

openSAP Invites, Episode 25 - Learn the Basics of SAP Business ByDesign

Transcript

Elena Lucarelli: [00:00:10] Hello and welcome! My name is Elena Lucarelli, and this is openSAP Invites. My guest today is Rainer Zinow. Many of you might recognize Rainer from the openSAP teaser videos of the SAP Business ByDesign courses. Rainer is a senior vice president in SAP Business One and SAP Business ByDesign. He joined SAP in 1991 and has held several roles in the company. For example, he established the SAP and IBM Competence Center and worked as an executive assistant to the former CEO and SAP founder Dietmar Hopp. In 2004, he joined the new initiative for small and mid-sized companies that is now known as SAP Business ByDesign. Rainer, welcome.

Rainer Zinow: [00:01:00] Thanks a lot, Elena.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:01:02] I think it's fair to say that you were there from the beginning, and I can't think of anyone better to give us an introduction on what is SAP Business ByDesign.

Rainer Zinow: [00:01:11] Yeah. What is SAP Business ByDesign in a nutshell? It is what we describe as a suite in a box. So, all of the core business processes - in total close to 40 - everything from financials, customer relationship management, manufacturing, supply relationship, everything in one box, tightly integrated, delivered to our customer. If we if we round off our portfolio, we also have with S/4HANA - especially the public cloud version - we have a modular suite, a federated suite where we integrate with SuccessFactors components, or others that we acquired over the years. So, that's the difference between suite in a box and modular suite.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:02:02] And you're focused on midsize and small companies. It's a complete ERP system.

Rainer Zinow: [00:02:07] Yes, exactly. So, I'm typically the one who's delivering with Business One and Business ByDesign, the first ERP system for these kinds of companies. Many of them tell me, "Get me out of the Microsoft Excel hell, I'm drowning in spreadsheets." Or the auditors say, "Hey, you need to do something, you need a more compliant system." That's when they typically come to us. Business One as I said, typically the first ERP system. Business ByDesign, for the bit more grown-up companies. And as they grow further, we then help them to transition to S/4HANA.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:02:49] Thank you. I think this was a quite good introduction and I know that you previously held role in education, so you have a good idea about that field as well. Which advantages do you see in offering free education to our customers, partners and actually whomever is interested in learning?

Rainer Zinow: [00:03:08] Yeah. As you indicated, I ran SAP's worldwide training business from 1996 till 2000. And these were obviously the heydays of our corporate growth. So, I was able to grow that business very substantially. And one day I, as you mentioned, I was also the assistant to Dietmar Hopp. I walked past our training center with him, and he said, if you really want to do us a favor, close down that building. And I said, hey, but this is this is a hell of a great business. And Dietmar Hopp's point was, well, our software should be so self-explanatory that you don't need such a big training center. Later, when I received responsibility for our mid-market, the situation changed again because mid-market companies don't travel to Walldorf for training, or Philadelphia or Paris or whatever you name it. They can't afford their people to be out of office for multiple weeks. Therefore, what we decided right from the beginning for Business ByDesign was that we said we bet on built-in training. And lucky us, the openSAP format became available and yeah, turned out to be the perfect platform because if you want a visual, I always imagine I would gain a new customer in the middle of Australia. No chance to go anywhere. How would they be able to use our system? And therefore, my ambition was put all of the knowledge in don't make money with learning because it's a mandatory prerequisite to success and run with that.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:05:11] Indeed, ours has been also quite an old collaboration now. We started our first course in June 2015, and we've produced ten courses since then. And I just want to do some math and crunch some numbers because your numbers are really impressive. In these seven years, you have reached over 165,000 learners, and

to reach these many learners, you'd have to organize 8250 trainings with 20 participants in each for 22 years. So that's quite a saving that you're doing by offering the things for free.

Rainer Zinow: [00:05:54] Thank you for saying that.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:05:56] And also sparing the whole logistics and difficulties that also organizing this training have because people don't think about it. But it's quite it is quite an effort to put together a training trainer to the different location, booking location, etc. But what did really move you to start with openSAP, and did you expect it to be this successful when you first started?

Rainer Zinow: [00:06:21] Well, obviously I had high hopes. And so, the concept of a massively open university is something that back then, even when I joined SAP in 1991, I already received back then still diskettes (floppy disk) and then a little later a CD with what was called computer based training back then. So, the format was not exactly new to me. I knew about it. I had seen it how companies like Accenture were using it before, what the MIT has been doing with it, what Stanford had done with it. So, I was I was quite optimistic. And as we didn't have a fallback strategy to take courses back in-house, we all said, come on, let's do all in everything. Make this a success. Yeah, and many years later, we are in the lucky position that people really like this channel, consume this channel. Just last week I recorded Week 1, Unit 1 of our latest course on globalization, which will be available later this year. So, it's an ongoing initiative and super well accepted by the market.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:07:45] Yeah, and I can see that. So, in the discussion forum, in the feedback that you get in the courses. And I mention the discussion forum because that's one of my favorite features of the openSAP platform. And as a project manager, one of my tasks is to act as a moderator in the forum. So, we really do read all the feeds that come in. And I've seen you there on several occasions answering the questions from our learners, and I think it's so valuable to have really a direct line to the experts. Because one thing when you do this learning is that you're by yourself. It's a virtual learning, right? So, you are in your room or on the go or whatever it is, and then, you know, ok I can be connected to a community. There is an expert there who can solve my doubts. And I think it was in one of our courses where you were offering some

system access and there were some new features, and some user wrote you that something wasn't working, and the team was able to fix that. And I thought that was powerful because it's really a two-way communication. So, on the one hand, there is you, the expert getting in there, but also our users, our learners who go into the systems and really do the exercises. I just love that! And I think it's a really unique point in our platform. But talking about the feedback that you received, how does the team handle that? So, do they collect it and then use it to improve? And would you say to our users that's valuable channel for them to share their feedback and their impression about the software.

Rainer Zinow: [00:09:17] Yeah. Let's talk a little bit about a life cycle of such an endeavor. So, when we decide that we would like to have an openSAP course on something, I literally see all of my organization already ducking away. Because they are scared to death to appear in such a course. It starts with: "What are the clothes I should wear?", "Should I see the hairdresser before I do this?" So, nobody asks me, "When did they need us?", "Should we do some training on our voice?" Or whatsoever. So, the first chapter is to recruit the team to tell them that that this is really worthwhile. Because after this course and that's what I recommend to all of my colleagues quote-unquote "work your market value". When you deliver such a course successfully, and all of them have delivered an amazing job. You are recognized as the expert in this topic on this planet. So, that is the first thing. Get the get the people. Get them into the studio. You do all of the handholding for them so that that we get off the ground. The most important part, as you said, is the community. Because the community, and that's where I invite many more people from my team, especially the product managers, to read through the feedback, because this is the most honest, unfiltered, unbiased feedback that you can receive. And you can see that the community is running at high speed during the course, but also the ByDesign community is actively engaging, and we are cross-linking postings between the different communities. So, what happens in the in a physical classroom, the interaction between the students, the tutors, and the teacher. That is what we do via the community. Therefore, the community is the most central element. And the stickiness of a course which motivates you to stay with the course for four consecutive weeks can only be accomplished via the community.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:11:48] Indeed. And also, by the quality of the content. Because I work with your team, I think it was five courses or four and I can really vouch on what you said. So, they really are highly motivated once you get them to do it.

Rainer Zinow: [00:12:03] Scared to death but highly motivated, yeah.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:12:06] Yes. Well, to do the you know, the PowerPoint questions part, that's fine. It's the video part that is scary. But in that part is also beautiful than to work with the teams because you really see them bloom it's at the beginning. The first take is always, oh, my God, I'm scared. And then you can see them getting more and more comfortable with the camera and then you get a really great result at the end.

Rainer Zinow: [00:12:31] And they have the advantage. They are the undisputed subject matter expert. I tell them, look, from all of the learners out there, you know, more than all of them. So, relax, enjoy, and present your topic. And that's what they do.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:12:51] What I also enjoy with working with your team is that you really, really love ownership. I mean, you can see that because you also use all the features that our platform offers. So, besides our massive open online courses, you also offer a Microlearning playlist and today with this episode, your first podcast as well. So, what can we expect this year to come on openSAP?

Rainer Zinow: [00:13:18] Well, first of all, two more major courses. One on the intelligent capabilities. This is a topic very dear to my heart. And Simona Marincei, and her colleagues have collected amazing content. I'm really glad that I have her in my organization because she is able to take what our TNI organization builds, for example, a document extraction service. I haven't yet learned the new term, but the old term was the Intelligent Robotic Processing Agent Framework, and really translate that into tangible business values. For example, that our customers these days take a photo of a supplier invoice, and they process it in the system. The picture is automatically recognized and behind the scenes we are using all of these BTP services. And what we need to do now as a next step, we need to make our partner ecosystem and our customer ecosystem aware of these capabilities. So, we are monitoring since we started the uptake on how these services are used and the uptake is great, but I believe that the openSAP course on this topic is the next booster. So that's the first major

course which we will see this year. The second major course is on globalization. There is a media miracle happening in ByDesign, ByDesign comes out of the box with 21 country versions, but it's actually used in 160 countries. So, the question is, how do you do that miracle? And the answer is there's a built-in globalization layer in ByDesign, which is accessible to our customers and partners so they can introduce additional tax rates, text derivation rules, whatever you name it.

Rainer Zinow: [00:15:23] And with that, they can build entire country versions. I just returned from the Innovation Summit, where I also met one of our new partners from Poland who said, "Hey, we are about to finish now a Polish version for ByDesign." We already have done the language translation, but Poland has a couple of unique requirements when it comes to how you process certain documents, and they are building this and there are many more countries to go. There's a high level of interest by our partners to learn more about this globalization capability because a country version is never complete. It is always a lot in flux, especially if I would look at Italy. The Italian government is very creative in changing some of the legislation there. Therefore, I can only do a certain amount of work and I commit that the solution is legally compliant. But in many countries, you have certain best practices, and the partners can use this tooling to build these best practices. And therefore, this course is very much awaited by the partner community. So, that's the second large one. And then we use the more snack able bite sized capabilities that you are providing us, because not every topic is worth an entire openSAP course. Or if we get additional topics in, then we don't want to rework an entire course, but rather publish smaller bite sized chunks and make that available to the market fast.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:17:10] So, one question about the globalization course, because I thought that was really interesting. It's not just really the language than that you would be able to extend, but also the legal part and the legal processes?

Rainer Zinow: [00:17:24] It is. We have a visual in that picture which is a fan, and it talks about the different aspects. So, it started with adaptations in the general ledger that you need to apply. Then you take your tackle the whole topic of taxation and taxation rules. Then you have the entire section of electronic document presentment. In many countries you must even submit invoices before you send them out. Then you get a dedicated number for it, which you need to print on that document. So, this whole

electronic document, interchange slash PayPal is a big topic. And then you have application specific areas like in human resource management, in expense and reimbursement management. So, it's a whole array of coded and non-coded changes that that need to be done. And then obviously you have the language adaptation toolkit with which you can do the translations and that again is integrated into SAP's translation hub where you have a lot of language pairs, and you can automate the translation process to a very high degree.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:18:52] So, this is a quite interesting feature that you have, and I think it's certainly worth having a look at this course. But I also hope that with this podcast we have inspired some new learners and made them curious about visiting our platform and specifically these courses that we've talked about. What's in it for them? So, why would you say that our customers, partners and in general learner should attend your courses on openSAP?

Rainer Zinow: [00:19:19] Well, I can tell you that a couple of partners came back to me and said, "One of the scariest days in a year is when we hand out the certificates for successful participation in an openSAP course and the people publish these certificates on their LinkedIn profiles." And they say, "You have no clue how many job offers you will get when you publish this kind of information. Suddenly you will see that the number of searches where you show up in LinkedIn goes through the roof." Therefore, some partners said, but I hope they did it more jokingly, "Stop handing out certificates!" But the certificates are very important for the participants. Therefore, obviously we will continue to do it. So, what's in it for the learner? Number one, you acquire a piece of content which is relevant for you, hopefully. Number two, you are part of a community now, as you've also described it. You made friends during the process, and you increase your market value. It's as simple as that.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:20:35] I hope people won't stop taking the courses and for sure keep on issuing record of achievement, so keep on coming to the platform and do your courses until the end. Otherwise, there is no record of achievement. But I would like you also to help our new learners to understand where to start, because your course portfolio is really, really large and it spans over so many topics. We have SAP Cloud Applications for SAP Business ByDesign. We have reporting, supply chain

management, administration, building analytics, you name it, and we have it, really. So, if I am new, which course would you suggest me to begin with?

Rainer Zinow: [00:21:17] Well, we made it simple for you. There is a numbering schema in our courses and there's only one ByDesign zero course. So, start off with getting started with SAP Business ByDesign. So, that's the ByDesign zero course, which gives you a good overview about what are the different aspects of Business ByDesign. And then you typically have a certain specialization. You have, let's say, one group of people who are more interested in financials, project management and maybe sourcing. You have a second team of people who are more interested in the CRM processes, in the logistics processes, manufacturing processes. So, that's typically the second category. And then you have what was called in the old days, the basis consultants. Those ones who know the extensibility, so they know, they know Cloud Applications Studio, they are interested in "How do I consume web services?" They are the experts for our analytical scenarios. So, these three clusters are available. I myself took all courses so far.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:22:35] Successfully, too.

Rainer Zinow: [00:22:36] Because I simply want to know... Yeah successfully, too. And I really wanted to know what the content is all about. My team also they claim that they looked forward to my questions and I provided a lot of feedback as everybody else in the community did it. Because we have a joint interest to make these courses better. Also, when it comes to the questions during the certificates, lots of discussions. Was this really the right answer? Was this answer covered in the course? Yes, or no? You know, our discussions there. So, yeah, it's the entire organization is involved, and everybody is contributing to it so that we deliver the most delightful learning experience to our consumers.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:23:33] I really, I always love that you were so involved in the production. I know you were there from the beginning. That's when we met, really. 2015 for the first time. So, that's really great. And it's special about this team. For our listeners, all the courses that we talked about will be linked in the info box on our page series. So, don't worry about taking notes or having missed something. You'll find all the

links there. And Rainer, unfortunately, we are at the end of our chat. Thank you so much for joining and thanks to our audience for tuning in.

Rainer Zinow: [00:24:06] Thanks a lot, Elena, for having me. And yeah, let's keep this great collaboration ongoing. Many more topics to go. I also have Business One where I also would like to see more openSAP courses and I motivating my S/4HANA friends to take the same route.

Elena Lucarelli: [00:24:24] That's something to look forward to! Thank you for listening to openSAP Invites. While you wait for the next episode to come, why not re-listen one of our past Invites? I recommend, for example: "Learn How to Build Better Products with a Human-Centric Product Backlog". Or one of our Thought Leaders episodes, for example: "Cultivate a Positive Mindset for Self-Innovation". And don't forget to subscribe to the series and share.

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