



## A FRESH APPROACH TO THE TALENT CONUNDRUM



Digital transformation is the only way forward for businesses – there's no ambiguity in that. However, for companies to succeed in this challenging and momentous undertaking, they must have the right combination of technology solutions and skilled talent supporting them at every step.

## RISE with SAP and Infosys Live Enterprise: the perfect technology answer for business transformation with speed.

What is RISE with SAP? It is an end-to-end bundle of infrastructure, applications (SAP S/4HANA) and services (Business Process Intelligence) to transform businesses. The offering helps companies to go digital and transition to new business models in tune with market needs. RISE with SAP offers a holistic on-your-terms and on-your-timeline transformation to an intelligent enterprise.

What is Infosys Live Enterprise? A suite that makes organizations sentient, responsive and agile. It is equipped with multiple technological components and assets that come together in a meaningful way to transform business.

RISE with SAP combined with Infosys Live Enterprise provides companies with a potent and comprehensive approach to business transformation. Further, it enables them to tap into a vibrant ecosystem of partners, customers and vendors and add significant value to their business.

## The importance of talent

It's not possible to overstate the criticality of the right talent to bolster crucial business initiatives. An independent research firm's recent study validates this statement. Businesses view talent shortage as the biggest barrier to adopting 64% of new technologies<sup>1</sup>. In fact, talent shortage outranks issues such as implementation costs and security risks. As a result, it poses a serious threat to an organization's growth plans. Companies must therefore figure out alternative ways to prepare the workforce to address the skills gap.

Consider the other angle - globalization, digitization and automation have enhanced company performance by

many folds. At the same time, they have made the business landscape much more complex. Software from established and knowledgeable players like SAP can help companies transform into intelligent enterprises. Today, 80% of business transactions globally touch an SAP system. Undoubtedly, a workforce that is skilled on the SAP platform will be in great demand.

Infosys recently hosted a roundtable discussion with SAP and Fayetteville State University experts to exchange thoughts on this critical issue. This paper describes the efforts taken by SAP through its SAP Next-Gen Labs and Infosys through its Infosys Innov8 program to plug the growing gap between talent supply and demand.

## Understanding SAP Next-Gen Labs

SAP Next-Gen Labs is an excellent community for students keen on technology and innovation pursuits and aspire to become decision-makers who can shape enterprises into intelligent ones. To make this happen, the community has access to 2717 educational institutions across 111 countries, and 153 SAP Next-Gen Labs and 117 SAP Next-Gen chapters. This rich ecosystem has been set up through relevant and value-adding partnerships.

The program introduces students to SAP software through the SAP University Alliances and provides networking and educational activities to build technical skills. At the same time, it enables faculty at educational institutes and partners such as Infosys to educate next-gen talent with SAP skills. Thus, together with the faculty and its partners, the program strives to produce the next talent pool for SAP and its wide-ranging ecosystem.

How do students benefit? First, they can start as early as middle school, thanks to the SAP Young Thinkers initiative.

Students get exposure to computer and data science through experimental and experiential learning programs. Second, through the SAP University Alliances, students can tap into the SAP ecosystem, learn best practices, network with other students, participate in competitions and events, access course information, and get certified. In short, students can innovate with purpose in this community. As graduates of this community, they are well-equipped to become future leaders and exploit many opportunities globally.

Why is this initiative effective? Typical college programs impart an overall view of technologies. At the same time, business application software such as SAP does not feature in the curriculum. It is only as new employees or graduates that students get trained on the SAP platform. SAP skill acquisition becomes a priority then.

The SAP University Alliances in action - The Broadwell College of Business and Economics (BCBE), Fayetteville State University has taken a different approach by introducing micro-credentials that are professional certifications or digital badges granted by mastery of a specialized competency. Examples of micro-credentials include the SAP TS410 badge certification for business process integration competencies on SAP S/4HANA. The advantage of the BCBE curriculum is that the professional certifications and badges are integrated with the requirements of degree programs at graduate and undergraduate levels. In effect, students are armed with practical skills during their college education itself, making them attractive prospects in the job market. According to Dr. Murat Adivar, professor of business analytics and an SAP-certified consultant at Fayetteville State University, students can command 40% higher salaries with micro-credentials. In addition, their career-related aspirations become significantly easier to achieve. The success of the BCBE program can also be gauged from the steady rise in interest in careers in the SAP ecosystem.

## Understanding Infosys Innov8

Infosys Innov8 is a strategic initiative from Infosys launched to accelerate digital transformation in enterprises by using SAP digital solutions. The initiative sprung out of discussions with senior SAP leadership on how to –

- capitalize on Infosys' vast knowledge and experience with AI/ML technologies
- utilize Infosys' expertise in working with hyperscalers to cloud-enable SAP S/4 HANA and help enterprises move applications to the cloud
- create and get ready new talent for the industry, which was facing an imminent shortage of 300 000 professionals in the next three to five years.

Infosys collaborated with SAP and almost thirty North American universities to construct courses that would provide a jumpstart for students on SAP as a

platform. SAP provides the necessary infrastructure support, such as SAP Learning Hub licenses and courses. Innov8 has been a resounding success, with over 1000 students participating in this rigorous program as part of their university tenure. The training and certification act as a springboard for a career on the SAP platform. In fact, Infosys has recruited over 200 students through this program, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach.

Infosys plans to introduce RISE with SAP and its Live Enterprise into the program as a next step.

### A synergistic partnership

When all players involved in an initiative remain aligned on the abiding objective of educating students on SAP, the outcomes are significant. Some of the gains that students can anticipate include -

- Opportunity to work with SAP's more than 400 000 customers in 180 countries and 21 000 partners like an Infosys
- Being part of the 21 million subscribers cloud user base
- Free access to online learning resources
- Forge ahead of peers by earning industry certifications in the latest SAP technologies

Students and faculty from the SAP University Alliances can utilize the wealth of resources in the SAP Learning Hub, edition for Next-Gen. It has 18 learning journeys covering three career paths of consultant, developer and architect. Each learning journey is carefully designed to meet the requirements of a specific career path, making a student more appealing to a prospective employer.

Career path	Learning solutions
Consultant	Intelligent enterprise resource planning with SAP S/4HANA Intelligent enterprise resource planning with SAP S/4HANA Cloud Human experience management with SAP SuccessFactors High-performance in-memory database management with SAP HANA Business Intelligence and predictive analytics with SAP Analytics Cloud
Developer	Application development for SAP HANA SAP Integration Suite SAP IoT and edge SAPUI5 and SAP Fiori applications
Architect	SAP IoT and edge

A Pearson Vue research further emphasizes the impact of certifications on career opportunities and earning potential.

**35%**  
of respondents said there was a salary increase

**44%**  
reported higher quality work

**91%**  
said they gained credibility and worth the time and money



## The partnership in action

Infosys enabled an aerospace firm amid an M&A to smoothly integrate two newly acquired plants into their business. Infosys undertook the grueling responsibility of creating a technological backbone for the acquired plants to operate seamlessly. This would allow the buyer to focus on the business part.

Infosys relied on RISE with SAP and Live Enterprise to create a technological blueprint for the plant operations. We worked closely with SAP on the solution

front and with hyperscalers to support S/4 HANA on the cloud network. In addition, solutions from the Infosys Live Enterprise suite were used to enable intelligent decision-making on the shop floor.

Infosys had a comprehensive plan to complete the integration in one year, by no means a simple undertaking. It involved many technical components working cohesively as well as effective change management.

Infosys' Innov8 program played a big role in handling the AI/ML components. More importantly, students who had trained in the SAP Next-Gen community were part of this implementation. They actively helped define business processes and determine technologies that could be utilized to integrate SAP with cloud and AI/ML.

This project's success is clear proof of utilizing rightly skilled students to work on challenging engagements and under tight deadlines.

## Conclusion

A path full of promise for students as well as companies

The SAP Next-Gen Labs training program is a win-win for both students and companies.

Students gain a ringside view of enterprises by working on real-world business projects with companies like SAP and Infosys. Real-world projects allow students to synthesize and apply concepts and theoretical knowledge gained in classrooms. Plus, it provides a holistic

picture of how the various processes and technologies converge to support business operations. Such an approach builds a robust platform for future innovators and business leaders.

For companies, groomed and ready-to-deliver employees are a huge boost to their growth plans. In the digital age, where things happen at a rapid pace, making the right moves at the right time is a significant competitive advantage.



## Reference

The shortage of tech workers is about to become an even bigger problem for everyone | ZDNet

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