

## ABSFT Customer Success Story

### SAP Upgrade Services



### The Edrington Group

**“I speak for everyone in the group when I say that it has been a pleasure to work on this upgrade project with such well-focused, well-managed people who share the same ideals as ourselves.”**

Alan Carlile, IT Director

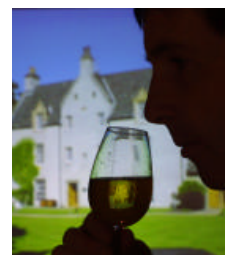


#### Customer Background

The Edrington Group is the UK's leading independent Scotch Whisky group, with a £230M turnover and over 900 staff. The Group's business is global but its operations are based entirely in Scotland, covering the full spectrum of the Scotch Whisky industry – from cask to glass, through strategic partnerships in global distribution to the international marketing of its brands to the final consumer. Edrington's premium brands include the blended whiskies The Famous Grouse and Cutty Sark, and the single malts The Macallan and Highland Park.



Edrington chose SAP as its ERP solution in 1998 and implemented functionality to support all of the key functions of its business, from manufacturing and supply chain management through to finance and human resources. The software is utilised at Edrington's two main sites in Glasgow and Perth, and key distilleries at Highland Park on Orkney, The Macallan on Speyside and The Famous Grouse Experience at Crieff.



The initial implementation utilised release 3.1h of SAP R/3 on an AS400 platform and Edrington upgraded the system to 4.0b shortly after the project. During 2002, for a combination of reasons relating to the imminent withdrawal of support for certain releases of SAP and the desire to take advantage of new functionality, Edrington decided to upgrade to release 4.6C.

Edrington selected Absoft to be its partner for this project. A successful relationship had developed with Absoft during Edrington's implementation of Business Warehouse (BW), with Absoft playing an instrumental part in delivering this system on time and on budget. Absoft had also gone on to provide SAP HR support services to the group and had built up an in-depth knowledge of the Edrington SAP system.

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### The Project

Edrington's objective was to achieve a technical upgrade – i.e. to deliver a 4.6c system which incorporated existing business processes. The implementation of new functionality in SAP would take place in a later phase. The upgrade project was to take place alongside the upgrade of Edrington's warehouse control system and the implementation of new interfaces to a bespoke system handling Bulk Stock transactions.

The SAP upgrade began in January 2003 with a planning phase that included identifying the super-users within the organisation, the skills available in-house and the additional skills required to address the project. Absft was contracted to supply these extra skills, and a group of consultants with previous upgrade experience were selected to join the project team. A series of meetings and workshops were set up to allow the project team members to get to know each other and understand the scope of the exercise. This was an effective step in developing a strong project team.

Absft was allocated responsibility for drafting a detailed project plan and determining how best to share the various project tasks amongst the members of the joint project team.

Edrington purchased two new AS400 servers and established new Development and Quality Assurance (QA) environments for the upgrade project. The upgrade team then undertook a comprehensive gap analysis to ensure that release 4.6c would be able to handle all of Edrington's existing business processes. This activity included the identification of bespoke developments in the 4.0b system and subsequent evaluation as to whether these could be left behind, replaced by standard SAP in 4.6c or if they would need to be brought forward into the new system. Changes were made and tested in the Development system.



Because of the flexibility afforded by having a separate system on which to test the upgrade, a copy of the 4.0b Production environment was made to the new QA system, thereby providing updated transaction information. The system was then upgraded to 4.6c and the changes made to the Development system in the previous phase were applied to the QA environment.

Once the QA system was complete, the next task was extensive process testing, using test scenarios developed by the project team to reflect Edrington's business processes. The testing activity was carried out by Absft consultants and, most importantly, by Edrington super users.

A set of 4.6c familiarisation materials were developed to introduce users to the new user interface and functions offered by 4.6c, including "Favourites" and "Enjoy" transactions. A further objective of the familiarisation exercise was to illustrate to users the ease of use of the new system and its positive impact on productivity.

To allow the project team to estimate and minimise system downtime, there were several run-throughs of the Production system upgrade before the final procedure was carried out. The final procedure took just three days. Working on a shift basis, the project team started the upgrade on a Friday morning and a successful go-live was achieved on the following Monday morning. The cutover to the upgraded system was seamless. Just 8 months after the upgrade project began, the 4.6c system was in place and it was business as usual at Edrington.

Following the project, Absft has been tasked with producing an optimisation report, recommending potential enhancements to Edrington's system.



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### Key Success Factors

- People and teamwork  
Edrington's excellent project management skills and a highly motivated IT department, combined with Absoft's SAP consultants – offering both technical and functional specialisms - to create a strong project team. In spite of the fact that much of Absoft's work was carried out remotely, using a connection to Edrington's systems, the joint team worked diligently and with great team spirit to deliver the project according to plan.
- Careful project planning  
The use of a separate system on which to test the upgrade not only created a safety net to counter the risk of cutover failure, but also allowed the cutover process to be fine-tuned and steps to be taken to minimise eventual downtime. The result was minimal disruption to the business and immediate benefits for users.
- Key user involvement  
By involving key users throughout the project, as well as undertaking system familiarisation activities, a new level of enthusiasm was generated amongst users, which resulted in rapid acceptance of the new system and an improved sense of system ownership.

### Benefits

- Productivity improvements  
New functions available in release 4.6c are enabling Edrington employees to enjoy time-saving benefits – for example, the use of “Favourites” allows users to process orders more quickly – saving around 30 seconds per order. This adds up to significant benefits across the group. Furthermore, Edrington is now in a position to exploit new technologies available in SAP to generate further business benefits.
- More satisfied users  
Direct involvement in the upgrade project and familiarisation initiatives have resulted in a sense of greater empowerment and higher levels of satisfaction amongst Edrington's user population.
- Cost containment  
Absoft consultants delivered this project remotely, attending Edrington sites only when necessary. This allowed Edrington to minimise both the cost of the project and disruption to its business.

**“The work Absoft undertook was of an exceptionally high quality and it was a natural progression to involve them in our upgrade. Absoft offer excellent calibre staff, with the leading edge skills required for these projects.**

**“The upgraded system has been well-received by staff – they are now asking what else the system can do! We will be looking closely at Absoft's optimisation report for the purpose of planning future system developments.”**

Alan Carlile, IT Director