



AFSUG[®]

African SAP User Group





A Day in the Life of an SAP Professional

**Connect.
Create.
Collaborate.**

About Me

- HR Associate at SAP South Africa.
- Currently specialising in Skills Development and Employment Equity.
- President of Toastmasters at SAP.
- Member of the BEN (Black Employee Network) and Run Healthy Committee.
- Studied Human Resources and found my place in a global tech company (after being in 2 industries).
- Passionate about people, growth, and giving back.



I Studied HR, So Why Work in Tech?

- A tech company needs far more than developers: it needs HR, finance, sales, legal, marketing, operations and many other disciplines.
- My HR qualification gave me a foundation; the workplace taught me how to apply it in a complex global business.
- Your qualification can open the door; adaptability helps you grow once you are inside



In Tech, Learning is Part of the Job

- Technology changes continuously and the way people work changes with it.
- AI and automation are reshaping roles across the business, including HR.
- That means learning cannot stop when you graduate or complete a certification.
- I have had to learn tools, processes and terminology that were never part of my degree.
- The useful habit is not trying to know everything — it is knowing how to learn, test, ask and improve.
- Stay curious about both your profession and the technology changing it.



The Biggest Shift: Nobody Hands You the Career Map

- At university, the path is visible: modules → assignments → exams → qualification.
- At work, the path is less obvious. You have to notice what you do not know — and take ownership of closing the gap.
- Your first role is not your final identity. Treat it as a classroom with real deadlines, people and consequences.
- You do not need to feel “ready” before you start. You need to be teachable, reliable and willing to improve.
- Your career grows when you stop asking only “What job can I get?” and start asking “What capability am I building?”



Mindset Shifts That Help You Grow Faster

- **FROM** “I must know” → **TO** “I can learn.” Ask better questions instead of hiding uncertainty.
- **FROM** “Tell me what to do” → **TO** “Here is what I understand; is this the right direction?”
- **FROM** “Mistakes mean I failed” → **TO** “What is this mistake teaching me for next time?”
- **FROM** “My degree is enough” → **TO** “My degree is the foundation; application builds capability.”
- **FROM** “I need a title first” → **TO** “I can build leadership, communication and credibility now.”



Build a Personal Learning Plan — Your Career Needs a Syllabus

1 DIRECTION

What role or capability do I want to move toward?

2 GAP

What can I not do confidently yet?

3 LEARN

What course, person or resource can teach me?

4 PRACTISE

Where can I use the skill in real life?

5 EVIDENCE

What can I show that proves I used it?

6 REVIEW

What improved? What is the next gap?

Repeat the cycle every 60–90 days. Keep the plan small enough to actually use.

Example: A 90-Day Learning Plan for a New Graduate

Goal: Become more confident using data to support HR/business decisions

SKILL GAP “I can use Excel, but I struggle to turn data into a clear insight.”

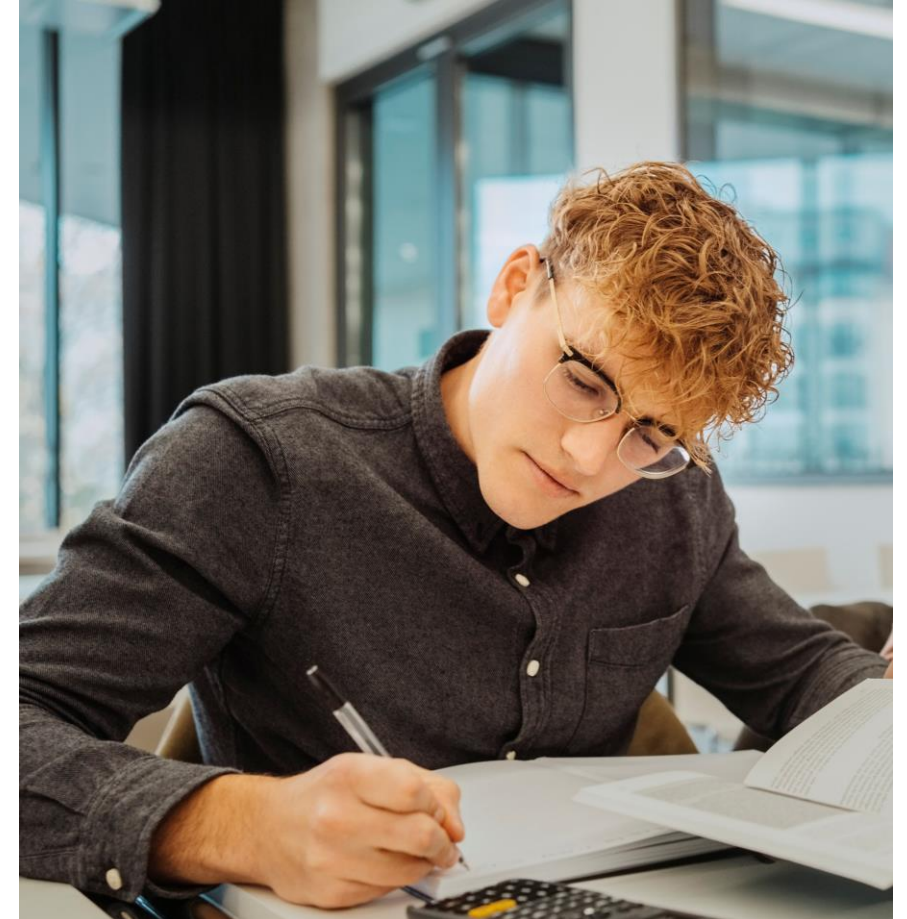
LEARN Complete a focused Excel / data-analysis course; shadow a colleague who uses reporting.

PRACTISE Use a student project, volunteer dataset or work tracker to answer one real question.

EVIDENCE Create a one-page dashboard + 3-minute explanation of what the data means.

REVIEW Ask for feedback: “What would make this clearer or more useful?” Then improve version 2.

The goal is not “finish a course.” The goal is “be able to do something better.”



Certifications: Choose Proof, Not Just Badges

A certificate should close a skill gap; not just fill a LinkedIn section.

- 1 START WITH THE ROLE** Look at real job descriptions. Which skills appear repeatedly?
- 2 CHOOSE THE GAP** Pick a credential because it teaches something you genuinely need.
- 3 APPLY IT** Build, analyse, present, organise or solve something using the skill.
- 4 SHOW THE PROOF** Be ready to explain what you learned, where you used it and what changed.



“I completed the course” is good. “I used the skill to do X” is stronger.

Mentorship: You Do Not Need One Person to Know Everything

- Build a small “personal board of advisors” rather than searching for one perfect mentor.
- Career mentor → helps you think about direction and choices.
- Skill mentor → is stronger than you in a capability you want to build.
- Peer mentor → learns alongside you and keeps you accountable.
- Ask specific questions. Try the advice. Return with what happened. That is how trust grows.
- A mentor can guide you — but they cannot do your preparation, networking or learning for you.



Feedback Loops: Do Not Wait for the Annual Review

1 ASK

“What is one thing I should keep doing and one thing I should improve?”

2 APPLY

Choose one behaviour you can change immediately.

3 SHOW

Let the change become visible in your next piece of work.

4 REPEAT

Ask again after enough time to see whether it improved.

Feedback is most useful when it changes behaviour — not when it only becomes a note in your notebook.

Your Reputation Starts Before Your Job Title Does

- Your reputation is the pattern people experience when they work with you.
- Are you prepared? Do you follow through? Do you communicate when something is late? Do you make the team's work easier?
- For students, reputation starts in group projects, societies, volunteering, internships and how you communicate online.
- You do not control every opinion about you but you can control the behaviour's you repeat.
- Ask yourself: "If I am not in the room, what three words would I want people to use about working with me?"



Build Your Career on Purpose

01 Professional Mindset

Move from waiting for instructions to taking ownership.

Clarify the outcome, manage your time and communicate early when you are blocked.

03 Mentors & Sponsors

Seek people who can offer perspective, challenge your thinking or open exposure.

Come with specific questions and respect their time.

05 Feedback Habit

Ask: "What should I continue, stop or improve?"

Then turn useful feedback into one visible action and follow through.

02 Learning Plan

Choose a small number of skills that support the role you want next.

Give each one a practical project, learning resource and target date.

04 Proof of Skill

Certifications can help, but pair them with evidence: projects, presentations, case studies, volunteering or real problems you helped solve.

06 Professional Reputation

People remember whether you are reliable, prepared and easy to work with.

Reputation is built through repeated small moments, not one big performance.

Use Stretch Opportunities as a Practice Ground

Your first job is not the only place you can build professional skills.

- Lead a student society meeting → facilitation
- Volunteer to organise an event → project coordination
- Join Toastmasters → communication + confidence
- Help a community group → applied skill
- Present a class project → storytelling + stakeholder thinking



**Do not ask only: “Will this look good on my CV?”
Ask: “What will this let me practice?”**

Build Your Reputation Online Before You Need an Opportunity

✓ BUILD

- Show the direction you are growing toward.
- Add projects, certifications and volunteer work.
- Share what you are learning — not only achievements.
- Comment thoughtfully on topics in your field.
- Use About to explain your story in your own voice.
- Keep examples of your work where appropriate.
- Connect with context, not just numbers.
- Engage thoughtfully with people and topics in your field.
- Keep your profile current as you grow.

X DON'T

- Wait until you are job hunting to become visible.
- Copy your CV word-for-word.
- Send mass connection requests.
- Claiming skills, you cannot discuss confidently.
- Post only to impress.
- Treat networking like asking strangers for jobs.
- Appearing only when you need a job or favour.

Your 30-Day FutureReady Challenge

- WEEK 1 : Choose one role or capability you want to explore. Read 5 real job descriptions and note repeated skills.
- WEEK 2: Build a 90-day learning plan for ONE skill gap. Choose how you will learn and where you will practice.
- WEEK 3 : Have one mentor conversation and ask one specific feedback question.
- WEEK 4 : Create evidence: a mini-project, presentation, dashboard, case study, portfolio item or improved CV/LinkedIn section.
- AT THE END : Review what changed. Decide the next skill. Repeat the cycle.





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