



# EPISODE 8: FEMALE TECHNOLOGISTS UNVEIL THE WORLD OF SAP

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

00:02 Hey everyone! This is Renee from Accenture in the Philippines, welcome to another episode of Pinays Talk Tech Podcast: The Podcast for Future Forward Filipinas. Join us as we have inspiring conversations with Pinays in Tech. From young innovators to industry leaders, this podcast will show you how Pinays in tech are leading through change. This is Pinays Talk Tech Podcast!

- **MUSIC BREAK** -

00:29 Out of the 100 largest companies in the world, 99 are SAP customers. But what is SAP exactly? And what are the opportunities in this space? To help us get answers, our guests for this episode are SAP technology leaders who will lift the veil on what a technology consultant really does in SAP and the opportunities for both technical and functional people. Our first guest is currently the SAP Business Suite S/4HANA Finance Managing Director at Accenture in the Philippines. Please welcome **Ana Marie Abad!**

01:08 Our second guest has over 25 years of progressive experience in the Enterprise Technology Consulting Services Industry. She is currently Accenture's Regional Client Account Lead for Products in South East Asia and is also our Consumer Goods & Services Industry Lead. Let's welcome **Kleng Fandino!**

**[00:01:32] Renee:** Hi, Anna. Hi, Kleng. How are you guys?

**[1:34] Ana & Kleng:** Hi, Renee. Hello.

[1:39] Renee: I want to introduce both of you to our audience. Can you tell me what you guys do? Explain it to your grandmother. How do you explain to your grandmother what do you do day to day? What's your job? Kleng, do you wanna start?

**[00:01:50] Kleng:** So, I'm a client account lead here in Accenture. So, I create relationships, create trusted relationships to all of our clients here. Really in a good level of understanding. I help shape solutions based on where, you know, where their pain points are. I need to bring expertise or thought leadership if they need it. But ultimately, I'm really out there to help solve, you know, their most critical what I call wicked problems. So, I think that's what I do. By the way, I don't do it alone, Renee, I'm I can't, and I will never will. So, what excites me about my role is really the ability to collaborate, right? Across various groups here in Accenture and you know, that helps me deliver and enable really impact to our clients.

**[00:02:41] Renee:** That's very interesting thing Kleng 'no? because it's not, it can't be one technology alone. Whatever your problem is, I



will bring the right people in. Anna? How do you explain to your grandmother? This is what I do.

**[00:02:55] Ana:** So I'm an SAP finance consultant. So, think of it as a person helping the organization, the finance organization in upgrading their system. So, if before, the finance organization is focused on very manual processes, very traditional operations. My role is to elevate finance organization to focus more on analytics, more on planning, decision making, so that they can, you know, help lead the whole business operations, and not focus on the very tedious aspects of finance. So, in a gist, that's my work.

**[00:03:33] Renee:** So, your job is to remove the paper.

**[00:03:34] Ana:** Yes.

**[00:03:35] Renee:** Okay. So, thanks for telling us what you guys do on the day to day. What is SAP, you know, because actually for Pinays Talk Tech, we've talked about a lot of different topics, mostly on inclusion and diversity. And I wanted to have like a sub series on, specifically on tech. That's why I'm so excited with you guys because I wanna educate people what is SAP. So how long have you been in this career? By the way, both of you, are you, you're both SAP professionals, right? And maybe Ana this time we'll start with you.

**[00:04:07] Ana:** Yep. So, SAP stands for systems, application and products in [00:05:00] data processing. In layman's term or on a finance standpoint, you can look at it as, an application software where you enter all of your business and accounting transactions to be able to come up with financial and operations report for the consumption of the whole organization. So, that's the like simple explanation what SAP is.

**[00:04:36] Kleng:** So, SAP is a big company in itself. So, they produce a software. It's a big software and it's what's being used to manage companies. So, it's a software managing big companies. So, it, the software for, you know, for being used by companies is called enterprise resource planning. That's the, that's SAP's number one product. And then they also have a lot of products, ERP, CRM, BI, but they're all built, you know, in such a way that's, they, it's

integrated with each other and, you know, can plug and play, you know, third party software, or third-party companies, customer or vendors. So that makes SAP exciting to me, right? Cause it's challenging and a lot of interconnections. SAP is a leader in the field.

**[00:05:23] Renee:** I know, like in, in the data that we have, they are being used by 99 of the top 100 companies. So, I find it very interesting because Ana spoke about the finance aspect of it. If you were an accounting lead or a CFO, it helps you run the business and then Kleng, you expanded our world suddenly. CRM—For those who are not familiar with CRM and BI, what are those?

**[00:05:49] Kleng:** So, CRM is the way you manage your relationships to your, in a company, to your end clients. So, it's a customer relationship management software, right? So BI is the entire business intelligence, right? It's really the, you know, the root of all base analytics, right? Because there's so much, you know, in a big company. So somewhere you need something to use that data and analyze that and then make decision making easier.

**[00:06:19] Renee:** Exactly. Because like they said, and it's a bit cliché at this point, no? But data is the new oil. That's where we have to go. So, if you are a company and you have the HR systems there, the finance systems there, your CRM there, your insights are deeper, no. And you can be more strategic. I've never heard of SAP before. So Kleng, you've been here 25 years and Ana you've also been working here for a long time in SAP. How did you get here? How did that happen? Yeah, Anna, do you wanna start?

**[00:06:50] Ana:** Yes. So, I started off as a CPA, so I'm a CPA right now. Even now, actually I can do your tax, right?

**[00:07:01] Renee:** Amazing.

**[00:07:02] Ana:** So, I was an auditor before, and then I moved to operations so I've done market closing, like part of the operations.



You're not allowed to do vacation leave during the first week of the month. And then, from then I moved to IT, as part of the operations, I was already using SAP. So that's the first time that, you know, I've worked with SAP. So, learning the transaction codes and all that generating reports out of SAP. And then, I moved to IT, and from then on, I've never left na. So, I love working in IT SAP because, it's all about the integration of new businesses, being able to understand what's happening at the back end. So, I was able to connect from being the end user and then, you know, understanding what's happening behind the system. You know, it's something that enjoyed me and challenged me so much so I've stayed. So, I've been working with SAP for 15 years now, so yeah. A lot of changes, and it keeps on changing. Like I said, there's a new release of SAP S/4HANA, we call it S/4HANA and, you know, a new challenge to take on as we talk to our clients.

**[00:08:19] Kleng:** I never learned it in school. I learned it on the job. So, I started with, It, background, you know, I'm an industrial engineer. I joined the multinational company. I was part of logistics, operations. I always cater around it, you know. So, I'm in the thick of things of good solid foundations on logistics operations. And then, you know, we were using a software at that time and so, it was the first part of the transformation. And then they were my manager nominated, oh yeah, you go join this project, you know, learn the software. And then, you know, you train the entire department and that was my first shot of SAP. I was what is called as a key user. And then after that, you know, I did another project, in, you know, from being part of a one module, it was now crossed a solution set. So buong supply chain, finished goods, manufacturing end to end, and I was still a business person wearing a business hat. And then after that, I said, you know, I, my manager, you know, I had the mentor that advocated. Okay. Yeah, you go move, right? And so, I move now from logistics operations to technology, and then I, you know, so that's how I started. And that's what I like actually in, SAP, but essentially, it's always progressive, right? So, as businesses evolve, you can have a path, you know, that allows you a progressive career throughout your, you know, throughout your life.

**[00:09:45] Renee:** So we have a CPA and an industrial engineer who found their way to the same tech that no one knew in college. Were you friends with tech people and you thought, oh, I can do that job? Or were you pushed to it?

**[00:10:00] Kleng:** Same. Yeah, I think same as well, but you, and maybe, you know, my personality has always been better suited for fast-paced project rhythm, right? I've been in operation the nine to five, right? But, and I had some experience as well with ongoing support, nothing wrong with that. However, you know, teaming and dynamic eh that goes into an SAP project, you know, from inception to execution. I always, you know, I always, I do bask. It was called as a cut-over high, you know, when you go live and you send it away. So, the entire project, you know, it can be high-pressure point, interesting job, lots of challenges every day. So, it's not a field, you know, for those who easily give up, right? So hence being part of a team, being a team player is absolutely necessary. There's always a start and there's always an end, right?

**[00:10:48] Renee:** Okay, so we always end it in high, no? Ana?

**[00:10:52] Ana:** Yes. Similar to Kleng, I was pushed to the IT group back then. But I never, like, I have a chance to go back. And similar to Kleng, I like the project-based type of work. Because you know, it has a beginning and an end. And then of course, I like the flexibility of working in a project, because you know, as long as you're able to deliver the work, no matter how, like how early or how late you start, that's also the flexibility of it. And like, if you're part of, like I said, month end closing operations. It's, nine to 6:00 PM type of job. And I like the dynamics of it.

There's a lot of changes. I get to work with a lot of different people. Just to share with you, like I've worked with mining company, with pharmaceutical company, with energy company, and it's just like first, second year, working in



Accenture back then. So, yeah, so that's how dynamic things are as part of the tech group.

**[00:11:56] Renee:** I love that because I always tell people when they ask me about my job, I would always say it's never boring because every time you moved to a new client, you have to now understand a new industry. I grew up tech, but I know HR and I know taxes in the US because I did US tax conversions in the past. Now, I wanna go back to the tech itself because you both have been here. You saw the transformation of SAP from on-premise to Cloud because everybody still talks about Cloud. It's still, I know it's been here, especially with us in Accenture. It's been with us for a while, but for some people it's still unclear and I'll explain to our listeners.

**[00:12:35] Renee:** The beauty of cloud is pay as you go. So, it's a drastic change from then to now. How did you transform with SAP and the technology transforming to cloud? Was that difficult for you as well? To do that—your own personal transformation?

**[00:12:52] Ana:** Yep. I think for me, it was more of a required kasi when you do the S/4HANA transformations, it's part of it, mostly, like you also move, the client moves also to Cloud at the same time. And, so with that, it's not really that difficult because in terms of the functionalities and the finance standpoint, it's not, you know, a huge change. But of course, understanding the benefit of moving to cloud in terms of, like operating cost and all, I have to learn that, specifically, because, you know, I have to, talking to like CFO, or creating a business case for the transformation. I also need to understand that point of team so it was part of the project. It was part of, you know, my role in Accenture to really understand what Cloud is.

**[00:13:44] Renee:** And then to also teach that to whoever you're speaking with, right?

**[00:13:46] Ana:** Because we do have like that, like SAP rise, right. So, understand what's the dynamic of that contract is really something that, you know, I needed to learn.

**[00:13:55] Renee:** Kleng?

**[00:13:56] Kleng:** I think on the transformation, I, you know, I'm always excited actually for something new, right? I always say that, you know, I have a three-year itch, you know, of wanting to do something new. So that transformation, I believe, was natural for me. But being in the SAP industry, you know, the field I learned is always cutting edge, it's always at the forefront or something super aggressive. Every now and then a new package of the software is out in the market. So as an SAP consultant, I know my, you know, the biggest thing I, you know, learn and I keep on learning now is that you need, you are wired to keep up and keep staying updated, right? So, keep your knowledge base, continuous build and, you know, do awesome networking, you know, in projects you will build that network, right? Within and outside the industry. Because where we, where are my role now, right? As a trusted advisor, you need to be, you know, at the forefront, right? So that clients, you know, would essentially trust you that you know, what you are telling them or what you are recommending for them to do is something that, you know, that you can be trusted and you're really up in your game.

**[00:15:09] Kleng:** And there are big projects that did attempt, you know, doing more than one art because an entire SAP project can never be a single art. It's an art or a group of arts. But a lot of the guidelines, you know, most basic guidelines can be applied, you know, in an SAP project.

**[00:15:28] Renee:** For those who are not familiar with arts, I love the jargon Kleng, so scaled agile terminology. And art is an agile release train. It can never be less than 50 people. It's 50 to 125 people so imagine the scale. Kleng is saying at minimum. At least two, agile release chains so at minimum 100 people. So, because it's that huge, and that's also what I like about scaled agile is the cadence of communication.

**[00:15:56] Kleng:** Exactly.



**[00:15:58] Renee:** Ana, have you ever encountered this?

**[00:16:01] Ana:** Yep. Yep. So recently there, I have a client where they asked what's the, like the advantage and disadvantages of doing agile for an ERP project. And I did explain as well that you know, there are certain phases of the project. As Kleng mentioned that we can do agile approach, but on doing it on a large-scale type ERP project, we cannot do it like end to end so we can do during built phase, we can do during testing phase. But, it's gonna be very difficult not only for the whole organization, but also from the infrastructure standpoint, because you cannot maintain a lot of environment at the same time when you do agile type of method. So yeah. So it's something that is still developing. We don't know, we can, you know, things are still changing, but right now it's best to do hybrid versus end to end agile.

**[00:16:59] Renee:** And I feel in that is actually that is also agile because you're taking the best parts and adopting it to your reality today.

**[00:17:06] Ana:** Yes.

**[00:17:07] Renee:** So, I find that quite interesting and I see that it continues to progress so I'm excited about what's next in that aspect. I need to do agile for SAP, what do I do? So, look at scaled agile. I agree with Kleng. It's the only one, I never was a fan of agile until I saw scaled agile because I only ever did large scale ERP deployments. So, it never clicked in my brain until I saw skilled agile. So yeah. I, I totally agree.

**[00:17:35] Kleng:** Correct. You need to experience it.

**[00:17:36] Renee:** Yes.

**[00:17:37] Kleng:** And interesting, even here in Accenture, right? Right now, there's an entire global group and we are part of that in the Philippines, right? Being part of what is called an SAP delivery excellence, right? Lean agile practices is actually part of that, right? We invested last year and sent out people from Manila to be part, you know, how can we continuously evolve our delivery methods in

which either we apply some lean agile practices, can we do our developments, you know, in SAP. But, you know, that's something as well, I mean, exciting here in Accenture because the scale is here. We have many clients. We have projects, right? And, you know, there's, you know, something you can consolidate, right? And learn, you know, from the project that we do.

**[00:18:22] Renee:** Yeah. Because you have a lot of people to ask their experience-

**[00:18:26 ] Kleng:** Exactly.

**[00:18:27] Renee:** Globally. So, I also, I love that about it. Do you feel that this type of work in SAP, is that going to continue and grow?

**[00:18:36] Ana:** Yes. So definitely because they have launched like the latest version, as I mentioned, like the S/4HANA and every year, this version is being upgraded with new functionalities. So, in a standpoint of a company, you would want to leverage or try to join the bandwagon of, you know, maximizing the value of that platform, our system, and the more that you like delay it further, the more that, you know, you're gonna be like, not be on the front runner of leveraging some of these functionalities and the value of it to the organization.

**[00:19:13] Renee:** Kleng, what's your advice for somebody who wants to break into SAP, whether they're already in tech or not yet in tech, what do you think?

**[00:19:22] Kleng:** Yeah. To me join, you know, with the breadth of SAP, right? Join a large multi-company, multinational company. Yeah, because 99% of them are using SAP, right? 99 out of a hundred multinationals are using SAP. So that's for starters, right? And start from there, your career—it needs to be handled as a profession, right? You have got to be specialized on something. Whether you know, it's the technology is SAP, right? It's a function, you know purchasing, or you know finance, or you know manufacturing, right? And then the next one is industry, right? You've got to be anchored on an industry and, you know, whatever first company you have joined in being a multinational, they are part of an industry. So, be very good, those three,



and then take it from there, right? Those are actually parang three, facts in which you can, you know, become a SAP consultant, right? But I remind you know, everyone, you know, it's really a lot of hard work to be a brilliant SAP consultant, right? And the longevity of that so you've got to build really a round, well rounded specialization. And so as long as, you know, I think the industry, as long as an, you know, an SAP consultant has adequate skills and relevant skills, you know, the future is pretty bright for those wanting to become an SAP consultant.

**[00:20:51] Renee:** The future is bright for all of us.

**[00:20:55] Kleng:** Yeah—I actually, that's what I, one realization I had, right? So, yeah, so you, I had the start, I, the, but across the career, my career during, and especially here in Accenture, when I joined Accenture, I moved into industries. I moved functions as well. I, you know, I moved some technology. But essentially there's a lot of transferrable skills that you can use and apply. And essentially it makes it diverse, right? Imagine, you know, consumer goods and industry professional, joining in life sciences, right? Then you will have a, you know, the path for divergent thinking begins, right? Because the team is diverse. That's what I actually enjoyed. So, to me, anchor, you know, staying true and anchored on your core, it helps me, you know, centered, you know, but as well, even Accenture allows me to, you know, the opportunities to work with many clients, many industries, you know, we have it here and we have it here in the Philippines.

**[00:21:57] Renee:** If you ask that you want to explore a particular area, the answer is almost always yes. That's what I find in my career here, 'no? Okay. So, I love their conversation again, very more tech focused. I appreciate you guys. So, last advice maybe for our women who are listening, who are thinking about, you know, their career path and where do I go next? And even for our young graduates. Now, going back to face to face in school and at work. What's your advice? Going back to find themselves and their career.

**[00:22:37] Ana:** I think, for me, I'll be open, be open to learning. I started as a CPA, look at where I am right now. I never imagined that I'll be

in tech, and, you know, play on your strength. Cause I've always been like a logical person and that strength has, you know, helped me in terms of project management, understanding the requirements of our clients. So, for me, be open to a lot of opportunities. So yeah, so I think that's the advice that I would share, be open.

**[00:23:13] Renee:** Okay. What about you Kleng?

**[00:23:14] Kleng:** Your career in SAP as a SAP consultant and beyond, you know, they, we are road troopers, so be comfortable traveling, be comfortable meeting new people, be comfortable speaking your mind, you know, be comfortable, be, you know, sharing your point of view and maybe sharing your ideas through stories. So, but as well, be ready and be comfortable with heavy unknowns, you know, especially at the start of the project. So be comfortable being uncomfortable and never stop learning. So, you will need to learn fast, never stop studying, read up wherever whenever you can. I found a great reward, you know, being an SAP consultant.

**[00:23:54] Renee:** Wonderful! I think it applies to a lot of things, no? So, thanks so much, Ana and Kleng for joining our show. I really loved our conversation today. Please have a fantastic day.

**[00:24:08]** Thank you for listening to Pinay's Talk Tech podcast. Brought to you by Accenture. Don't forget to hit subscribe on all major podcast platforms.

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