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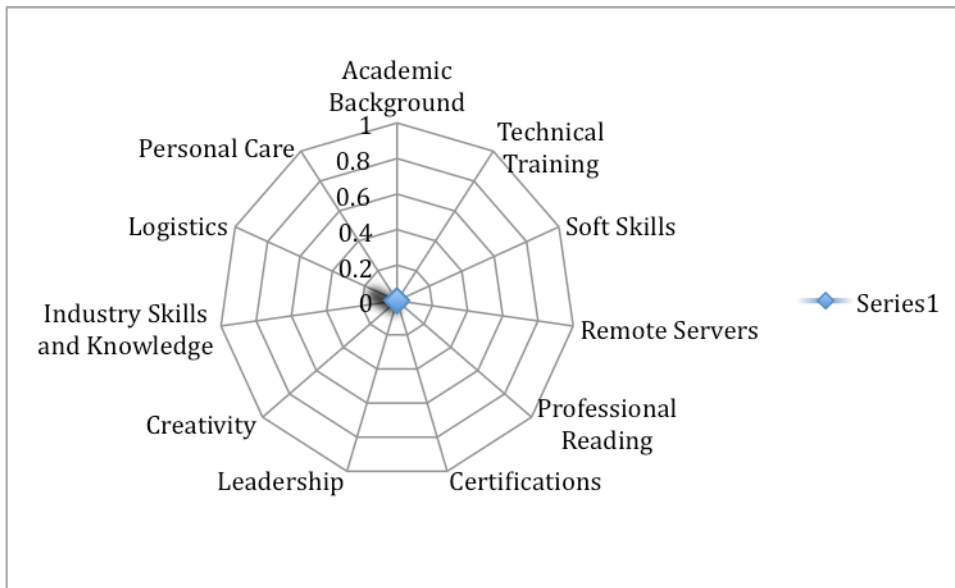
## **Top 11 Things You Need to Know to Become a Top Gun SAP Consultant**

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## Introduction

Although the market for SAP Consultants continues to be 'hot', the demand for Top Gun consultants, those who bring far more to the table than just SAP configuration skills are in ever-greater demand. To get there, we have put together this eBook with our views of what you need to know or learn to reach the elite status of 'Top Gun', where you can command top rates.



## Academic Background

In reality, and especially at the peak of the SAP boom, which may well be occurring again, a high school diploma with some work experience was enough to perform most SAP core module implementations. This author went to the SAP Materials Management academy with a number of people who worked in procurement who had a High School diploma and they all did fine.

However, the minimum requirement we see is an associate degree, and the normal requirement is a bachelor degree, regardless of specialty. A Master's degree is highly preferred.

Degree	Major/Minor	Core Competency
High School	N/A	Basic Bookkeeping Math, English, Writing
AS, AAS	Technical, i.e., Flight Engineer	Good Presentation Skills Solid MSOffice Skills Constant Learning
Bachelor's Degree	Business, Computer Science, Industrial Engineering or Technology, Mechanical, Civil, Other	Excellent Presentation Skills Writing Skills Public Speaking Skills Sales Skills Master of MSOffice, particularly excel and powerpoint
Master	MBA, MS	Quantitative Expertise Able to teach and mentor Strategic Thinker

## Technical Training

From a technical stand point, when it comes to SAP and to IT more broadly, you will never be able to stop learning. However, we assume you will have to successfully complete the following training. We have focused on SAP BW but the same basic model applies to any SAP module.

SAP	Other Software	Methodology
SAP BW Academy	Microsoft Office Expert	Lean Principles
SAP 010	Advanced Internet Research Skills	Six Sigma
Business Process Management	Database Design, i.e. Entity Relationship Modelling	ASAP Methodology
SAP Online Presentations	RWD InfoPak, at least user level if not author level	Project Management Professional or Prince 2

Basic ABAP	Adobe Connect or Webex or iWork	SCOR (Supply Chain Operational Reference Model)
SAP Solution Manager-Implementation		
iTUTOR		

## Soft Skills

You may find it surprising, but soft skills will be your primary keys to success. Once you get to the point where your technical skills are assumed by the market to be sufficient, (keeping in mind you will be a life long learner), you will find that the market is demanding people with a good fit.

Communication Skills	Presentation Skills	Interpersonal	Harder Soft Skills
<b>Small Group Dynamics</b>	Powerpoint Master-Assumed	Team Builder	Financial Statement Competence
<b>Written Communication</b>	Presentation of Steve Jobs should be your target	Know how to follow and how lead, in that order	Throughput Accounting
<b>Mastery of various media, including paper, internet and mobile communications platforms</b>	Comfortable on-stage in front of small and large audiences	Negotiation skills	ABC Costing
<b>Brevity and clarity in all things written</b>	Chart and Graph expertise	Master Networker	
<b>E-Mail Usage</b>	Present at SAPPhire		
<b>Become a SAP Mentor</b>	Present at TechED		

## Remote Servers

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As you are by now aware, you will need to become a life-long learner. With SAP, you can count on major new functionality being released approximately every 6 months. In all probability, you won't be able to stop whatever you are working on to attend training. You may be on the bench, and what better time to catch up with some self-training. To do that, you will need access to SAP servers, and there are various sources, some free, some requiring a monthly fee. This may be tax deductible, so consult your accountant.

Free Servers	Paid Servers	Netweaver
<a href="http://www.ondemand.com/businessintelligence">http://www.ondemand.com/businessintelligence</a>	<a href="http://iibs.ca/">http://iibs.ca/</a>	SDN provides a downloadable system which you may be able to install on your equipment
	<a href="http://sappractices.com/">http://sappractices.com/</a>	

## Professional Reading

To be a Top Gun, you will find the technology changes constantly and that business is in constant change. To keep up with it, you will need to read, a lot, broadly, and constantly. We have put together some journals and magazines we believe you should make it a point to read and subscribe to. Of course, many magazines have migrated online, but you don't always have online access. But however you do it, as a Top Gun consultant, you will want to be or be perceived, as the smartest guy in the room.

SAP	Industry	General
SAP Press-SAP BW Professional	Air Force News	Forbes
SAP SDN Blog	Government Computer News	Fortune
SAP Journal	Just in Time for America	Businessweek

<b>Balanced Scorecard Online</b>	Japanese Manufacturing Techniques	Wall Street Journal
<b>SAP Planning Best Practices in Implementation</b>	World Class Manufacturing, The Next Decade	McKinseyQuarterly
<b>Supply Chain Management Based on SAP Systems</b>	Building the Data Warehouse, W.H. Inmon	Requirements Engineering, A good practice guide
<b>xCelsius 2008 Dashboard Best Practices</b>	Data Model Patterns, Convention of Thought	Liberation Management, Tom Peters
<b>SAP Press-CPM and Balanced Scorecard with SAP</b>	Presenting to Win, The Art of Telling Your Story	Necessary bu Not Sufficient, Eli Goldratt
<b>SAP Press-Managing Organization Change during SAP Implementations</b>	The Six Sigma Handbook, by Thomas Pyzdek	The Goal, Eli Goldratt
<b>SAP Press-SAP ERP Financials Configuration and Design</b>	Supply Chain Excellence, by Bolstoff Rosenbaum	Game Theory at Work
<b>SAP Press-SAP BW Data Modelling</b>	Visual Data Mining	Critical Chain, Eli Goldratt
<b>SAP Press-ABAP Basics</b>	The Data Warehouse Toolkit	
<b>Master the SAP Business Informatin Warehouse</b>	The SAY It with Charts Complete ToolKit	
<b>ABAP Objects</b>		
<b>SAP Business Information Warehouse Reporting, jones</b>		

## Certifications

Although the controversy over whether SAP Certification is worth the price, we take the position that they are what you make of them and that it can't hurt to get one. Our experience also indicates that those who are certified once they gain experience, have a broader knowledge base with which to help customers get value from the SAP investment. But aside from the SAP Certification, there are several

other certifications which are considered the gold standard within their respective sphere's of influence. It is not realistic to attempt to obtain all of these, but if you were to combine, say APICS CPIM with SAP BW Certification, you would immediately be recognized as expert and able to command higher rates.. We have not attempted to list absolutely every possible professional certification out there, as there are many, but rather, the ones we consider key indicators of Top Gun talent.

<b>Professional Certifications</b>	<b>SAP Certifications</b>	<b>Other Software Certification</b>
<b>Certified Professional in Supply Management-CPSM</b>	SAP Business Warehouse Certified Professional or Associate	Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)
<b>Six Sigma Master Black Belt-SSMBB</b>	SAP Strategic Enterprise Management	
<b>APICS-CPIM, Certified in Production and Inventory Management</b>	SAP ASAP	
<b>Project Management Professional-PMP issued by PMI.org</b>	SAP Value Engineer	
<b>Certified Public Account</b>	SAP Business Objects Certification, there are various depending on the solution	
<b>Jonah (Theory of Constraints)</b>	SAP Solution Manager	
<b>Certified Management Accountant</b>	Any other SAP Module	

## Leadership

This section is unique in that there is an on-going debate on whether leaders are made or born. We believe that no matter your natural leadership abilities, there is much you can do to improve your leadership ability. As a former military officer, still in the reserves, I can tell you that leadership is distinctly different from management, though not easily separated. The first key to leadership is to learn and practice good followership.



Training	Experience	Thought Leadership
<p><b>We especially value military leadership experience and the invaluable training delivered by all the branches of the services. Non-commissioned officers as well as officers seek and are given responsibility early and often.</b></p>	<p>Participation in organized sports, especially in positions of leadership are always great training grounds for future leaders.</p>	<p>Become a leading contributor to Sap Developer Network, by creating high-quality whitepapers, podcast, blogcast, wiki entries or articles.</p>
<p><b>Outdoor adventure training, such as the Navy Seals Extreme Experience are great ways to experience team building</b></p> <p><b><a href="http://www.extremesealexperience.com/980.h.EXTREME_SEAL_LIVE_WEBCAM_SHOW">http://www.extremesealexperience.com/980.h.EXTREME_SEAL_LIVE_WEBCAM_SHOW</a></b></p>		<p>Author a SAP Press Book and get sold/sponsored via SAP Press.</p>
		<p>Work jointly with a university on a research project on a particular subject area, such as optimizing pallet loading sequencing in EWM, as an example</p>

## Creativity

You may not have given this one much thought in the past, but we believe a true Top Gun will be highly creative. Business consulting requires you to constantly develop new and innovative approaches to solve client problems. You may be called upon to lead brainstorming sessions while working on tight deadlines. The development of new solutions, acceptable to the client, will be one your key tasks and something you will get better at as you gain deeper ‘system knowledge’ of your SAP skillset and your industry.

<b>Books</b>	<b>Tools</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Thinkertoys</b>	iMindmap	Lead Organizational Change Management Activity
<b>Cracking Creativity</b>	Thinkpak	Brainstorm in a directed fashion
<b>Social Boom, How to Master Business Social Media</b>	Quality Circle	Facilitate a Quality Circle

## Industry Skills and Knowledge

SAP Industry Solutions are the secret sauce of SAP’s incredible success. There are at least 30 vendors of ERP and a nearly infinite number of niche solution providers. That is why this is probably one of the most important knowledge areas you, as a SAP Consultant, need to become an expert in. SAP has at least 27 Industry Solutions, and there are dozens of Partner Solutions, which you can explore in the SAP ecohub (<http://ecohub.sap.com/>). You will not be able to learn each and every industry solution, which doesn’t mean you don’t know something about them, at the very least, that they exist! From an SAP BW perspective, SAP offers no SAP BW Industry specific training, although it does have some limited standard business content available for a small subset of the Industries within its solution portfolio.

SAP Industry Solutions	Specialized Solutions within the Industry Solution			
<b>Airline</b>	MRO+IMRO	iCrew	IATA Billing Solution	Airline Route Profitability
<b>Aerospace &amp; Defense</b>	RF-ID			TM
<b>Automotive</b>				
<b>Media</b>	Digital Rights Management			
<b>Professional Services</b>	Multi-Resource Scheduling			
<b>Chemicals</b>				
<b>Consumer Products</b>				
<b>Engineering Construction &amp; Operations</b>				TM
<b>High Tech</b>				
<b>Industrial Machinery &amp; Components</b>				
<b>Life Sciences</b>				
<b>Mill Products</b>	Mill Solution			
<b>Mining</b>				
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>	Traders & Schedulers Work Bench			
<b>Telecommunications</b>	Network Management			
<b>Utilities</b>	Smart Meter Infrastructure	Convergent Charging		

<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>				
<b>Postal</b>	BOBJ Postal Solution	Extended Warehouse Management		
<b>Railways</b>	Rail Car Management	Real Estate Management	Transportation Management	RF-ID
<b>Logistics Service Providers</b>	Global Trade Services	Extended Warehouse Management	Transportation Management	RF-ID
<b>Banking</b>	Bank Analyzer	Paymetrix Card Solution		
<b>Insurance</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	Accounting for Public Sector			
<b>Defense &amp; Security</b>	DFPS	RF-ID	Foreign Military Sales	Deployed Solution
<b>Healthcare</b>	Patient Management	Pharmacy Solution		
<b>Higher Education &amp; Research</b>	Student Management Solution			
<b>Retail</b>	Merchandise Planner	Assortment Planner		
<b>Wholesale</b>	Vistex ICM	Catch Weight Management		

## Logistics

To be a Top Gun SAP Consultant, there are certain logistical requirements you are going to have to learn to cope with and budget for, particularly if you are working as an independent SAP Consultant or even working as an employee. First off, you are going to need anywhere between \$25,000.00 to \$50,000.00 in the bank to cover the 'float'. You can expect to spend, based on our nearly 30 years of consulting around the globe, just in expenses, between \$4,000.00 and \$6,000.00 per month. The typical pay cycle is that you submit your expense at the end of the month and about 30 days later, you will get reimbursed for them. While you are waiting to get reimbursed, you will have run up another month of expenses, and if you are running on the high side on your expenses, that means you will have \$12,000.00 tied up in expenses. But, in our experience, on most projects, there is a delay of more than a

month to get the first payment, sometimes up to three months. So you can see how you can quickly run up a tab of \$25,000.00 in expense float. These are worst case scenarios and everybody tries to minimize this, but it still happens and no doubt will continue to happen.

It is also why you should try never to accept a project where they are asking for an all in rate as you will absolutely not be getting fully reimbursed for your full expenses on those. In short, you must learn to negotiate and negotiate hard.

Besides having sufficient budget for your expenses, you will need to have your personal finances set up on auto-pilot as much as possible. If married, you can assume you will have home emergencies, if single, you will have to have your home set up to run unattended, or perhaps be completely mobile. But what you don't want to do is let your personal logistics issues seep into the working environment.

As an independent, you are also going to need Professional Indemnity insurance, which is sometimes hard to find. We can provide you with the name of our provider if you need coverage. There are also other insurance requirements, not consistent from one project to the next, like auto insurance with mandated minimum coverages, workmens compensation and several others.

## Personal Care

To be a Top Gun SAP Consultant, is, well, a tough lifestyle. You will spend more nights sleeping in a hotel bed, far from your family, than you will at home. Projects are grueling endurance events, where tempers may flare, and emotions run high. To cope with this challenging environment, you are going to absolutely have to have a personal fitness program you follow wherever you are at. Find a routine you can live with, such as Matt Fuery's Combat Conditioning, which can be done in any hotel room, and in 20 minutes, will kick your butt! But when all fails, take a walk. I have lived in Europe, which is a walk around continent, so this is my favorite way to explore, move around and in general, get rid of the stress of the day and stay creative.

Eating will be your other challenge. Fast food, junk food, restaurant food. Frankly, it is not very healthy, and should be avoided, but you will have to eat! So figure out how to eat healthy on the road. It is not easy, and temptation is everywhere. Some other suggestions you might enjoy on the road include learning to dance or indoor rock climbing, something available these days in almost every city you go to.

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If you have followed our advice in this document, after about 5 to 10 years, you may reach the coveted status of Top Gun SAP Consultant.

