

MY JOURNEY FROM OPERATIONS TO SAP LEADERSHIP

:- By Chris Salis Sap

INTRODUCTION

I'm Chris Salis, and if someone had told me early in my career that I'd one day help lead strategic innovation at one of the world's largest enterprise software companies. I might have smiled politely and returned to managing supplier contracts. But life has a way of surprising you when passion, preparation, and purpose collide.

This is the story of how I went from hands-on procurement operations to shaping the future of SaaS and procurement at SAP—a journey defined by constant learning, strategic leaps, and a commitment to building systems that work for people.

STARTING AT THE GROUND LEVEL: MY FOUNDATION IN OPERATIONS

My professional journey began at Adecco Employment Services, where I managed IT procurement across hundreds of branches. It was a deep dive into systems, suppliers, and cost-saving strategies. As a Procurement Manager, Senior IT Buyer, and Strategic Sourcing Manager, I, Chris Salis, have handled vendor negotiations, contract execution, and strategic partnerships. Skills continue to shape how I approach business transformation today.

These roles laid a strong foundation in operations, taught me the value of process optimization, and revealed the massive potential of scalable procurement strategies.



BUSINESS OBJECTS: WHERE TECH AND STRATEGY MEET

In 2006, I joined Business Objects, which became a pivotal chapter. Starting as Senior Manager of Procurement and Strategic Sourcing. I, [Chris Salis](#) [SAP](#), was later promoted to Executive Director and Chief of Staff to the CEO. I managed global go-to-market strategies, shaped product portfolios, and helped guide the post-merger integration with SAP.

This experience helped me refine my strategic thinking and executive leadership. It also introduced me to the world I'd soon fully enter: SAP.



MY SAP CHAPTER: FROM SALES TO SAAS TRANSFORMATION

Joining SAP in 2010 as VP and Head of Global Sales for Line of Business Solutions for Procurement was both an honor and a challenge. I later became Global Vice President & General Manager, and finally, Global VP and Head of Portfolio for SAP's Go-to-Market.

During my time at SAP, I:

- Launched SAP's Digital Business Unit
- Introduced a new B2B/C SaaS business model
- Reduced time-to-revenue from 12 months to 90 days
- Transformed zero-revenue products into \$ 41 M-generating solutions
- Led SAP's sourcing solution, the company's first successful SaaS product
- Drove 4x SaaS growth and increased revenue 300% in just one year
- Played a key role in the \$4.3B Ariba acquisition and led the post-merger team

SAP gave me the platform to think boldly, act strategically, and execute at scale. I was fortunate to work with brilliant teams, lead major initiatives, and help reshape SAP's future-facing business model.

THANK YOU!

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