

## THE BEST RUN

# Racing to First Place with LinkedIn Tactics from SAP

**Location:**  
Walldorf, BW

**No. of employees:**  
95,000

**Industry:**  
Computer Software

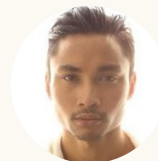
## About the Company

SAP is a leading global provider of enterprise application software, helping businesses around the globe streamline processes and get the most out of customer data.

## Challenge

SAP has long been leader of the pack with digital selling practices, but in a competitive field, you need to keep your foot on the gas and find an inside track wherever you can. One thing that SAP's sales leadership team realized early on is that it's not just about giving someone the keys to the car – you have to show them how to drive it. Thus, much of their focus has been on instilling effective behaviors and practices throughout the salesforce.

*“A comprehensive, always-on communications program is vital to maintain momentum for a digital selling training program. We need to be in front of the trainees consistently to remind them: ‘hey, this thing works!’”*



**Arif Johari**  
Head of Communications for  
Digital Selling at SAP

### Tip:

*Don't just share content you want people to read. Share content they will find interesting. Spark dialogues and learning opportunities.*

*“You have to come up with a mechanism to show the value of why your behavior should change. It’s not enough to just say ‘this is the new way’; you have to show them, not tell them.”*



**Michael Labate**  
Head of Operations & Program  
Development at SAP

## Solution

By adopting Sales Navigator as its digital selling platform, SAP felt it had the right software in place. The organization then placed its focus on helping reps get the most out of these tools, through training and sophisticated performance measurement. Applying the same old sales methods through powerful new software is akin to driving a Tesla or Bugatti in the slow lane.

One transformative step that helped SAP shift up a gear was the creation of a “Train the Trainer” program, which enables the global enterprise to bring sellers up to speed on best practices in a scalable way. SAP’s innovative approach generates a steady supply of enthusiastic experts who can embed knowledge and skills in other sales reps, distributing the amount of time and effort required to over 250 trainers. These internally developed trainers (all volunteers from within the company) go through seven virtual sessions, and then a three-day in-person workshop, where they learn to recognize and communicate successful digital selling behaviors. (See sidebar.)

SAP’s digital selling program started with a small pilot back in 2014, and revved up quickly: “teams that have been fully trained on digital selling behaviors and how to apply those behaviors to the LinkedIn Sales Navigator tool generated 7 times the pipeline than those

### SAP’s 3 Keys to Driving Digital Selling Success on LinkedIn

1. Build yourself a good brand with a customer-centric profile
2. Set up a listening dashboard to monitor people you’re interested in
3. Engage in productive conversations and build relationships

*“I have always said that sales has always been about relationships and it always will be about relationships. Social is just another way to build those relationships.”*



**Kirsten Boileau**  
Global Head of Digital  
Selling at SAP

### Tip:

*To keep its large salesforce fully tuned into digital selling practices, SAP employs an “always on” communication program, continually serving up tips and tricks through newsletters and other channels while welcoming questions or concerns from individual reps.*



teams that had just been trained on how to use LinkedIn Sales Navigator,” says [Arif Johari](#), Head of Communications for Digital Selling at SAP. Since then, the approach has gained rapid traction. There are now more than 250 trainers and 38 digital selling program managers. To reinforce the initiative, SAP uses gamification, maintains leadership involvement, and closely measures revenue attributable to digital selling activities.

For performance benchmarking, SAP uses an innovative system called “Key Indices,” which compares digital selling success against dynamic averages based on global, regional, and national peers. This provides much

more useful and actionable information than comparing against one overarching baseline. The resulting insights enable leadership to “learn from those that outperform and help those that underperform,” says [Michael Labate](#), Head of Digital Selling Operations and Program Development.

## Tip:

*Don't let leadership support fade after initially implementing a new program. This involvement needs to be continual and ongoing, so that employees throughout the organization recognize the importance and value of digital selling.*

### ROI of Changing Digital Selling Behaviors



### Tips from SAP for Success in Digital Selling



*“We’ve customized the training content to be relevant for each individual role... We outline steps for daily tasks, which lead to making more money and being more successful.”*



**Phil Lurie**  
Vice President of Sales  
Technology at SAP

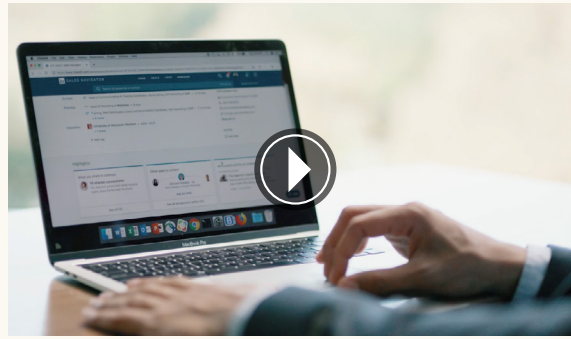
## Tip:

*Aim to curate a back-and-forth conversation when you engage someone new. Focus should always be on the other individual, their company, and their challenges. “It’s really about the customer and making it very customer centric and value oriented,” says Boileau.*

## Results

With this comprehensive enablement infrastructure in place, SAP's global digital selling program is firing on all cylinders. In 2018, the organization attributed €91 million in pipeline and €21.65 million in booked/won deals to digital selling. They've also found that reps who adopt digital selling behavior are 1.3 times more likely to hit quota, realize a 55% boost in sales performance, and achieve 3.6 times more deals closed. Meanwhile, SAP has seen the overall size of its network grow 20% year over year.

There have been plenty of noteworthy individual success stories mixed in, as well. Kirsten Boileau, Global Head of Digital Selling



at SAP, speaks of one instance where a young account executive from the Middle East was going through training at the Sales Academy, and during the first week there she reached out to someone for a meeting and got a response. She had used LinkedIn Sales Navigator to find the right person to talk to and was able to put forward an opportunity worth over a million dollars.

€2B in pipeline & €1B in won deals  
attributed to digital selling via Sales Navigator

+20% growth  
in SAP's Network  
from 2017 to 2018

Employees that are most active on Sales Navigator:

are up to **1.3X**  
more likely to hit quota

see up to a **22pp**  
boost in sales performance

What does it take to operate a  
global digital sales program?

**6** global leads  
over **35** regional  
program leads and  
more than **250** trainers

resulting in excess of **14,000**  
people trained worldwide

