

openSAP Invites

Thought Leaders Episode 11: Reimagine the Future in a Post-Pandemic World

TRANSCRIPT

Frank Diana: In this century, in this 100 year period, we're likely to see twenty thousand plus years of progress based on the acceleration that's expected. I mean, you sit back and think of that, that's that's overwhelming. And the pandemic has indeed showed us that what was going to happen anyway has been accelerated on so many different levels.

Kevin Benedict: We're kind of at that position now where we're looking at it and rethinking and saying, let's be more purposeful where we're going and rethink the direction we're going in, the innovations we're we're implementing here, and just make sure they are in line with what we want for our future.

Rob Nichols: Welcome to a special thought leaders edition of openSAP Invites. I'm your host, Robert Nichols, and I'm really excited about my two guests for this episode, both from Tata Consultancy Services, Frank Diana and Kevin Benedict. Both Frank and Kevin are futurists, thought leaders and frequent speakers to audiences around the globe. Frank is focused on leadership dialogue in the context of our emerging future and its implications on business, society, governments, economies and our environment. He blends a futurist perspective with a pragmatic, actionable approach, using storytelling to see possible futures and drive foresight into leadership deliberation. Frank and I first worked together on an openSAP course titled Reimagining the Future: A Journey through the Looking Glass. Kevin is a passionate advocate for using technology for social good. He hosts a variety of online TV channels where he has interviewed hundreds of executives and thought leaders on industry trends and emerging technologies. Kevin is a global speaker on the deeper strategies of business and technology transformation. He loves building teams, innovating, designing new strategies and winning. Hello, Frank. Hello, Kevin. Welcome to openSAP Invites.

Frank Diana: Thanks for having us.

Kevin Benedict: Thank you.

Rob Nichols: Frank, I can't believe it's been four years since we published your openSAP course, Reimagining the Future: A Journey Through the Looking Glass. When we first talked about doing this podcast and I reached out to you and I was like, I can't believe it's been four years.

Frank Diana: I was just going to say I was just talking to your producer offline about that and just can't believe the time has flown so quickly.

Rob Nichols: Yes, yes, and, you know, there was a lot of work put into that course, and I think for everyone involved, it was a labor of love. I think everyone really enjoyed it, enjoyed the topic. I really highly recommend for our audience listening out there, if you're not familiar with the course to go out there and enroll for it, you can take it at your own pace. Although the course was published back in twenty seventeen, all the information is still valid, very relevant, everything that Frank discussed I think still applies today. And again, I just highly recommend that you go out and explore that course. Frank, I remember when we were developing the content for that course, you actually live close enough to our studios where you were able to drive to the studios every morning. Now, I think it was a couple hour drive each way. And again, while I sit here and think, I can't believe that was four years ago. At the same time, it seems like forever when we were all able to sit in that small recording studio together, no windows, no real ventilation, but maybe you could say a few words of what you remember about your experience and when we were developing the course there.

Frank Diana: Well, I remember being a lot of fun, and you're right, I drove in every every time we had to be there. It's nice to be in a studio setting and it was very, very professionally done. I remember that vividly. And I think the course kind of reflected the professionalism of the folks that were involved. But it was a great set of sessions. And the topic is just such an interesting topic. The course or presentation, that's just it opens minds and that's really the intent.

Rob Nichols: Yes, absolutely. And back then we couldn't have we couldn't have thought about what happened in 2020, but before we before we dive into the conversation about these future possible future scenarios in the way that we live. One of the things I found last year as a result of the pandemic and social distancing, that I found a lot, that I had a lot more personal time to pursue a personal interest or hobby, actually went out and bought myself a new guitar. I probably accelerated my ability to play that guitar because of the additional time I had. So I wanted to ask the both of you just a lite question, and maybe start with you, Kevin. I know you live in a very beautiful part of the United States out out in the Mountain West. Have you had an opportunity to have more time to pursue an activity or interests that you enjoy and maybe share with us what that is?

Kevin Benedict: Oh yeah, of course, just like the rest of us. You know, I waited till my mid 50s before I took a backpacking, and we put a lot of miles of backpacking up into the high alpine environments around Idaho here. So a lot of backpacking, a lot of fly fishing. And just to add to that, bought an old jeep. So now I get to work and break old bolts and get rid of rust and fix up so we can drive up into the mountains even higher. So lots of fun.

Rob Nichols: I'll think of you whenever I see those truck commercials climbing up mountains and boulders

Kevin Benedict: Well, put a lot of rust on it and then then you have a better idea.

Rob Nichols: And now, Frank, I know you live here, obviously, on the East coast of the United States, close to to where I live. How about yourself, if you had an opportunity to have more time to pursue a personal interest or activity.

Frank Diana: No, unfortunately, the opposite, the pandemic, as you might imagine, has created such a stir and a craving for information and insights into what might be happening that have invested a tremendous amount of cycles, not just talking to the world about it, but also understanding at it's broadest levels levels, as we talk about this, obviously, there are so many dimensions to thinking about the future that have consumed just a tremendous number of cycles. It's almost hard for me to describe. The only thing I will tell you is my youngest daughter recently moved into a house, and I did get to spend some time painting and putting floors down, and at least I had some time for that.

Kevin Benedict: And now I feel like a slacker, Frank.

Rob Nichols: Yeah, thanks, Frank.

Kevin Benedict: I said I had to start first, and so I did come in and say, you had no time either.

Rob Nichols: So both of you are considered futurists, Kevin, maybe it might be helpful for our audience if you tell us what is a futurist.

Kevin Benedict: Yeah, I mean, futurist, I don't think there's one kind of definition, but what it involves in my day to day activities is just a big focus on what's going to happen next year, three years, five years, even 10 years from all different dimensions, whether it be societal or technology, business strategy. When you see various emerging technologies evolving, how is that going to change processes? How is it going to change consumers? How is it going to change all of that? And there's there's always a lot of stuff to study. You can never get fully on top of it. And really is is just we're dedicated to that purpose of looking down the road and then helping our client better understand how to prepare for that today.

Rob Nichols: Understood. Frank, one of the key concepts you talk about is the idea of possible future scenarios for how we live, possible future scenarios for the economy, our health, transportation, money and so on, and that these future scenarios are based on a foundation of science and technology, things like the Internet, social, mobile, cloud and data. And the variances of what those possible future scenarios may look like are influenced by something called future accelerators, such as the Internet of Things, robotics, genomics. This concept of future scenarios for our standard of living is the basis, I think, for our discussion today. So maybe it might be helpful if you can talk about this concept a little bit more. And I assume that the pandemic has led to some of what you were calling those emerging accelerators. Maybe you can give a little spin to how little spin to the pandemic's impact on that.

Frank Diana: Sure, and maybe to build off of that whole notion of what is a futurist, first and foremost, I don't believe it's someone who predicts but that it probably would be a response you'd get from a lot of folks that describe what a futurist is. Because, again, I don't believe and this was part of our course, if you remember, I don't believe there's a real ability to predict, given the various things that are happening, the pace at which they're happening, the number of building blocks that are emerging, coming together in ways that it's just it's almost impossible to understand. So when we were looking at future scenarios is really all about possible futures, understanding what possible futures might look like. And when you do that, you have to kind of factor in where science and technology are going, where society is heading, where geopolitics and economics and others are heading as well. And that's what makes the job so difficult. You've got to have a grasp on a number of those things to try to at least put a potential future scenario together. So from that course, we had we had used the visual that talked about the foundation of science and technology and the fact that we like to talk about exponential progression, but it's real and those things are evolving so quickly that it's hard for anybody to really understand how they play out over time when you intersect those things with the things happening at the societal level.

Frank Diana: And just for example, the pandemic is something we didn't predict, but it's a societal impact that has to now be factored in and that's going to have more and more often. So when you step back and look at it all and you just take a look at where we may be going it's complex, but it helps because it's otherwise you're flying blind, right? If you have no sense as to where the world could go and how it impacts me and my organization, then it's almost impossible to react or do anything about that. Right. So that whole that visual that you're referencing was all about that, helping folks understand the things that come together and when they do what it might mean to the future.

Rob Nichols: One of the key themes that that you expressed in that course was that the speed of change is outpacing our ability to adapt and keep up and that we can no longer predict the future with any certainty. And in fact, the only certainty is uncertainty. We currently have an openSAP course out there called the Business Opportunities of a Digitally Transformed Economy, and in that course, interestingly, it was an update to a course that they did five years ago or actually back in twenty fifteen where they made some predictions and bold predictions about 2020 and the digital economy. So, for example, back in 2015, they predicted two billion people will be connected to social media. The actual amount in 2020 was closer to 3.5 billion. They also predicted that in 2015 that by 2020 the cloud market would be 32 billion and the result by 2019 was closer to 62 billion US dollars. I was, again there's no certainty other than uncertainty, but I thought maybe you guys could talk a little bit about the future of digital transformation.

Frank Diana: I'll start and Kevin's really very close to the digital side of the story, so then as Kevin to chime in, but first the the acceleration phenomena is just going to get more intense. There are some numbers that are fascinating out there that would say in this century, in this hundred year period, we're likely to see twenty thousand plus years of progress based on the acceleration that's expected. I mean, you sit back and think of that, that's that's overwhelming. And the pandemic has indeed showed us that what was going to happen anyway has been accelerated on so many different levels. I use a visual that makes that point very clear. It talks about how we have seen 10 years of ecommerce growth in three months. And again, when you think about these things and how a singular event, as impactful as it's been, has disrupted the world at such a level that has resilience and adaptability, now more of a common discussion than it was. Now, those words and their their meaning for business should have been addressed years ago. If you just thought about what we've been discussing, the pace of change, then any any resilience and adaptability has to be at the core of what you do. Now, those words come up all the time, right. But it didn't even two years ago. So that pace phenomena and the fact that it has made digital and has exposed digital for not having done it sooner, I think now it's all it's all under the microscope, all of it in my mind. It will and has to accelerate the path of digital transformation. I'm not a big fan of the transformation work. I mean, digital to me is the foundation as that visual talks about. And it's just you have to do it. It's not that you're transforming. It's that you are you really acknowledging that the foundation of business has to shift if it hasn't already. Kevin your thoughts?

Kevin Benedict: Oh, yeah, and I mean, we saw this here in 2020 with the pandemic, we saw companies that were laggards. They they fell to the bottom even quicker, and companies that had heavily invested in digital, in e-commerce and processes that supported home deliveries, and you name it, especially in retail, you saw their business

just spike. You know, I'm here in Boise, Idaho, it's headquarters of Albertsons. And I looked at Albertsons had a huge jump in sales because of the pandemic. Now, competitors had less sales if they weren't set up to address these. So whenever you see these kind of transformational environments like the pandemic, it just accelerates whether going up or down.

Rob Nichols: You know, innovation is really at the heart of what we had talked about earlier about those possible future scenarios, right. So you've got that basis in science technology and then you have what the possible outcomes are going to be. And at the heart of all that is innovation. One of the things, Frank, that you had talked about in that original openSAP course was the fact that the speed of change is forcing us to have more of an innovative way of thinking that where in the past we had a dependency, more on the skills that our left brain has to offer, mathematical, analytical, rational, but that tomorrow's problems are going to require us to really lean on our right brain skills of creativity, empathy, imagination at things that make us human. Can you talk about innovation and maybe how it has been impacted by current events?

Frank Diana: Sure, I mean, first and foremost, that creativity and right brain conversations involved and not just the innovation discussion, but the education discussion, the notion that somewhere in the future there's going to be a level of automation that forces all humans to really focus more on our humanness, if you will, those creative, creative and empathetic pieces of our psyches that that we maybe don't use as much. So there's a number of factors, if you will, that are driving us to this right brain phenomena. But if we think about the speed that the world moves in today, and the fact that we have the ability through science and technology to solve some of the world's grandest challenges, those challenges get resolved and solved through innovative thinking and through innovations. And so those organizations that can innovate quickly and accelerate the learning that is required to continue to innovate. And that's a key point. Accelerated learning, I think, is probably the biggest metric any company can measure themselves against, a return on learning, if you will, because it will be those that really learn quickly that will evolve and sustain themselves in time. And that means that learning in the context of our four walls is no longer sufficient. And how we operate in a multi-stakeholder world, if you will, and use that opportunity to learn quicker is also a foundational piece of how businesses need to evolve going forward. So innovation is at the heart of success, and in my mind, societal advancement. You mentioned standard of living and well-being, I do believe will again elevate our standard of living on the back of what we're seeing today, but only if we can channel the innovations that are coming in ways that do that.

Kevin Benedict: And I would just like to add to that, Rob and Frank, it takes focus, and when you have something like covid-19 in this global pandemic, it really focuses a lot of attention to survival. And what's it going to take for us to survive. It reorders priorities. So suddenly it's a high priority to innovate in this particular area. So, I mean, there's there's some value in the whole effort to focus. And if you think about it, no successful startup or successful invention would ever take place without ideas. And what's interesting is when you see the companies that purposely harvest ideas from their team and dedicate time, energy and investments to innovation and coming up with good ideas is critical. And you see you see the success and it's in the history books for us to read about. But some companies, they approach innovation and good ideas as a random occurrence. They don't have the processes in place to harvest these great ideas from their teams. So I think that's an increasingly important effort that needs to happen across the board.

Frank Diana: And if I could just add, you mentioned the pandemic and its impact and one of the things that's been clear, companies have innovated faster than ever because of the pandemic, and what is done is lifted this fog that said, we can't do things quickly, and allow them to see that if you put your mind to it, you can accomplish just about anything. And so we're now seeing that innovation and what is possible has been elevated, and people can start to apply that to more aggressively moving their own innovation needles.

Rob Nichols: You know, you mentioned the importance of our ability to learn and to learn fast. When I think about the educating of our youth, one of the things we learned last year, I mean around the world, our educators had to learn new ways of teaching our youth. Maybe you can talk about specifically about that impact on the future of education as far as what the pandemic, some of the things that are now been put in place, you know where... a lot of things have happened, right, not only students learning remotely, realizing that we really don't have one solution that fits all, that there's some disparities between haves and have nots. And I imagine these themes are global themes. So I was interested to hear what what you had to say about about education and the impact the pandemic has had on it and its future.

Frank Diana: Yeah education is a really big topic these days, and Kevin has specifically been spending an awful lot of time talking to educators and people within the industry, so anxious to hear Kevin's thoughts. But I want to start at a higher level. Again, this is an example of how education desperately needed to change before the pandemic. And the pandemic is acting as an accelerant towards some of those changes, not enough yet, but at least we're making some some additional progress. But if I go up another level and think about where things are heading, and actually ask the question, what is education or learning for that matter, in the future, in the future, that those are the scenarios that we

paint? What is education learning in that future? And then think back to other very transformative periods in history. It was education that allowed society to actually navigate the troubled waters of those trends, the transitions or transformations. It happened with the steam engine. It happened when we moved out of the farms and into the warehouses and in offices. And it needs to happen again. And the questions like, you know, with all the information and knowledge that's available at our fingertips, at our beck and call, what is information dump into a child's brain going to accomplish for them in the future? And do we have to think about learning in the context of those right brain things that I mentioned before, as opposed to just, you know, increasing their knowledge base. And those are open questions. But I do believe the conversation that should be happening is not so much how does technology better enable education, but what is it? And then how do you apply technology to enable that view of education? So with that, Kevin, your thoughts?

Kevin Benedict: Absolutely, I've had the opportunity to spend quite a bit of time with educators over the last few months and to start out this conversation, both students and faculty, crave, have an incredible craving to get back together so they can do those mind melds and really share an intimate environment and learn together. But, another thing that happened because of the pandemic is everyone learned what is truly possible. Without that added motivation of having a pandemic and being forced to move to a virtual environment, they wouldn't have accelerated their learning on how to update their classes, how to look at content in virtual environments. And one of the things that educators have shared with me is that they have learned that there's there's some of their teaching methodologies are actually better done in virtual environments. Things like lectures, was there really a value in a lecture hall of sitting there with three hundred other people, or could you be sitting at your desk in a dorm room or somewhere else and being more efficient for both the faculty in that? Not only that, as teachers learn that if they created really good courses, those courses could be packaged and made available to other schools around the world.

Kevin Benedict: So you have this whole intellectual property issue that comes up as well. Many universities are looking at university studios, not Universal Studios, university studios, where they can improve the quality of their online content. So they were forced into these environments to learn how to use the collaboration technologies better, to actually bring in educational technologists who understand both how to teach and how how people learn and then how they can best use technology to get the information across. So there has been so much advancement because of the pandemic, which really just forced people to learn. But going forward, you're going to have, you're going to have universities looking at different business models because they now know what they can package and make available online. So you're going to have some universities that

perhaps have different pricing models based on having an on campus university experience and then dividing that with others that just want a virtual experience. So you're going to see new business models, new ways of teaching, new intellectual property and licensing agreements across schools, and all kinds of changes because of the pandemic.

Frank Diana: And if I can add, so an example of how we've accelerated to the use of technology to maybe better enable an existing view of how to educate, what if we use virtual reality capabilities to teach somebody about the Civil War by actually being in it, virtually. The experience then would say that I'm more likely to learn, because I experienced it versus reading it or having somebody lecture me on the Civil War. Now, I take that a step further and say, how about virtually we are in any place around the world, the suffering and experiencing that suffering firsthand because we're there. And so that right brain kind of phenomenon where we want to enhance people's empathy and compassion and the things that make us very human. Those are all mechanisms that could be leveraged to do those things. But that's rethinking the education process versus just using technology to better enable today's view of education.

Rob Nichols: When Kevin was describing these business models for education in a more connected way, and more sharing across traditional boundaries of maybe course content or a specific topic, it reminds me, Frank, of the comment you made that one of the reasons that it's become more difficult for us to predict the future is because we're so connected and that the pace of change is exponential because, again, we're we're more connected. And that was just an example that Kevin just gave about education, where a school in some corner of the world can come up with a great course and then share it with the rest of the world. So that's that's that's very interesting. So education is one of those things that we that's part of part of our our living. Right. So those things that make up the standard of living, our health, transportation, energy, communications, we can spend a lot of time talking about all those things, obviously, I don't think we can cover them all. But I think one that I definitely want to want to ask you about is health care, health care and well-being. Obviously, we've learned a lot about that in the past year. So what can you guys say about that as far as the future of health care? And again, if you can provide a little bit of commentary as it relates to the impact of the pandemic on that.

Frank Diana: I'll start with if we think about, first, the future of humans, and in that context talk about health care, I mean, there's a broad belief, and I think I talked about I know I talked about this in the course, and that is that we humans will will live longer, healthier lives over time. So much so that it has many people wondering what some of our typical institutions might look like as that world plays out, for example, retirement and wealth accumulation and work itself. Those things all kind of get called into question if you know,

a hundred, a hundred and ten, hundred and twenty, or were standard length of lives. Right. So one is looking at it through the lens of humans. The second, though, is if we do extend those human lives, what does it mean for the stress that it puts on the health care system. So we can talk about how do we evolve health care in its current context, what we really need to think about it again in these future scenarios. So if we have many people living longer lives, and we solve some of the chronic diseases that that unfortunately still impact us like cancer and heart disease and we solve those things, we're probably not going to have solved dementia.

Frank Diana: We just haven't made enough progress there. So if people are living longer, healthier lives, but living them with dementia, is going to put tremendous stress on the health care system, more so than we see today. So, again, when we think about these things, we can't just look at the current health care system and try to figure out how to fix it. We've got to think about the health care system required for this future that's emerging. And it's just to me puts more emphasis on the need to fix it. Right. We here in the US specifically don't have the collection of data we need to manage from a treatment based health care system to a preventative based health care system. That's that's problematic. Right. So how do we get to a point where we have a connected health care system that enables us to make that shift. And the pandemic was just an underscore for me, in that I think the warts were exposed and how certain pieces of the world were able to react more effectively than others. And at the heart of it was where their health care systems were.

Rob Nichols: You mentioned that in the future we may have longer lives, and I can see where if we're living longer, we're living to a hundred and twenty, we're going to have that many more people who are going to require health care at that later point in life. So very interesting. But another thing that we learned from last year was specific to health care was about that supply of personal protection equipment, the amount of ventilators, how quickly can we manufacture them. How do we how do we cooperate, whether within a country and across it's states or across countries globally, it really highlighted some of the challenges that we have specifically to the health care and their supply chain. But I imagine that obviously has happened in all industries. So I thought maybe it might make sense if you guys can talk a little bit about the impact of the pandemic on supply chain.

Kevin Benedict: I can I can jump in there, Frank, too, and just get us started there. One of the things that pandemic absolutely exposed is that our business models of continuing to stretch and create these long lean supply chains that extend it all the way around the world where everything was just in time, things were just manufactured as needed. And we tried to squeeze out every penny from every process. What it does in the course of a pandemic is if there's any change or any ripple to demand, the system is just incapable of doing it. So

what I would anticipate in the future is that organizations really are going to consider risk to a higher degree than they are now. They're going to look at it and say, you know, instead of just manufacturing to the to the requirement that we have today, maybe we should have an extra warehouse full of these. So if there's a demand or a need somewhere in the world, we actually have capacity to meet that. So you're going to see a more intense look at supply chains going forward. And you're going to see, is a company capable of responding during the pandemic? Are they going to be able to meet all the criteria we're now going to ask as a buyer? We're going to want our suppliers to be able to do a bunch of additional things to support us when there's any kind of change in demand. So I do anticipate companies are going to relook and rethink the globalization of their supply chains, how extended they are in just a whole variety of things. Frank?

Frank Diana: Ok, so if I could just add to that, this is a really good example of how these macro level forces converge to impact the path of the future as we started this conversation. And geopolitics is a big one. So we consider the fact that anti-globalization sentiment was already out there, and the pandemic now is just accelerated that sentiment. And we think about the trade wars and the notion that maybe we do move to regional supply chains, and even regional trading hubs instead of the global hubs that exist today. What does that mean to business? What does that mean to the environment, the economic environment itself? And so I find this to be a really good example of the difficulties in predicting, as we started to say earlier, because futurists have to track all of those things, not just futurists, but economists and others have to track all those things if they're going to do any justice to identifying the possible paths of these futures. So I think it's a really good example.

Kevin Benedict: I'll just, let me just add on top of that, Frank, also, is that the same investigation and rethinking of global supply chains is going to dovetail into the need to have a more sustainable world as well, because you're going to want your suppliers not only to verify that they're capable of reducing risk when it comes to supplying you with products, but also is that same supplier capable of manufacturing with sustainable materials and methodologies and processes. So when you're rethinking your supply chain, and if you want to be purpose driven in the same conversation it's not only, how are you going to handle the next pandemic, but also Mr. Supplier, how are you going to help me be more sustainable as a manufacturer?

Rob Nichols: One of the things that was a surprise for me that I learned about the food supply chain was just some of those single points of failure between farm and our table. I found that to be really, really surprising. And as you say, I hope I hope we have those innovators out there that are solving these problems, certainly for the supply of those

things that we need to survive. But I think that probably segues really well into the next topic, which really retail and commerce. Right. We've all seen the major impact to retail and commerce. I think I know here, I can have pretty much anything delivered to my front step. Now, I, I recently finally got my parents to get on and be able to order online for themselves on Amazon. So I know that's happening for a lot of people who maybe weren't doing that before, but obviously there's this impact to retail and commerce. So what do you guys say about that?

Frank Diana: So if I were to start, I think you make an interesting point in terms of kind of getting across the generational divide in terms of use of digital tools, if you will. I mean, that's clearly happening. And again, this is a great example of an accelerant, right? These things that we're seeing, were going to happen, and it just was a matter of time. And we're seeing the acceleration of drone delivery on the back of this. Just a number of things that are coming that would have come, but would actually just manifest themselves faster. So retail not not immune to this, obviously. And retail we think about it was already in the news in terms of bankruptcies and in what is retail in the future. Do you need a retail store? Will everything be online or virtual? And those are still open questions, mind you. But I think the resolution to those questions happens sooner now, because we've seen the art of the possible and as Kevin said earlier, we're not likely to go back.

Kevin Benedict: I see that, Rob, I'm right with you. My mom turns 80 this year, and on her fourth attempt was finally able to successfully order groceries from Walmart+, and have them actually show up at her front door. So that was a big celebration, and now every week, as I'm checking in with her on the on just routine calls, I'm always asking her if she's got her groceries, and she's able to do it. And I'm really going to go back to what Frank just said again, the art of the possible, just helping us pull back the curtains and go, OK, we were never motivated to take those extra steps at the university level or anywhere else when we're teaching classes or we're ordering products, trying to figure out how to do it, and what works best. Now we are, we've been forced to do it. We understand it. Our eyes are open, and so now we can look at even different ways of doing things that might help society.

Rob Nichols: Like I said, there's so much that we can talk about, but we are starting to run out of time, so I want to ask the both of you if you could share some of the key takeaways for our audience from today's discussion.

Frank Diana: Yeah, I'll maybe use some of the takeaways from the course, because I think they're still very relevant today. Now, it was always about when we created that course, impressing upon leaders around the world that these changes were coming. They

were likely coming faster than they realized, and they needed our full attention, because what we don't want is for the future to be shaped for us. We want to shape that future. And we can only do that if we understand it in a way that allows us to. And so, the takeaway for me continues to be the same. We're not focused on the future for the fun of it, we're focused on the future, especially these days, to help us understand it at a level that allows us to shape it, because we do all agree for the most part that what's ahead of us is highly transformative.

Kevin Benedict: And I'll just add that, you know, sometimes things just happen to you, and the pandemic is one of those. It happened to us, none of us asked for it, none of us were planning on it. And so what happens is that that forces people to leap forward. We see giant innovations through all kinds of different businesses. And when that happens, innovation accelerates faster than the regulatory environment as well. So you ended up just trying to survive and thrive. Now you need to stop and say, but is that the right direction for our society. If we want to be purpose driven, is there something we need to do now to, I know we were able to innovate to survive, but now let's look at what's good for us. Is that really the direction we want to go? So I think a lot of the emerging technologies that we're seeing out there, too, just because they were created, just because we were able to find business cases doesn't necessarily mean they are good for society or that's the direction we want to go. So I think it's also important for us to take these pauses, and to look at what we're doing, and the direction we're going, and ask ourselves, is that really the direction we're going? Just because a VC (venture capitalist) is willing to fund an idea, does that mean that idea is good for society? And I think we're kind of at that position now where we're looking at it, and rethinking and saying, let's be more purposeful on where we're going, and rethink the direction we're going in, and the innovations we're implementing here, and just make sure they are in line with what we want for our future.

Rob Nichols: In addition to the openSAP course, Reimagining the Future: A Journey Through the Looking Glass, do you have other resources or references you want to share with the audience. For them, if they want to explore more on this topic, I'll include any written information in our show notes.

Frank Diana: A couple and we'll see if Kevin has anything to add. One is we have a Reimagine the Future YouTube channel. A lot of those education interviews that I mentioned that Kevin's done are available on that channel, as are other interviews and just a number of different videos on the future and where he might be going. So that's a great resource. The other my blog has been a pretty popular resource, frankdiana.net, where I

actually talk about some of these things and very impactful conversations around where society is going. So that's another resource. Kevin anything to add?

Kevin Benedict: Oh, yeah, and I would just say you can just jump on Google and look up Frank Diana and you can find the whole list of all the social media connections and the videos and everything else he's done. Same with me, @KevinBenedict, just Google, and you can see all the various links to interviews, to content, to videos we've created, to courses that Frank has done, all of that.

Rob Nichols: And like I said, I'll include the links to the YouTube channel you mentioned and other information in our show notes. This has been an excellent discussion. I've really, really enjoyed it, Frank. Kevin, I want to thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this podcast. And hopefully we will get a chance to partner on another openSAP course or podcast in the near future. Thank you.

Frank Diana: Thank you.

Kevin Benedict: Thank you, Rob.

Rob Nichols: Thank you for listening to openSAP invites, I also want to thank my producer, Lorna Richards, and if you've enjoyed this episode, please share rate and leave a review. Also, be sure to check out openSAP free learning offering of massive open online courses, microlearnings and podcasts on opensap.com.

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