

Situation

As a market leader, the SAP SuccessFactors organization had the vision to create an entirely new market category for the future of work, Human Experience Management (HXM). This was an ambitious goal and significant evolution of the long-standing Human Capital Management (HCM) market. This change presented many challenges, an important one being aligning the organization so they could deliver this new market vision. As Senior UX Program Manager, I observed that employees did not clearly understand the new market vision and were wary due to change fatigue. I pitched a strategic initiative to codify the HXM vision into a set of principles that would make it more tangible, actionable, and clear. I pitched the idea to leadership and gained executive sponsorship and a commitment of resources. Many colleagues were inspired by the idea and I was able to recruit a strong team consisting of fifteen experts from across the organization who contributed significant time and effort over many months. So critical to the future of the company, but inventing a new product category would be challenging. To effectively execute and deliver on the vision, team members needed to understand the vision clearly and thoroughly and organizational alignment was required. I pitched an initiative to codify the new vision into a set of clear Principles and secured executive sponsorship to form a large tiger team to deliver them. I recruited fifteen team members from across the organization and led a development process based on Jobs to be Done.

Key challenges included:

- Unclear organizational vision for HXM
- Employee confusion about transition
- Lack of alignment across teams
- Inconsistent understanding of HXM vs HCM
- Need for clear guiding principles
- Communication gaps
- Strategic alignment challenges
- Implementation uncertainty

Tasks

The organization needed to:

- Create clear, memorable HXM principles
- Articulate vision for transformation
- Define actionable guidelines
- Support market differentiation
- Provide organizational clarity
- Enable consistent messaging
- Guide product development
- Foster employee alignment
- Create implementation framework

Actions

Research and Discovery

- Formed 15-member cross-functional team including:
 - UX leaders
 - Strategy leaders
 - Product managers
 - Solution architects
 - Marketing professionals
- Conducted stakeholder interviews
- Gathered organizational perspectives
- Documented current understanding
- Identified vision gaps
- Assessed priorities
- Collected implementation insights

Analysis and Development

- Synthesized interview using Jobs to be Done methodologies
- Organized insights into themes
- Identified actionable patterns
- Created initial principle drafts
- Refined principles iteratively
- Ensured principle clarity
- Limited principles to four
- Maintained vision alignment

Stakeholder Management

- Held leadership meetings
- Presented vision and principles
- Gathered executive feedback
- Collaborated with marketing, strategy, and customer success teams
- Modified principles as needed
- Maintained core intentions
- Built organizational support
- Created implementation plans

Implementation Strategy

- Developed communication strategy
- Created integration framework
- Established success metrics
- Built rollout and adoption plans

- Created training materials
- Designed implementation support
- Developed feedback mechanisms

Results

After the HXM Principles were completed, a small leadership team convened to modify them for marketing communications. This version was utilized to define the HXM market.

Organizational Impact

- Launched at big customer conference
- Achieved positive employee reception
- Enhanced organizational clarity
- Improved strategic alignment
- Created common understanding
- Established clear framework
- Built organizational momentum

Communication Effectiveness

- Integrated principles into communications
- Created consistent messaging
- Enhanced vision articulation
- Improved strategic clarity
- Strengthened market positioning
- Built customer understanding
- Enhanced value proposition

Strategic Alignment

- Provided clear direction
- Enhanced decision-making
- Improved cross-team alignment
- Strengthened market differentiation
- Created implementation guidance
- Enhanced product development
- Built organizational cohesion

Implementation Success

- Achieved positive customer reception
- Created concrete HR connections
- Enhanced employee understanding
- Built implementation framework

- Established clear guidelines
- Improved operational clarity
- Strengthened organizational focus

Conclusion

The successful development of the HXM Principles and implementation of the revised version at SAP SuccessFactors demonstrates how addressing organizational clarity needs can drive strategic transformation. Despite challenges in gaining comprehensive executive alignment, the project successfully created a framework that enhanced understanding and alignment around the HXM vision.

This case study illustrates that successful organizational transformation requires both bottom-up initiative and top-down support, supported by clear principles and consistent communication. The lessons learned about stakeholder alignment and organizational change continue to provide valuable insights for future strategic initiatives at SAP SuccessFactors.