

## SAP Customer Success Story Professional Services – Software Consulting



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Hans-Detlef Weber, Managing Director, Accenture

### AT A GLANCE

#### Summary

Needing to recruit junior consultants with SAP background, Accenture teamed up with the SAP® Education organization to design an attractive, intensive training course for university graduates. The 6-month program is based on a mixture of theory and practice and helps individuals embarking on a career in consulting get up to speed quickly.

#### Web Site

[www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)

#### Key Challenges

- Short supply of young, mobile, skilled SAP consultants experienced in implementing complex IT projects and standardized software infrastructures
- Need to hire a significant number of new consultants with SAP background in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, where the demand exceeded the number of available qualified resources

#### Project Objectives

- Partner with SAP to develop proposals for a rapid and targeted method of teaching SAP skills
- Institute an on-site training program designed to prepare recent college graduates to consult on SAP software implementations, and task SAP with providing the training

#### Solution and Services

SAP Consultant Education offering of SAP Education

#### Why SAP Services

- SAP Education experts guarantee structured, on-site, high-standard training.
- Condensed, 5-week course provides participants with the specialized knowledge they need for future SAP software implementations.

#### Implementation Highlights

- This 6-month training program in SAP theory and practice was launched in October 2004 at the Accenture office in Kronberg near Frankfurt.
- Training in 2004 was so successful that Accenture extended the initiative into 2005, with 14 courses containing 15 participants in each.

#### Key Benefits

- Career enhancement: trainees springboard into their careers with a structured start in the SAP consulting business that is unparalleled in the industry, plus gain immediate recognition by SAP customers everywhere.
- Increased certification speed: modular course design certifies junior consultants in just 6 months.
- Improved time management: Accenture professionals can focus on consulting projects instead of training.

#### Implementation Partner

SAP Education

## ACCENTURE

### Teaming Up with SAP® Education to Train and Certify Junior Consultants in Just Six Months

One axiom of any software implementation project is this: the more qualified a consultant is, the more successful the project will be. This is certainly true for SAP® software implementations: having consultants on the job with sound knowledge of SAP solutions is a valuable asset, resulting in shortened project runtimes and reduced implementation costs. For this reason, the demand for young, mobile, skilled SAP consultants is high and growing higher, but today qualified consultants are in short supply.

Accenture, one of the world's leading management, technology, and outsourcing service providers, is well aware of the situation. It sees firsthand that the continuing trend toward standardization of software infrastructures with SAP solutions is increasing demand for skilled consultants with SAP software expertise. As part of its workforce of over 123,000 people, Accenture employs nearly 11,000 SAP consultants and completes well over 1,600 SAP implementation projects every year. These implementations represent an important part of the company's 2005 fiscal year revenue of US\$15.5 billion.

In its capacity as a business innovation partner, Accenture not only combines strategic consulting with technology-based services but also enters into stable, long-term innovation partnerships with its clients. Because it is prepared to take entrepreneurial risks – that is, take responsibility for whole processes and their outcomes, either on its own or with its business partners – having qualified SAP consultants is key to Accenture’s success. Therefore, in 2004 the company set out to rectify the shortage of young, certified SAP consultants.

### **On-Site Program in Germany Trains Junior Consultants in SAP Skills**

In 2004, Accenture committed to hiring 1,000 new staff in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The majority of this staff would be involved in implementing SAP solutions.

In response to this challenge, Accenture joined forces with strategic cooperation partner SAP to develop proposals for a rapid, targeted method of teaching SAP skills. Working closely with the SAP Education organization and its SAP Consultant Education offering, which is aimed specifically at consultants, Accenture designed a condensed training course for graduates of different disciplines. “Instead of training new employees ourselves, we have tasked SAP Education to teach them skills. The SAP Education professionals guarantee structured, on-site training of a high standard for a large number of junior consultants, enabling us to focus on our ongoing consulting projects,” says Hans-Detlef Weber, managing director at Accenture.

### **Building Competence Right from the Start**

Launched in October 2004, the half-year training program consists of a balanced mixture of theory and practice. The motto of the training program is “Competence right from the start.”

The course kicks off with a five-week classroom “academy” at Campus Kronberg, located near Frankfurt, Germany, the Accenture headquarters for the nearby German-speaking countries. Participants undergo intensive, in-house basic training,

which gives them an in-depth generic and process-oriented understanding of SAP applications based on professional consultant profiles and prepares them for future project assignments. The training content varies, depending on the topic area or consultant profile that the trainees have selected.

The program currently comprises 12 different modules that start in Kronberg each month. Students can choose from generic training aimed at the mySAP™ ERP Financials solution, financial and management accounting, or the SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence component, or they can focus on industry-related sets of solutions such as SAP for Banking or SAP for Insurance. Describing the design of the Accenture courses to fit consultant profiles, Björn Interthal, director of consultant education at SAP, says, “The SAP software products are so sophisticated that no consultant can ever hope to cover all of them. In five weeks of condensed, modular courses, we provide participants with the specialized knowledge they need for their future assignments.” The classroom sessions are complemented by a series of presentations by experienced Accenture consultants who explain the company’s methods and practices to the budding young experts.

### **Creating Certified Professionals in Only Six Months**

Staff instructors with many years of experience teaching SAP products provide training in SAP theory. The training systems used for practical exercises are based on the latest versions of the software. The systems are preconfigured by SAP, and the instructors ensure that they operate smoothly.

All course materials correspond to the current status of SAP products. SAP training experts have adapted them to partners’ requirements, and they contain essential information only – a highly efficient approach that promotes optimal learning.

Students’ progress is monitored closely during the classroom phase, and they get to apply their knowledge by presenting case studies about fictitious companies. These exercises enable them to acquire simulated hands-on experience before their first real-life customer project and to extend their knowledge of the design and implementation of SAP software.

“Compared to other training opportunities for consultants, the program Accenture offers has a much stronger hands-on orientation,” explains Weber. “With the support of SAP Education, we can offer graduates an SAP training package that enables them to develop their theoretical knowledge while gaining experience in the implementation of complex major projects.”

At the end of the classroom phase, participants are tested in industry-specific knowledge and SAP expertise, and the result is documented. This examination is the first hurdle in the junior consultant’s new job and is immediately followed by an internship. Weber is very satisfied with the rate at which new SAP

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experts are snapped up for internships: within a week of completing the exam, every trainee is deployed on a customer project. The internships last just under five months, during which period the junior consultants are involved in a number of different SAP assignments.

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50 077 741 (06/01) Printed in USA.

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