

Podcast: Talking SAP Solution Manager with Jim Spath

"On the pros and cons of Solution Manager, framing the SolMan discussion, and whether presentations should be truthful or focus solely on success stories."

Podcast Interview Date: April 29, 2010

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Podcast guest Jim Spath is a fan of the Bengies Drive-In Theatre. And just like the drive-in, we've got a podcast double feature for you. In part two (the part in this description), Jim and I talk about our shared interest in improving the public discussion on SAP Solution Manager and why we think this public airing is important. In part one of our double feature, we talked about getting the most out of ASUG 2010.

Jim Spath is a Technical Architect with a global manufacturer. He's an SAP Mentor and a long time ASUG volunteer. He writes some of the most readable technical blogs on SCN. Jim is presenting at ASUG 2010 on compressing database objects. I tracked him down on Skype for a Sunday evening taping so we could talk about ASUG but also launch several upcoming discussions on SAP Solution Manager. Note: the views Jim expresses on this podcast are only his personal views and are not made on behalf of any of his organizational affiliations.

Podcast Timeframe

1:40 Why the "Solution Manager" phrase can be vague and why Jim sees "SAP Solution Manager" as a tool not a product. Jim also explains the roots of the SolMan product (managing transports and version control). SolMan is to some degree misunderstood now because it has so many different capabilities - it is hard to establish a common ground when discussing its capabilities.

4:40 Jim's "Solution Manager - A Necessary Evil?" blog post - some people took issue with Jim's TechEd SolMan presentation - he shared the feedback openly in the blog post as a way of expanding the Solution Manager debate.

6:45 What's the next step for a constructive discussion on Solution Manager? What are Jim's experiences working with the tool so far?

8:55 How Jim dealt with getting negative comments on his presentation - was he receiving criticism for being a messenger about news his attendees didn't want to hear?

10:40 What should be expected of presenters? Should they focus solely on success stories or present a more honest view?

12:40 Jim's view on the topic going forward. He doesn't want to become "the guy that doesn't like Solution Manager." His main focus remains how to help his company get the most out of SolMan. ASUG now has a Solution Manager Special Interest Group, but Jim will continue to share his own views on the topic. He's attending a 4-5 day training in SAP Solution Manager this summer.

15:35 Jon with a shoutout to Jim's blog and how he turns his technical pieces into narratives with a storyline, something that's not easy to do. Jim: "I don't write instruction manuals, I write hitchhikers guides to instruction manuals."