

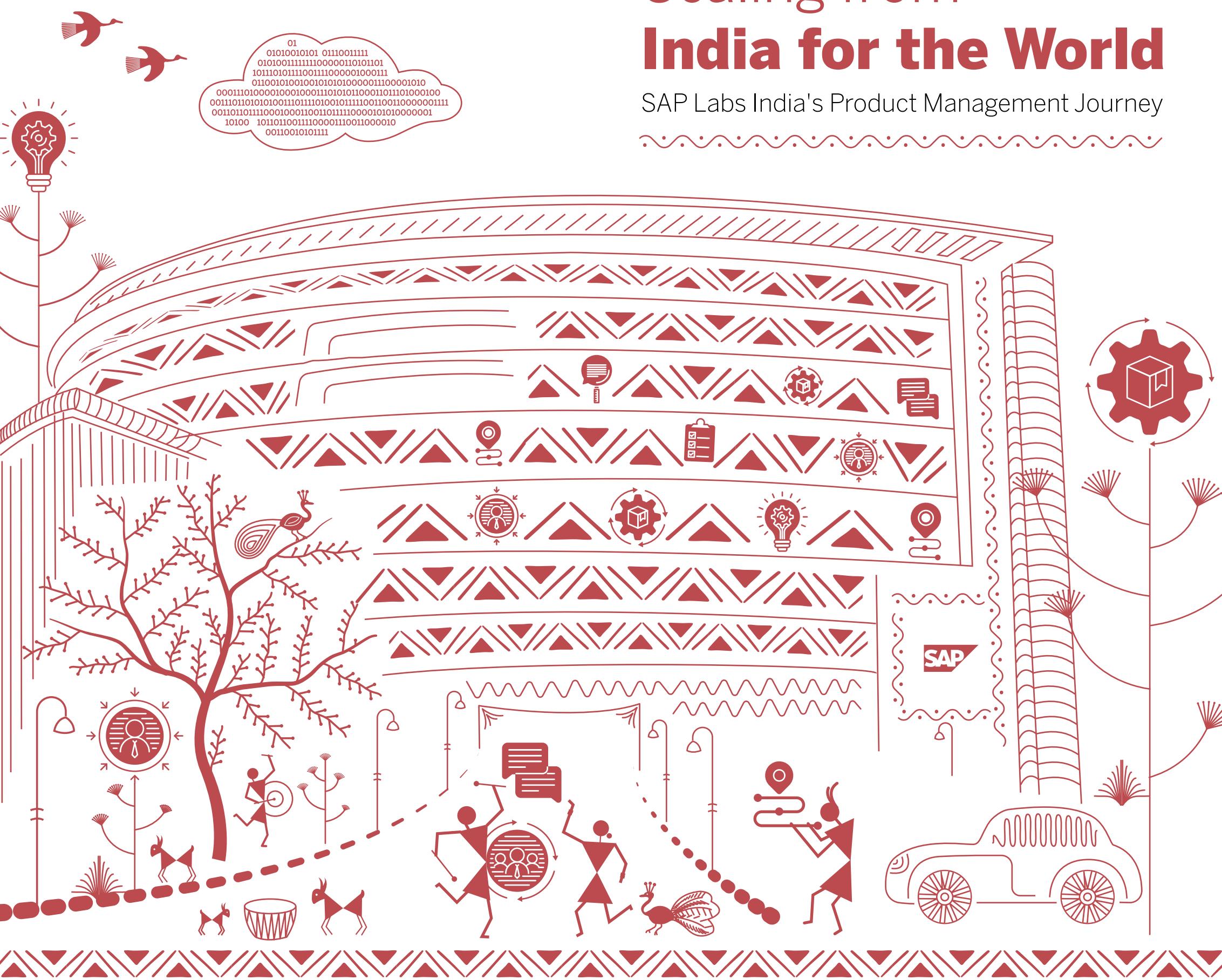


25 Years of
SAP LABS
INDIA
Innovating for the world



Scaling from **India for the World**

SAP Labs India's Product Management Journey





Mastering the Details

Tracing the path of product management
at SAP Labs India

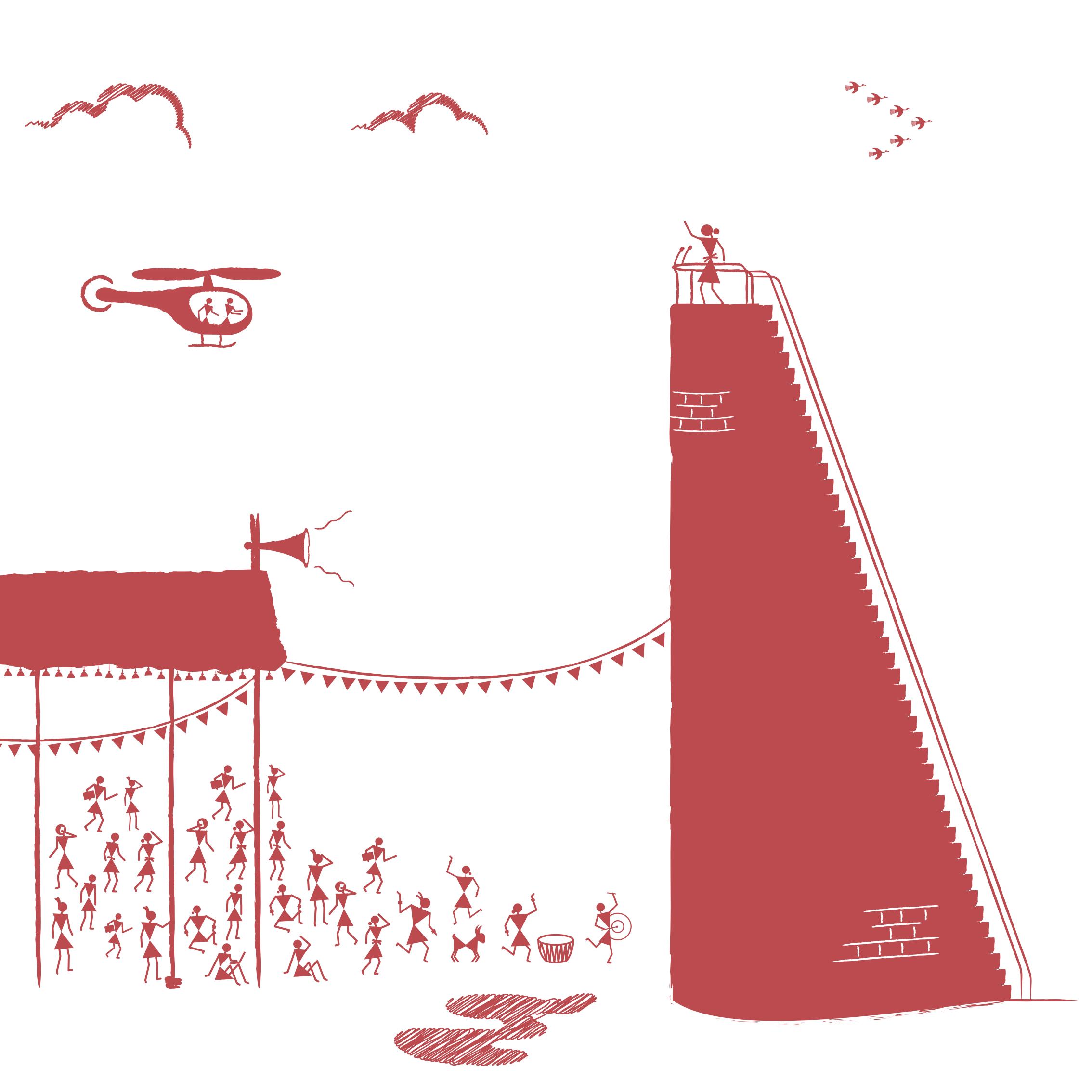
This book is an insightful exploration of SAP's unique approach to product management and the critical role played by India in the growth and success of SAP Labs over the past 25 years.

In particular, the last 15 years have witnessed a significant transformation, with product managers taking full ownership of the end-to-end product lifecycle. This book is a celebration of this journey, showcasing the evolution of India as a location from the eyes of product managers.

We aim to offer a comprehensive understanding of SAP's product management strategy, highlighting the best practices, trends, and innovative approaches shaping the future of product management, not only in India but for the world.

There are 4 elements to this book – **the SAP Labs India story and the changing role of product management, our focus on customer centricity, the innovation journey so far, and the next frontiers.** Each section has been linked with scenes and stories from a Warli painting. The intricate detailing of Warli art is similar to how SAP Labs India operates, with a focus on the details and a larger goal of delivering a seamless and transformative experience to our customers.





FOREWORD

Today, product management is at the convergence point of design, engineering and marketing to drive strategic decisions that enhance user experience, foresee market demands, and accelerate business growth. This book in essence is a celebration of our product champions leading from the front and a firm testimonial to the end-to-end product ownership and leadership driven out of SAP Labs India. These inspiring stories are intertwined with India's indigenous Warli art form. The attention to intricate details to paint the bigger picture is synonymous with how product managers operate each day.

2023 is a milestone year for us here at SAP Labs India as we mark the 25 Years of our thriving presence in India. The story of our product management practice is as exciting as our journey here and holds a great deal of promise in enabling greater product leadership from India. Wish you a wonderful read!

Sindhu Gangadharan

Senior Vice President & Managing Director,
SAP Labs India & Head – SAP User Enablement



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The 0-1 Thinkers and Doers!

While I think about product management, the notion that comes to my mind is the ability to look at something abstract and create clarity through product definitions and enable the build of something tangible. In the product world, this is essentially what translates into 'Product Ownership', a journey that various R&D locations across the globe aspire to take.

If I look at SAP Labs India as a product, it has for sure gone through the various aspects of a product lifecycle management and is poised for significant scale over the next few years. This journey has been nothing short of a spectacular one and has been fueled by the engineering leadership along with the product management at SAP Labs India.

'Scaling from India for the World' is a true reflection of this journey of product leadership from SAP Labs India and celebrates some of our leading voices in the domain of product management and the next wave of global product leaders from India. This book is divided into four sections capturing the journey of Labs India, our focus around customer centricity, the product and innovation ownership led by India, and the next frontiers of product management.

The storytellers that you will find in this book are the key forces shaping this transformative culture of product leadership at SAP Labs India.

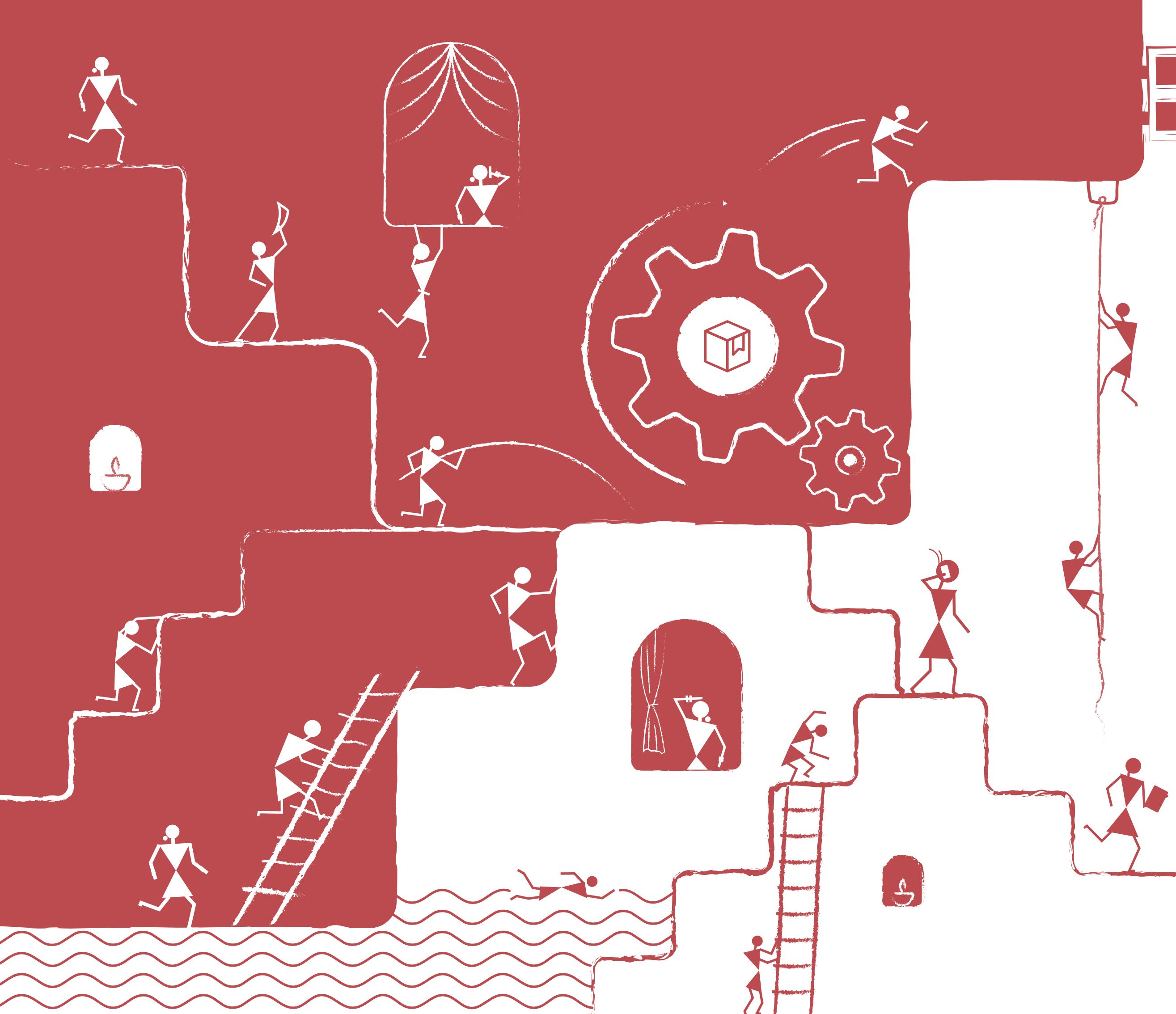
As we venture into the next growth phase, this book will serve as the strongest testimonial on the power of collective product leadership at SAP Labs India.

I am sure you will enjoy this inspiring read!

Anzy S Mohammed

Chief Operating Officer,
SAP Labs India





Tapestry of Transformation



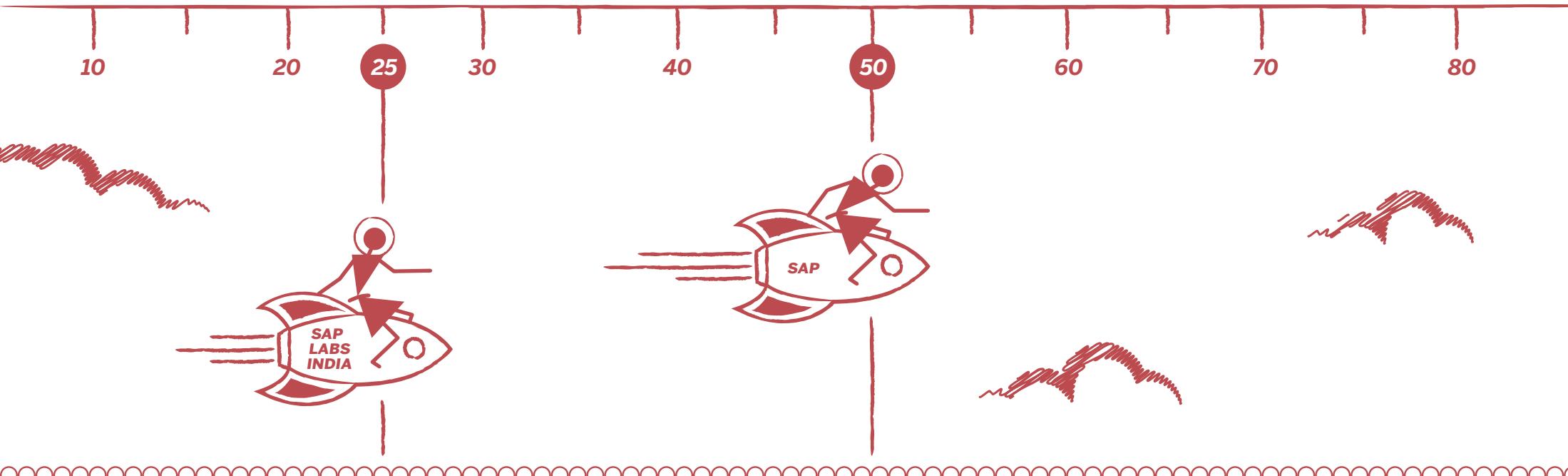
SAP Labs India's journey and the role of product management

Over the past 25 years, SAP Labs India has played a pivotal role in driving innovation and development of SAP products and technologies. From a small team of engineers and developers, we are now the largest core R&D hub for SAP Labs globally.

We have been at the forefront of innovation in emerging technologies, and established partnerships with leading academic institutions, startups, diverse entities across domains, and even government bodies, to drive research in these areas.

In the early years of SAP Labs India, the focus was primarily on software development and engineering. Product management was a relatively new concept, and the role was limited to providing inputs on design and functionality. Today, we have a strong team of product managers who are responsible for owning and managing entire product portfolios globally, from ideation to launch and beyond – continuously gathering feedback and driving improvement.

We invite you to rediscover product management through the eyes of our product leaders and one of the first product managers at SAP Labs India.



PRELUDE

Evolution of Product Management: The Story So Far

For over 5 decades, SAP's products have revolutionized the way business is done. What started with a standard software to automate financial accounting by processing data in real time, has now evolved into an integrated system that caters to a company's business functions end to end. Since then, SAP has been reinventing how businesses are run across the globe.

SAP in the digital era has a strong core, consisting of our intelligent suite, Experience Management solutions, and Business Technology Platform. We offer industry cloud solutions so that companies can run their business seamlessly. We build the world's largest business network, allowing businesses to quickly react to fast changing environments and connecting demand to supply across company boundaries. And we introduce solutions for sustainability management for organizations to understand and minimize their carbon footprint.

SAP Labs India's journey mirrors SAP's journey. While we initially had predominantly product development, support and services roles based out of India, the location steadily expanded not just in headcount but the extent of impact it has on SAP's products and strategy. We have seen a shift from a delivery mindset to a more innovation-driven customer first and product mindset at SAP Labs India.

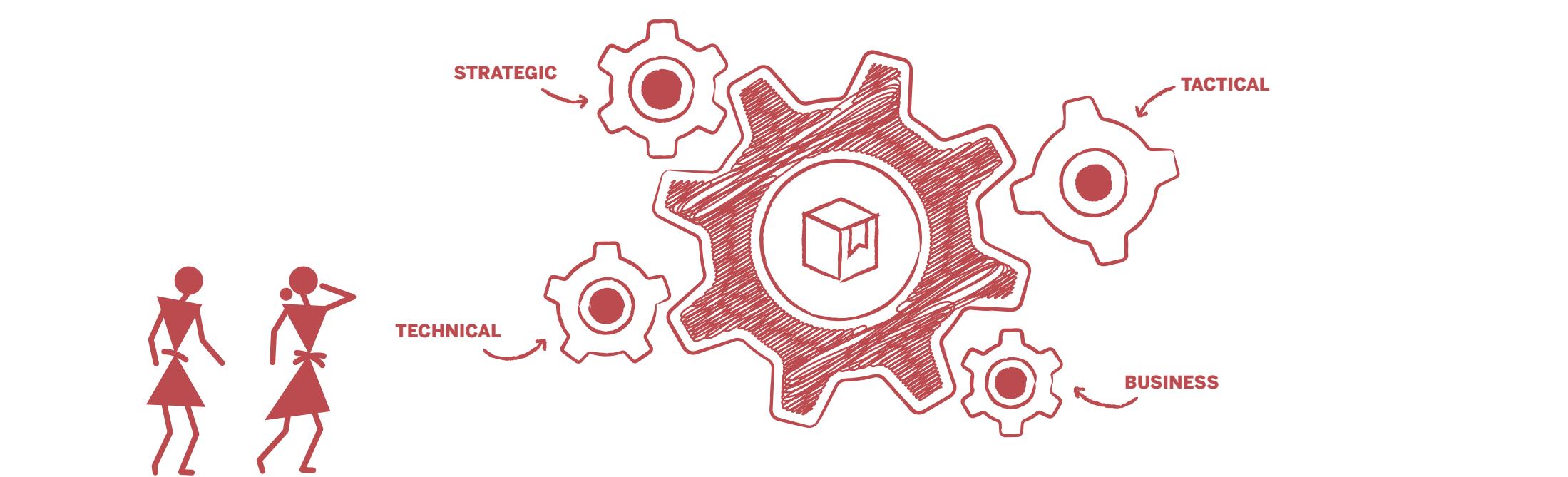
Developing a customer first and product mindset meant that the need for a strong product management function was paramount. Initially we had only a few product management roles driven out of India, focused mainly on the tactical side of product management. They worked closely with local development and design teams, designing new-age enterprise applications.

We then witnessed a growth phase at SAP Labs India where, on one side, we had product innovations driven with end-to-end delivery responsibilities. On the other hand, the Asian market was experiencing tremendous growth and became an important growth engine for SAP globally. Coupled with this growth was access to the entire partner ecosystem of SAP, which has a significant presence in the region.

The increase in responsibilities in India meant that more tactical product owners were needed to ensure that products are delivered in line with customer requirements. With the advent of cloud and new-age Software-as-a-Service offerings, product management had to become more agile and responsive in meeting customer needs. Consequently, more and more agile scrum teams and corresponding product owners have become a part of SAP Labs India.

This growth also created an opportunity for more strategic and business-centric product management roles in India. For example, the need arose for outbound product managers focusing on the growing APJ markets. Eventually, we had seasoned product managers who could take on broader and more global product ownership roles from SAP Labs India.

In the next chapters, we expand on some of these growth enablers and explore the future of product management in India.





Vijay Seethapathy

Senior Vice President,
Cloud ERP Cloud Delivery & Excellence

Driving Product Experiences @ SAP Labs India

Navigating challenges to drive product innovation

Vijay is a focused leader delivering strategic innovations and improving business processes across a broad portfolio of SAP products. He contributes to core SAP S/4HANA with a global, empowered, and diverse team, helping SAP customers run better in an ever-changing environment. In over two decades of SAP experience, his journey has spanned many roles with growing responsibilities, from Developer to Engineering Head.

According to you, what are some of the early product innovations that were delivered from SAP Labs India?

SAP Labs India has always focused on driving innovation across core industry sectors. At SAP, I was deeply involved in the Oil & Gas industry, starting with ARAMCO. Our intention was always directed towards standardization.

We then developed a module called TSW for the entire Oil & Gas industry vertical. SAP Labs India also drove product innovations in the retail industry, especially fashion management. We have worked with global teams of brands like Nike and Adidas. The best part about this was that we had the entire team visiting our facility in Bangalore to conduct workshops instead of us going to their offices, which was a tremendous change.

We also delved into driving product innovations in core industries like supply chain planning, which can be a complex topic. For example, Product Planning and Detailed Scheduling (PPDS) is one aspect which was driven entirely from India. It talks about planning the production of the resources on the shop floor. Initially, it was considered difficult to drive such a product into the market, but we started off focusing on simpler topics and then moved on to core industry topics.

Now that you've completed more than 23 years at SAP Labs India and as we know that SAP Labs India is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, what were your views on product management in the early days?

We were a part of the India leadership team trying to establish our growth story here. When we started out, it was primarily about understanding the customer's business, and trying to see the problems that our customers were facing. It was more about translating that into a meaningful output in terms of offering efficient product solutions.

During those times, the product management functions were primarily driven out of Walldorf because of the proximity to the customers. We also looked at USA as a location, because we noticed that the first adopters of our products were from those regions. Another important part was to focus on SAP's consultation practices.

Other than engineering, we also focused on architects as both the roles' required skillsets were similar to each other. It's important to have key architects, and most of them worked out of SAP Labs India. As a success story, we built the architecture curriculum and drove it from this very location. We also needed to establish end-to-end product ownership, primarily in product management. When you talk about a product area in specific, it's important to have product management, architecture and engineering as core drivers.

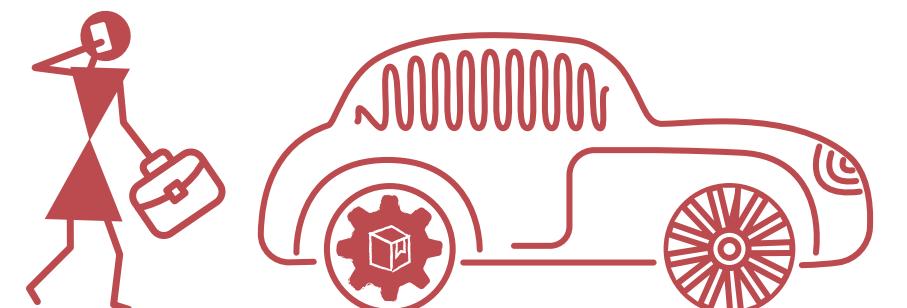
Our challenges were mostly about proximity to customers. Now that we've moved to the cloud, it's not just about understanding what the customer needs, but we need to tell them how technology can transform their business. As a product owner, one must have a technology-focused mindset along with a sound understanding of the market including informing the customer about where they must be headed.

Could you talk about the role of product management as it has taken a significant leap in terms of driving progress at SAP?

Let's take an example of S/4HANA Cloud, Public Edition. Although our products are evolving, there is no way a product management organization is going to be successful if it just builds the next 500 features. The very first goal we've set for product management is product experience. It's all about offering an end-to-end experience, right from onboarding in the cloud to finally the upgrades. This means that as a product manager, it's important that you plan for onboarding, user experience topics, harmonization, and quality consistently.

It was always thought that quality was an engineering function alone, which is not the case if you ask me. Quality is not an afterthought – it needs to be factored in from planning stages already. The product experience is the number one priority for product managers in our organization that feeds into quality. Nowadays, the backlog is not filled with 80% of requirements and 20% quality components – it doesn't work that way. Product experience takes up about 50-60% of it. When I say product experience, it's not just the UI experience but the end-to-end experience. It's all about usage. More than designing and delivering the product, aspiring product managers must understand the features and how they are used by the customer, and engineering functions should follow that.

This means building features that can track individual usage and sub-functionalities. If you want to get into small and medium size enterprises, as S/4HANA Cloud, Public Edition is trying to enter, it's all about the entire experience, and that is where the transformation happens.





Early Days of Product Management @ SAP Labs India

Creating a space to showcase the true value of delivering from India

Rajeev Gollapudi joined SAP Labs India in May 2007. Over the past 16 years with the company, he has gained rich experience in building and marketing technology and business applications with an emphasis on IT transformation.

You joined SAP Labs India in 2007, and you're one of the first Product Managers to join the company. How has your journey been so far?

When I joined SAP in 2007, only a few people were working on what we called 'Product Definition.' My primary goal was to establish a space and demonstrate the value of delivering the PM function from India. From the beginning, our Product Management team's focus was on taking full ownership of a few specific areas.

After a few years, we started outbound activities for the APJ market and created a separate function called RGTM (Regional Go-To-Market) with a strong focus on adoption of our product line in the APJ market.

With this background, I have been able to position myself as an expert in handling the API market. It's been quite a journey over the past 16 years!

Product Management as a function was very new almost a decade back. How did you define PM as a practice?

Back then, we researched heavily into the theory of Product Management, and I recall referencing IEEE papers to establish the baseline for our practice. For example: we learned that we need to balance between being closer to the Delivery Org (R&D) and the Market (Stakeholders and Customers). This was one of our initial challenges.

We were clear on wanting global ownership of at least one part of the product. In other words, end-to-end responsibility – from initially defining the product strategy to finally taking it to beta customers and representing the product at TechEd events across SAP.

Slowly establishing and showcasing this global ownership was critical to demonstrate that such a Product Management role can be carried out from SAP Labs India.

Looking at things from your perspective, how has Product Management evolved as a function within SAP Labs India?

I believe the maturity of the function has evolved with the growth of the location itself. When I joined, the focus at SAP Labs India was more on product development and R&D.

As SAP Labs India started getting more responsibilities across the diverse portfolio of SAP, we saw that the Product Management function started to evolve to match the growth. Currently, we have hundreds of Product Managers with a wide spectrum of responsibilities: for example, from inbound product owners to end-to-end product managers and leaders who have a larger global ownership and responsibility of the products.

In fact, this growth is in line with the growth of the entire Product Management functions in the Indian software industry. Many global companies set up their PM functions in India, which gave us access to a skilled set of Product Managers in the market to scale up our function.

When we first met a few years back, you were leading a product marketing team. Since then, you've pivoted into an Individual Contributor role as Chief Product Manager for the BTP portfolio. What was the thought process in making this career shift?

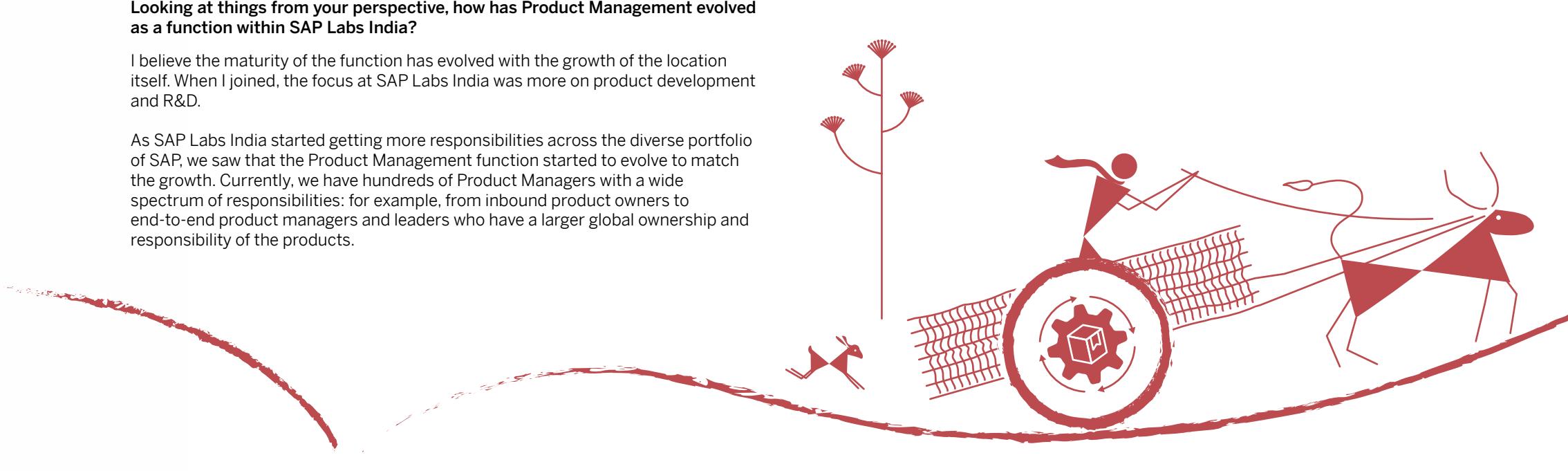
After the successful stint in a PM role, I wanted to generalize my PM skills to be able to apply in different products and domains within the SAP ecosystem. This is how I positioned myself – as a person who knows the APJ market, understands the product, and can effectively communicate its value to various stakeholder groups.

Moving to an IC role within SAP BTP allowed me to focus fully on learning about the new product line. During this time, I worked to establish and rebrand myself in the new product domain. Looking back, I can confidently say that this was the best decision I made in my career: To make a move into a completely new product area where I had no prior experience.

Cross-product management is an interesting and up-and-coming domain. How do you visualize the future of cross-product management and what role do you see India playing in it across SAP BTP?

As SAP products become more complex to address diverse solutions for our enterprise customers, cross-product management has become increasingly important. The goal of this team is to represent the 'One BTP' message and drive adoption of the entire platform, rather than just individual areas. Since setting up this function two years ago, we have seen significant benefits.

When it comes to Product Management in India, the opportunity is being close to the APJ market. I believe that the PM function should be extremely customer-centric. The biggest advantage for India is the proximity to the APJ market. The APJ market is itself growing at a fast pace. If you can build and sell products in the APJ market, you can do it anywhere else in the world.



Strokes of Inspiration

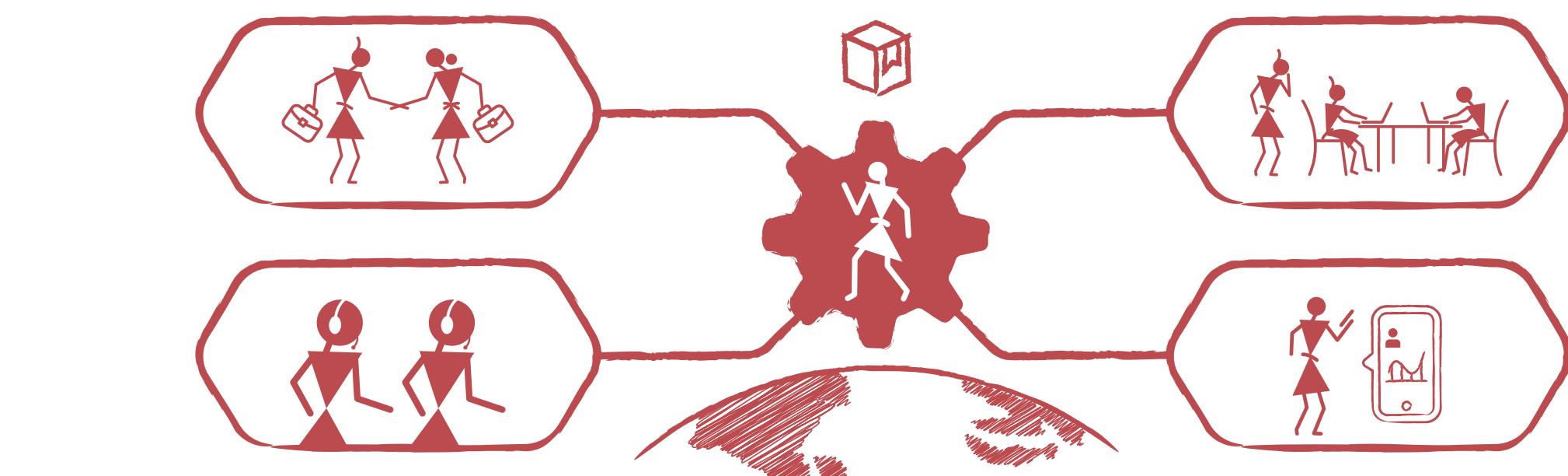
Innovating for India and beyond:
A customer-centric approach

At SAP Labs India, customer focus remains at the heart of every product innovation, even as the product management landscape evolves. With a strong grasp of the unique needs and challenges of the Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ) region, we have become a key player in product strategy, shaping not only SAP's offerings in this thriving market, but globally.

Our product managers engage in workshops and local events, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of customer preferences. This knowledge informs the development of innovative products that meet the specific demands of the region.

Through active participation in customer and partner engagements, our product managers are leading the industry's most important conversations and owning global portfolios. Our efforts are focused on ground-breaking solutions that will shape the future of technology for years to come.

Join us as we dive into the incredible growth story of APJ, fueled by India, as shared by the product managers who are spearheading the movement.



PRELUDE

Our True North Star: The Customer

Customers have been front and centre of what we do at SAP, from the beginning when our founders built our first software code sitting right next to our customers. We have always had customer success as our true north star and live by the "Customer first, SAP second, and Line of Business third" attitude. With every decision we made, we always had the long-term customer value in mind.

For product managers, this translated into consistently engaging with customers and ecosystem partners, providing the necessary focus and context for various teams – from bringing the customer voice into product priorities for development and support teams, to delivering the right product value proposition and positioning for sales and marketing teams.

The growth in Asian customers and market opportunities demanded a corresponding increase in the maturity of product management roles. At SAP Labs India, it was natural to first tap into the Asian market and the partner ecosystem in the region.

An outcome of this regional customer focus has been the emergence of product marketing teams dedicated to promoting the value proposition of our products to customers in the region. Asia Pacific and Japan is a diverse region, with customers of all sizes and from different industries being geographically distributed.

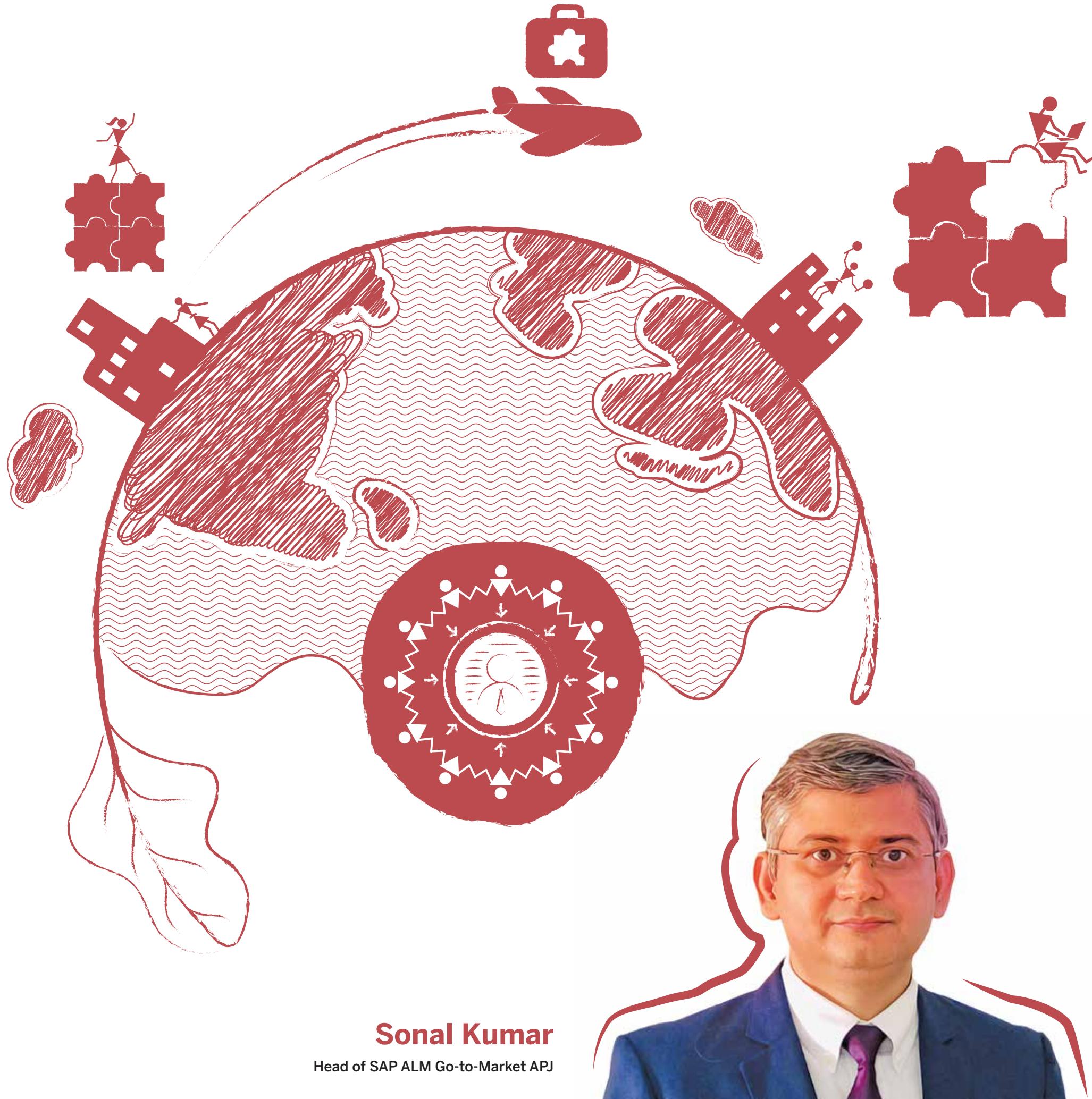
Although regional focus was born of the opportunity to address the local market, a true growth in maturity of SAP Labs India as a location meant taking end-to-end product management responsibility for products across all dimensions, from strategic to tactical and from business to technical. This also meant that customer focus could no longer just be regional but truly global.

At the same time, the Indian software industry was experiencing an upheaval in maturity as an increasing number of product companies established their global product management functions and leadership in India. The start-up ecosystem was also on the rise, with a growing number of unicorns driven by many product leaders.

This global ownership meant that we had to develop product managers capable of demonstrating thought leadership in a particular domain and managing the complete product lifecycle, from product vision and strategy to product design and build to product launch and support.

Moreover, we had to ensure that these product managers represented the product in various global events, analyst and customer forums, and managed all that from India.





Sonal Kumar

Head of SAP ALM Go-to-Market APJ

First Principles for Global Initiatives

Driving digital adoption to inspire customer centricity

Sonal Kumar has been a part of SAP since 2004. He is one of the few Global Product Managers and has handled inbound and outbound Product Management roles for 15 years.

From an SAP Labs India standpoint, you are part of a pure GTM Product Management team. Could you talk a little more about this team?

We ensure to educate and offer information to customers to use the product efficiently. Our team is also an integral part of customer lifecycle journeys from pre-sales to customer initiation. Simply put, we evangelize our product into the market.

Our focus is to help customers across their journey with SAP Labs India and accentuate their experience at different stages. Along with offering a value proposition of the product, it's equally important to create the necessary awareness. This is the reason our team works with field colleagues to consistently enhance the experience of our customers.

We invest a lot of time in creating the right foundation. Creating valuable connections is vital so our committed members can independently drive their agenda forward.

What can you tell us about the opportunity landscape across APJ? How you see it now and how it could scale in the next few years.

The emergence of Asia not only as an economic powerhouse but also as a tremendous potential hub for agile talent has been amazing in the recent years.

Secondly, we see a tremendous scope for our customers in Asia to become global in nature. Alongside the strong global footprint of our customers, the depth of technology utilization has also increased, leading to market maturity. We can look at APJ from market and industry perspective:

1. Market: Each unit in Asia of course has different cultures and different languages; the way the market operates is also quite different. For example, in Japan, MU Japanese language becomes important. One must be visible there to build trust and more importantly, most sales deals are via partners, hence it becomes quite important to have a partner-first strategy. S. Korea has a huge dominance of large customers, and we need to have meaningful engagement with these customers. SEA has countries or country clusters e.g., Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indochina, etc. bring its own mix of Customers/Partners, Culture, Competition and Colleagues. Understanding these 4Cs helps. Keeping these dimensions in mind while designing products and having this awareness in the go-to market is quite important.
2. Industry: Each industry brings its nuanced domain flavor, unique way of working, etc., and then further detailing in sub-clusters underneath it. Retail is different from shipping is different from PSUs, etc.

Could you walk us through the challenges in diversity that have helped you drive these narratives together and deliver business outcomes?

Challenges in diversity usually come in the form of digital adoption in different countries. The idea of economic maturity can be a challenge for countries to traverse through.

Speaking of challenges in diversity, not all countries go by the concept of digital acceptance. Once we understand the difference in perspectives, we must tailor the GTM plans to different markets and industries.

What comes to your mind when we say customer centricity?

All of us, in some way or another, are customer centric. Do you have the mindset to add value to the customer? Are you offering unique experiences to your customers? These questions clearly define what it means to become customer centric. Customer centricity is not limited to designing a great product, it also emphasizes the impact of customer experiences in their journey with SAP.

Could you highlight the exposure you've garnered as a global product manager?

Initially, one part of my experience as a global product manager was to interact with CPOs and development teams. At the same time, we've run global initiatives to create a customer community for consistent feedback, otherwise called the Enterprise Advisory Board (EAB).

Personally, I was a part of global conferences like TechEd in different countries. If you think about diversity and global presence, interacting with global customers like BMW, Bosch and Indian companies like Mahindra & Mahindra, BPCL, etc. was a great experience.

In a nutshell, as a global product manager, it's important to invest in interactions with developers and outbound sources. All products of SAP must be of a certain standard, and one such standard owned by my team includes operations and support.

What would be your advice for aspiring product managers, considering your journey goes way back to 2008?

To answer this question, I'd like to say that I'm a big fan of first principle thinking, which is to perceive at the foundational level. The results, however, can be derived in due course of time. As a product manager, it's important that product management becomes an influential role built on trust.

Build a rapport with your team members, understand team dynamics, and realize there is a unique way of interacting with every person on your team. Be aware of your competition and sensitive to strategic change, which is a core imperative for your growth as a product manager.

To conclude, always remember that product management is more a people function than a domain function.



Driving Global Product Management Engagement @ SAP Labs India

The transition from siloed to an integrated and diverse product ecosystem

Piyush Gakhar joined SAP Labs India in 2010 and heads the Global Product Management Team for the SAP BTP, Integration Platform. He shares his amazing experience leading product management teams over the years.

Could you talk about your journey at SAP Labs India in leading product management functions, with a global product responsibility for critical product portfolios?

To start with, I would like to thank the leadership for providing me this opportunity and the entire Integration Product Management team for making our integration portfolio successful. Before I joined SAP Labs India, I had a diverse experience in consulting, pre-sales, and business development. I then joined SAP in 2010 and was involved in various roles and responsibilities like product ownership, market success, leading strategy projects, and working across portfolio topics.

It was a great experience packed with learning for me as to how SAP operates at scale in terms of catering to different customers across regions. Along with my experience in consulting and business development, I got an understanding of holistic product development, which helped align everything with a customer-first strategy to SAP's vision. By nature, my experience involved handling multiple applications as it requires collaboration with global stakeholders.

I am glad to have gotten this opportunity and I'm privileged to lead a fantastic product management team with diverse skillsets, focused on product and customer success.

In terms of market focused activities, what are the skills needed to have end-to-end ownership of a diverse portfolio of products?

If you have a go-to attitude backed up with strong determination, then the sky is the limit. We are a globally distributed team with end-to-end product responsibilities. All our team members understand SAP's priorities and vision and how it translates into product strategy and the goals for the team.

We also need to have a comprehensive view of how our business and operating models function across cross-functional teams. One of the most important facets is to build trust and bring all stakeholders together with individual priorities and align them towards a common goal.

With end-to-end product ownership, we must look at various aspects and dimensions to make a product successful, irrespective of the location where you're operating from.

Your team seems to have pivoted to have more global ownership at different levels. Could you talk about how key responsibilities are distributed across such a global team?

Let me first elaborate on how our teams are set up. The first thing is that our teams are flexible, and there is a strong sense of collaboration within the teams and across stakeholders. All our team members are excited and interested in what they do. While distributing the responsibilities, we have ensured that it aligns with individual interests, product goals and skillsets for the best outcome.

Our global teams work out of key strategic locations to make sure our products, customers, partners and stakeholders are successful. We don't aim to divide responsibilities based on regions, but entirely based on individual interests, skillset and product goals to achieve the best results. This is how we operate.

Transitioning from a siloed approach to an integrated product strategy, could you take us through some of the challenges in new-age product management roles?

Yes, there are siloed approaches, whether you are closer to engineering or closer to the market, but sometimes these responsibilities might not yield the right outcome. In my opinion, a product manager should invest in an end-to-end strategy and consider all perspectives.

It is only when you understand your customers that you can bring in the right requirements back into the product. You need to work with several stakeholders to understand their requirements, align team goals with SAP's vision including collaborating with different teams to ensure you're building the right product and user experience.

It is equally important to analyze important trends in the market and engage with diverse ecosystems to scale your product, while making sure you're driving the business and the commercial success of the product. And as product managers, all of us must bring key elements together to achieve a successful outcome.

What would be your one advice for product managers who aspire to have a sense of global ownership? What according to you are the skills and experience gaps at SAP Labs India that need to be filled?

It goes without saying that India has a lot of talent. Product managers should focus on continuous learning and growth. We should invest time in exceeding our areas of expertise, building strong networks, having a successful collaboration with stakeholders, and most importantly, creating relationships built on trust. In addition, we as product managers must have diverse views and consider all dimensions to make the product successful.

Be it customer requirement and experience, the roadmap of the product, alignment of product strategy with the company vision, market view with business success, stakeholder success, or engagement with an external ecosystem to create the necessary awareness, everything matters.

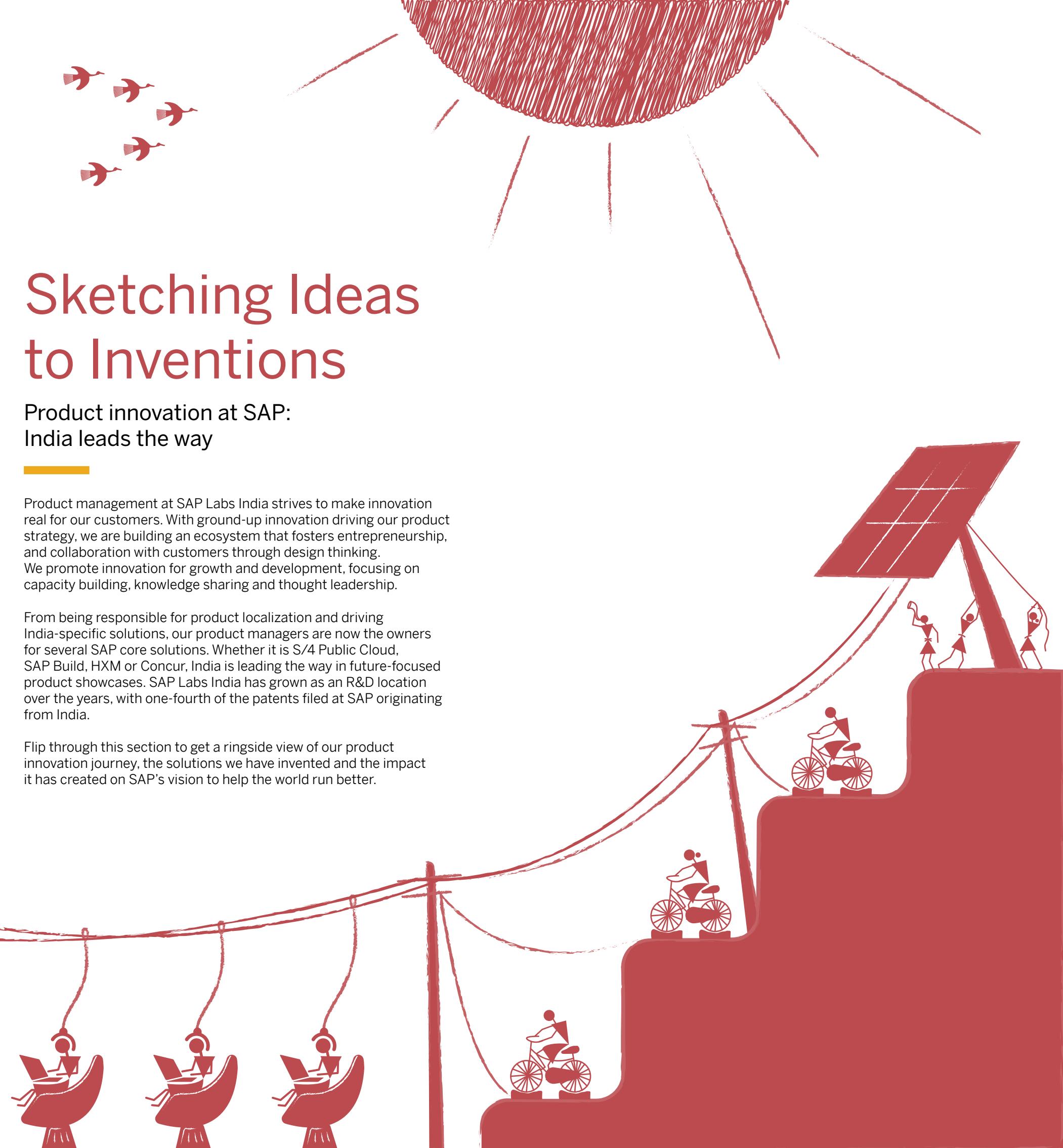
To sum it up, SAP respects diversity and provides many opportunities. If you ask me, it's essential to be patient, keep upskilling yourself and wait for the right opportunity to come.



Piyush Gakhar

Global VP and Head of Product Mgmt & Strategy,
SAP BTP, Integration Platform





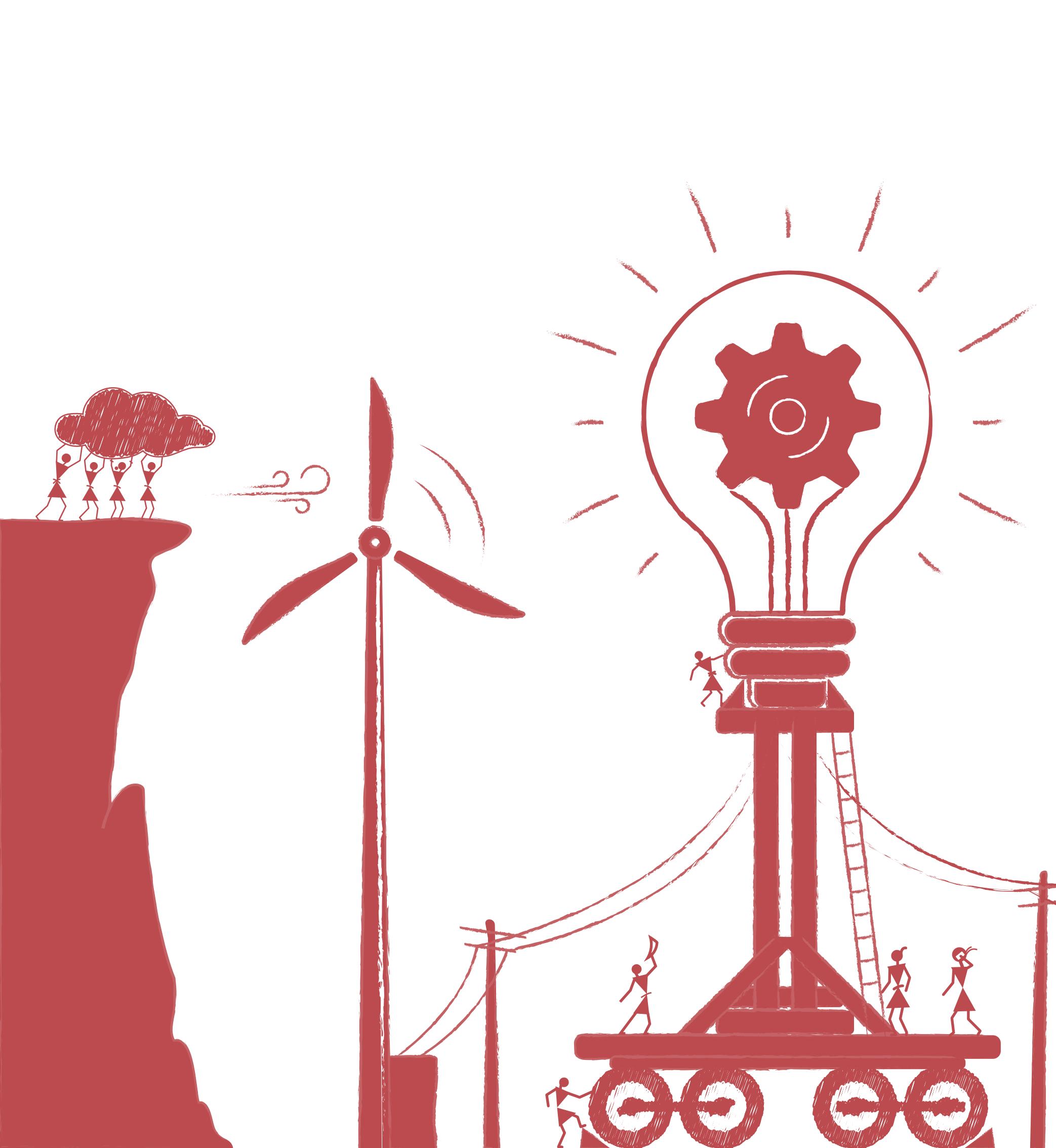
Sketching Ideas to Inventions

Product innovation at SAP: India leads the way

Product management at SAP Labs India strives to make innovation real for our customers. With ground-up innovation driving our product strategy, we are building an ecosystem that fosters entrepreneurship, and collaboration with customers through design thinking. We promote innovation for growth and development, focusing on capacity building, knowledge sharing and thought leadership.

From being responsible for product localization and driving India-specific solutions, our product managers are now the owners for several SAP core solutions. Whether it is S/4 Public Cloud, SAP Build, HXM or Concur, India is leading the way in future-focused product showcases. SAP Labs India has grown as an R&D location over the years, with one-fourth of the patents filed at SAP originating from India.

Flip through this section to get a ringside view of our product innovation journey, the solutions we have invented and the impact it has created on SAP's vision to help the world run better.



PRELUDE

The Changing Face of Product Leadership

Over the years, SAP Labs India has become a crucial hub for product engineering and leadership, with product management teams playing a key role at every stage, from product ownership to cross-collaboration and building traction. We now take a look at some of the significant products that have been developed and their evolution, highlighting the contributions of SAP Labs India and the product managers who are leading this change.

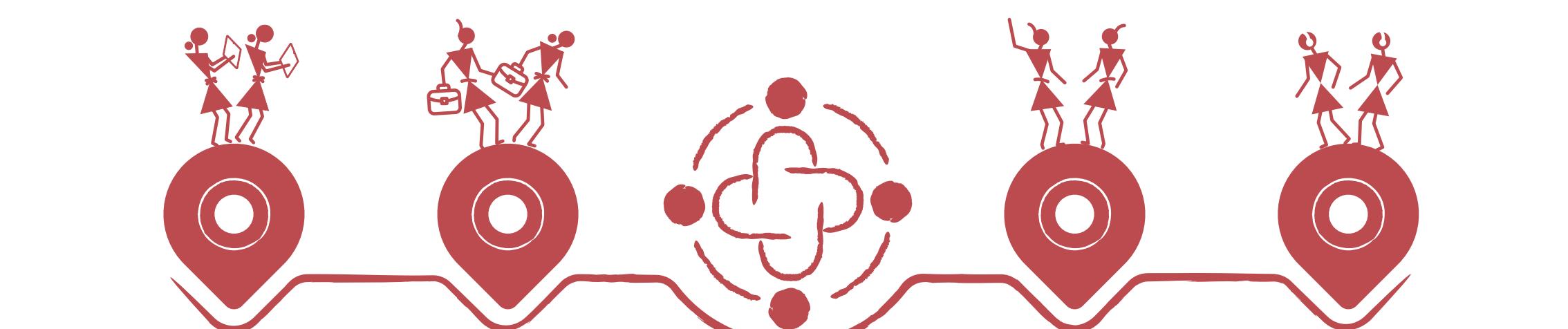
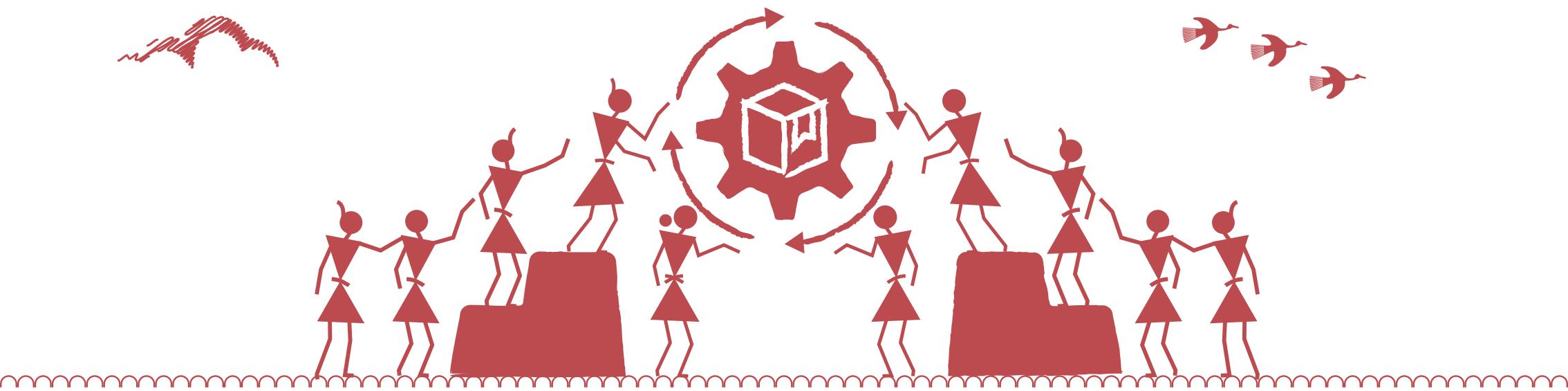
One such innovation is SAP Build Process Automation, a solution aimed at citizen developers, providing them with no-code workflow management and robotic process automation capabilities. The product has evolved to include embedded AI and content factory concepts, with the product managers in India driving its growth in the APJ region.

We are also heavily involved in SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding, a tool that aids new employees in fitting into the organization and its culture through tailored experiences. The onboarding team, mostly based in India, works in close collaboration with engineering teams in Bangalore and strategy managers worldwide to promote adoption across various regions.

Regarding SAP Concur, a travel and expense management solution, SAP Labs India has played a vital role in enhancing the user experience for SAP Concur Invoice. We have collaborated on product definition, implementation, and UX validation, and are now focused on implementing seamless integration with S/4HANA. We are also working on extending localized capabilities like invoice tax handling to countries such as Canada and Germany.

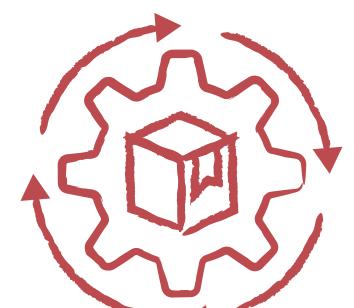
SAP Concur's virtual card for invoice payments is another feature that originated here. It is the first such fintech solution on a digital platform and is a step towards the future of spend management capabilities. The product demonstrates the potential of virtual cards in facilitating payments for suppliers, making the process seamless and efficient.

Lastly, we explore SAP Digital Manufacturing, a cloud-based manufacturing execution solution that connects business systems to shop-floor equipment. SAP Labs India played a pivotal role in the product's conceptualization, and we are presently responsible for critical modules, including Analytics and Resource Orchestration. In fact, the entire orchestration solution was built in India. With teams distributed across China, India, Ukraine, Italy, Germany, the US, and Canada, we have been at the forefront of facilitating seamless collaboration.



PRODUCT LEADERSHIP SHOWCASE

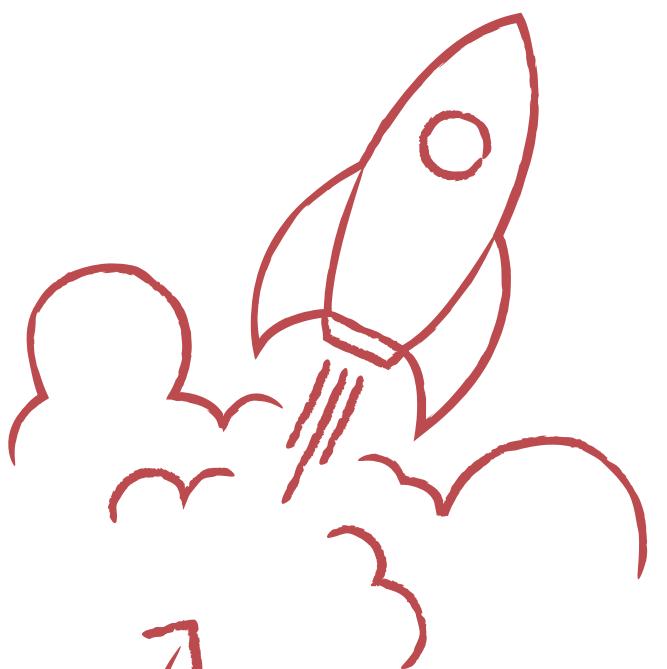
SAP Build Process Automation



Product Ownership

At SAP Labs India, our onus is to inspire a culture built on the foundation of developing products for the smart enterprise.

The product evolution phase involves concepts like embedded AI and content factory led by product managers in India. 50% of the team works out of SAP Labs in India, driving critical product definition topics such as triggers, interoperability with SAP Build services, and SAP connectivity in automation. With the goal to publish 80 new content packages with greater contributions from partners and LoBs, the initiatives are entirely driven from here.



Building Traction

Three product managers working from India are focused on accelerating APJ customer adoptions. There are several initiatives like roadshows, end-to-end customer engagements, and working with CoEs to help product managers increase adoption and get more success stories. This year, the focus is on LoB integration with dedicated product and joint marketing goals for guided experiences in SuccessFactors, and NGProc with S/4HANA.

One of our product managers leads strategic partner engagements and drives the content factory strategy across the globe to increase awareness, improve adoption in Industry 4.0 and Rise with SAP engagements. They also support COIL and other partner teams for Hack2Build and other events.



Cross Collaboration

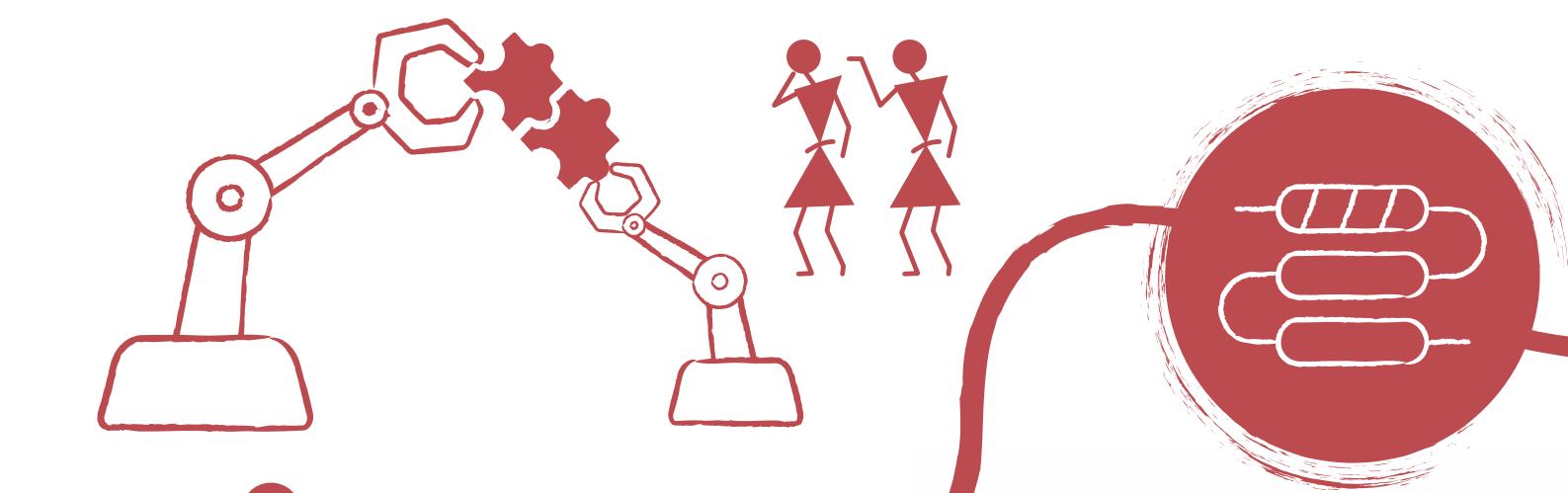
Some of the core themes of SAP Build Process Automation this year involve interoperability and LoB integration. Four product managers from India are strategically involved in product definitions around cross-collaboration topics like interoperability between Integration Suite, Build Apps and Signavio.

40% of the development for LoB integration is driven from SAP Labs India. We have also seen collaboration from two product managers in India for LoB integration topics with SuccessFactors, S/4HANA, Customer Experience, etc. which includes accelerator content packages and marketing activities.



With over 19 years of experience at SAP, Archana currently leads strategic customer/partner engagements and is responsible for pre-built content factory in SAP Build Process Automation. She has conducted numerous workshops, produced webinars and podcasts, and has been a regular speaker at multiple international conferences.

Archana Shukla
Director, Product Management



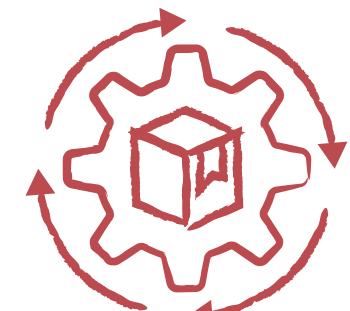
Vijay transitioned to product management during his early days of Intelligent RPA and has worked in the erstwhile NVT board area. He has been with SAP Labs India for over 17 years now, and currently heads the Product Evolution team for SAP Build Process Automation.

Vijay G
Director of Product Management,
SAP Build Process Automation



PRODUCT LEADERSHIP SHOWCASE

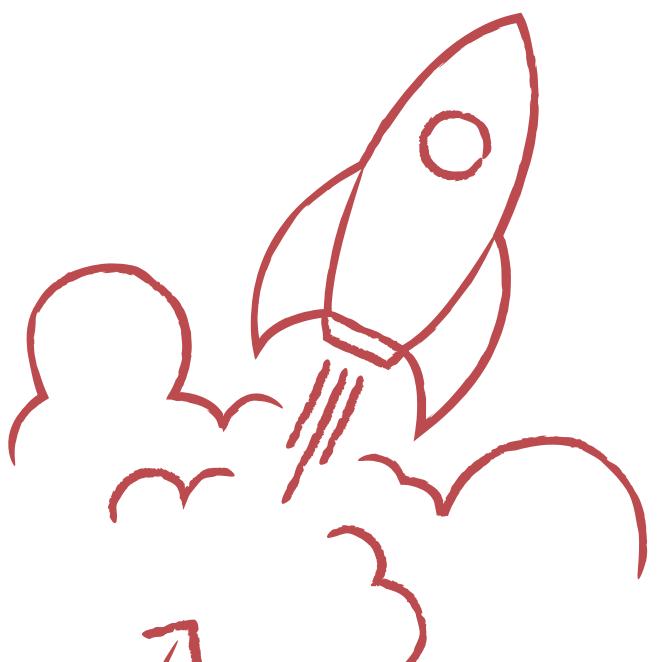
SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding



Product Ownership

The solution helps integrate a new hire into the organization. It is designed to leverage the capabilities of the SuccessFactors Platform and is fully integrated with Employee Central.

The onboarding PM team is primarily in India, with product strategy managers in the US and Germany. Most of the engineering team being co-located in Bangalore has helped in close collaboration. We frequently heard customers asking for custom notification email capabilities. We showcased a prototype at the SuccessFactors HackOverflow 2022 that was widely appreciated, and we incorporated this into the product across 2 releases. We also built a compliance forms framework with a simplified UI. Currently, the team supports 100+ compliance forms for 5 countries.



Cross Collaboration

The onboarding team took the lead in getting the functional scenarios and use cases documented, and laid the foundation for getting alignment among the SuccessFactors modules. We could achieve this seamless user experience for new hires by jointly leveraging cross product integration, suite qualities, technology and security guidelines.

Onboarding leverages the SuccessFactors Home Page extensively and hence when the SF Home Page was reimagined as part of the UXR initiative, it was an opportunity to elevate the new hire experience. We have collaborated closely with the platform and web experience teams across Germany, China and the US to ensure successful adoption among our customers. In order to provide a holistic product suite rather than a broken experience, the onboarding PM team collaborated with other module teams to integrate with WorkZone and Qualtrics.

Building Traction

The top voted ideas on the influence portal have been delivered. This along with many direct customer engagements has been increasing adoption of Onboarding across geographies. The focus on USA and Canada compliance is a competitive advantage driving adoption.

The onboarding product team strives to understand core customer problems. We conducted a Design Advisor Program for Offboarding, with more than 20 customers and 5 partners. Product managers ensure that partners are aligned with the roadmap and vision. The enthusiasm of the engineering team has enabled translating multiple challenges into innovative solutions. We (Product and Engineering) closely collaborate with other teams, such that it feels like one team. The combined efforts are resulting in increased adoption that is accelerating with each release.



Jayananda's product management journey began as a developer in SAP CRM when his idea was showcased at SAP TechEd DemoJam. He became more interested and switched to a Product Owner role in TIP Core Software Logistics. In 2014, he joined the SuccessFactors Learning Product Management team and later moved to SuccessFactors Onboarding Product Management.

Jayananda A Kotri
Sr. Director, Product Management,
SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding



Drawn to product-related aspects, Smita transitioned from being a technical product owner to a product manager. She became a part of the SAP SuccessFactors team in 2010 and later moved to SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding, where she has worked on onboarding features, integrations and security topics.



Smita Jalit
Sr. Product Manager,
Functional Product Expert,
SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding



Satyabrata started his career as a developer at SAP TIP but was always interested in the business side of software. Product management was a logical next step as he could work at the intersection of business and technology. Since 2019, he has worked on almost all areas of SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding.

Satyabrata Chayani
Product Manager,
SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding

Fascinated by the conceptualization of ideas, Naveen traversed various roles in engineering and MBA before joining SAP SuccessFactors in 2019 in Employee Central, and later moved to Onboarding. He has been involved in ideating and launching features from scratch, driving custom adoption for the new product.



Naveen Venkatesh
Sr. Product Manager,
SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding

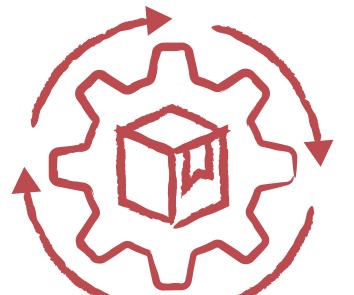


Sunitha's foray into product management began as the primary contact for Singapore Payroll and later other SEA countries payroll. With a keen interest in the HXM solution, she switched to PO role for EE Master Data Integration between SAP on-prem system and SFSF Employee Central Cloud system tool, before moving to SuccessFactors Onboarding in 2020.

Sunitha R
Product/Dev Expert,
SAP Globalization Onboarding

PRODUCT LEADERSHIP SHOWCASE

SAP Concur: Invoice UX Evolution



Product Ownership

At SAP Labs India, a key focus is on enhancing the user experience of our products. This is particularly important for our invoice solution, where we are dedicated to improving efficiency and elevating the overall experience for customers.

Our team of 30 engineers, 1 product manager, 1 UX specialist, and 2 architects based in India collaborate on product definition, implementation, and UX validation as part of this transformation journey.



Building Traction

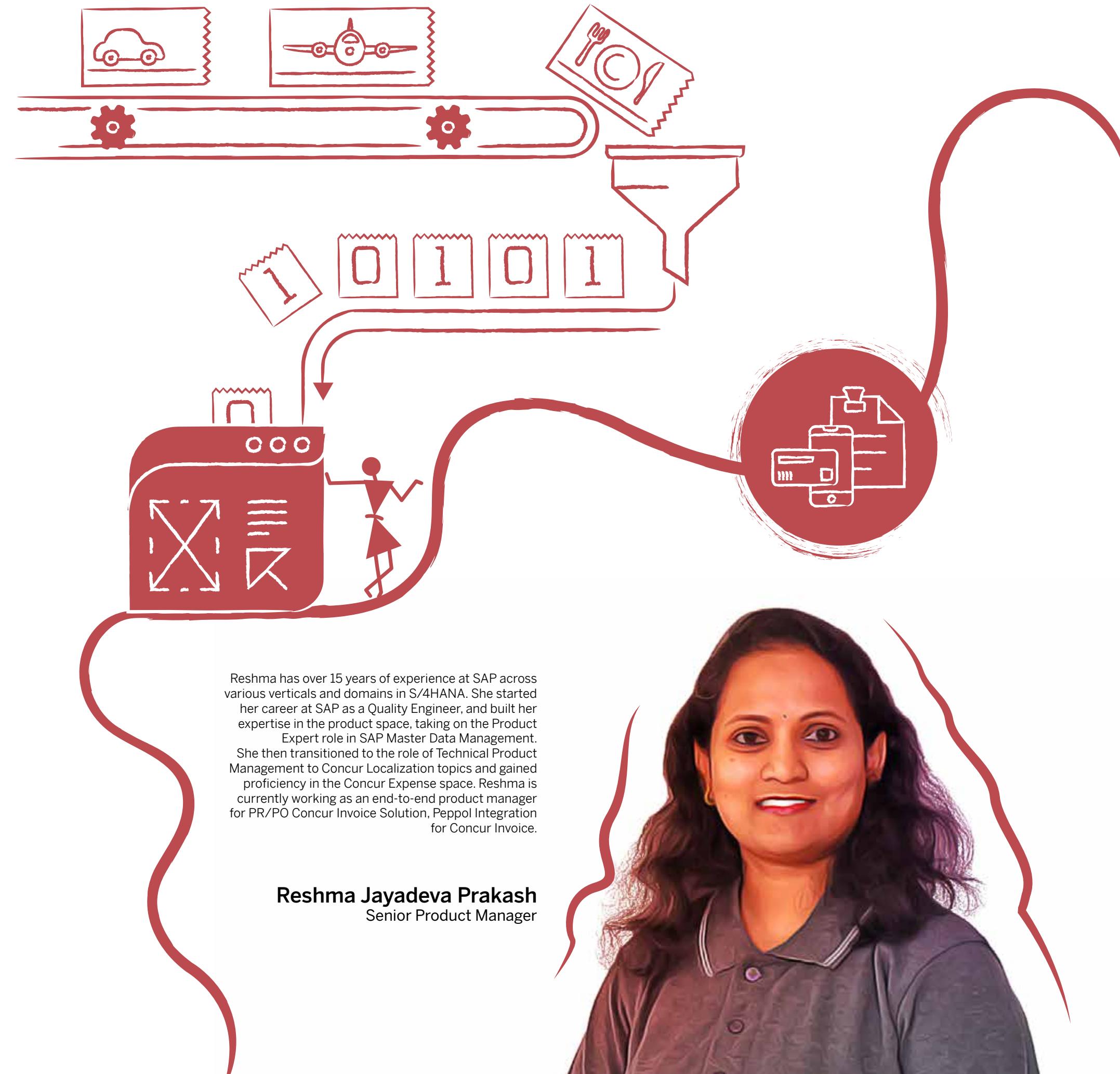
We plan to release the Early Adopter version in Q2 2023, and we are currently leveraging our Indian customer base to validate the UX being built. We are also conducting user research for the next planned topics – PR/PO within the same umbrella. Our total revenue under management is \$109M, and we have 6,600 customers worldwide. Our plan is to double the revenue by providing seamless integration of Concur Invoice with S/4HANA, expanding the market to other countries.

Thanks to our partner collaboration, we were able to understand GST handling for the Indian market to manage expenses incurred and invoices paid to vendors. We are now using these learnings to extend the invoice tax handling capabilities to Canada, Germany, and other countries.



Cross Collaboration

We are working together successfully as one team to deliver the Invoice UX Evolution Phase 1. In 2019, we completed Phase 0, which focused on the Invoice Manager persona and transforming the Invoice Overview Dashboard into a Next Generation UI. Collaborating with our colleagues in the US development team, along with the marketing, solution, and support teams, we are on track to deliver the product successfully in Q3 2023.



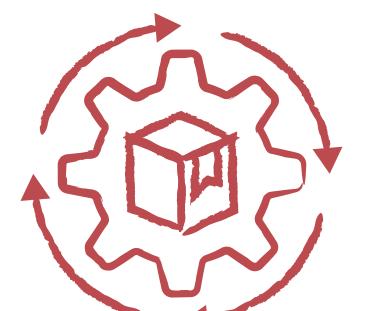
Reshma Jayadeva Prakash
Senior Product Manager



Reshma has over 15 years of experience at SAP across various verticals and domains in S/4HANA. She started her career at SAP as a Quality Engineer, and built her expertise in the product space, taking on the Product Expert role in SAP Master Data Management. She then transitioned to the role of Technical Product Management to Concur Localization topics and gained proficiency in the Concur Expense space. Reshma is currently working as an end-to-end product manager for PR/PO Concur Invoice Solution, Peppol Integration for Concur Invoice.

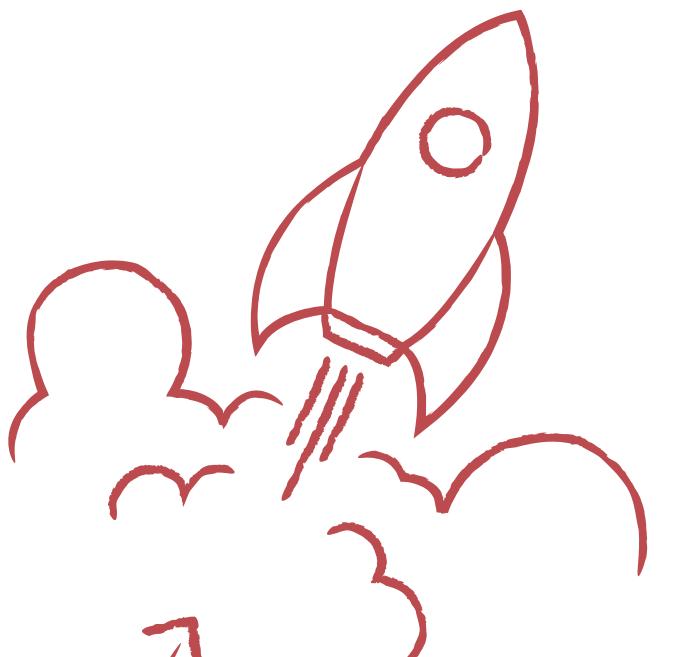
PRODUCT LEADERSHIP SHOWCASE

SAP Concur: Virtual Card for Invoice Payments



Product Ownership

First fintech solution on a digital platform that is engineered out of SAP Labs India as a step towards the future of Spend Management capabilities to inspire businesses with Next Gen payment gateways. To facilitate this, a team of 20 engineers including a project manager and architect from India were chosen. This innovation in the fintech payment space has the potential to transform financial transactions, showcasing the power of virtual cards in payment facilitation for streamlined transactions and enhanced security.



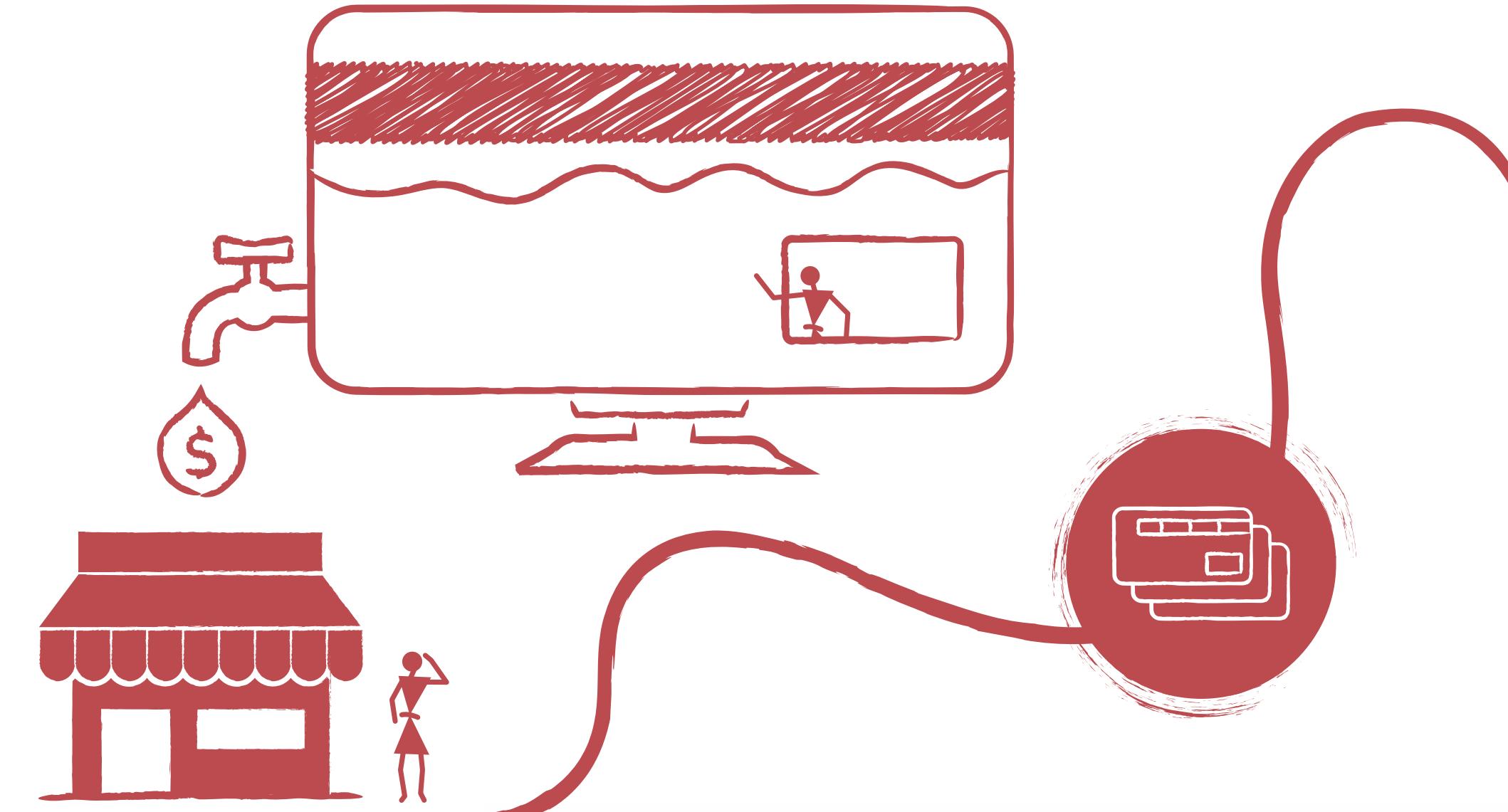
Building Traction

Overall plan was to deliver end-to-end solutions to match the demand for provisioning virtual cards for seamless supplier payments. Early validation of solutions was done by leveraging the Indian ecosystem (customers and partners). These solutions covered the diverse needs of both SMB and enterprise customers. Also, adoption of Concur products is expected to increase significantly. This is also an opportunity to enhance customer experience. The next step is to leverage ecosystems to deliver innovations covering virtual card payments for employees.



Cross Collaboration

The development started in 2022 and was launched in Concur Fusion in February 2023 by collaborating with global teams. Also, worked in close collaboration with Pay Partner Extend (Embedded Partner) to enable and co-create Virtual Card payment solutions. Not to forget, executing to deliver quality products by working closely with ISBN stakeholders in alignment with the SAP strategy.



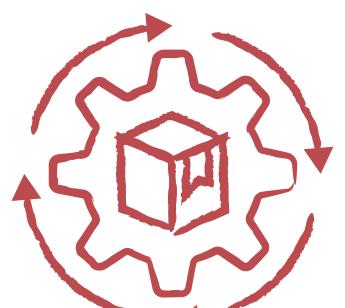
With an overall industry experience of 17 years, Shiva Kumar has spent 15 years of his career at SAP and has worked with consulting, product management, and product success organizations within SAP. As a procurement expert supporting global customers, Shiva was previously the global lead for two-tier (Hybrid ERP) with the S/4HANA cloud program.

Shiva Kumar H S
Senior Product Manager



PRODUCT LEADERSHIP SHOWCASE

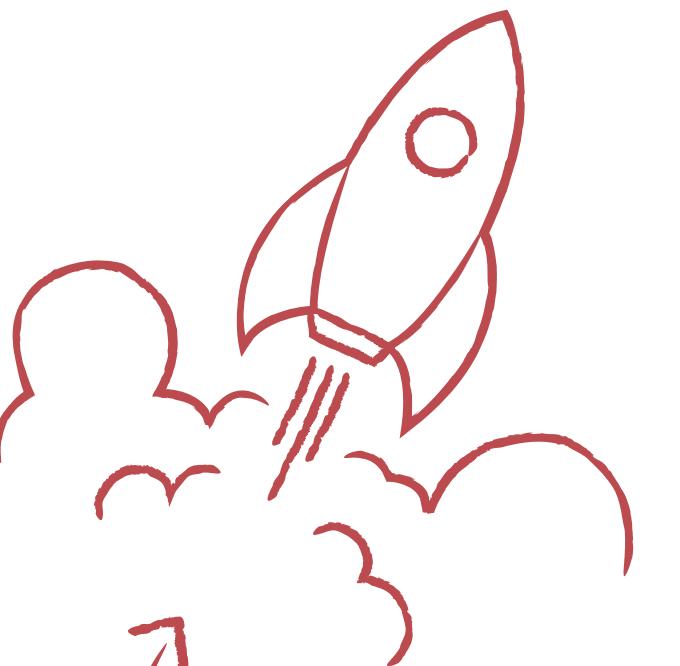
SAP Digital Manufacturing: Analytics



Product Ownership

Inspiring a culture of innovation and collaboration is a testament to our vast customer and partner base, who are equally committed to leading with change. SAP Labs India's role during the conceptualization of the product began right from inception. Several key modules of Digital Manufacturing (DM) are owned primarily out of India, from Analytics and Resource Orchestration to Production Execution. With over 20 experts involving architects, developers, product owners, and program managers, the focus was on delivering a cloud-native and highly scalable architecture based on multiple global customer feedback cycles.

In terms of product innovation, all of the analytics core solutions were designed in India along with strong collaboration not only with global DM product management, but also with SAC production management and engineering teams.



Cross Collaboration

With a global team spread across China, India, Ukraine, Italy, Germany, USA and Canada, the emphasis is on seamless collaboration in a dynamic environment, prioritizing well-designed concepts, architecture and program management. The team from India has been instrumental in shaping the structure that ensures smooth execution at scale across different time zones. The mantra has always been to empower teams with complete ownership of their individual components, supported by a full-stack development culture.



Building Traction

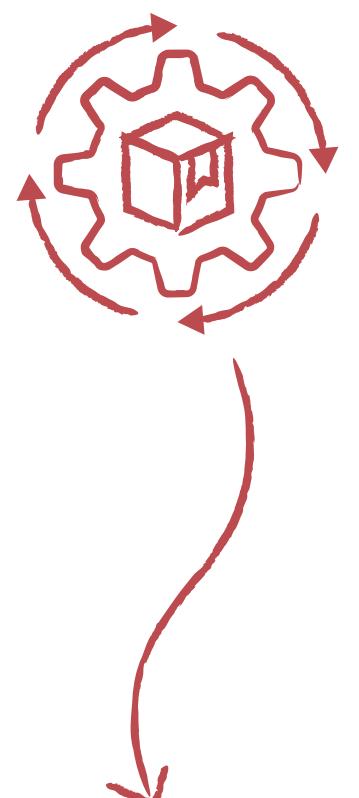
We have played an integral part in supporting customers across the globe, along with the Global Customer Advocacy team, resulting in more customer references. Hosting dedicated partner events with more than 70-80 participants from over 40 partners in the ecosystem has enabled co-innovation circles supported by training/enablement, and preparation for sales and implementation cycles.



Sumanta Chakraborty
Chief Product Expert

PRODUCT LEADERSHIP SHOWCASE

SAP Digital Manufacturing: Resource Orchestration



Product Ownership

Innovation and customer focus are at the heart of our solutions. With SAP Labs India taking a leadership role from inception, several key modules of DM such as Analytics, Resource Orchestration, and Production Execution, are driven from India. Over 10 experts comprising architects, developers, and product owners worked on delivering the first hybrid cloud solution.

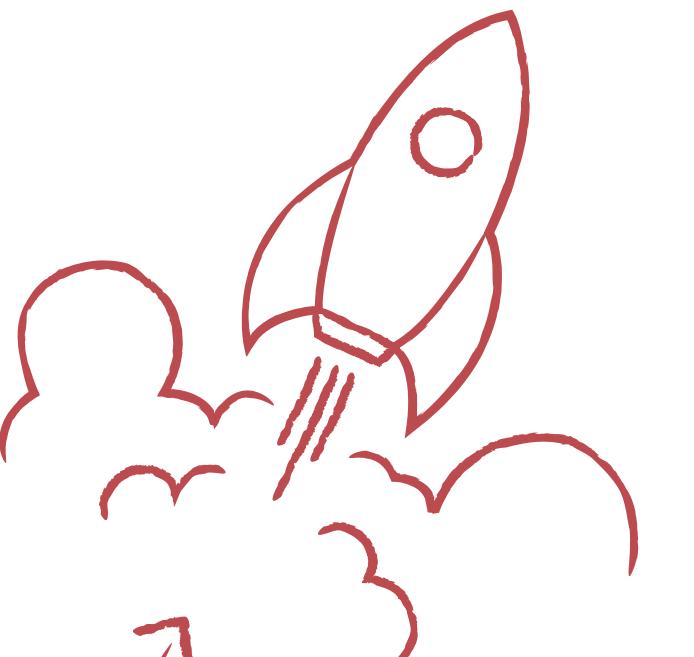
The entire resource orchestration module has been built in India, where we closely collaborated with ME on-premise customers as well as early adopter cloud customers to build a comprehensive solution that covers shift planning, order schedule planning and asset status tracking.



Cross Collaboration

The team is distributed across China, India, Ukraine, Italy, Germany, USA, and Canada. To foster collaboration in such a dynamic environment, we have clearly defined concepts, architecture and program management.

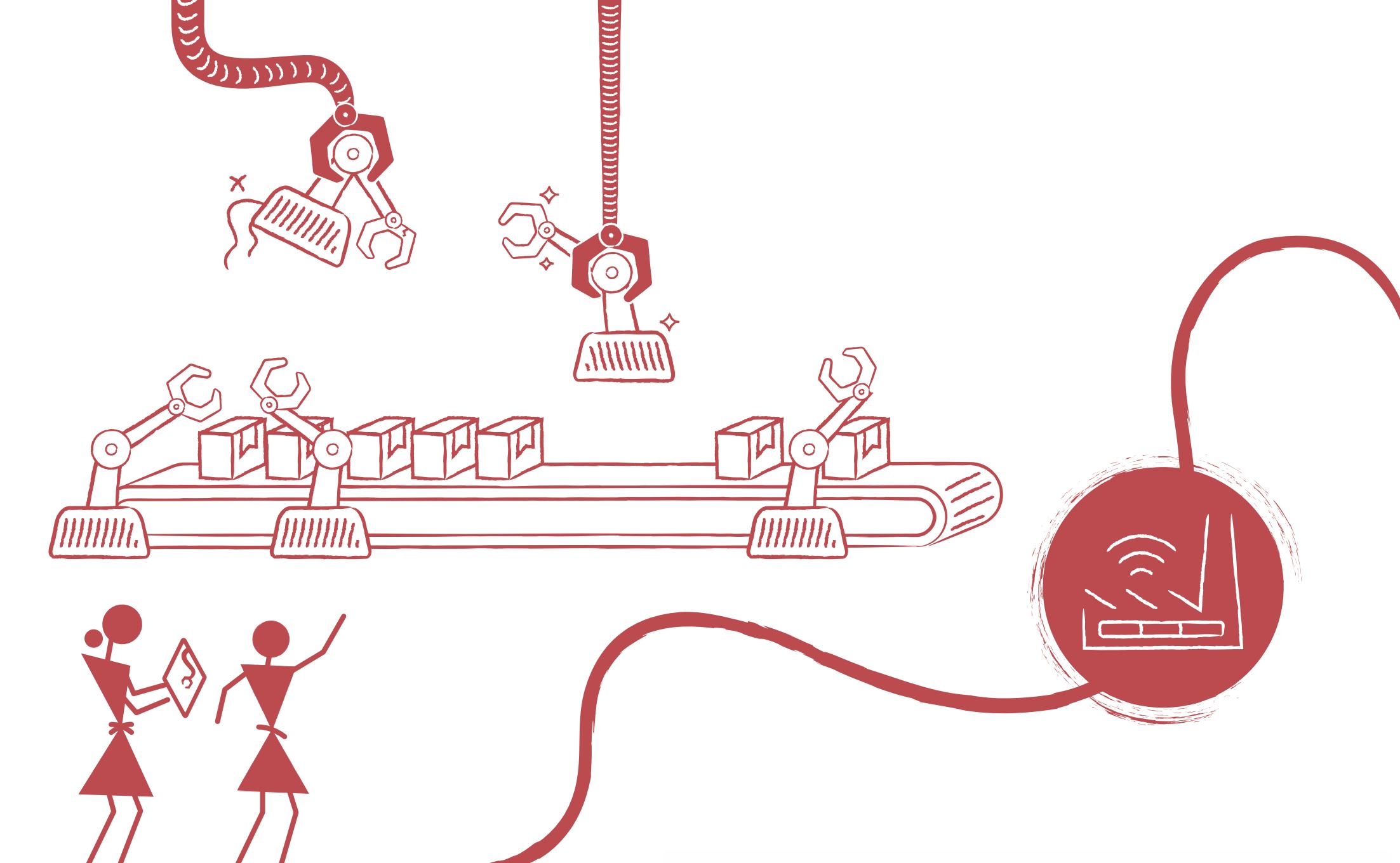
The India team has been at the forefront of designing a framework that facilitates seamless implementation on a large scale despite varying time zones. Our guiding principle has been to promote "empowered teams" who are given full responsibility for their specific components, bolstered by a comprehensive full-stack development ethos.



Building Traction

To enhance our customer engagement on a global scale, we have expanded our team's capabilities to facilitate collaboration with customers worldwide. Through early adopter and customer co-innovation circles, we have gathered valuable feedback and identified innovative use cases to shape our solutions.

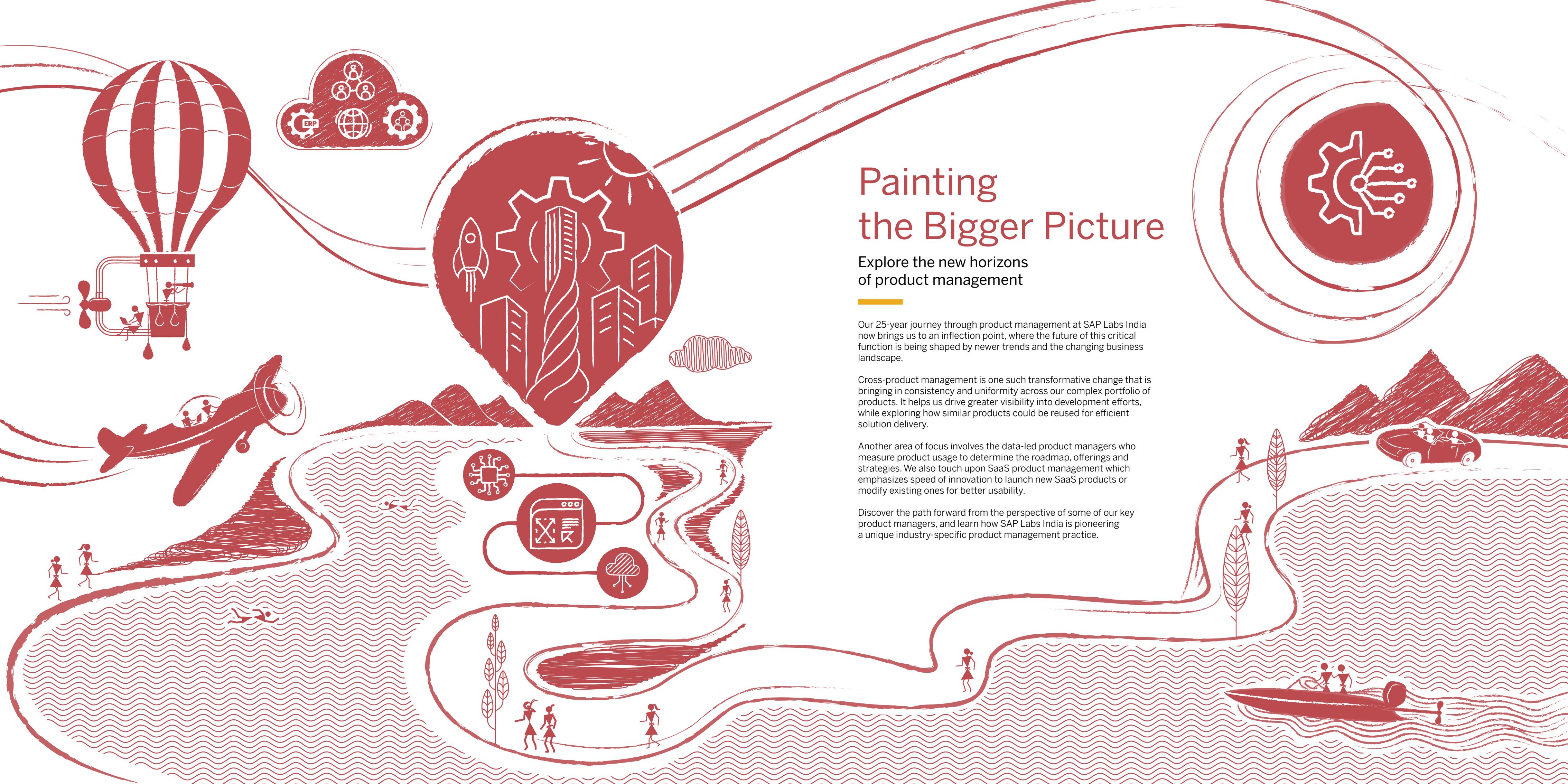
As part of our commitment to partners, we organize exclusive annual events, which attract over 70-80 participants from more than 40 partners in our ecosystem. Partners are encouraged to participate in co-innovation circles, receive support in training and enablement, and assistance in preparing for sales and implementation cycles.



Sathish Karthik Ramu
Chief Product Expert



Sathish has been working with SAP across global locations for over a decade. He has played the role of solution manager and handled large SCM accounts. Having been part of the Executive Board Office, he acted as a product expert during several acquisitions. In Digital Manufacturing, Sathish has managed advanced shop floor planning solutions on the cloud, creating new market opportunities around 4.0 Manufacturing areas.



Painting the Bigger Picture

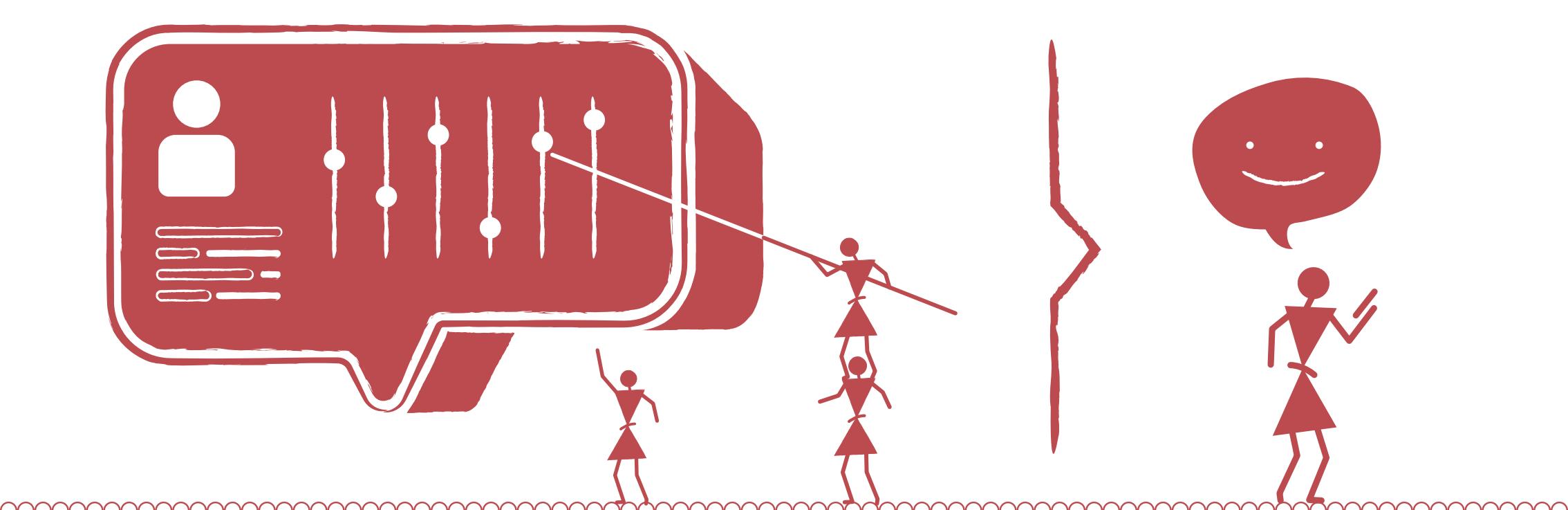
Explore the new horizons
of product management

Our 25-year journey through product management at SAP Labs India now brings us to an inflection point, where the future of this critical function is being shaped by newer trends and the changing business landscape.

Cross-product management is one such transformative change that is bringing in consistency and uniformity across our complex portfolio of products. It helps us drive greater visibility into development efforts, while exploring how similar products could be reused for efficient solution delivery.

Another area of focus involves the data-led product managers who measure product usage to determine the roadmap, offerings and strategies. We also touch upon SaaS product management which emphasizes speed of innovation to launch new SaaS products or modify existing ones for better usability.

Discover the path forward from the perspective of some of our key product managers, and learn how SAP Labs India is pioneering a unique industry-specific product management practice.



PRELUDE

Product Management: Next Frontiers

SAP's strategy is to become the #1 Cloud ERP company in the world. To achieve this, product managers had to adopt a new approach to delivering applications at scale. With cloud-based products, updates and improvements can be rolled out much more quickly than with traditional software, requiring agile decision-making and faster execution. There is also an increased focus on user experience, meaning that product managers must understand user requirements, and design products that are intuitive and easy to use.

Product managers also need to develop a cloud mindset and support the customer's end-to-end journey, from awareness to adoption, to improve customer retention. Cloud software products have made product management a more dynamic and data-driven field, requiring product managers to be more responsive to the needs of their customers.

Cloud applications generate a wealth of data, from tracking usage of the product to consumption patterns to user behavior. This brings a tremendous opportunity for product managers to be data-driven in their decision-making. They need to be able to analyze this data and make informed decisions about what features to prioritize, refine their user personas and plan continuous improvements to the user experience. This data also enables customization of the value proposition for individual customers and facilitates more effective product rollouts.

Cloud software applications have also made it increasingly important for product managers to be well-connected to their ecosystem partners and to collaborate effectively with complex internal teams. As cloud products often rely on integrations with other services and infrastructure platforms, product managers must navigate complex partnerships and negotiate agreements that are mutually beneficial to all parties.

This includes business partners, implementation partners, regulatory bodies, customer groups, and many more. SAP thrives on a strong ecosystem that has fuelled our success over the past many decades. We now have several innovations co-developed with partners and many white spaces in the industry cloud exclusively developed by partners. This means product managers at SAP need to work together in delivering end-to-end solutions to our joint customers.

With the increasing complexity of cloud software products at SAP, there is a growing need for cross product managers (sometimes also called as portfolio product managers in the industry) who can ensure consistency and management of multiple products within a larger portfolio. These PMs need to have a broader understanding of the end-to-end value proposition of their products and how they fit into the overall SAP strategy. They must collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams and negotiate partnerships with various stakeholders from different individual products, sales, marketing, and customer success teams. By taking a holistic approach to product management, cross product managers can ensure that their products work together to deliver a seamless and valuable experience for our customers.





Srinivasa Raghavachar

Senior Director – Automotive Product Management,
CX and Industries

SaaS Product Management

Driving cloud product management
for the smart enterprise

Srinivasa Raghavachar is an experienced product leader with a proven track record of delivering B2B SaaS products that customers love. In his current role as Senior Director of Product Management, Srini heads the Automotive Industry Cloud Product Management team globally at SAP.

Could you talk about your journey as a product manager over the years, or give us a sneak peek into what you're managing right now?

My journey at SAP Labs India has been absolutely amazing! I started my career at SAP in 2004 as a Developer, and held various roles, including Development Lead, Project Manager, and Product Owner. My stint as Product Manager started with the role of being the Global Product Manager for SAP Enterprise Learning in 2010. In 2021, I took on the Global Product Leadership responsibility for Automotive Industry Cloud and drove the vision for the Industry Cloud platform. My team is based out of Bangalore and Germany with a mandate to drive product management for the Automotive Industry Cloud platform. Our team has successfully delivered 7 new products, which has enabled our customers to embrace new models such as digital sales and EV business.

What are some of the key aspects of Product Management in the Cloud?

Highly relevant question. We are continuously striving to improve in this area. Having a cloud mindset is the most important factor – cloud opens up possibilities to deliver value through connected, cloud products and we need to come out of on-premise mindset that can hold us back. The role of the product manager is expanded greatly in cloud being responsible for business outcome. As a product manager, we need to ensure that cloud products support the full customer journey including:

- Awareness: creating awareness of the product by creating necessary assets
- Activation: activation of the acquired customer
- Retention: retaining customers
- Revenue: driving revenue through active usage as customer pays exactly for what they use
- Referral: referrals from customers leading to viral usage

Speaking of customer centricity, could you shed some light on how your team is fulfilling customer expectations and feedback?

As we all know, cloud accelerates continuous discovery, experimentation and learning. From waiting for customers to install, implement and using "hearsay" feedback on-premise, cloud allows us to learn from customer usage & behavior. We have adopted rapid deployment cycles for faster experimentation and integrated built-in product analytics for unique insights into product usage. We also use cloud reporting to understand customer adoption and live customer details. Our cloud products generate a substantial amount of data. We capture them and apply AI to automate and make the product smarter to fulfill customer demands.

We use customer feedback programs such as Customer Engagement Initiative, User Group Engagement, and Industry Advisory Council extensively to incorporate customer feedback. User Experience is critical for cloud products, and we place great significance on this. We use "Product Satisfaction" score which is derived from Qualtrics Product Experience Questionnaire and SUS score (System Usability Scale) to measure the perceived usability and improve continuously.

What methods are your teams using to engage partners in building a partner ecosystem around the Industry Cloud?

Partners play a vital role in Industry cloud ecosystem delivering complimentary solutions. We build our product as a platform to ensure that it can be successfully adopted by partners and customers. For example, SAP Industry Process Framework from Automotive Industry Cloud portfolio provides a holistic orchestration platform for partners to build products on top. We have conducted several initiatives to enable the partner ecosystem. For example, we launched a program called SPRINT last year for Automotive Industry Cloud where we

provided the development environment and expert support for the partners to build the complimentary products. The short-listed ideas from this initiative are being supported by our product experts to ensure that they are launched successfully enriching the Automotive Industry Cloud portfolio.

Could you throw some light on your journey in terms of building Industry Consortiums, and how is your team plugged into the entire narrative?

Industry consortiums provide us with the great opportunity to understand business & technology trends and be a trusted partner to our customers. We use traditional channels like DSAG user group and events like Hannover Messe 2023 to collaborate with our customers and partners. But cloud enables products to be built for the network and ecosystem. This is where we are investing significantly to collaborate with our ecosystem to deliver next generation industry cloud use cases.

We have built the SAP's Industry Network for Automotive which is called Catena-X based on web 3 principles to realize the concrete use cases for data exchange and interoperability. We have founded the joint venture Cofinity-X based on Catena-X with nine key players in the Automotive industry (BASF, BMW Group, Henkel, Mercedes-Benz, Schaeffler, Siemens, T-Systems, Volkswagen and ZF). Cofinity-X aims to operate an open marketplace for applications that provides products and services to enable the efficient and secure exchange of data between all participants in the ecosystem. This allows us to continuously learn from live operational network and create viral products. We are working on creating a similar network for APJ this year.

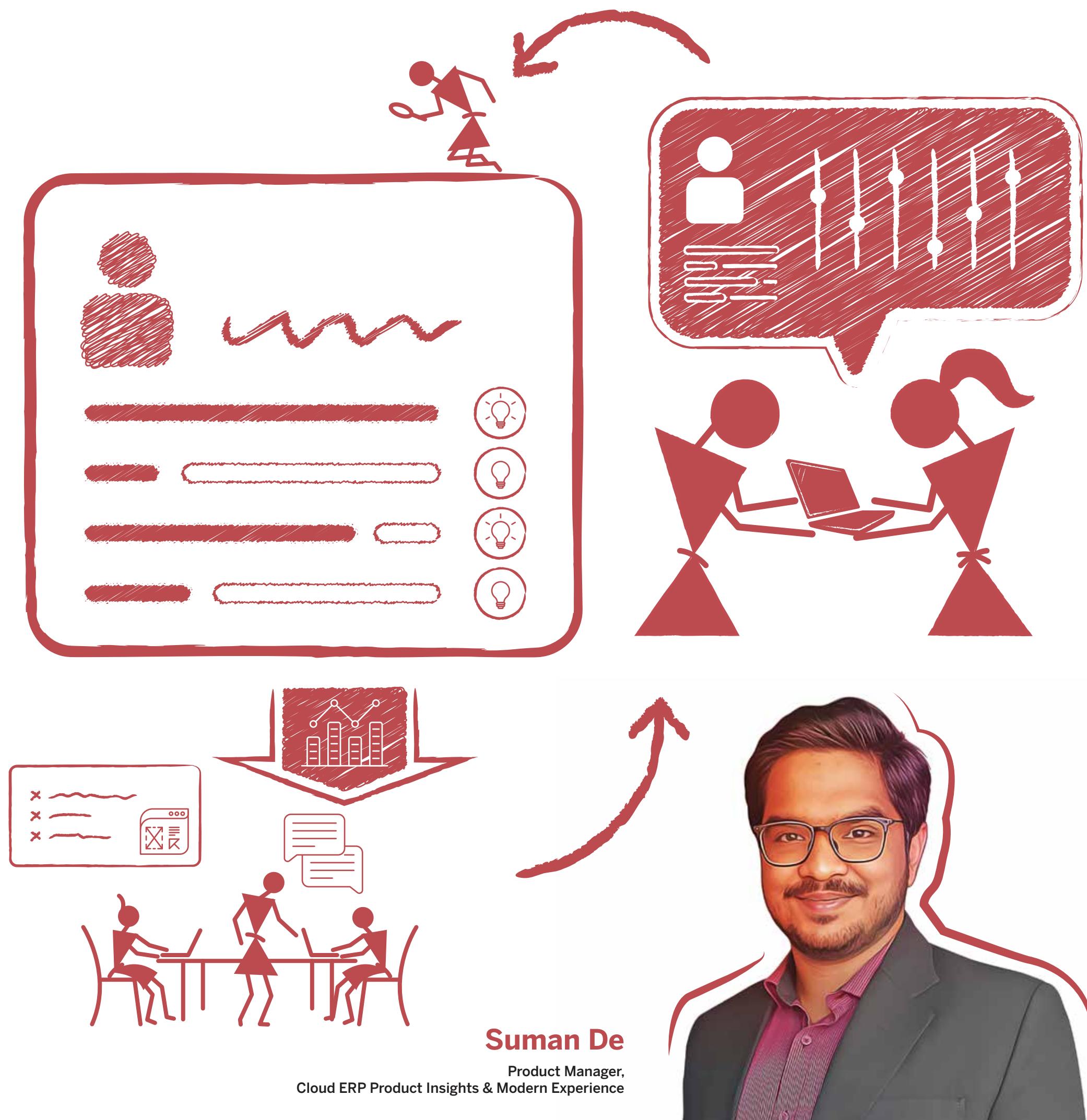
As a senior product leader at SAP Labs India, how do you see product management roles evolving, and what do you think are the core skillsets for aspiring product managers?

The role of product managers is continuously evolving. Some trends that I see are:

1. Cloud products are a subscription business which means that product managers are responsible for the entire customer journey from acquisition to referral. Product managers need to be business owners in cloud responsible for customer success as opposed to predominantly focusing on delivery in the case of on-premise products.
2. Cloud products allow numerous possibilities to build and integrate with other products. Product managers in cloud need to build a business platform that allows viral adoption by Partners and Customers not siloed products.
3. Everything is a network in Cloud. Product managers need to build network and ecosystem aware products.
4. Collaborative approach to product management: As cloud products become more complex and require more specialized knowledge, product managers will need to work closely with cross-functional teams to deliver successful products.

Some of the core skillsets that are needed for product managers are:

1. Cloud Mindset: PMs are responsible for entire customer journey and need to have cloud mindset to build successful products and platforms.
2. Business acumen: Cloud product managers need to have a strong grasp of the market and the business landscape in which their products operate. PMs need to be able to identify market trends, analyze customer needs, and develop product strategies that align with customer's business goals.
3. Technical expertise: A deep understanding of cloud computing technologies and services is essential for product managers working in cloud product management.
4. Data analysis: Cloud products generate vast amounts of data, and product managers need to have the skills to analyze this data to identify trends and insights.
5. Customer focus: This is evergreen. Cloud product managers need to be deeply focused on their customers' needs and preferences. PMs need to be able to develop end-user personas, analyze customer feedback, and use this information to drive product development and continuous improvement.



Creating the Right Balance with Data-Driven Workflows

Putting usage insights front and center for PM excellence

Suman has been a part of SAP since 2015 and is a Product Manager for Cloud ERP Product Insights & Modern Experience team. He was part of the Aspiring Product Management curriculum of the Product Management Forum, which enabled him to learn in-depth about SAP solution areas as well as nuances of Product Management. In his current role, Suman's team is responsible for empowering SAP to execute along the Cloud ERP public cloud strategy by providing actionable product insights and experience.

From developer to product manager, could you share a little bit about your experience working for SAP Labs India?

I was a developer for about 7 years, and there was a transition period where I wanted to understand how to create value for our customers and the scope of our products from the customer's perspective. Thanks to aspiring product managers, I got the exposure I needed in product management, understood key SAP solution areas, and was intrigued by several facets of product management.

Last year, I got the opportunity to be a part of the Cloud ERP Product Insights & Experience team. We are an inbound cross-product management team, taking care of product usage and adoption through data and analytics based on application implementation. So, it's all about how customers are using our product features and functionalities for their business processes.

We provide governance, communities, tools and other central services to drive use-case specific product insights and experience based on our cross-functional stakeholders needs following the Cloud ERP – public cloud strategy. Also, we leverage this expertise to drive requirements for the collection and analysis of product insights and experiences.

We also take care of the experience part along with the operational scope of our products. When I say experience, it's all about improving the way our end-users feel about our applications. At the same time, we roll out surveys and feedback channels to better understand our customers in terms of challenges, performance and operational workflows.

The basis of both these aspects – experience and operational is governed by analytics. Using solutions such as Cloud Reporting, we generate insights for product management and better decision-making to steer our products towards success.

As a practitioner, how do you foresee data-driven product management and its scope for better product decisions?

From a practitioner standpoint, deciding on a product roadmap or feature prioritization becomes challenging. However, when we bring data into the picture, we understand how our customers use the features and functionalities offered to them.

Let's take the classic example of Microsoft Excel. There is a vast customer base of people who use the basic features of Excel. But there are only a few people who are aware of the statistical and analytical prowess of the tool. In this case, Microsoft can focus on the features that are used by a larger number of users, not forgetting the niche market of users who use the statistical part of the tool. This reminds me

of the 80/20 Pareto's Principle. That is, 80% of the users are from 20% of the customer base. Now, if we focus on 20% of our customers and their industries, we can get to 80% of active users. Therefore, using such insights can help you focus on customers and devise a product roadmap for the future.

How do you create the right balance between data and driving qualitative feedback in the data-driven product management space?

Product managers can balance the use of data with other factors by taking a holistic approach to product management, considering data alongside user feedback, intuition, and other contextual factors such as market trends and competitive landscape. By using a combination of data and other inputs, product managers can make more informed and well-rounded decisions.

It is essential for a product manager to understand the usage of an application. Therefore, it's important for us and application owners to come together and strike the right balance.

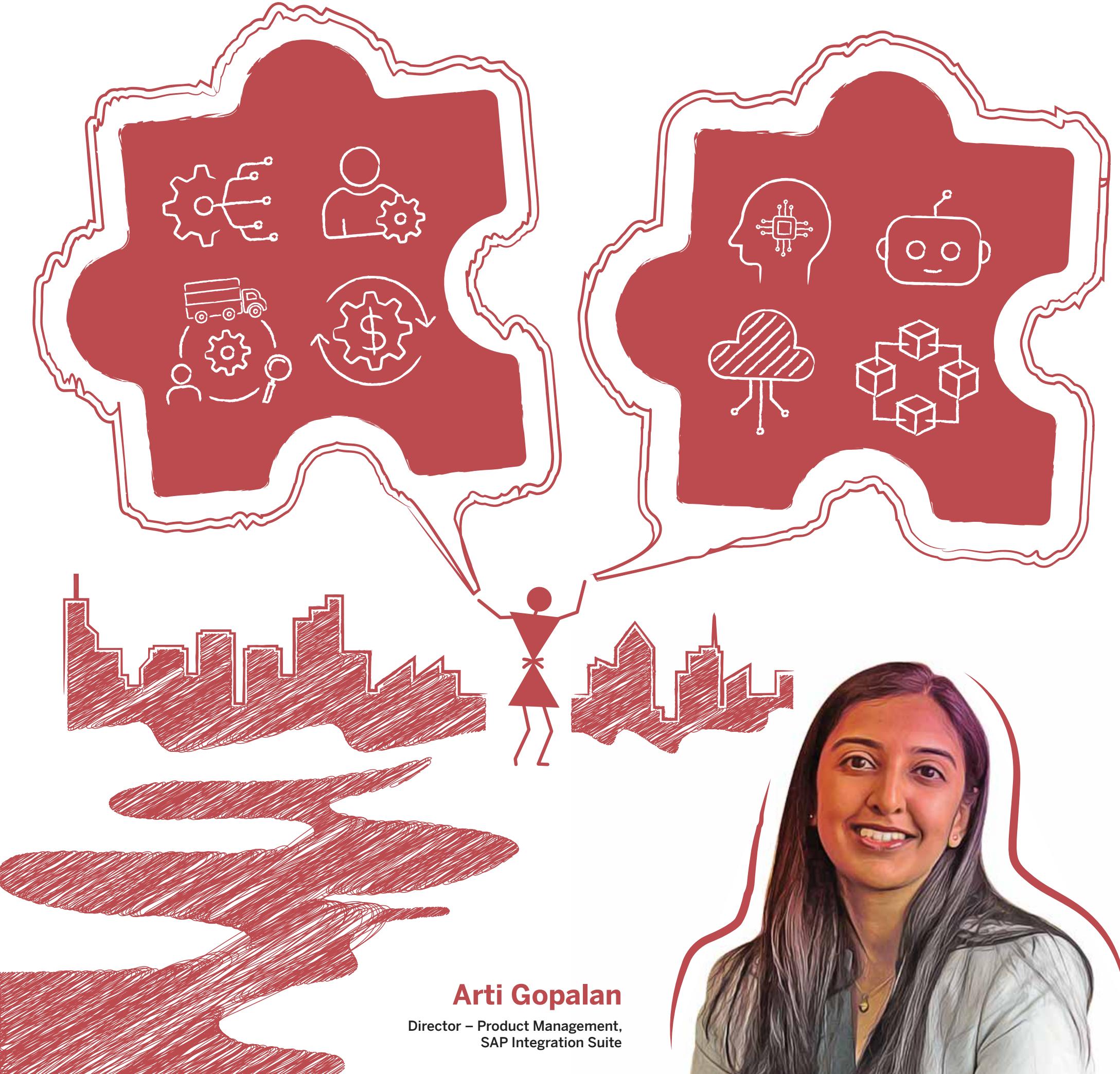
According to you, as a practitioner who has interacted with global teams, what do you feel is required to implement a data-driven approach in product management?

If we look at the entire usage cycle, there are two things that every product manager must consider – license consumption and functional usage. When I say license, it's everything that the customer is billed on. Now, when I say functional usage, it's all about focusing on features and functionalities, even for the non-billed items. By paying attention to the product features used by the customer, we can build a strong investment plan to improve their experience.

We need to ensure more license users are coming in. At the same time, it's important to understand the usage of specific product features.

How does your team facilitate internal stakeholders?

We provide governance, communities, tools and other central services to drive use-case specific product insights and experience based on our cross-functional stakeholders needs following the public cloud strategy. Also, we leverage this expertise to drive requirements for the collection and analysis of product insights and experiences. We continuously work towards creating reports that can be leveraged by our leadership, product managers, and other relevant personas and we have a dashboard in Cloud Reporting which gives transparency on KPIs that drive our Cloud ERP Public Cloud solutions.



Arti Gopalan

Director – Product Management,
SAP Integration Suite

Networked Product Management

Driving seamless integration across the product portfolio

Arti Gopalan is a Director, Product Management at SAP Labs India leading the APJ PM team for SAP Integration Suite. She joined SAP Labs India in October 2007 as a developer. In the last 14 years at SAP, Arti has played multiple roles starting as a product evangelist to being a holistic product manager focusing on driving growth.

From a global perspective to the strategic approach at SAP Labs India, could you talk a little bit about the scope of Product Management teams here in India?

The SAP Integration Suite product management team focuses on the multiple facets of product management by following the OKR practice. This provides flexibility to the product managers in the team to develop their T-shaped generic and specific skills required for managing our mature product.

One-third of the SAP Integration Suite PM team is based out of India, helping the regional focus on the customer lifetime value at SAP Labs India by supporting the pre-sales and post-sales activities of our field colleagues. From my years of experience at SAP and networking with other product managers in the industry, I can gladly call out that the scope of PM in India has reached its prime now. We have the VP – Global Head of Product Management and Strategy for SAP Integration Suite based out of Bangalore.

In addition to this, most of the SAP Labs India colleagues play global lead roles in helping shape and drive the product strategy, road mapping and prioritization exercises, providing commercialization expertise, as well strategically planning and engaging the partner ecosystem.

Could you talk about the internal adoption of the SAP Integration Suite, and how are you driving the strategy for our customers?

At SAP, integration has been a key focus for a long time. As part of our overall intelligent enterprise strategy there is a quote – Integrated Enterprises are Intelligent Enterprises – and we love that. Be it SaaS or On-Premise, the intent from SAP is to offer a holistic experience to our customers, which includes ensuring a seamless exchange of information across the solutions that make up business processes.

Customer landscapes are heterogeneous in nature. They have applications in private cloud, on the public cloud platform, and legacy systems continue to co-exist. For any business process to effectively be digitized, organizations need to ensure that all these systems are connected. And even beyond the organizational boundaries, there is constant interaction and exchange of information with business partners, vendors, suppliers, regulatory agencies and customers. Simply put, we need to improve the ability to securely process transactions when exchanging information between solutions in the customer's environment and the broader ecosystem.

With these customer requirements clearly understood, we have multiple solution teams at SAP who are looking to ensure and facilitate seamless integration out-of-the-box. From an internal adoption perspective, we know that the Integration

Suite is definitely something that is being considered. Here, as PMs, we engage with multiple internal stakeholders to share our experience across the years. We have SAP solutions that provide embedded integration experience (close to 7,500 indirect customers via the network solutions at SAP) as well as those that provide pre-built integrations (~3,000 integration scenarios available on SAP API Business Hub) that can be consumed flexibly by customers according to requirement and convenience.

From an external perspective, how do you drive the adoption of the SAP Integration Suite?

We are one of the mature integration platforms in the market and have already been identified as one of the leaders in Gartner's Magic Quadrant published recently in January 2023 for Enterprise Integration Platform as a Service (EiPaaS), maintaining our position for the past three years in a row. Our ~11K customers certainly validate the rich capabilities of the platform.

As product managers, the team focuses on every stage of the customer lifecycle. We create awareness – provide the necessary content for our customers to understand the value of the platform and how it can increase return on investment, engage with customers from the creation of enterprise-wide integration strategy, discovery of use cases, to adopting and going successfully productive with their integrations.

The other aspect would be to create multipliers who can assist customers to integrate our solutions. Here we engage quite a lot with our partner ecosystem.

Can you share a bit more about how your team of product managers at SAP Labs India work with the partner ecosystem?

I would like to call out the location advantage for sure. We have a rich partner ecosystem based out of India who are highly engaged with SAP Labs India. Most of the global development teams in our partner organization are not too far from where we work. This helps us connect with consultants and developers across India. We leverage the different partnership models that exist – co-innovation to complement our offerings, content development to enhance thought leadership, engaging and enabling our implementation partners.

By conducting regular Hackathon initiatives, we're able to encourage developers to leverage the capabilities of the solutions. We have also co-initiated GTM activities with our partners to ensure that our customers are aware of the tools that cover our integration platform.

As we conclude, could you guide us as to how you would offer your support to aspiring product managers?

Compared to when I started 14 years ago, I feel now there is a structured approach to product management. We have pre-defined frameworks that provides us a better approach to how we measure impact and outcomes.

In my opinion, for any aspiring product manager to become successful, it is of essence to invest in continuous learning and networking with peers.



Platform Product Management

Aligning across teams for cross-product success



Manjunath Baburao is a Product Manager in the cross-product management team for SAP's enterprise Platform-as-a-Service offering – 'SAP Business Technology Platform' (BTP). He joined SAP Labs India in May 2008.

How would you describe your current role at SAP Labs India?

I've been with SAP Labs India for the past 15 years, and formally started off in a Product Management role for the BTP Foundation area, in 2016. Currently, I am part of the Cross-Product Management team within the SAP Business Technology Platform. This team was started in 2021, with a handful of people, to care for SAP BTP as ONE platform.

Just like we have different product management teams responsible for individual products in BTP, the driving force for the cross-PM team is to shape and highlight the Business Technology Platform as the technology foundation for SAP, and as a unified innovation platform for customers and partners. Our goal is to ensure consistency of cross topics, such as enterprise readiness, security, lifecycle management, data centre availability, etc, so the customers can benefit from a seamless experience when using cloud products across the SAP portfolio.

So, we become the glue to drive collaboration across BTP areas, as well as towards the LoBs to drive BTP adoption.

Today, BTP is at the center of SAP strategy, but cross-product management as a concept is fairly new to the rest of us. Can you tell us about the genesis of this cross-PM concept?

From the time we started, our aim was to create an impact as a central team in an overall decentralized product.

Individual PM teams like the integration PM, the automation PM and the App development PM, have experts handling their respective domains. The cross-product management team steps in to identify and drive what I like to call 'platform qualities' that are needed to support customers who want to consume SAP BTP as a consistent, unified platform. Apart from the obvious technical aspects, consistency could extend to areas such as pricing, commercial models, contractual SLAs, enablement, etc.

In line with SAP's platform and innovation strategy, cross-product management is growing as the next frontier of how we look at bringing in consistency and integration across a complex suite of products in SAP's portfolio.

Speaking of consistency, one of the cross PM team functions is also to minimize siloed development of similar products. We work on creating full visibility into different development efforts to ensure that similar products can be enriched and reused.

Can you perhaps touch upon a specific scenario?

Sure, let's begin with the trial itself. Even now, SAP BTP and SAP Analytics Cloud have separate trials, where customers need to create separate registrations for each trial. But we're trying to move towards a consistent 'Try-to-Buy' experience with our Freemium offering. We're focusing on creating a seamless customer journey from their first touch point to try, adopt, consume and expand, all with a consistent platform experience. There are many such examples which we deal with frequently.

How do you measure the success of a cross PM function, given that there is no direct responsibility of delivering a product or implementing it for the customer?

Though we do have formal KPIs which measure success for our team, in my view, alignment is a great success metric for a cross product management team. Primarily because, the success of our team needs contribution from various teams/roles across the SAP BTP area – development, marketing, customer success, and so on. Cross-PM supporting full alignment across these roles/functions for BTP, paves the way for SAP's success as an enterprise company, and customer/partner success with their platform & innovation strategy.

We also want to drive alignment across various aspects, from strategy, to planning, to execution, to roadmaps, as well as aligned awareness and adoption of BTP. For example, whenever a customer visits the SAP Labs India Experience Centre, we, from the cross PM team emphasize the ONE-platform value proposition, and contextually position each of the individual pillars as capabilities or tools, within the broader BTP toolkit.

In your perspective, what are the key skillset or competencies you look for in cross-product managers, or even product managers in general?

I believe that in any customer-facing role, it is important to have empathy, a willingness to listen & learn and clarity of communication. Same is true for Product Management. Specifically for Cross-Product Management, it helps to be able to visualize the big picture and understand customers' business, pain points and how SAP's product portfolio can support them with the same. We call this, a 'T profile', meaning a broad understanding of the entire product portfolio, with specialization in a specific area. Eventually, our customers and partners are looking at SAP BTP to understand how they can build something easily and cost effectively for their business.

Besides this, two skills that I have felt are important, specifically over the past couple of years, are a) collaboration & stakeholder management and b) influencing without authority. We have some great soft skills training modules at SAP on these topics, and I have taken some of these in my initial days. At that point in time, I could not really put to practice some awesome tools I picked up from these trainings. However, in my current role, these are critical skills to handle expectations across different stakeholders & customers and achieve alignment.

Is there anything more you'd like to share about your journey as a Product Manager at SAP Labs India?

In my 15 years at SAP, I spent many years working on different products as a part of cross functions. Sometimes, I used to wonder: Am I really becoming an expert at anything? Am I simply jumping from topic to topic, without diving deep into many of the areas?

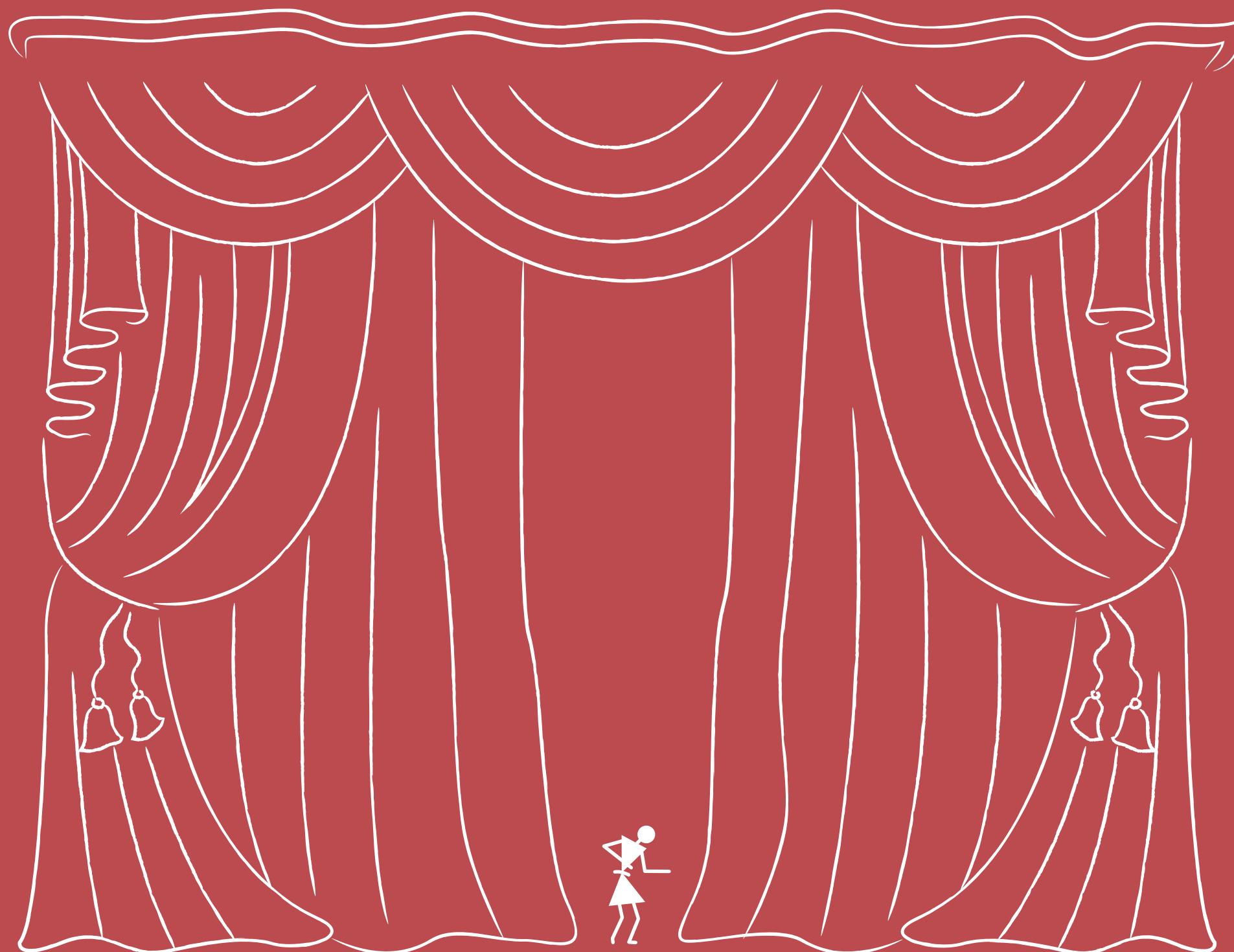
However, I now realise that spending time across different functions and developing a 'T-profile' was an ideal stepping-stone to succeed as a Cross-Product Manager, by gathering an interesting view on how things come together, which brings me back to my favourite word – 'alignment'!

Now, I'm hoping to drive more of these alignments, towards the success of SAP BTP and SAP.

Manjunath Baburao

Product Manager, SAP BTP





CLOSING NOTE

Power of Product Management: Shaping Product Innovation

As technology rapidly progresses and transforms industries into a cloud-centric world, product management remains a critical force for driving purposeful innovation. Our unique approach to product management has been refined over the past 25 years at SAP Labs India, and we believe that the next 25 years will be even more promising as we continue to evolve and adapt. The growth of this function is closely tied to SAP's success, and we look forward to strengthening this partnership further.

In today's competitive business environment, providing customers with seamless and engaging end-to-end experiences has become crucial. This has made the product experience a top priority for businesses. Product leaders have a vital role to play in the ever-evolving field of product management, as they are instrumental in delivering these experiences.

From leveraging data and insights to collaborating with cross-functional teams and ecosystem partners, product managers face diverse and challenging responsibilities. They strive to present a unified face across a wide portfolio of products. Nevertheless, with the right approach and mindset, they can overcome these obstacles, maintain customer focus, and drive groundbreaking product launches and customer success stories.

The rise of India's influence in the APJ markets has transformed outbound product management. Today, our robust community of seasoned product managers has taken on global product ownership and leadership responsibilities, driving SAP's growth worldwide.

SAP Labs India is establishing itself as a thought leader in the product management space and it is reflected in our close collaboration with industry bodies like NASSCOM through their vision of "Shaping Worldclass Products from India", through initiatives like the 'NASSCOM Product Connect' which are aimed at fostering innovation and developing product management skills in the country.

We hope this journey through product management at SAP Labs India has provided a broader perspective on the world of product management and the possibilities that await. Just as the simple strokes in a Warli painting combine to create a beautiful masterpiece, product managers are leveraging their skills and expertise to craft inspiring narratives for the future.



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