

Tanya Duncan

# The Essential SAP® Career Guide – Hitting the Ground Running

- ▶ Fundamentals of an SAP job search
- ▶ Interviews with leading SAP professionals in diverse career paths
- ▶ Tips for choosing the right SAP module for you
- ▶ Important SAP skills & tools

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 An introduction to SAP</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 What is SAP?	14
1.2 Current state of the enterprise software market	15
1.3 SAP can fast-track your career	16
<b>2 Starting your SAP career</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 SAP consultant	19
2.2 Industry SAP professional	28
2.3 How is consulting different from industry positions?	29
2.4 What size firm fits you best?	32
2.5 Independent consulting	33
2.6 Moving from an industry role to consulting or vice versa	34
2.7 Functional vs. technical roles	39
2.8 How to develop skills in other modules	43
<b>3 How to find a job working with SAP technology</b>	<b>47</b>
3.1 Finding open positions	47
3.2 Creating a stand-out SAP resume	50
3.3 References	58
3.4 Cover letters	60
3.5 Preparing for SAP interviews	62
3.6 Negotiation	69

<b>4</b>	<b>SAP terminology, tools, and methodologies</b>	<b>73</b>
4.1	Common SAP terminology	73
4.2	Deployment methodologies	78
4.3	Business process redesign	92
4.4	Frequently used SAP tools	94
<b>5</b>	<b>Important SAP skills and concepts for beginners</b>	<b>97</b>
5.1	Key professional skills	97
5.2	Crucial technical skills	100
5.3	How to write a functional specification	119
<b>6</b>	<b>SAP expert interviews</b>	<b>123</b>
6.1	Jon Reed	123
6.2	Julien Delvat	129
6.3	Thomas Michael	135
6.4	Sydney McConnell	138
6.5	Janet Salmon	142
6.6	Jörg Siebert	146
6.7	Martin Munzel	151
6.8	Jeremy Sisemore	155
6.9	How to work a 40-hour week, stay in business, and still take a vacation	164
	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>The Author</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Index</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>175</b>

## 2 Starting your SAP career

**As you begin your SAP career, there are several major career options to consider.**

One of the first decisions to make when starting your career is whether you are interested in an industry or a consulting position. All other career options seem to follow this key decision. As an SAP professional at a consulting firm, you could serve clients in a variety of industries with their SAP rollouts and upgrades. An equally rewarding position is to work in an industry supporting SAP customers.

Many consultants decide to become independent later in their career. Some find it more lucrative and satisfying than consulting within a firm. Consulting independently is a longer term goal for many SAP professionals, but starting in a firm or at an SAP customer site is the best way to start your SAP career. Both options have varying benefits and disadvantages depending on your career and personal goals. The following are the major SAP career options, pros and cons, and typical project work for each path.

### 2.1 SAP consultant

If you answer yes to the majority of the following questions, you should consider a career in consulting:

- ▶ Do you prefer working in various industries for multiple clients over more consistent work?

- ▶ Do you consider yourself independent and self-motivated?
- ▶ Are you open to traveling full-time (50-100% of the time)?

SAP consultants work for a consulting firm or independently consult as a subcontractor for clients who are SAP customers. Many people find consulting glamorous because of the travel, typically higher salaries, frequent project and client changes, and the prestige of large firms. There is something to be said about advising some of the largest and most well-known companies in the world. Most people who have spent time as a consultant agree that consulting puts you on a career trajectory of fast growth. You learn an immense amount about technology solutions, client relationships, and what it takes to succeed.

Like any job, there are some aspects of consulting that outweigh the benefits for those who prefer a career in an industry. Frequent travel comes with long commutes (sometimes cross-country), early travel on Monday mornings, flight delays, hotel living, and the general inconvenience of living out of a suitcase. Others may not feel comfortable leading meetings with clients or lack the confidence to advise others. In spite of the added pressure and drawbacks with traveling, consulting is certainly a worthwhile consideration for those starting their SAP career.

### **2.1.1 Expectations**

Your typical work week as a consultant starts by traveling to the client site Monday morning, or Sunday night. Cross-country travelers may spend the better part of Sunday traveling to the client site. Those rare, lucky

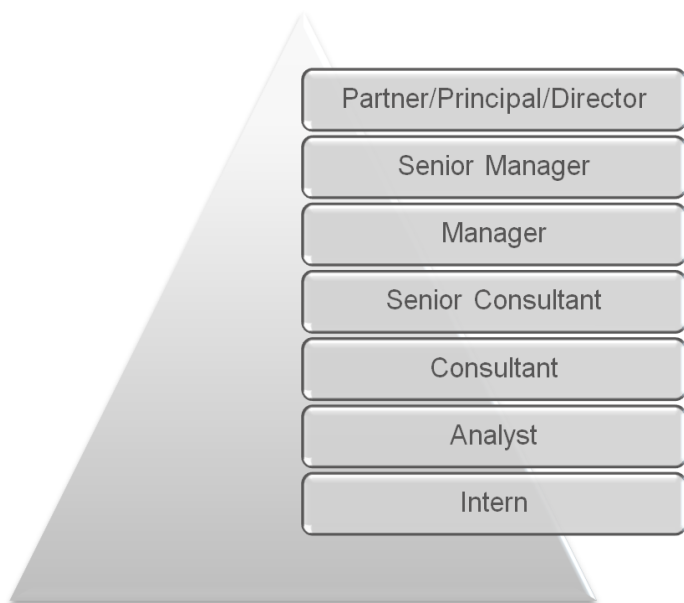
consultants on local projects get to sleep in the comfort of their own bed every night and avoid travel. While local projects are a great break from being 'on the road', you are often expected to work longer hours because you are not traveling and you are not able to expense meals to the client.

Consultants typically start at the client site Monday morning sometime before noon and work long days (10+ hours) before flying home Thursday or Friday night. Project timelines and go-live weekends occasionally require staying in town for the weekend. Consultants are generally expected to work a minimum of 45 hours and most work closer to 60 hours in a given week. The weeks leading up to project milestones usually require intensely long days.

As a consultant, you rely on business users and leadership to provide the requirements for the system. Based on these requirements, you can configure the system. Consultants must guide clients in making key decisions by providing information and demos in SAP (commonly called CRP's, conference room pilots). Consultants take the lead in blueprint workshops, configuring the system, facilitating testing, providing knowledge transfer to the client, and supporting the live system.

### **2.1.2 Consulting career ladder**

The major consulting firms follow a career ladder similar to Figure 2.1. There are variations in the names for each level between firms, but the general idea is the same. Some firms also offer a separate career ladder for those interested in specializing in a specific area of SAP instead of following the partner track. The next page describes each of the levels in the partner career ladder.



*Figure 2.1: The consulting career ladder*

## **Intern**

Internships are typically full-time summer positions for undergraduate or graduate students. Some firms keep interns part time during the school year to keep connected with strong talent. Interns are usually assigned a small project management-type position on an SAP engagement. This provides them an opportunity to understand the phases of a project, how client engagements work, and explore project roles.

Interns are expected to spend a significant amount of time learning about the firm, networking with leadership, and finding where they could fit in. Interns need to focus on delivering quality assignments and work with their managers to contribute to meaningful projects. Many

interns can be stuck with trivial work that leaves them feeling like they have no part in team or project success. Interns should ask for more responsibility if they have extra time and demonstrate their potential by going above and beyond expectations.

High-performing interns may receive an official offer to join the firm full-time after graduation. Some firms will require interns to interview for full-time positions, but others consider an internship a long interview for a full-time position.

As an intern, it is crucial to distinguish yourself from other candidates. Internships are a great way to see inside a company and can help you decide if you fit in with the culture and project work. Internships are also important in discovering what you are passionate about and whether your planned career path is really right for you.

## **Business analyst**

The analyst level is an entry-level position for undergraduates and inexperienced consultants. The analyst role usually lasts 2–3 years before promotion to consultant. Analysts usually work in a project management role or join a functional or technical project team. They are usually paired with an experienced consultant or senior consultant and have opportunities to learn about project roles and explore different functional or technical areas.

The analyst role is a unique time in your career to explore different modules in SAP or decide that you want to pursue another technology or career path. Find formal and informal mentors to nurture your career and help you achieve your career goals.



# B Index

## A

ABAP 41  
Accelerated SAP 86  
Agile methodology 83  
Aris 95  
ASUG 49

## B

Basis 41  
Batch job 75  
Big Data 15  
Blueprint 73  
Business analyst 23  
business information  
    warehouse 41  
business intelligence  
    41

## C

Client 76  
cloud computing 15  
Configuration 102, 112  
consulting firms 32  
Cover letter 60  
customer relationship  
    management 41  
Customizing request 77  
Cutover 74

## D

Deployment 74  
Development client 101

## E

Enhancement 77  
enterprise resource  
    planning 13  
Environment 77

## F

finance and controlling  
    40  
functional specialist 39  
Functional specification  
    119

## G

Global ASAP 87  
Golden Client 101  
Go-Live 74  
GUI 77

## H

HPQC 94  
human capital  
    management 41

## I

- Independent consulting 33
- Industry SAP
  - professional 28
- Integration testing 74
- Internet of Things 15
- Internship 22
- Interview 62

## M

- Master data 75
- Mock cutover 101
- Module 75

## N

- Negotiation 69
- Networking 49

## P

- Performance testing 74
- Production client 101

## Q

- Quality system 101
- QuickTest Professional 96

## R

- Realization 74
- Recruiter 155
- References 58
- Regression testing 74
- Resume 50

- Rollout 74
- Run SAP 88

## S

- SAP 14
- SAP Activate 89
- SAP Community
  - Network 49
- SAP consultant 20
- SAP HANA 15
- SAP Service
  - Marketplace 100
- security 41
- Software development
  - lifecycle 79
- Solution Manager 94
- STAR technique 68
- Sub-module 75
- supply chain
  - management 40

## T

- Table display 109
- Table search 103
- technical specialist 39
- Technical specialist 41
- Transaction code 76
- Transport request 77
- Transport requests 114

## U

- Unit testing 74
- uPerform 95
- User acceptance testing 75

## **V**

Variant 76

Workbench request 78

Workflow 76

Work-life balance 164

## **W**

Waterfall methodology  
82