims to harmonize service level agreements (SLAs) and tools available to customers. Thomas also highlighted the importance of data quality for a successful adoption of innovations such as AI.

## Executive Exchange on SAP's Corporate Strategy

The foundation of SAP's best of suite product portfolio remains SAP Cloud ERP and the SAP Business Technology Platform. As part of SAP's goal to become the leading enterprise application and Business AI company, powered by BTP, SAP is making a big push on data strategy, including partnerships with [Collibra](#) and [Databricks](#), to drive foundational data harmonization. Moreover, SAP is also streamlining enablement for internal teams and simplifying payment options for customers.

## Executive Exchange with SAP's CEO Christian Klein

Christian Klein, in the final executive exchange session of the day, discussed the necessary transformation at SAP, also due to the rise of AI. He underscored the importance of SAP's partnerships with [Nvidia](#) and [Apple](#), and the need for a better migration path from SAP Business Warehouse (BW) for customers leading to a consistent data layer in the cloud.

SAP plans to support the digital transformation and the move to the cloud with enterprise architects. He highlighted the importance of SAP's ecosystem and the company's future aspirations, including providing a seamless experience for customers. The need for many customers to balance between cloud and on-premise solutions had been outlined as well, with SAP confirming to maintain its maintenance commitment for SAP S/4HANA On-Premise until 2040.

**Gianmaria Perancin**



**Executive Exchange at the SAP Headquarter with SAP's CEO Christian Klein**