

# SAP Talent Win Events Build Talent Pipeline Through Memorable Candidate Experiences

SAP

Best Candidate Experience

November 2019



## Company Background



<b>Company-at-a-Glance</b>	SAP
<b>Headquarters</b>	Walldorf, Germany
<b>Year Founded</b>	1972
<b>Revenue</b>	€27.708 million
<b>Employees</b>	96,000
<b>Global Scale</b>	140 countries
<b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>	ERP and Cloud software solutions
<b>Industry</b>	IT
<b>Stock Symbol</b>	SAP SE
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sap.com">www.sap.com</a>

## Budget and Timeframe

---

<b>Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?</b>	Four
<b>Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?</b>	Variable
<b>Number of contractors involved with implementation</b>	Variable
<b>Start date of the program</b>	2017

## Business Conditions and Business Needs

---

SAP is a B2B brand that is sometimes perceived as dull, bureaucratic, slow, uncreative and German-centric. Added to this challenge is who SAP competes for talent against: exciting consumer brands such as Apple, Google and Facebook. This means that SAP must continually change perceptions and stand out amongst the tough competition.

SAP uses all the typical channels to attract and engage talent such as social media and job advertisements, but how does an organization engage the passive audience who is not searching for a job yet ensure that company is front of mind when they do choose to change role?

By creating memorable experiences.

## Overview

---

Creating memorable experiences is the ethos behind the Talent Win strategy.

Talent Win is a program that creates memorable experiences for select talent groups to build the SAP Talent Acquisition Pipeline.

## Design

---

Talent Win is an event program that attracts specific target groups of professionals and offers them a unique event with SAP people, technology and products following a “networking-based” approach. Each event contains content about SAP, a unique experience and networking. The event is a tailor-made experience for selected pre-qualified groups based on hiring demands and profiles while reflecting diversity among the invitees.

Target groups included:

- Women in leadership
- Women in tech
- People of color in all business areas
- People with Autism
- Cloud professionals
- People who work in industries who haven't considered careers in software sales or consultancy before
- Senior executives from new industries

The human, emotional side of the SAP employer brand can best be exposed through experiences that money can't buy, and only SAP can deliver. This is how Talent Win "wows" the participants who network with hiring managers during the event. The experience of a Talent Win event is the "wake-up kiss" to passive candidates who comfortably work at their current employer with little to no desire to change.

Implementing a dedicated follow-up process to the events nurture's candidates through to hire. This is not necessarily immediately following an event and as such, success is measured by new hires from a Talent Win event within 15 months. In 2017 and 2018 (YTD), SAP has run more than 100 Talent Win events worldwide for more than 3,020 candidates.

SAP has the unique ability to utilize customers and sponsorship partners to create unique experiences. Examples include: Cirque du Soleil, professional darts, European Space Agency, Bayern Munich football team, Live Nation concerts (Shakira, Harry Styles), eSports and many more.

SAP's scope is professionals, senior leaders and executives. This audience is normally not attending career-focused events, is likely secure in their current roles and may have outdated perceptions of what it is like to work for SAP.

The aim is to add a new experience which was not there before: at first, candidates are invited via LinkedIn by demonstrating SAP's recognition and admiration for their profile. They then get an invitation to an exciting event — not a recruitment call-to-action.

The events are unique and by invitation only; as a result, creating a VIP status and spirit. People are invited to interact face-to-face event with SAP employees and network with like-minded individuals.

SAP managers with an interest in recruiting these specific prospects are invited to the event. They are briefed in advance on attendees, allowing them to identify who they want to speak to, ensuring a very personal and intimate experience for invitees. In turn, the networking phase gives the candidates the option to ask “tough” questions and speak about SAP and working at SAP with different people in a relaxed atmosphere.

By leveraging SAP's customers and sponsorship partners, SAP showcases its technology in a new, innovative, and unexpected way, resulting in a change of perception of the SAP brand and SAP Employer Brand after the event.

There is a robust follow-up strategy which includes a survey to measure impact and to keep candidates warm. This post-event process keeps the human and personal connection between the attendee and the SAP Employer Brand.

The team is known for creative and innovative approaches to win candidates' hearts and minds. SAP people, technology and products are showcased in innovative event formats for a unique experience that money can't buy. The feedback from the candidates who joined the events, and the multiplier effect even months after, speaks for itself and the hires prove the ROI. The program positively contributes to the Global Talent Acquisition strategy to support the business to reach diversity targets (such as 30% women in leadership by 2022).

The team members love their work and are especially proud of one of the most recent experiences, the “SAP Frankfurt Darts Slam” in Frankfurt, Germany. A Talent Win exclusive event was held prior to the main darts event. This saw 120 target candidates and employees meet Rob Cross, World Darts Champion (sponsored by SAP), and ask him questions on training, motivation and his connection to SAP. The main event that followed included many famous darts players, saw female players compete equally with men, and included people in fancy dress chanting and singing — how often does that happen at a recruitment event?

If darts is not someone's thing, then how many recruitment events end in sailing? Or are held at a Harry Styles concert? Or enable them to learn how SAP technology powers Cirque du Soleil?

This program creates not just a great candidate experience, but a memorable experience period.

## Deployment

---

As a German software company, adherence to GDPR is critical, and this program adheres to SAP's communications policies at all touchpoints.

Candidates are identified and approached via In-mail on LinkedIn and are then invited via a secure link. At this point they agree to further communication from SAP via an acknowledge of its data privacy statement and are then part of SAP's Talent Community. This enables the Talent Win team to send reminders, post-event "thank you for attending" mails, and "keep warm" emails in the future. It is also then possible to track members of this segmented Talent Community and see if they apply for roles directly at a future date.

During all communication steps, the team follows the global brand communications framework and uses local language and creative, localized images. The communication style is highly engaging, personal and natural language to reinforce the human touch SAP wants to convey.

The key obstacles Talent Win has encountered are:

- Invitees forward their personal invite to other people, which results in unwanted registrations. The process is then to approach the invitee and then uninvite any unwanted guests after clear and transparent communication
- Low response rate to LinkedIn InMail. To increase the "opt-in" a strategy was implemented to start with a teaser-mail, sending the personal link to register with an individual password once the invitee has replied
- Low participation rate at the event. The team now personally calls each candidate to ensure their attendance. Following this additional step, attendance rose to an average of 80%
- Target audiences who are more introverted; as a result, networking is not appealing. For example, developers are not always fond of a networking approach. For these groups, SAP has created more "hands-on" events and focus on demos and other real interactions with SAP's technologies
- Budget. Employer Branding does not have huge budgets, unlike some of SAP's competitors for talent (Google, for example). These events are funded at least 50% by the business area they seek to support. As the program has grown, the team can showcase some amazing experiences and hiring numbers; hiring managers become ambassadors of the program and Talent Win is factored into annual budgets at local levels

## Measurable Benefits

---

After each event, each participant is asked for feedback through an online survey. On average, events receive a promoter score of 98%. Perception change is seen in all dimensions and demonstrated in words such as “innovative,” “cool,” “personal,” “warm culture,” “great people” and a company the candidate wants to work for.

More than 90% of all candidates have the desire to find out more about career opportunities at SAP after the event.

SAP builds a diverse talent pipeline (40% women, for example) and hires are tracked; 10% hires are expected from each event within 15 months. So far, 300 hires have been made through Talent Win events.

SAP cost-per-hire has been reduced as the overall event cost is significantly lower than the fees for recruitment agencies.

Pictures from events are shared on social media and attendees are encouraged to share content. This increases positive brand impact via likes, shares and comments.

These events have led to better professional partnerships between hiring managers and Talent Acquisition teams. Asking hiring managers to attend corporate events can be challenging, but hiring managers compete to be part of Talent Win events.

Talent Win contributes employee engagement among managers, recruiters and HR directors who are happy to support and experience the events.

By ensuring that experience is part of SAP's employer brand, it supports the corporate marketing objective to humanize the SAP brand and lead with purpose.

### Testimonials

- Simone: *“I absolutely loved it! I actually never thought SAP could be so cool!”*
- Julia: *“I don't know anything about darts but thought let's go and experience it. I learned a lot about SAP as a company and was genuinely taken aback by SAP's innovative and cutting-edge technology. I surprised even myself that I really enjoyed darts! People in fancy dress, singing songs. Wow. Brilliant fun. I wish my company did this. Can I come again?”*
- Martin: *“Darts? SAP? Not in a million years would I associate a company I thought was very stuffy and bureaucratic with such vibrant celebration. SAP is in fact a really cool company.”*

## Overall

A key learning in this process has been invitee numbers. While there are those who do attend speak highly about the event, there is a consistently high NPS. There is a lot of work that goes in to ensuring that the events have a good attendance rate.

Because these events are after work and free, many attendees sign up in advance but have no emotional commitment to attending. The drop-out rate can be as high as 50%. This means the team must assess each event in each location as it learns more about how much "over sell" is needed to guarantee full turnout.

Candidate follow-up is a focus area for the future. The current process requires local recruiters to manage ongoing communication with attendees, the success of which can be inconsistent. At the start of 2019, SAP SuccessFactors introduced a CRM product as part of its recruitment technology suite. This is being introduced into the events planning process and results so far have been positive. This is expected to make significant impact in 2019 and beyond.

**Figure 1: Talent Win Event**

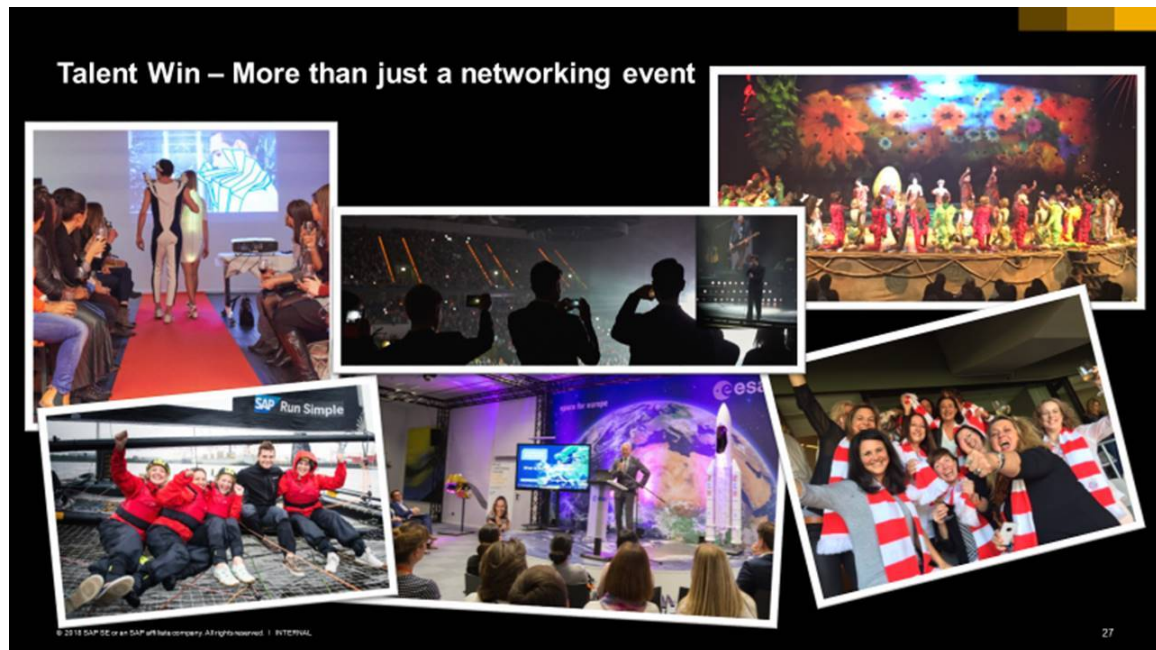


Illustration provided by SAP

## About Brandon Hall Group

---

Brandon Hall Group is an HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

### Inspiring a Better Workplace Experience

**Our mission:** Empower excellence in organizations around the world through our research and tools every day. At the core of our offerings is a Membership Program that combines research, benchmarking and unlimited access to data and analysts. The Membership Program offers insights and best practices to enable executives and practitioners to make the right decisions about people, processes, and systems, coalesced with analyst advisory services which aim to put the research into action in a way that is practical and efficient.

### Membership Offers Tailored Support

Our membership delivers much more than research. Membership provides you direct access to our seasoned team of thought leaders dedicated to your success, backed by a rich member community, and proactive support from our client services team.

### RESEARCH ACCESS & EVENTS

- Reports
- Case Studies, Frameworks & Tools
- DataNow® & TotalTech®
- Webinars and Research Spotlights
- Annual HCM Conference

### ADVISORY SUPPORT

- Ask the Expert
- 1 on 1 Consultations
- Research Briefings
- Benchmarking



## **CLIENT SUCCESS PLAN**

- Your Priorities
- Executive Sponsor
- Client Associate
- Monthly Meetings

## **Strategic Consulting Offers Expert Solution Development**

Our consulting draws on constantly updated research and hundreds of case studies from around the globe. We provide services that simplify and target efforts to produce business results.

## **BENCHMARKING**

- Competitive/Comparative
- Maturity Model
- Custom Research

## **STRATEGY**

- Business Case
- Planning
- Organization & Governance

## **TECHNOLOGY SELECTION**

- Vendor Selection
- Architecture Design
- Systems Evaluation

## **DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION**

- Program Design
- Assessment
- Survey
- Process Integration

For more information, contact us at [success@brandonhall.com](mailto:success@brandonhall.com).