
SIG: Branding the Changing Enterprise - Impact of Mergers & Acquisitions on User Experience Organizations

MODERATOR

Janaki Kumar

SAP Labs LLC
3410 Hillview Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94306 USA
janaki.kumar@sap.com

TEAM SAP

**Dan Rosenberg,
Michael Arent**

SAP Labs LLC
3410 Hillview Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94306 USA

TEAM ORACLE

**Anna Wichansky,
Madhuri Kolhatkar**

Oracle USA
500 Oracle Parkway
Redwood Shores, CA 94065 USA

TEAM CA

**Roman G Longoria,
Bob Hendrich**

CA
1 Computer Associates Plaza,
Islandia, NY, 11788 USA

DISCUSSANT

Arnie Lund

Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond WA 98052 USA

Abstract

Mergers and acquisitions are becoming increasingly common in the enterprise software world. For example, SAP acquired Business Objects, Oracle acquired PeopleSoft and CA acquired Cassatt in recent times. While this is a business expansion strategy for the acquiring company, it presents a challenge for UX professionals in both the acquiring and acquired companies, who are responsible for branding the look and feel of the newly combined business entity. This SIG examines **the design, technical and cultural challenges facing a UX practitioner from the acquiring as well as acquired company's perspectives**. We will explore possible best practice solutions that can help other UX professionals facing similar challenges.

Keywords

User Experience, Enterprise Software, Branding, Mergers and Acquisitions, UX standards and guidelines, UX Strategy, UX Management, SIG Discussion

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.2 INFORMATION INTERFACES AND
PRESENTATION: User Interfaces

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General Terms

See list of the limited ACM 16 terms in the instructions.

Introduction

Imagine you are the head of a large enterprise software company. You have spent considerable time and effort in defining a corporate brand consisting of a recognizable look as well as a consistent and professional feel.

Now, imagine your company decides to acquire another enterprise software company. That company has also invested in their own unique look and feel. The acquisition goes so well for your company that they decide to acquire yet another company and another after that...

As the person responsible for the user experience (UX) strategy, you are now faced with:

- Multiple UI technologies and platforms
- Multiple navigation paradigms and menu structures
- Multiple interaction behaviors – window handling, save model, error handling and messaging, button placement etc
- And completely different visual designs

You may also have varying degrees of compliance with Accessibility standards, and levels of internationalization.

Similarly, how does it feel to be a UX professional of an acquired company? You may have spent resources

defining your own unique brand. Clearly you have done something right since another company wants to acquire yours. However, fitting into the acquirer's UX organization is not without design, technical and cultural challenges. Are there tips and tricks to help UX professionals in these situations?

SIG Panelists

Our panelists today have lived through several such acquisitions, and are here to tell us their stories. We will discuss this topic from the acquiring and acquired perspectives by inviting panelists who represent both positions from each company.

TEAM SAP

Dan Rosenberg, SAP

Daniel Rosenberg is a Senior Vice President at SAP, the largest Enterprise Applications Software company in the world. In this capacity he directs user experience design and usability activities across all SAP product lines. Prior to joining SAP he was Vice President of R&D for UI Design at Oracle Corporation. Previous corporate positions included the role of User Interface Architect for Borland International and Ashton-Tate. He has authored or co-authored many well known publications in the HCI field, including "Human Factors in Product Design" (Elsevier 1991) as well as chapters in the original "Handbook of Human Computer Interaction" (Elsevier 1988).

Michael Arent, SAP Business Objects

Michael Arent is currently Vice President of User Experience at SAP Business Objects, a new division of SAP focused on analytics and business intelligence software products and solutions. He leads a globally located team of managers and design professionals who

provide best-practice design as well as assure the usability and standardization of user interfaces and user experiences. He is co-author of two recent books on software prototyping, *Effective Prototyping for Software Makers* and *Effective Prototyping with Excel*. Prior to SAP, Michael was with PeopleSoft, Adobe, MetaDesign, Sun, and Apple.

TEAM ORACLE

Anna Wichansky, Oracle USA

Anna Wichansky Ph.D CPE is currently Senior Director of Applications User Experience at Oracle USA. She helped transition PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, and Siebel UX groups post-acquisition. Anna was a founding member of Oracle's Usability and Interface Design group. She managed multiple UX groups, and founded the usability labs, advanced user interface research, and customer usability advisory board. She has an M.S. and Ph.D in human factors engineering from Tufts, and A.B. in experimental psychology from Harvard. She researched, developed, and tested the user experience at Bell Laboratories, Hewlett-Packard, and Silicon Graphics. She has consulted for NASA, NIST, and non-profit organizations.

Madhuri Kolhatkar, Oracle USA

Madhuri Kolhatkar is the Director of User Experience for Oracle's Applications Unlimited product suites and is based in Denver, Colorado. Madhuri is well seasoned in acquisitions and mergers and has over 20 years of experience in Telecommunications and Enterprise Software industry. She has lead user experience teams in US West, QWEST, JD Edwards, PeopleSoft and Oracle. Madhuri brings some interesting perspectives on how end user experience is affected when a product brand disappears or is absorbed by the acquired

company. She has BA in Sociology, MA in Journalism from India, and MA in Communications Studies from Concordia University, Montreal Canada.

TEAM CA

Roman G Longoria, CA

Roman Longoria is a Vice President of User Experience at CA. Historically CA has grown into a \$4 billion company by acquiring hundreds of software companies. Over the last 5 years CA has acquired over 20 companies to help fill in the gap in its enterprise IT management portfolio.

In 2003, he founded the User Experience group at CA, which is responsible for product design, UI standards, usability testing, accessibility, and institutionalizing user centered design. Since 2008, he has been managing a global centralized services organization covering product design, development, and QA.

Bob Hendrich, CA

Bob Hendrich is a User Experience Architect for CA. Since CA's acquisition of Cassatt Corporation in May of 2009, he has been doing application design for CA's enterprise management products. His post-acquisition focus has been integration of Cassatt's next-generation cloud computing paradigm with CA's current enterprise automation suite.

Bob began his career in 1990 doing Human Factors research for the International Space Station. Since 1994, he has focused on usability testing and software design of enterprise applications in the insurance and software industries. For the past five years he has designed the user experience for Cassatt's cloud computing platform.

SIG Moderator and Discussant

This SIG will have a moderator and a discussant who are both UX professionals with experience on this topic.

MODERATOR

Janaki Kumar, SAP Business Objects

Janaki Kumar is currently a Director at SAP Labs. She leads a global user experience team focused on Governance Risk and Compliance (GRC) and Performance Optimization Application (POA) domains. She has worked in the field of Human Computer Interaction since 1994 with extensive experience designing enterprise software. When SAP acquired Virsa Corporation and later Business Objects, she worked with the acquired entities to analyze their user experience practices and standards, educate the new colleagues on SAP's UX practices and standards, while putting in place a phased strategy to harmonize the experience for the enterprise professional.

DISCUSSANT

Arne Lund, Microsoft Corporation

Arnie Lund is Principal Director, User Experience at Microsoft. Dr. Lund's PhD is in experimental psychology (with a focus on cognition) from Northwestern University. He co-chaired the ACM SIGCHI CHI conference in 1998 and 2008. He is a Fellow of the Human Factors Society (HFES), and recently completed his service on the HFES Executive Committee where he ran the HFES Institute overseeing various US standards activities (including the first US HCI standard). He was the president of the Board of Certification for Professional Ergonomists, and holds a CUXP certification. He has published widely on UX management issues.

Community and Audience

We expect this SIG to be relevant, interesting and informative to the following audience:

- UX practitioners in enterprise software companies
- UX professionals recently affected by mergers, acquisition or partnerships
- UX professionals in companies where departments have differing UX strategies, trying to unify their designs in a heterogeneous UX landscape.
- Executives in companies considering mergers and acquisitions, to be informed of the UX implications
- Academics who wish to understand key trends in industry.

Audience Participation

We encourage the UX community to be part of this conversation through a variety of channels.

Prior to the conference, we will post our SIG discussion topic on a website and invite UX professionals to send questions and comments to our panelists via social networking sites such as *twitter*. During the SIG session the audience members can ask questions directly or post them on *twitter* (*#uxmergers*). The moderator and discussant will monitor the comments and select interesting posts for discussion during the SIG.