

Building a Professional Narrative | 16 October 2026

Your Story. Your Brand. Your Future.

Your CV tells people what you have done.

Your story tells them who you are and the value you bring.

By popular student demand, AFSUG welcomed back **Aveena Mothilall** for a 90-minute interactive follow-up session to the **Student x Industry Connect WebCast 2026**.

The focus? Helping students, graduates and young professionals build their personal brand, grow meaningful networks and take ownership of their career journeys.

Through practical examples, live polls and open conversations, Aveena challenged attendees to think beyond qualifications, certifications and job titles.

The message was clear: Your career is more than your CV — it's the story you create, the connections you build and the choices you make.

Your Personal Brand — What Makes YOU Stand Out?

Imagine meeting a potential employer. You have just 30 seconds to explain what makes you valuable.

Could you do it?

Aveena explained that while qualifications and technical skills may get you an interview, your personal story, strengths and potential impact help you stand out.

A strong professional narrative connects four elements:

- **Who you are:** Your values, interests and passions.
- **Your strengths:** What you naturally do well.
- **Your proof:** Real examples of how you've made a difference.
- **Your direction:** Where you want to go and the value you hope to create.

And here is the good news — you don't need years of work experience to have a story worth sharing.

University projects, volunteering, community involvement and everyday problem-solving all demonstrate valuable skills.

Your brand should be authentic, memorable and consistent — whether someone meets you in person, reads your CV or visits your LinkedIn profile.

Networking — Turning Connections into Opportunities.

Building a personal brand is only the beginning.

You need to make it visible.

Aveena reminded attendees that networking isn't about collecting LinkedIn connections or simply attending events.

It is about building genuine relationships that create opportunities.

Her advice was practical:

- **Before an event:** Research speakers, identify people you would like to meet and prepare meaningful questions.
- **During the event:** Be curious, listen, engage and practice introducing yourself.
- **After the event:** Follow up, reconnect and keep the conversation going.

For those who feel shy or unsure where to start, Aveena encouraged practising in familiar environments before moving into larger professional networks.

AFSUG events, SAP communities, industry forums and volunteering opportunities all provide valuable spaces to connect, learn and grow.

Don't wait for an opportunity to find you - Put yourself where opportunities can happen.

Career Planning — Your Journey Doesn't Have to Be a Straight Line.

One of the most encouraging messages was that successful careers rarely follow a perfect, straight path.

Aveena shared her own journey — from counting inventory as a young graduate entering the SAP environment to leading major technology projects, becoming a CIO and progressing into global data and analytics leadership.

Every experience contributed to her growth.

Her advice? Stop focusing only on where you want to be in five years.

Instead, ask yourself:

Where am I now? Where do I want to go next? What do I need to learn to get there?

Aveena encouraged attendees to create realistic 90-day goals, identify skills gaps and take practical steps towards their next opportunity.

She also highlighted an important distinction: **having knowledge is not the same as being competent.**

Certifications are valuable, but applying knowledge through projects, workplace experience and real-world problem-solving is what builds capability.

For those looking to enter SAP from another career, the journey may involve transferring existing skills, gaining SAP end-user experience or taking an alternative route into the ecosystem.

The important thing is to keep moving forward — with purpose.

Mentors, Sponsors and the Power of Support.

Nobody builds a successful career entirely alone.

Aveena explained the difference between two important relationships:

A mentor shares knowledge, provides guidance, challenges your thinking and helps you grow.

A sponsor believes in your abilities and advocates for you when opportunities arise — even when you're not in the room.

Both can play a powerful role in career development.

Her encouragement was simple: **Seek guidance, ask questions, build trust and never be afraid to ask for help.**

The Skills That Will Shape Tomorrow's SAP Careers.

Looking ahead, Aveena highlighted that technical knowledge alone will not define success in the evolving SAP ecosystem.

Critical thinking, problem-solving, business understanding and the ability to turn technology into meaningful solutions will become increasingly important.

She also encouraged students to embrace AI tools as learning companions — helping them research, practise, develop confidence and accelerate their skills.

Technology provides the tools. Your ability to solve problems creates the value.

From Learning to Action — Your Next Step Starts NOW.

As the session concluded, attendees were encouraged to turn their learning into action.

Over the next seven days, the challenge is to reflect on your strengths, ask for feedback, refine your personal brand statement and take one meaningful step towards building your network or career.

Adding a personal touch, Aveena also offered **five attendees the opportunity for individual follow-up guidance**, including CV and LinkedIn profile reviews.

A reminder that meaningful connections can create real opportunities.

Your Future Starts With YOU.

The session closed with a powerful reminder from Aveena: believe in yourself, have the courage to step beyond your comfort zone and recognise the value you bring.

Your career won't always follow the route you imagined.

There will be challenges, unexpected opportunities and moments when you need to change direction.

But every experience can become part of your story.

Your CV shows your experience.

Your personal brand communicates your value.

Your network opens doors.

Your choices shape what comes next.

Thank you to **Aveena Mothilall** for sharing her experience, practical guidance and commitment to supporting the next generation of SAP professionals.

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