



SAP App Center and JobPts: How an Innovative Buying Experience Helps Innovate the Employee Experience

An Enterprise Applications Focus Report

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Companies across a wide variety of industries are striving to deal with the need to empower a dynamic and growing employee base to do their best to service an equally dynamic and growing customer base. Many of these companies are looking to a combination of technology and business processes in order to support their employees and improve their engagement with the company and its customers. For many, however, their traditional human resource tools don't meet the challenge, and solving the problem involves taking a different look at what employee engagement is all about.

Importantly, a company that embraces the cloud and modern business practices such as employee engagement should have access to applications that extend their human resource systems without relying on older, outmoded acquisition and deployment processes. Indeed, as business practices evolve to extend traditional line of business functions like human resources, the way in which these new business practices are deployed must also evolve, especially for cloud-based systems.

This means that the way in which new functionality is discovered and deployed has to change as well, to make the experience more consumer-like and less driven by older, on-premises business models. This is why SAP created its online [SAP App Center](#) as a platform for partners to provide prospective customers with a B2C experience in a B2B setting. This report is the first in a series on how SAP App Center is enabling customers to have access to innovation in a consumer-like experience. SAP App Center does

this by providing a full-service platform that allows partners to leverage SAP's assets, including SAP Cloud Platform, in order to support new functionality and new business models.

This simultaneous embrace of new business processes and new ways to acquire and deploy business software have become a key best practice at Sun Communities, a real estate investment trust based in Southfield, MI. The approach that Sun Communities has used to innovate its employee engagement practices is a good example of the value of SAP App Center and the new business practices it can enable.

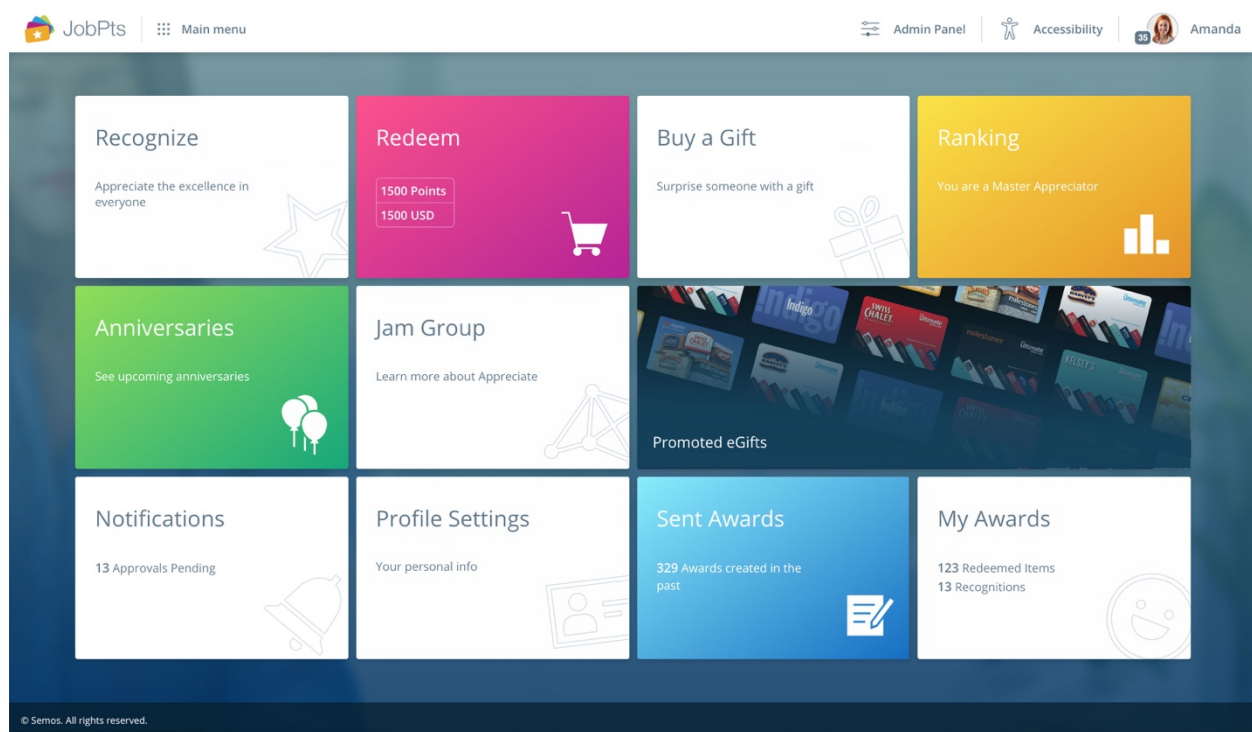
The emphasis at Sun Communities on employee engagement in the pursuit of customer satisfaction is a core business imperative, according to Marc Farrugia, Sun Communities' vice president of human resources. "Without our team members, we have no operations and no ability to serve our customers," said Farrugia. Doing right by the employees so that they will do right by the customers involves a relatively simple concept, Farrugia added: By creating a "fun workplace" Sun Communities is able to empower employees to provide an important personal touch when it comes to managing its properties and communities across the country.

At Sun Communities this meant deploying a peer recognition system that they could use in addition to their other employee engagement processes. The company had an older system in place, but it was "getting kind of stale...and adoption was low," according to Farrugia. Replacing it, ideally, would entail finding a solution that worked closely with the company's SAP SuccessFactors human resources software. That requirement eventually led Farrugia to the SAP App Center online marketplace and to App Center partner Semos Software, and its JobPts product. (See Figure 1.)

The quest to replace the legacy system started somewhat surreptitiously, however. Farrugia had heard about the SAP App Center online digital store and was browsing the listings when he came across JobPts. The App Center listing allowed Farrugia to quickly ascertain that JobPts met some of this key criteria: In addition to its ability to recognize employees for exceptional service, Farrugia could see in the App Center listing that JobPts was built to directly interact with the company's HR system – SuccessFactors, and that the app runs on the SAP Cloud Platform – the platform that underpins SuccessFactors.

Another important part of Farrugia's decision to deploy JobPts was the App Center's ability to support purchasing directly from the website. The fact that a sales call or complex contractual discussion wasn't needed to purchase JobPts made it even more palatable. The ability to run a free pilot, another feature available for many solutions on the SAP App Center, added to the ease and fluidity of Farrugia's buying experience. "Being able to see hands-on what the solution looked like and (to be able to) make a purchasing decision with a couple of clicks really got me to purchase it," said Farrugia.

Figure 1: JobPts in Action



The fact that JobPts runs on SAP Cloud Platform had an important influence on the buying decision, said Farrugia. One of Farrugia’s goals as human resources vice president is to “eliminate the different segmented components within our HR landscape,” he said. An app that runs on SAP Cloud Platform and is designed to integrate directly with SAP SuccessFactors would definitely help achieve that goal and vastly simplify the deployment process. “It was particularly important that we were able to get up and running quickly and not have it be overly burdensome to our team in terms of development resources.”

“It checked way more of the boxes than we ever expected,” Farrugia said.

This ability to check boxes on behalf of prospective customers is why Semos Cloud features its apps on the App Center, according to Goran Rice, head of customer success at Semos Cloud, an Israel-based App Center partner. Connectivity to SAP SuccessFactors through the SAP Cloud Platform is an important selling point for JobPts. Customers like Sun Communities “want to be fully integrated into SAP: extensibility was important,” said Rice.

Customers also want to know that the apps they’re buying are certified and that the infrastructure and data that support the apps are safe and secure. Discussions about safety and privacy can be difficult for smaller vendors to have with prospective customers, said Rice. That’s why “SAP Cloud Platform is a big advantage if you’re a partner,” said Rice. “When you work with SAP Cloud Platform you practically eliminate most of those questions. If you can save two months of discussion about unnecessary things, that’s a key advantage.”

The advantage accrues to the customer as well. “The certification is something that you can’t take lightly,” Farrugia said. “There was no extensive integration work to be done. That value is critical and will really help further the adoption.”

Importantly, the App Center model fits neatly into an evolving new model for how customers acquire new technology. “The vendor push that was once the norm is practically over,” said Rice. “Customer pull is happening, and you need to embrace and support it.”

Farrugia agrees. “We have been fortunate to have a lot of autonomy in HR to adopt new technologies. To identify a need that maybe we have or didn’t know we have, purchase the product, and seamlessly integrate it into our landscape in a matter of hours or a couple of days is really the vision” for where companies like Sun Communities should be going, he said.

Indeed, the App Center experience has already been tapped to provide another new app for Sun Communities. “After we purchased JobPts, we found a job description management app through the App Center, and we go live next week,” said Farrugia. “Moving forward, it’s become a spot I will always check. It’s a great place to browse through to stay up to date with what’s out there. The App Center is a critical tool to help drive innovation forward.”

This ability of App Center to support innovation while simplifying the buying and deployment experience makes it a valuable asset for customer and vendor alike. The marriage of a modern platform strategy with a modern software acquisition strategy is an important way in which companies like SAP are moving the consumer app experience into the enterprise and offering a way in which innovation can come from certified partner products instead of trying to do the necessary development in-house. For innovative customers like Sun Communities, and others, this strategy has given them an important platform for moving the company forward in a domain – employee engagement – that only promises to become more important as time goes on.