

DataSwitch a vital instrument for helping BKW halve reordering times

One of the UK's leading instrumentation engineers has slashed the time it takes on stock reordering by 50% after implementing DataSwitch from K3 Syspro.

BKW Instruments is a leading supplier, manufacturer, and distributor of instrumentation solutions across a number of industries including water, pharmaceutical, food and beverage, oil and gas, energy, HVAC and more. The business is a long standing customer of K3 Syspro, having first implemented a SYSPRO Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution from the business over twenty years ago. When the business sought a solution to help automate its complex reordering processes, K3 Syspro was the obvious first port of call.

BKW's previous warehouse management system was labour intensive and operated in a reactive nature. The task of re-ordering stock was time consuming and relied entirely on human input, which also left it open to human error.



“With DataSwitch, we are saving on paper usage and have slashed the time it takes to carry out this process by 50%.”

Mike Honeyford, BKW Instruments

At a glance

Company

BKW Instruments

Industry sector

Manufacturing
 • Instrumentation Solutions

SIC Code

26511
 • Manufacture of electronic instruments and appliances for measuring, testing, and navigation, except industrial process control equipment

Number of employees

50 +

The challenge

- Complex reordering process
- Labour intensive warehouse management system
- Time consuming processes and human error

Solution & services

- SYSPRO ERP
- DataSwitch
- K3.Reports

The benefits

- Automation of processes and information
- Improved reporting
- Improved traceability
- Management transparency throughout entire supply chain
- Real-time access to critical business information
- Seamless Integration

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Mike Honeyford, Operations Director at BKW Instruments explains the difficulties the company was previously encountering. He says: "Our previous re-ordering system didn't encompass a restock trigger, and as a result the task of re-ordering was done on an 'as and when' basis. There was no process to follow and this meant items ran the risk Mike Honeyford, Operations Director at BKW Instruments explains the difficulties the company was previously encountering. He says: "Our previous re-ordering system didn't encompass a restock trigger, and as a result the task of re-ordering was done on an 'as and when' basis. There was no process to follow and this meant items ran the risk of being reordered multiple times, or not at all. of being reordered multiple times, or not at all."

"Our previous reorder process was only triggered when the last stock item had been used. This meant that the system relied on employees to notify the procurement department when an item had become out of stock. What would follow in the old process, was multiple administration tasks to manage reordering through manual methods, resulting in a large paper trail. Purchase orders were created manually, before being sent to our procurement department, where they were manually checked before being inputted onto the system and processed. With DataSwitch, we are saving on paper usage and have slashed the time it takes to carry out this process by 50%."



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Leveraging the Internet of Things

In order to create a more proactive reordering process and automate the task, BKW approached K3 Syspro for a solution. K3 Syspro implemented DataSwitch across the entire business, integrating it with the company's existing SYSPRO ERP solution, and also with a number of the company's existing third party applications. DataSwitch is a powerful data manipulation and systems integration tool, which leverages the Internet of Things to automate processes and information. The solution is developed and maintained by K3 Syspro itself.

It was important to BKW that DataSwitch was not only able to automate the existing ordering process, but also offer the business improved reporting functionality, which gave management transparency throughout the entire supply chain. In order to do this K3 Syspro built a solution that seamlessly integrated three of its technologies: SYSPRO, DataSwitch, and K3 Reports.

K3 Reports is a dynamic K3 Syspro module, which provides powerful Crystal Reporting capabilities, working alongside both SYSPRO and DataSwitch to allow BKW's management team real-time access to critical business information,

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from anywhere. K3 Reports provides BKW with clarity of important business information, but also with data the company can use to drive its future growth plans.

Mike Honeyford comments; *"As a business with multiple facets of operation, it is important that our ERP system integrates with the other systems we use. Our business operations can shift throughout the course of a single day, and so we required a solution that could adapt to this. The great thing about SYSPRO is that it seamlessly integrates with the third party applications we use. This has given us the infinite ability to work outside of SYSPRO, but utilising data which can integrate back into SYSPRO through DataSwitch."*

"Since automating a number of our key warehouse management processes using DataSwitch, we have been able to save significant time throughout our entire warehouse operations, reducing the time we previously spent reordering stock. DataSwitch consolidates our reordering process, ensuring that stock is re-ordered ahead of time, enabling us to dedicate the time saved to further improving customer experience."

Since implementing DataSwitch, BKW has been able to automate a number of its stock replenishment processes, resulting in considerable time savings. One such saving comes from the automation of stock replenishment for low value, high volume items. Using DataSwitch, and the company's existing barcode scanners, BKW has created automated stock triggers to ensure stock is reordered ahead of time.

This is carried out by scanning a barcode, which then creates a bin note, and a purchase order within DataSwitch. These purchase orders are then consolidated overnight using DataSwitch, which utilises a number of existing factors such as previous order quantities and supplier costs. The purchase orders are then automatically sent from DataSwitch to K3 Reports, which sends a copy of the purchase order via an email distribution list, for full traceability.

Mike Honeyford explains how the automated process is benefitting the entire business. *"Automating our reordering process has seen us make significant time savings across the business; purchase orders are consolidated and processed overnight, meaning that during working hours our team is able to use the time previously afforded to this process to concentrate on other areas of the business, including future development."*

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BKW is not only using DataSwitch for the supply and distribution arm of the business. It also keeps stock of a number of components that are manufactured in house. BKW has been able to expand its use of barcodes, further utilising DataSwitch to streamline the company's processes. BKW is able to use barcode scanners to trigger the creation of a Job for each component. This is distributed via email and received by the manufacturing department each morning. Again, K3 reports is instrumental in the production of jobs, providing full traceability of all purchase orders which are emailed using Crystal Reports.

"The way we use DataSwitch for our own manufacturing arm is very similar to the way we use it when dealing with third party suppliers and distributors. However, instead of a PO, SYSPRO creates a unique works order, to manufacture a specific item or part. Again, K3 Reports is used here to produce copies of works orders which are then automatically sent to the correct department. This provides us with full traceability of our operations and access to real time reports so we see where we can make our processes even leaner."



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BKW has been a K3 Syspro customer for over 20 years, during which the company has come to think outside the box when exploring the ways in which it can make more of its ERP investment.

Mike Honeyford concluded; *“Being a customer of SYSPRO for over 20 years has seen our demand as a customer shift throughout this time. Whenever this has happened, K3 Syspro has been able to offer us power tailoring support for our solution, to ensure we continue to generate ROI from our ERP investment.”*

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