

The client

Walker Bros (Elland) is a manufacturer of retail display equipment and components in the furniture industry, which supplies both direct to retailers including Tesco and Card Factory, and through an appointed shop fitting company. Established in the 1960s and still privately owned, it employs around 40 people.

The background

Walker Bros (Elland) has a strategy in place to grow to a turnover of £5 million in three years' time. However, these growth plans were restricted by its legacy software systems, which in many places suffered from a lack of integration and automation, and overly complex workflows.

The company was using a variety of different applications, many of which were not integrated with each other and therefore unable to share information automatically.

Its accounting software was supported in-house with no upgrade path available, and a separate reporting application was required to extract the required company reports from this software. Its payroll software was separate again, and not integrated with the accounts system. Nor had the company any time and attendance clocking-in system.

A specialist CAD application was necessary for the design and prototyping of new items and production of item drawings to be referenced in production, but again this was not integrated with other business systems. Its email was hosted externally. Finally, the company relied heavily on Excel spreadsheets throughout the business, from sales to production, often created where individuals had no system process to follow.

As such, Walk Bros (Elland) sought to improve system integration and workflow throughout all of its business areas, from sales enquiry to payment receipt. It wanted to automate all standard business processes and develop new pre-defined best practices. APH knew that SAP Business One would be able to achieve these goals, providing a single platform for all core business processes as well as integration with the company's specialist CAD software.

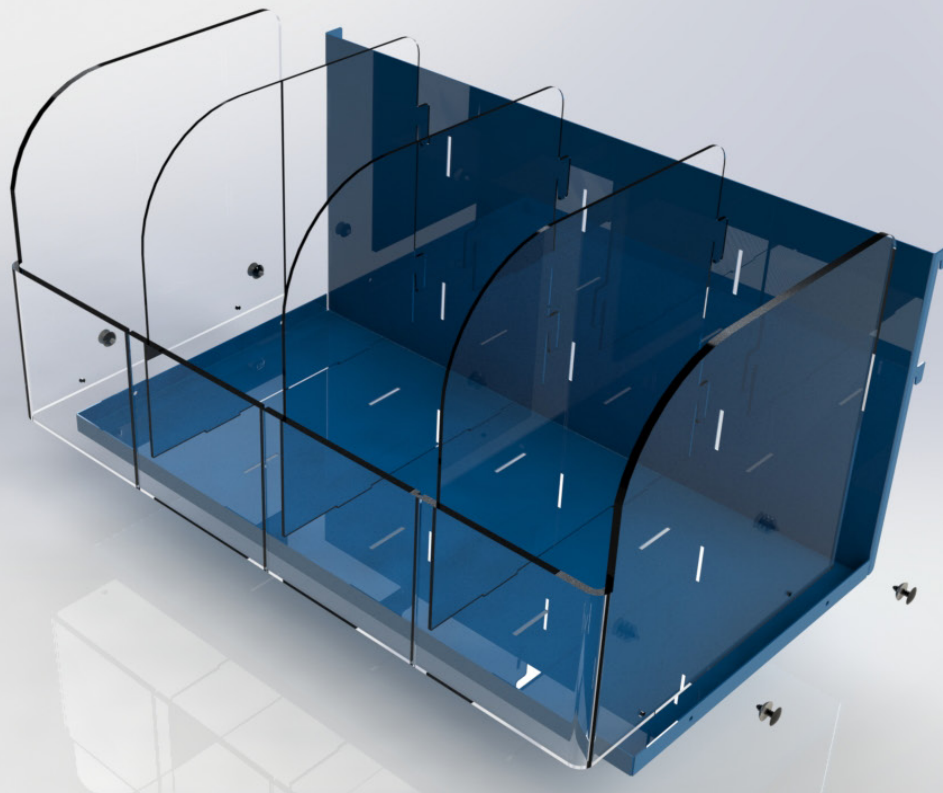
The solution

We began by setting out Walker Bros (Elland's) key business requirements, and breaking down the overall goal of improved integration and workflow into a series of more granular and detailed objectives..

These included specific objectives around issues such as more flexibility around bills of materials (BOM), greater accuracy and integration between system inventory and production, and automated workflow to identify the best supplier price and availability for purchased components.

We also agreed some key metrics which Walker Bros (Elland) wanted to achieve, such as a reduction of at least 10% in the company's current costs for temporary and overtime labour, which initially stood at £360,000.

From there, we proposed a SAP Business One deployment incorporating an initial four professional and nine limited licenses, plus one payroll license.



The results

Walker Bros (Elland) now uses SAP Business One for all its core business processes, including managing the entire sales trajectory, from initial enquiry to delivery and payment, financials and accounts, inventory management, human resources and relationships with suppliers.

The sales opportunities functionality within SAP Business One enables Walker Bros (Elland) to define all the different stages in the tendering process (enquiry, meeting, prototype and so on) and track the progress and value of these stages accordingly. Sales forecast data enables more accurate business planning, and sales quotations can be produced automatically, generating more consistency and accuracy.



APH's own labour capture application, combined with a labour collection terminal and employee cards for swiping in and out has dramatically improved the company's ability to track employee time and attendance.

SAP Business One's inbuilt financials modules manage all of the company's financial and accounting processes, with the SAP-approved module BrightPay managing the payments to staff.

Ultimately, Walker Bros (Elland) has achieved the seamless, fully-integrated software system for all key enterprise functions that it was looking for. Different business departments are able to share key information with each other automatically, improving accuracy and simplifying workflows. As the business grows, SAP Business One will continue to support all core operations.

Matt Bowman, Quality Manager at Walker Bros (Elland) said: "We have ambitious growth plans as a company and our legacy software and systems were holding us back. There wasn't nearly enough integration or automation, we were relying on overcomplicated processes and too much manual intervention, and different business functions were unable to share information easily.

"SAP Business One has been absolutely transformative. To be able to use a single system for all our core business functions, and for those functions to be able to speak to each other and share information automatically is such a powerful foundation for our operations. APH guided us through the entire process, really taking the time to understand our processes, our needs and our objectives, so we've got a deployment that really works for us. As we expand and grow, SAP Business One – and APH – will grow with us."

Charlie Heywood at APH said: "Walker Bros (Elland) was in the classic position of having grown organically, adding new systems and processes as they were required, and not being able to take a holistic view of the whole application infrastructure. SAP Business One is such a powerful option in these scenarios because it is so comprehensive and so customisable; organisations can tailor it to precisely their own needs and operations, which is exactly what we've done."