

# Solving S/4 skills shortage



## SAP Business Transformations in 2021

With many SAP programmes, including S/4HANA business transformations, back online, the future of the SAP landscape looks more exciting than ever.

On top of SAP's ECC support extension and a hearty Q1/Q2 recovery, we're seeing a high demand for flexible SAP contracts - a step in the right direction considering a successful adoption of remote work during the pandemic.

The only problem? The nagging maladies of IR35 and the S/4 skills gap are still up in the air which means clients need to address them before going into high gear.

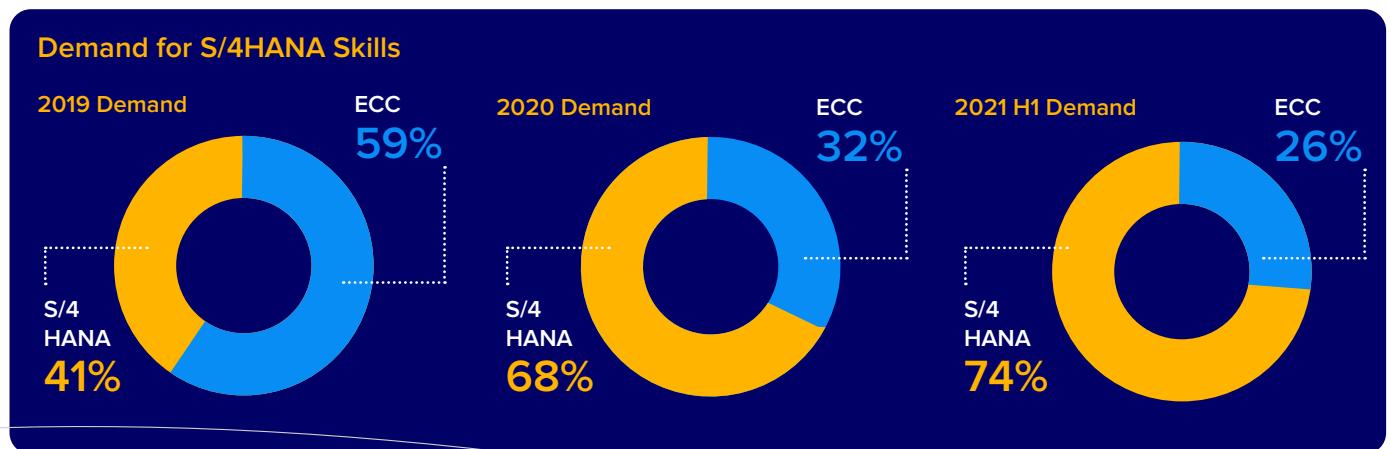
The following article provides everything you need to know to navigate the emerging SAP landscape, tackle the skills shortage and find the best SAP S/4 talent around. Let's start from the beginning.

### What's the S/4 skills situation?

Last year's remote UKISUG Connect wasn't a conventional one, but it still brought a wealth of insights from the group's experts, speakers and SAP business leaders.

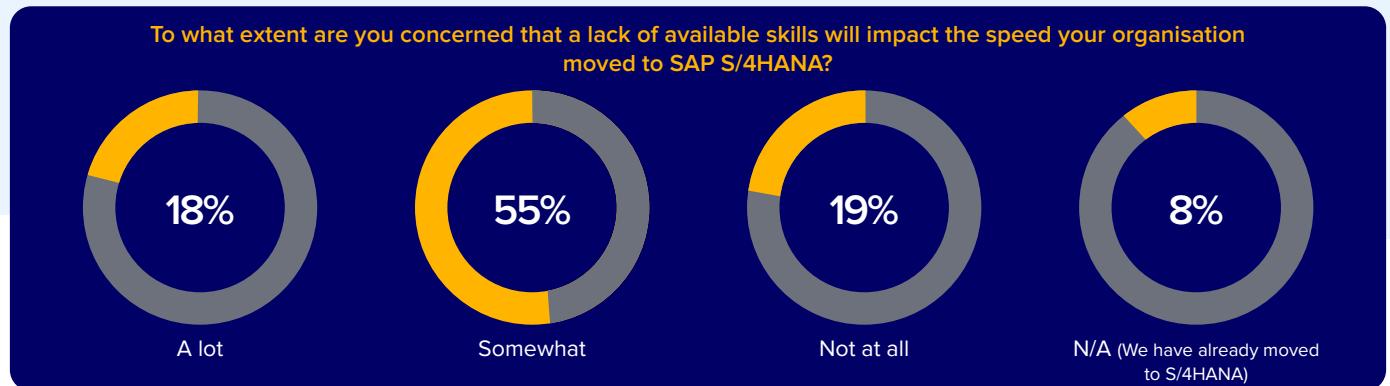
#### Most important of all?

The need for qualified S/4 talent is still growing. Even with the COVID-induced slowdown, Q4 saw a considerable upturn, with a 73% increase in demand for S/4 jobs alone. This indicates a major landscape shift compared to 2018-2019 when the demand for S/4 skills was just 41%, with 59% of the market tied to ECC talent.<sup>(1)</sup>





Unfortunately, the relative infancy of S/4 programmes means the SAP landscape needs to play catch-up. During the 2020 UK&I SAP User Group survey, 73% of SAP leaders predicted the skills shortage would impact ongoing and future programmes. Those predictions proved correct as many businesses are now facing talent shortages.



Large numbers of candidates lack relevant experience which hinders the resourcing of teams to deliver recovering S/4 transformations, many of which have already pushed back key milestones due to the pandemic and necessary cost-saving measures.

The SAP UK & Ireland User Group Analytics Symposium that took place in April this year brought even more interesting insights to the table. According to the research, data analytics helped 62% of SAP organisations emerge from the pandemic but only 32% of organisations have the necessary data skills in place<sup>(2)</sup>

The growing importance of data means there's nowhere near enough talent with existing commercial experience to fill in the niche. With the private sector IR35 now in full swing, we're already seeing a further split in the contractor market. So where's all that SAP talent when you need it?

## 3 Possible solutions to S/4 skills shortage

### 1. (Re)Training your existing SAP/IT workforce

The first step to putting S/4 programmes back on track is retaining and training in-house ECC/IT teams to set the foundations for the new landscape. This approach will not only let you save money and keep knowledge in house, but it'll also help leverage existing business relationships and move things forward faster.

That's especially important considering that 79% of SAP businesses leaders are worried skilled people may leave the organization to look for greener pastures.<sup>(1)</sup>

Recent IDC research shows that well-trained S/4 users contribute to a 14-times improvement in KPIs and bump organizational satisfaction by 104%.<sup>(3)</sup> All that can be achieved by incentivising innovation and providing room for professional development.

### 2. Choosing the right recruitment strategy

A solid in-house foundation will help you set the ground for S/4. But you'll still need external help, expertise and oversight to keep things running smoothly. You need to decide the most optimal way to source SAP specialists for your S/4 programme (permanent, contract, SoW) and consider both benefits and drawbacks. For instance, while permanent roles will give you long-term, in-house expertise, candidates may be limited by geographic availability, headcount constraints and potential salary limitations.

Alternatively, contract engagements let you onboard seasoned SAP professionals with existing S/4 experience to deliver transformation when you need it. They're more costly than permanent team members but cheaper than going to an SI. Still, contracts are a short-term fix and you'll need to figure things out on your own out after Go-Live. It's also important to factor in the inside/outside IR35 scenario. Many top SAP contractors are reluctant to work under the new rules if roles are deemed inside.

### 3. Find the right S/4 recruitment partner

One thing's certain when it comes to the post-COVID SAP landscape. The question: 'Where do I find S/4 talent?' will reverberate all through the remainder of 2021. So, why not tag team with a solid recruitment partner that will answer it for you? Finding the right service provider will help you free up in-house resources, give you access to exclusive talent pools, and save plenty of time and money in the process.

And let's not forget the added benefit of knowledge transfer. The S/4 territory is still uncharted waters for many so the extra guidance will let you move the transformation ahead much quicker.



# Start your S/4HANA journey in good company

## 1. ‘Outside’ Cost Neutral Solution

Some of the very best SAP experts in the UK will only consider ‘outside’ IR35 engagements. This is particularly true for independent contractors with vast commercial full end-to-end S/4 experience. bluewaveSELECT will attract, screen and secure contractors in compliance with the new rules whilst providing full tax liability insurance for all parties.

## 2. ‘Inside’ Still Find SAP Experts

Two-thirds of our SAP professionals are open to working ‘inside’ IR35 under the right circumstances while many of our clients are ready to partially offset PAYE costs. With the additional benefits on the table, bluewaveSELECT will engage with the best ‘inside’ IR35 talent in our network to keep your programmes on course.

At bluewaveSELECT, we’re always on a mission to help our clients plan and deliver successful, future-proof SAP programmes. We handle the heavy lifting so you can sit back and watch the results.

If you’re looking for fully compliant and cost-effective solutions for sourcing, screening and hiring your SAP S/4 experts, we’re here to help. To engage with the very best independent S/4HANA professionals we’ve prepared a comprehensive, three-way solution package for our clients and SAP experts.

## 3. Statement of Work (SoW) Framework

Finally, to remove all responsibility and liability for IR35 and to secure top S/4 talent, we can provide a Statement of Work (SoW) framework in which bluewaveCONSULT, our SAP consultancy, takes on the role of a service provider.

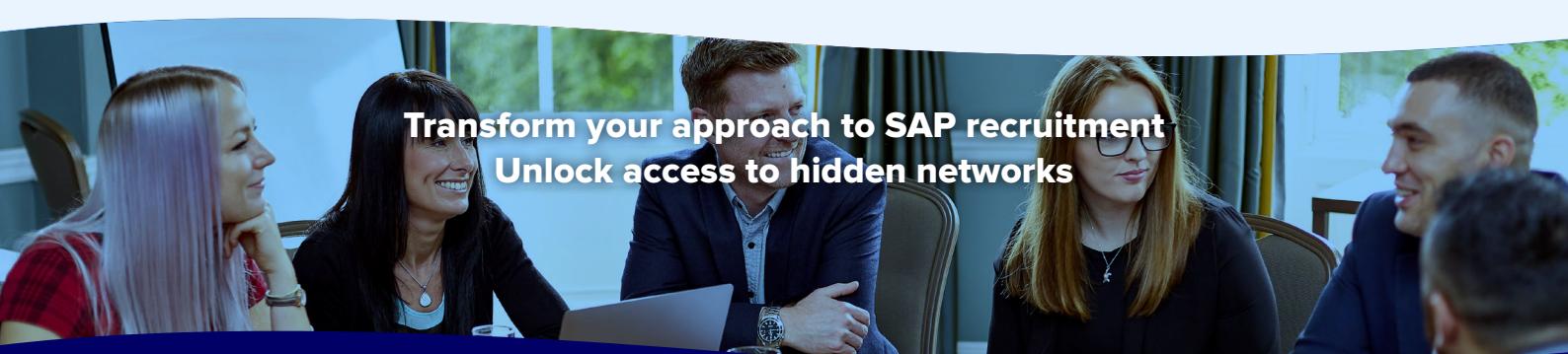
In parallel, if you need in-house S/4HANA permanent capability to drive the value out of SAP for the business, we have decades of experience building SAP teams to back you up. We know where to find the best S/4HANA people and work with passive candidates who are at the top of their game.

In fact, we are so confident in creating the perfect match that we offer a 100 day, 100% rebate guarantee for all permanent placements with our partnership model. No sliding-scale or small-print clauses.

**Why wait any longer for the perfect SAP S/4HANA experts to knock at your door?**

Call: +44 (0) 1423 559 559 or email: [hello@bluewaveselect.com](mailto:hello@bluewaveselect.com) to learn more.

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