

birchman



From the Abbey Road recording studios, to the Zeppelin iPod Speaker Systems and the homes of discerning music lovers around the world, the initials B&W mean innovative and high quality audio systems.

Bowers and Wilkins (B&W) is responsible for some of the most ground breaking technology in the audio world, including the introduction in 2000 of tweeter domes made of diamond. Their research and development centre, christened by journalists 'The University of Sound' based in Sussex, continues with the mission of getting as close as possible to transparent reproduction of recorded sound. But innovation does not stop with their products. B&W believe that to remain world class they have to have innovative business processes as well. In 2006, they took the decision to upgrade their SAP R/3 licences to SAP.ERP.



B&W were using R/3 4.6c to support purchasing, logistics, sales, distribution, warehousing and finance. However, they had seen additional features which they believed, over the coming years, would allow them to extract increased business value out of their SAP system. Of particular interest were web based supplier collaboration, business intelligence, flexible general ledger and elements of Financial Supply Chain Management, such as biller direct. Working closely with SAP and Birchman, B&W became convinced that the most cost effective way to gain the functionality they wanted was to upgrade the R/3 system to SAP.ERP.

B&W Speakers Success Story

"This upgrade signals our continued commitment to SAP systems for at least another 10 years," says Paul Fryer, Business Systems Manager at B&W Group. "With this upgrade we are gaining access to all of the capabilities we believe we require to support our future growth. As our business changes and expands, SAP.ERP has the depth and flexibility to continue to meet our needs." The Birchman Group have been providing support services to B&W for over four years and acting as their SAP Value Added Reseller. Although the original intention had not been to carry out the actual upgrade immediately, late in 2006 B&W chose to take the opportunity of an unexpected window in their development schedule to move ahead with the upgrade. In December the B&W IT team together with a consultant from Birchman began the planning and preparation to upgrade B&W's two tier landscape. Before the Christmas break the Development system was running on the new release ready for B&W to commence their testing cycle.



In January 2007 work began on the Production system and B&W staff began using SAP.ERP ECC6 on 22nd January 2007.

This was achieved with less than 20 days consultancy, the system was only unavailable to users for 6 hours and almost more importantly, no one had their Christmas Break ruined! From its beginnings in the 1960s in Worthing, Sussex, B&W now manufactures in the UK, Canada, Denmark and the Far East. B&W has over 150 users but plans to expand the user base. "We plan to expand the number of SAP users worldwide," says Fryer. "This upgrade to SAP's latest software is part of our preparation for system growth."

The Birchman Group was formed in 2003. A pioneer in IT Value Management, Birchman focus all their work whether implementing new systems, upgrading existing systems or providing support, on delivering positive business outcomes. Birchman partner, Gareth Edwards, says, "We balance the skills and ethics we bring to our work with an understanding of the customer's 'real world', which gives us a professional and pragmatic approach to the work we do. We are pleased to be working with B&W and believe that the approach we both take to using and managing the SAP system illustrates that it is a good solution for the medium sized enterprise.

Often there is an apprehension within the SAP user community, of carrying out an upgrade. There is a perception that the upgrade will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. However we believe that our work with B&W has demonstrated that an SAP upgrade has become less complex over time and provides a fantastic return on investment, if it makes additional functionality available." Why don't you set Birchman the challenge of making your upgrade as pain free.