SAP Raises Bar with Academy for Pre-Sales Leaders

SAP
Best Advance in Leadership Development
September 2017

Company Background

Company At-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Walldorf, Germany
Year Founded	1972
Revenue	22.06 billion EUR
Employees	84,183
Global Scale	Offers services globally, offices in more than 130 countries.
Customers/Output, etc.	SAP is a multinational software corporation with 340,000 customers in 190 countries.
Industry	Enterprise software
Stock Symbol	Traded as FWB: SAP and NYSE SAP
Website	www.sap.com

Budget and Timeframe

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Overall budget	$600,000 USD
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	3

Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	10
Number of contractors involved with implementation	3
Timeframe to implement	June 2015 - 2017
Start date of the program	June 2015

Business Conditions & Business Needs

As a market leader in enterprise application software, SAP is at the center of today's business and technology revolution and meeting customer needs requires internal Learning and Development organizations to deliver innovative training to better prepare employees for success.

SAP has more than 2,500 pre-sales professionals who help customers and prospects visualize the value of the company's solutions. More than 300 pre-sales managers are responsible for leading, coaching, and developing them and their teams, understanding the latest SAP technology, leading customers on digital transformation journeys, and learning from each other.

Pre-sales managers also need to strengthen their global network of pre-sales contacts to better align with the practices and resources needed to address global customer demands.

In the past, Pre-sales lacked a consistent manager training approach and curricula across the globe. Managers could attend internal training or an occasional outside workshop sponsored by a market unit or region.

To determine needs for a new Pre-sales Leader Academy, interviews with Pre-sales managers showed they wanted more focus on talent development, a better understanding of their own skills, constructive guidance on being a leader and coach, more guidance on effectively messages to customers, and better guidance on how to run a team as an enterprise.

Interviews with pre-sales higher-level leaders showed a need for pre-sales managers to take a bigger role in guiding their teams and in guiding SAP customers in their digital transformations.

Overview

The Pre-sales Leader Academy was created to provide an experience with focused learning, expert guidance, and shared understanding to best develop managers.

The Pre-sales Leader Academy leveraged the current Sales Leader Academy as a foundation. The Sales Leader Academy had been run successfully for a year, and there were many similarities in charter, content, and delivery. The skills inventory, applied innovation, executive conversations, and leadership elements were used as a basis for the Pre-sales Leader Academy.

Another successful program was the SAP Academy for Pre-sales – a program for new hires. Leaders of that academy shared their experience with pre-sales managers to help them better understand the academy curricula and aid recent graduates.

The Pre-sales Leader Academy also utilized other successful training, such as presentation and storytelling that was delivered across the globe by the SAP Pre-sales Learning organization. Content for the Pre-sales Leader Academy is continually enhanced using feedback from attendees and a quarterly review to decide which adjustments will have the most impactful.

In addition, the new academy uses case studies, discussion, and socialization.

The goals for the Pre-sales Leader Academy were designed to improve upon five key performance indicators:

1. **Win rate.** Percentage of opportunities WON after completing the program.
2. **Pipeline growth.** Percentage increase of pipeline opportunities after completing the program.
3. **Sales revenue growth.** Percentage of additional sales revenue generated after completing the program.
4. **Won Cloud opportunities**. Percentage of opportunities focused on a cloud solution won after completing the program.
5. **Unique accounts won.** Percentage of new deals won that incorporated innovation technology.

The 2015 and 2016 CRM Pipeline Data Analysis completed and verified by an independent research firm indicate that the Pre-sales Leader Academy program made a significant impact on the SAP sales organization. Improvements were seen in each of the five KPIs as well as qualitative feedback from the program participants.

Design and Delivery of the Program

Pre-sales Leader Academy

- **Description.** This 10-day workshop equips Pre-sales Managers with the skill sets and tools to effectively coach their teams. The curriculum also teaches them how to drive innovation, decisively lead their teams, successfully develop their team members, engage an executive audience, and coach their teams to deliver memorable presentations to customers. They also learn from sharing best practices used in their home markets.

- **Target audience.** Pre-sales Managers.

- **Program KPIs.** Workshop satisfaction rate, revenue pipeline, booked revenue, opportunities in pipeline, won opportunities, cloud business, innovation opportunities

- **Duration.** 10-day live classroom workshop

- Program components.

    o Pre-work activities such as readings, videos, eLearning, account research, and facilitated conference calls.

    o SAP Leadership Academy, Dublin, Calif., and Innovation Center, Palo Alto.

    o Post workshop activities include facilitated conference calls.

    o 90-day reinforcement activities.

- **Value Proposition.** To increase revenue, customer satisfaction, and the overall performance of the Pre-sales Managers and their teams.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the specifics of innovation selling.

- Learn how to lead, coach, manage the necessary change.

- Understand the SAP Innovation Center best practices for innovation deals.

- Understand the traits of successful leaders.

- Know and practice how to coach teams to better performance.

- Develop the mindset of a business executive to enhance the ability to communicate on their level.

- Understand how to leverage available tools and resources to help develop and coach a team.

- Observe and practice impactful presentation techniques that makes pre-sales memorable to customers.

- Share best practices with other leaders in an open environment.

- Internalize a leadership plan.

Main Content

- **Day 1: Innovation leader.** Learn how to lead, coach and sell customer innovation.

- **Day 2: Three leaders.** Learn about the unique characteristics of 3 highly successful leaders.

- **Day 3: Innovation Day at SAP.** Visit SAP innovation incubation labs to inspire customer innovation.

- **Day 4: Memorable presentations.** Practice techniques and deliver a memorable event.

- **Day 5: Talent development.** Understand tools and resources to leverage for talent development. Meet and observe presentations from the SAP Pre-sales graduate academy.

- **Day 6: Executive conversations.** Learn and demonstrate how to engage on an equal basis with an executive.

- **Day 7: Coaching.** Learn to diagnose different needs of direct reports based on individual background and specifics of tasks to be fulfilled.

- **Day 8: Best practice sharing.** Learn from others in the same academy who have faced and conquered problems and issues in their market unit.

- **Day 9: Franchise4Success.** Understand how your direct reports should engage and execute successfully with a customer as pre-sales.

- **Day 10: Leadership plan.** Present back to the others what a manager has learned as a result of this academy and what specific plans there are for leading change back in the market unit.

The Pre-sales Leader Academy is currently run out of the expanded Academy facility in San Ramon, Calif. In 2015 and 2016, the Pre-sales Leader Academy was run in the Sales

Academy facility in Dublin, Calif. In 2015, two Pre-sales Leader Academies were held in June and September for a total of 48 attendees who represented six continents and 19 countries.

In 2017, sessions have continued with 10 two-week programs for 255 managers from more than 30 countries. The average satisfaction rating for the program is 4.8 on a 5.0 scale.

Figure 1: Pre-sales Leader Academy Program – Execution & Feedback 2015 – 2016

Program	#Sessions	#Participants	Rating/5.0
Pre-sales Leader Academy 2015	2	48	4.75
Pre-sales Leader Academy 2016	6	149	4.8

Source: SAP 2017

Adoption of the Program

SAP's Global Head of Pre-sales identified the need for the academy and became its executive sponsor. She presented the idea of the Pre-sales Leader Academy to all regional and business unit Pre-sales leaders to understand their needs and gain their support.

After obtaining global buy-in and commitment, she enlisted the learning leaders who had created and successfully run the Sales Leader Academy. The learning leaders provided guidance on establishing an academy and access to program and content experts. Pre-sales learning SMEs then were engaged to help with the design and review of the curriculum.

Feedback on the first Pre-sales Leader Academy in June 2015 was positive and provided valuable insight on what worked well and what could be improved. As a result, improvements were made, and the second academy was delivered with even better ratings.

At this point, the two groups attending the academies started to spread the benefits of the academy to their peers. Two weeks out of the field for Pre-sales leaders and their managers can have an impact on the business. A video was made to summarize the experience from the first group of participants. As one person said, "This is the best training I have attended in my 15 years of being a manager at SAP."

**Figure 2: Pre-sales Leadership Academy Video**

Source: SAP 2017

This academy is not mandated, and business units must fund the travel and training expenses. Even so, there is a current backlog of attendees for future academies – a clear indication that regional leaders value the academy's benefits are willing to make the investment.

Another challenge was to develop an experiential academy rather than a lecture-based academy. Facilitators, outside presenters, and SMEs were coached on how to make content challenging and memorable using interactions, simulations, playback, and experience sharing. For example, a video was developed by a group of managers who shared experiences in a humorous and enjoyable manner.

Figure 3: Managers' Video
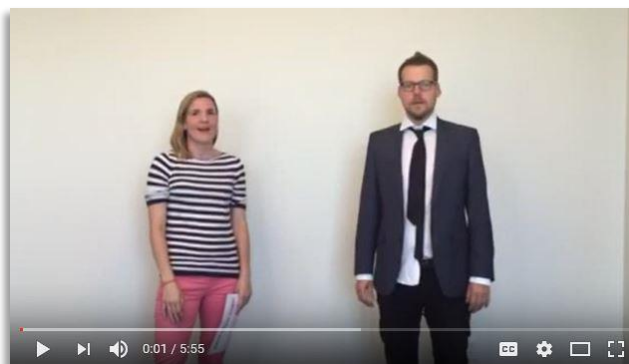
Source: SAP 2017

Sharing best practices became one of the most popular sessions but had had to be carefully facilitated to avoid becoming a complaint session without any real solutions being offered.

A major challenge was to get a commitment from participants to apply their shared knowledge and experiences in the field with their teams. At the end of each workshop, attendees were asked to deliver two items.

First, they must present a 10-minute story about what the digital transformation means for their customers or industries. The story must include a drawing utilizing effective presentation techniques. Managers learn from observing each other what digital transformation means to pre-sales.

The second deliverable is a short video. In the video, each manager must tell what their leadership plan will be going forward. It should include ideas and lessons learned from the workshops, social experiences, and the best practices shared over the two weeks.

Six months after the academy, the two forms of commitment are reviewed on an individual basis. This feedback helps to set expectations for change and awareness that the managers will be held accountable for change.

Measurable Benefits

From the start the Pre-sales Leader Academy, design and implementation were geared toward creating a measurable and significant impact on the SAP Sales and Pre-sales organization.

### CRM Pipeline Data Analysis – 2015 and 2016

An independent research company analyzed CRM data of team members who reported to the Pre-sales Managers before they attended the 2015 academies and again after managers participated in the leadership program. The comparison showed that the Pre-sales Leader Academy made a clear and positive impact on the five KPIs (Win Rate, Pipeline Growth, Sales Revenue Growth, Won Cloud Opportunities, Unique Accounts Won).

For the analysis, 42 managers met the criteria: 1) Managers who attended Pre-sales Leader Academy training in 2015 and were still in the position in 2016. 2) Managers who have hiring dates listed in the training file. Those managers were compared against a control population of 248 Pre-sales Managers who did not attend the Pre-sales Leader Academy in 2015 or 2016.
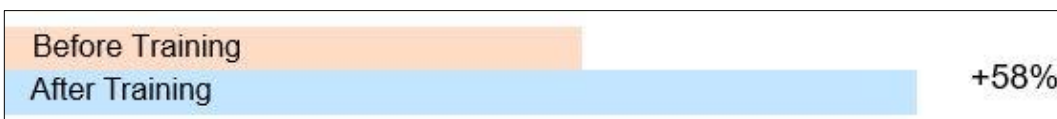
**Win rate.** Opportunity creation and closure rates for managers teams have increased after training.

Before Training	
After Training	+95%
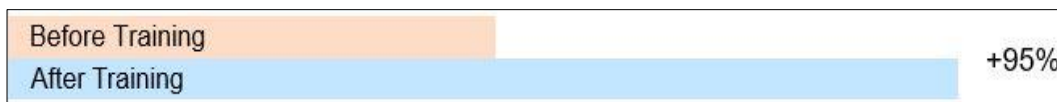
Pipeline growth. The value of opportunities has increased significantly after training.

Before Training	
After Training	+58%

Sales revenue growth. The amount of revenue generated has seen an increase after training.

|	
Before Training	
After Training	+50%
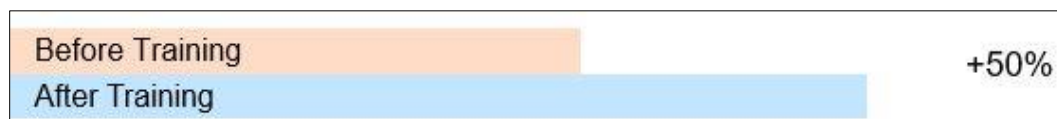
Won Cloud opportunities. After training, there has been an increase in winning opportunities focused on the critical segment of cloud customers.

Before Training	+65%
After Training	
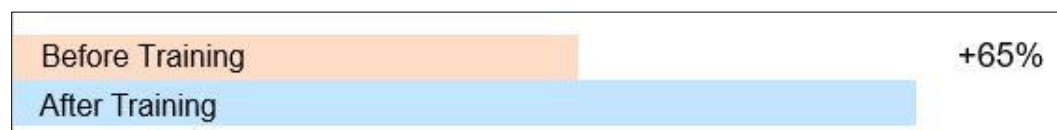
Unique accounts won. The number of innovative deals has increased.

Before Training	
After Training	+81%
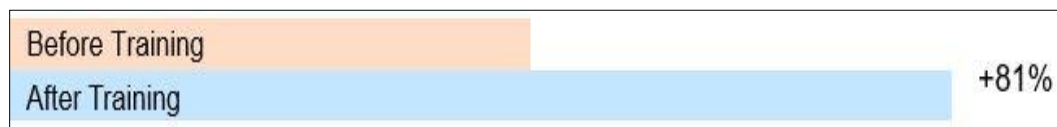
Increased revenue. Revenue attributed to those Innovative deals has increased due to the training attendees.

Before Training	
After Training	+96%
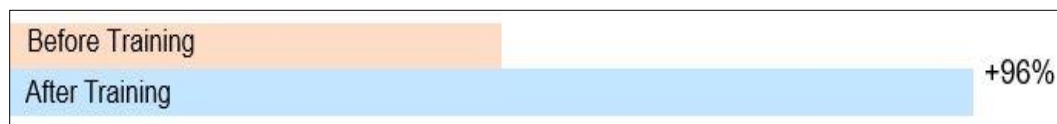
Feedback

Besides the measurable benefits of the academy experience, managers shared some transformational comments:

"This was the best training I have had in 15 years of my career with SAP."

"Wow, wow, wow!"

"Really makes you think what it takes to be a leader."

"Fantastic Best Practice Sharing."

Overall

Every group of managers who attend the academy makes this program a collective experience. Each group takes on personalities that are unique. They create a social sharing-message group to post updates during the two weeks together. Over the weekend, the updates take the form of messages and photos of their explorations in the California area. After the academy, the message groups are full of personal and professional updates.

These pre-sales managers also participate in a Pre-sales Manager Solution Hub. This role-based hub is a collaborative knowledge-sharing workspace intended to benefit everyone but reliant on participation. If all pre-sales managers across the regions and business units had been asked to join this role-based hub, very few would see the purpose. But now that they are connected through this common academy experience, they are willing to connect, contribute, and work together to make this group a vibrant and beneficial manager community.

Executive and leadership sponsorships are key to the success of a program with such a large scale and scope. Leaders are visionaries and help determine where they want the company to go and how it needs to change. These messages, and the means to support them, can be delivered through this academy experience.

An immersive experience like the Pre-sales Leader Academy gives managers a solid foundation and a global network of peers to help make them successful in this journey.

The SAP Pre-sales Learning team also learned that a successful program must constantly evolve. The team modifies the workshops and delivery methods for every academy based on feedback from the attendees, and ratings have improved over each successive session.

Lastly, the team learned that programs beneficial to a manager's career also provide business benefits. It is much easier to attract future managers when their leaders understand the potential impact to their business that can result after this training.

Attendees of the academy see the Pre-sales Leader Academy as in investment by SAP. And SAP can measure this investment result in business impact.

This result has helped to garner support of pre-sales leadership for academy experiences for additional target groups. In 2016, a Pre-sales Leadership Academy was created specifically for Pre-sales Engagement Leads, who have no direct report responsibilities but are strategically aligned with customer accounts.

The Engagement Leads are responsible for leading virtual teams across multiple strategic accounts. Their academy experience shared similar content with the pre-sales managers but additional curricula had to be developed for innovation, influencing without authority, project leadership, presenting with impact, and enterprise architecture. The feedback for those new academies has been very positive.

The success of the Pre-sales Leader Academy has helped to keep demand high for managers who have not yet attended the academy. When pre-sales learning first started the leader academy in 2015, considerable time was spent in convincing leaders to send managers and convincing managers to attend.

Now, there is a waiting list of managers requesting attendance well into 2018. SAP is a growing company, and much of its success is its investment in people and in providing learning opportunities that help them be successful not only in their current jobs but in their future jobs.

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