Episode 6 - Learn How Integration and APIs are the Foundation of Intelligent Enterprises.mp3

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:00:02] Welcome to openSAP Invites, your invitation to learn with us on the go.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:00:10] Welcome to openSAP Invites, I'm your host, Elisabeth Riemann, and in this episode, we talk to Dr. Harsh Jegadeesan about integration and APIs to understand why they are the foundation upon which intelligent enterprises are built. We talk about use cases, integration building blocks and integration black belts, and learn about SAP's strategy for integration. Harsh explains the most common integration challenges to us and presents the tools SAP provides to enable truly integrated and intelligent enterprises.

Dr. Harsh Jegadeesan is Vice President and Head of Product Management and Strategy for Integration at SAP SE. Harsh helps global enterprises to craft and execute their API and integration strategies in their journey towards an intelligent enterprise. Harsh has 20 years of varied experience in enterprise apps, platforms, data and process management solutions. Harsh holds a PhD in computer science. Let's say hello.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:01:17] Hi Harsh and welcome to openSAP Invites.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:01:21] Thank you so much for having me, Lizzie. I've been a user of openSAP, learning from openSAP, and also been an instructor on openSAP, so I'm really proud and happy to be here.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:01:33] Excellent, thank you. It's our pleasure. And it's great for me personally to be able to work with you again in the name of integration. Now Harsh your name, I think, is truly synonymous with integration topics at SAP. And as you just mentioned, I'm sure that many of our open SAP learners already know you. And I think some of them at least might also remember that the two of us worked together with the team on the 2019 MOOC, Simplify Integration with SAP Cloud Platform. What do you remember best?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:02:04] I think openSAP is a great medium to connect with the learners globally. We had people coming in from South America all the way to New Zealand. We had 17 to 20 thousand people coming in there as a community and learning the best of knowledge from the experts. That's what I really like about openSAP. And the specific thing that I like about our course, apart from all the serious thing, was the fun teaser that we did together. And all the time I spent in the studio getting inputs from Miguel to be better in front of the camera. So those were my best parts of the openSAP experience.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:02:43] Thank you. So Harsh can you tell us, what do you love about integration?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:02:48] For me, integration is an opportunity for enterprises. It's an opportunity for enterprises to offer a frictionless experience to their customers. A connected experience which they can all relish. It's an opportunity for enterprises to really empower the front lines of employees so they can offer the best service and make the right decisions and have a very fulfilled job. It's an opportunity for enterprises to be best run enterprises, intelligent enterprises. That's why I really like and am really passionate about integration and the opportunity it provides us to provide to our customers.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:03:28] Right. So, I actually summarize all of this in a very simple equation. I have a techie math engineering background and it's all about equations. So, integration is one plus one greater than infinity. That's how I express the tremendous opportunity that integration APIs and events provide our customers. To make it more tangible and concrete, think about a retailer and if they are able to know what their consumers are really looking at, the needs of their consumers in real time at the moment. And they're able to respond to those needs at any time of the day, at any channel of the customer's choosing, they will have these customers for life. Right. It's all about bringing the demand chain and the supply chain together to be able to have a 360-degree view of your customers and be able to fulfil their needs. And integration can allow you to do that. Think about a global manufacturer of goods who's actually sourcing components from different parts of the world. If they have a real-time integrated and resilient supply chain, they'll be able to manufacture in real time, keep their inventories low and really keep the promise to the customer by collaborating with their network of suppliers. And last but not the least, if you are a healthcare provider and if you

know patients' preconditions, if you have all of this data, you'll be able to offer the best health outcomes to the patients. Right. So, in every industry and every global context, integration can offer you those infinite opportunities. Right. So, in summary, it's all about offering these limitless possibilities summarized in one plus one greater than infinity.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:05:23] I love that equation. That's brilliant. And so easy to remember as well. That's great. Before we continue to talk about integration as a whole, and I was thinking perhaps you could start by clarifying some of the basics for everyone. We have some key terms that we refer to time and again. And these include APIs, for example, events, workflows, functions. So, I was wondering can you tell us individually what each of these building blocks are and how they come together within the integration context?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:05:53] Sure. So, let's demystify these terms and try to get to the most fundamental understanding of what these mean. So, APIs are like Lego bricks. We all used to play with Lego bricks and building beautiful worlds where our imagination were the limits to what we could build. So, APIs for me and events as well now, increasingly so, are like these Lego building blocks. That's the foundation on top of which you can then craft new applications, new processes, new business models. What do APIs do? They expose data, they expose some reusable services, expose some actions in a way that they could be really combined together as new business processes, as new applications, as new business models. What integration then does is on top connect these APIs together into end-to-end value streams. And these value streams could be end-to-end processes like lead to cash, source to pay, design to operate, and these end-to-end processes offer these connected experiences to customers, employees and partners. So, in summary, API, some events are like the Lego bricks, the building blocks for any digital transformation initiative, and then integration and workflows are on top, which build higher value-add items on top of these building blocks.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:07:23] And we talk a lot of the acronym API. Can you remind us what the acronym actually stands for? I don't know if anyone actually uses the full term, but just for completeness sake.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:07:33] APIs are Application Programming Interfaces, these are interfaces to data, interfaces to processes, interfaces to services. And APIs, by the way, are not

new. Right? I mean, there is a big hype around APIs now. Everything is an API, but they are not new, SAP has been doing APIs for a long time now. Remember business application APIs, are BAPIs, which was exposing SAP functionality for a long, long time now, and our customers still use these business APIs to build on top of SAP, our ecosystem still uses it. So, a basic definition APIs are Application Programming Interfaces.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:08:15] And Harsh when we talk about integration at SAP, we like to use the phrase an intelligent enterprise is an integrated enterprise. And so, I'd like to ask you if you can explain this phrase to us in real terms.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:08:28] Intelligent enterprises are best-run businesses. What they do is in real time, they have this real time closed loop feedback that help them turn insight into action continuously. They're able to combine the front-office experiences and the back-office operations in a very nice way. And what does it allow them to do? It allows them to deliver best customer experience, an employee product on the brand experience and also achieve superior outcomes such as data-driven innovation, process excellence through automation, being able to launch new business models, build a digital ecosystem through business networks. And this is what, by applying modern technologies, cloud native technologies and intelligent technologies, intelligent enterprises are able to do. They're able to turn insight into action continuously. When we say intelligent enterprises are integrated enterprises, we mean that integration is a foundation for intelligent enterprises. It is the central nervous system that connects different parts of the enterprises and moves data and events constantly so the enterprise can really get this insight in one part of the enterprise and be able to act on it in another part because it's continuously connected in real time. And all this is possible through a strong integration foundation. That's why we say intelligent enterprises are integrated enterprises.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:09:58] And I do really like the appeal of looking at integration as being the central nervous system. So Harsh, now that we all fully understand exactly what an integrated, intelligent enterprise is, can you talk us through some of the main business advantages of that for our customers?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:10:14] Yeah, it's always important to actually look at how technology enables business outcomes. So, if I think about three big business outcomes that our customers get out of an integrated, intelligent enterprise, the first one is process excellence. It's about breaking down departmental silos and thinking in terms of value streams such as lead to cash, which go all the way from front office to back office to be able to combine your supply chain, your demand chain with your supply chain, it's about getting employees across these different departments to be able to collaborate and deliver the best experience and outcomes to customers and also having the right data in hand, in real time, to be able to make the best decisions. Right. So, process excellence is the foundational piece or the business outcome that you get if you're an intelligent enterprise. The second one is the customer experience. No matter which channel the customer reaches out to you, whether it's an online channel or an offline channel. How do you really deliver a frictionless experience? Right. And in this generation, it's all about experiences. I can tell you my daughter, who's 10 years old, will not touch anything or work with anything digital if it doesn't deliver the best experience to her.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:11:37] Absolutely. I mean, it's all about experience. People are willing to pay more for experience and convenience these days. Right. And that's the whole experience economy that's unravelling and unfolding in front of us. And people want to do business with companies that offer them the best experience. So that's the second business outcome that an intelligent, integrated enterprise can deliver, which is connected experience. The third one is about innovation and transformation. When you look at innovation, it's about combining different things that you know into new value. It's about value creation and it's not done in isolation just by yourself. You do it and do it together with your ecosystem, with your customers. And if you have these building blocks that I talked about, APIs and events, then you can recompose things and innovate new business models on top of it. So, in summary, it's about three things: it's about process, excellence, superior connected experiences which offer frictionless experience. And the third one is about innovation and transformation - together with your ecosystem and customers. These are the three big business outcomes that integrated, intelligent enterprise can deliver.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:12:49] So now could you perhaps explain to us the SAP integration strategy itself? What are we doing moving things forward here on the integration front?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:12:58] Sure, this is a great question and it's also important to understand how integration has become a C-suite discussion. Our CEO, Christian Klein talks about integration as a strategic lever or as a strategic driver. Right. And our board members, Juergen and Thomas, talk about how integration is important for the intelligent enterprise, for our business network strategy, for our industry cloud strategy. So, integration for SAP is at the center of our core product strategy and our integration strategy…

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:13:32] …at SAP is very simple. Deliver an integrated, intelligent enterprise for our customers. How do we do this? We do this by offering out-of-the-box integrations across end-to-end business processes such as recruit-to-retire, source-to-pay, design-to-operate, and lead-to-cash.

[00:13:52] And this leads to process excellence. Our customers don't have to do this across their heterogeneous landscapes. We deliver it out-of-the-box across SAP partner and non-SAP systems. Right. But how do we do this? More concretely, we deliver thousand seven hundred plus pre-built business process integrations across SAP partners and non-SAP, where we think about this as Netflix for integration.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:14:18] We're not just offering integration platform or integration technology. We offer integration outcomes. Right. And that's the most simple way that you could define our integration strategy, it's at the center of entire product strategy, at the center of SAP strategy. And we do it by offering out-of-the-box integration.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:14:38] And that's a big advantage, right, to really offer this out-of-the-box content, that's really easy to use. And so, our customers really can start working on their own integration journey. Absolutely brilliant. So, I'd like to ask you now, what specific solutions does SAP offer for integration? And with this question, Harsh, I think it would be great if we could start to maybe demystify just a little bit CPI so going with the acronyms. Again, you can clarify this in a minute. So, CPI, PI and PO, and Data Integration tools for us. What does all of this mean and what does SAP really provide here for integration?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:15:12] I'm going to take a time machine, go back in history and really talk about it from that perspective. SAP always offered interfaces, IDocs, and BAPIs and opened

up the capabilities because on SAP system, ERP system was at the center of a customer's landscape and it always had to connect with other systems that are around, either within the landscape application-to-application or with other businesses from a B2B context. Right. So, we always forwarded those interfaces. Twenty years back, we had to provide an easy solution, an integration solution, in order to be able to connect SAP systems with other systems in the landscape. CRM systems who are trying to come up at that point of time, SRM systems were getting more codified, Supplier Relationship Management. Supply chain systems were emerging and there needed to be a very simple way to connect these systems, no matter which language they spoke. Right. So, 20 years back, we started with XI, the Exchange Infrastructure which later became Process Integration, PI. And that's been the important component of any SAP landscape so far. Right. We have several thousand PI customers who are using that to integrate with SAP systems, PI the world into process orchestration, bringing in business rules management in a way adding between the trading partner management to become really the world leading integration platform for our customers. Over the course of 20 years, integration has become more and more strategic. There are API-based integration, event-based integration, there are heterogeneous environments, multi-cloud environments.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:17:03] And therefore, six years back around 2014, we launched Cloud Platform Integration, CPI, earlier called HCI, HANA Cloud Integration and later becoming CPI. All the name changes. Absolutely.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:17:19] As the cloud-based integration platform, we took a conscious choice to build it grounds-up with cloud native technology so that it can scale for cloud-scale message processing. And that, in hindsight, was the best decision we made. We did not take our existing middleware that was running on premise and just stick it up in the cloud. But we actually went back to the drawing board with all those 15 years of learning, looked at the new patterns, integration patterns and styles that were coming up and built a completely cloud-native platform. We also applied a lot of open source. We used Camel, we used Kafka in order for that to really scale at cloud scale. We made sure it could run on a multi-cloud foundation so it could be deployed and fully managed in the hyperscalers of the world. AWS of the world, the Ali Cloud of the world, and also make sure that it can run in a hybrid environment. So, we went from PI/PO to CPI on the cloud and CPI over the past five years has matured significantly. We added capabilities like API Management on top Open Connectors, we added Enterprise

Messaging for events and CPI itself became the Cloud Platform Integration Suite, which is SAP's Swiss Army Knife for integration. Excellent. It's a toolkit for integration available in multi-cloud environments and it's SAP's hybrid integration platform. SAP has always been a leader on integration, the promise of SAP's ERP was integrated business processes. And now we see customers transitioning from PI and PO into the SAP Integration Suite, which is a logical successor for PI. So if you are a customer relooking at your integration needs now and trying to future proof your integration strategy, then you should start with SAP Cloud Platform Integration Suite, CPIS for short, and try to see how you can consolidate your integration landscape PI, PO, and other third-party integration solutions onto SAP Cloud Platform Integration Suite.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:19:35] It's fascinating that you took us on that journey back in time, 20 years to really explain the evolution of the integration strategy at SAP and how we're now really equipped for multi cloud and it's really all future proof. So that's really interesting. Thank you, Harsh. And you're very experienced in this field as well. I don't know how many years of experience you have, if you want to share that with us.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:19:55] I've been doing tech for 20 years now and APIs and integration for half that time. So, the best part about all of this is of my current job today is having a ringside view into the digital transformation that's taking part in every industry. We are living in unprecedented times. There is a start-up somewhere in some corner of the globe has the same kind of access to another start-up that's in Silicon Valley or Berlin or one of these tech hubs. And the start-up with access to hyperscaler tools with all the free knowledge and all the courses like openSAP can actually go ahead and build ground-changing tech. Right. And this can disrupt companies that have been entrenched in this field for a long, long time. So, there is disruption that's happening everywhere. And I have a ringside view to how the enterprises across the world are responding to this disruption. In every industry in banking, when you're talking about in financial services, where there is really democratization of services in retail, in consumer products, in entertainment and sports, it's really fascinating. And I really like to share these experiences with other customers being their trusted advisor when they want to craft a digital strategy with APIs and integration.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:21:23] And we've talked about your experience and I'm sure over the years you've also come across and really overcome certain challenges that customers have presented to us with their own integration journey or strategy. Can you tell us how you've really solved some of the challenges that customers have faced?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:21:40] It's about customer landscapes that are becoming really, really complex. These landscapes are huge. We have customers who still use mainframe systems back in the days. Right. But it was also like how Rome evolved. If you do a software archaeology across these landscapes, you will see pieces of everything right all the way from mainframes to microservices.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:22:02] Trace everything back.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:22:04] Absolutely. Because these landscapes have evolved that way. These landscapes are huge. They are heterogeneous, that it's not a one way. The landscape, there are multiple windows, custom grown tools. It's really heterogeneous and now increasingly hybrid. Right. So, these are the three hutches of the landscape, huge heterogeneous and hybrid.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:22:24] And hybrid within on premise and cloud. Right. That's what we mean with hybrid.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:22:28] Entrepreneurs, cloud and everything in between like private cloud and manage cloud to almost public cloud is what we say. Hybrid is right. It could also be edge because there are a lot of edge computing that's happening where there are IoT devices, oilrigs, it's all done by which we actually put out under hybrid. Right now. The simple question is, how do you hide all this complexity? And how do you really expose the data services in a simple way so that you could really innovate on top? Right. How do you actually move your keep your lights on dollars to innovation dollars?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:23:14] Right, that's the biggest problem that CEOs have,

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:23:17] And that's huge,

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:23:18] It is really huge because imagine you spend most of your IT budgets just keeping the lights on, right. And then IT is seen as really legacy organization. And then there is peripheral innovation happening sparked by led by the business leaders. Right.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:23:37] So the biggest job, the biggest challenge that the CEOs needs to solve is how can I hide all this complexity and how do I really create simplicity on top? Mm hmm. Right. So, APIs are at the hinge of hiding this complexity, opening up data, opening up services, opening up events, opening up actions in a very simple way, like Lego bricks and acts like an enablement layer on top of which you can innovate. Right that's the most important challenge to be able to hide this complexity and open up for innovation.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:24:15] So Harsh what's the high-level integration in API strategy, an approach that you recommend to our customers?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:24:23] That's, that's another really good question, we talked about the challenges of being able to hide the complexity and being able to expose simplicity on top that CEOs today face. Right. When we have to formulate an integration strategy the most important thing is the mindset. It's about moving from a duct tape integration to dry integration. What do I mean by that? When you have to solve an integration challenge, you look at it as a challenge and trying to duct tape two systems together, sometimes sticking two systems together with chewing gum. You have to move to dry integration and DRY is Don't Repeat Yourself in software architecture. And how do you go to dry integration? It's by using APIs and events as the building blocks. Right. If you may, it's another brick in the wall so you can actually use them as building blocks to build bigger innovations and applications and processes on top. Right. So, when we talk to customers, the first thing that we talk to them about is how do they accelerate their integration by out-of-the-box integrations? What are their integration scenarios? All the out-of-the-box integration that SAP provides is based on the dry philosophy, where we have data APIs and so those APIs from different SAP systems and third-party systems exposed.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:25:45] And we have integration flows that actually can connect this out of the box. By the way, even those process level APIs can be exposed, in turn, to combine it as another building block as part of another bigger process. So, it's always an additive architecture

an additive mindset, right? So customers start with out of the box integration and then they think about how do I do open integration in terms of opening up all my different systems, the data on those systems, the services, the decisions, as well as events as APIs, and then use them as building blocks to do new processes, new workflows, new business models, and also exposing them to partners so they can connect with partners in real time. So, it's all about thinking in terms of additive strategy, thinking in terms of dry, Don't Repeat Yourself, and using APIs and events to accelerate the strategy. That's the high-level pitch. That's the high-level guidance that we give our customers.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:26:55] And it's really good to have that kind of mid-term goal in sight as well, that we're not kind of duct taping systems together. It really is talking about developing an integration strategy with the customers starting simple and then building up over time using the different building blocks that the APIs, the events, and really looking at the business need that they have there and not just actually connecting things for the sake of it. So that is a really good overview. I think of the it's a theory. Maybe he can talk us through some customer use cases, some real-life scenarios, because that's really good, I think, for an even better understanding.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:27:27] So if you look at customer use cases, we have close to eleven thousand five hundred customers which are using different parts of our integration portfolio on the cloud, right on our enterprise integration Platform as a Service on the cloud. They use it from process integration for tying into end processes for all the big customers, starting from BASF, Colgate, Nike, to Adidas, all use our platform to do process integration. They also are out of the box integration to accelerate the process integration. We have customers who use our platform to do traditional B2B integration and modern B2B with APIs. So, if you talk about customers like Merck, if you talk about customers like Changi Airport, …Pharma, these are all innovation, award winning customers who use our integration solution for B2B and build digital ecosystems. We also have customers who are exposing APIs to low code, no code application development tools so you can build multi-experience applications, you can build chat bots. For example, Centrica takes an API first strategy to expose all their assets. They also use one source of digital integration hub architecture, where they are getting data from multiple systems, staging it on HAHA as an in-memory data and then exposing data to APIs so that customers don't have to see mesmerizing circles on their apps. They get responses that come in and split

seconds. So, we have had who are offering the fashion marketplace how they're using our technology. We have Natural Cosmetics; they have one point eight million sellers of the cosmetic products world over who use integration and APIs for those digital transformation use case. Last but not least, we have Post NL which I mean, you know, the postal industry is going through significant disruption. None of us are sending postcards and letters anymore.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:29:47] No, not even I am. And I love sending post.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:29:52] So post is being reinvented by being part of the e-commerce industry because all of us are doing a lot of things online and there are parcels and post journalists offering services like delivery notification services and stuff like that to other e-commerce players like .com and Netherland's, which is like Amazon.com for Netherland's. Right. So, we have a lot of these customers doing digital transformation use cases, leveraging APIs and events as Lego bricks for this digital transformation, using integration as a way as a central nervous system to connect different parts of their organization and be intelligent enterprises. And we are very privileged to have them as customers. We've learnt a lot in that journey, and we look forward to more digital transformation use cases.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:30:47] And digital transformation that our customers have been going through together with SAP. What are some of the specific steps that they actually need to implement?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:30:55] The first thing that we always talk about is look at the business outcome and see if this is a process excellence use case or is this about having this end to end process, which is breaking down the departmental silos, having data flow like a river across these processes? Or is it about offering connected experiences for customers on the device of their choice, multi experience and so on and so forth? Or is it about agility or comparability? Right. I mean, we have a dramatic situation like Coalwood where you want to decompose your processes and be really resilient. Right. We have which are opening up chat boards to engage with the increasing load that they get from their consumers and helping them rebuild. Right. So, think about the business outcomes to start with. Think about how they tie up with what you as a business want to do, how you try to innovate yourself and position yourself in your industry. So, it should all start from there. The next thing is to think about how do connect, integration is

a given. What about our digital transformation project, if you're going to build apps, if you're going to open up for local development, if you're going to do an email. Right. And get insights from your data, if you're going to do data warehousing, whatever you do on top at the foundation, you have integration.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:32:16] Right? So, get that integration right. Get your integration strategy right. Do not have duct tape integration strategy, have a dry integration strategy which are based on APIs and events. Use out of the box integration packs that SAP delivers to accelerate your enterprise and operations, really open up all your digital assets, your data, your services, your decisions, your events APIs and events and use them as Lego bricks for your digital transformation architecture. Those are the three things I focus on. Your business outcomes are not out of the box integration and a strong integration strategy. Think about open integration. Think about APIs and events as Lego bricks for your digital transformation. And last but not the least, use hybrid integration platform on API platform. And don't build all of this at home. All of this in your enterprises use something that I mean the SAP Integration Suite is a really cloud native hybrid integration platform available in all kinds of multi cloud environments supporting holistic integration. You start there and then accelerate your journey from there. So those are my top three things out of my mind. When someone starting on a digital transformation project.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:33:34] That really could clear steps to easy to remember to what we're talking about using the content and the tools that are out there. This leads nicely to my next question, it's a standard one, but I do like to ask this one, and it's related to what's on the SAP integration roadmap. It's a tough one, but can you give us any insight? No commitment here, just kind of an indication of some of the good things that are to come.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:33:58] So I'm going to talk about a few things. Maybe I'll try to summarize it in the top three things that's cooking in the labs here at SAP. And I would also encourage the viewers to go take a look at our road map explorer, our road map studies, where we provide full transparency on what's coming up in the next month. So if I have to break things down as three big, big bucket items, the first one is we want to provide end-to-end business integration for the integrated intelligence suite. By the end of this year, we will have 90 percent coverage of all these standard integrations that go across the end to end business processes.

Additionally, we are working with partners so partners can build additional integration packs and pre-built integrations. So if you're using an ISV solution, which is a partner like then you simply don't on our current integration path and it should be connected to the automatically but the also opening it up. So there are other partners who we'd like to partner with the build more and more integration packs to offer out of the box integration and have end to end coverage. Right.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:35:12] So that's one thing that we are really focusing on, end-to-end business process integration, which is out of the box for lead-to-cash, source-to-pay, recruit-to-retire, and design-to-operate processes. But the next thing is how do we embed integration into our industry clouds and our business networks? We have a business network like Ariba, which is a network of suppliers and buyers, and we remember that integration technology into Ariba so you could really onboard suppliers very, very quickly.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:35:52] And all of this technology is really used by line of business users, not really by integration experts.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:35:58] We empower the line of business users to use it. And then comes in industry clouds like the Logistics Business Network, where integration is really embedded so you can connect to multiple logistics providers very, very easily. So that's the second thing, to be able to embed integration and democratize that empower of business users to use it as part of their business process in terms of the business network like Ariba or an industry cloud, like a logistics business network.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:36:27] And the third thing is the integration suite itself, the platform that's the foundation for all of this integration. And there we are working on three main things. One is having this across all multi cloud environments.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:36:42] We already have it now. We're onboarding more and more customers in this multi cloud offering. We also are helping customers move from PI into the Integration Suite in a multi-cloud context. A lot of our customers are in this for the HANA transformation journey. For S/4HANA, Integration Suite as the recommended integration platform for transformation. And we are helping customers in that journey, all these digital

transformation use cases we talked about. The second thing is we're working on hybrid deployment. So, you could actually take that and deploy it into your on-premise environments if you are on a regulated industry, so data does not go into the cloud. Actually, trying working on a hybrid deployment and beginning next year, we will have a hybrid deployment coming up for the integration suite, the third and most important thing for us is developer productivity.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:37:33] Can we achieve joy of use for the integration developer who's spending 10 to 12 hours, 12 hours of his day using our tools? Can we create that joy of use? And that's the third big thing that we are spending our calories on. So that's in a nutshell what we are trying to do across three layers, the business process integration for the intelligence suite, the whole industry cloud and business network integration where we are embedding integration for LoB users. And last but not least, the innovations on the integration platform, which is our integration suite itself.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:38:13] Thank you. And as a final question for today, what is the integration Blackbelt program exactly and how can we learn more and when can we expect the next sessions?

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:38:25] Blackbelts are people the the creme de la creme? We'll have the supreme skills and talent. Right. Think about visualize Master Shifu from Kung Fu Panda, who's at the top of his off of the pyramid.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:38:45] Right. So, Integration Blackbelts are trusted advisers, their trusted advisers to our customers to help their skills. Chief digital officers, the head of integration to leverage integration and APIs in a very strategic context. Right. So, they have all the knowledge across what's happening in the industry, across different industries, what's happening in technology from an integration perspective and all the trusted advisers to our customers.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:39:14] We launched this program internally at SAP. SAP has some brilliant talent on APIs and integration globally. Everywhere we work with 150 plus Integration Blackbelts today that also for integration like those available at be in different market units across series of sales, engineering, CEIs, customer engagement initiatives, customer

executables, customer success managers who can actually guide our customers like we have 150 plus.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:39:44] And based on those, we had a very strong interest from our partners and in summer we opened it up to our partners and we now have 50 plus partners and counting who become certified blackbelt and personal advisors. So Blackbelt is our way to take all the knowledge and distil all of that and help people become those trusted advisers to our customers.

Harsh Jegadeesan: [00:40:10] And we also launched the LinkedIn live to use that as a way to take those blackbelt knowledge and then share it with a wider audience. And that's why I'm really excited about integration blackbelts. I mean, we launched at the beginning of the year with the massive in summer with our partners. We see a huge need for something like this where people are willing to upgrade their skills to a Master Blackbelt level and help our customers in their digital transformation.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:40:44] One level, I love the glimpse at the Kung Fu Panda. I think you might like that initiative. That's amazing. And I think it really instils you with confidence to know when you want to kind of start your own integration journey. Think about the business need and really know that you have these trusted advisers at your side from SAP. So that's really excellent. Harsh, Thank you so very, very much for sharing your time and your knowledge and experience with us today on openSAP Invites.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:41:10] Thanks so much for having me here, Lizzie. I really enjoyed the conversation.

Elisabeth Riemann: [00:41:15] Now openSAP News and Reviews, and for the new academic year, we have a lot that's new. So here we go. Starting October 7th, we have get started with innovation, culture and key technical topics in a system conversion to SAP S/4HANA. Next is Human Experience Management, the next phase of H.R., which starts October 13th and used SAP Business Services to Kick Start Your Intelligent Processes, which starts October 14. Next, we have Building Apps with the RESTful Application Programming Model, which starts October 19th. Also starting October 19th, is Delivering Value with Intelligent Innovations in SAP

S/4HANA and starting October 20th, we have How to Build Chat Bots with SAP Conversational AI and Be Visual! Sketching Basics for IT Business, which starts October 28. To read more details and enroll for free see open.sap.com/courses. Happy learning. Thanks for listening to openSAP Invites. If you enjoyed this episode, please share, raise and leave a review and don't miss your next invite, subscribe now.