

# INDUSTRY 4.0 MANUFACTURING FOR HOWDENS JOINERY

CASE STUDY

## About the Customer

Howden Joinery PLC is a leading supplier of kitchen and joinery products to the trade in the UK, listed on the FTSE 250. Offering over 10,000 products—including kitchens, joinery, appliances, work surfaces and hardware—the company enables customers to furnish homes entirely from a single source. With approximately 40% of its products manufactured across five factory locations, Howdens distributes goods to more than 800 depots in the UK, Republic of Ireland and France. Providing free design and planning services at every depot, the company has delivered millions of kitchens nationwide, even serving the royal family.

## Project Summary

In late 2021, Howdens initiated a transformative digital manufacturing program to modernize its operations. Partnering with Engineering Industries eXcellence's Digital Manufacturing team, the company aimed to replace its legacy Manufacturing Execution System (MES) with a state-of-the-art solution. The new system would enhance operational efficiency, integrate advanced technologies and support both make-to-stock and make-to-order production models. This strategic move was designed to position Howdens at the forefront of Industry 4.0 and Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) advancements.

## Project Activities

- Developed a proof of concept using SAP's cloud based Digital Manufacturing solution.
- Integrated existing SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems with the new MES for real-time product traceability.
- Implemented machine integration for improved automation and product tracking.
- Assisted in replacing legacy MES and ERP systems at newly acquired worksurface sites.
- Prepared for future upgrades of existing production lines using SAP Digital Manufacturing and Plant Connectivity.

## Business Drivers

- Increase speed and flexibility in adapting to new and existing business processes.
- Enhance data-centric manufacturing for improved analytics, efficiency and cost reduction.
- Shift mindset to prioritize natural manufacturing processes over multiple system interactions.
- Adopt a cloud-first strategy to benefit from exclusive cloud features.
- Leverage Industry 4.0 and IIoT technologies securely.

## More About The Project

Recognizing the limitations of its decade-old, custom-built MES—which was originally designed for a make-to-stock model—Howdens saw the need for a significant technological leap. The legacy system, built on outdated .NET technologies, lacked scalability, modern integration capabilities and support resources. Enhancing the old system had become time-consuming and could not keep pace with the company’s evolving needs.

Initially, Howdens collaborated directly with SAP to implement SAP ME/MII on a single production line. However, they soon realized that newer SAP solutions like SAP Digital Manufacturing (DM) offered greater capabilities. Partnering with Engineering Industries eXcellence’s Digital Manufacturing team, they embarked on a proof of concept to validate that SAP’s cloud-based MES could replicate and enhance their current processes.

The successful proof-of-concept led to the implementation of a new “Paint-to-Order” project, integrating SAP ERP and SAP DMC with a new supply chain to facilitate real-time product traceability. This allowed Howdens to expand from a make-to-stock to a make-to-order model at a greenfield factory. Engineering Industries eXcellence is currently assisting in replacing existing custom manufacturing and ERP systems at newly acquired worksurface sites, further enhancing SAP DM with machine integration for better automation and traceability.

## Engineering’s Advantage

Manufacturing transformation projects of this scale require deep expertise in both digital technologies and industry-specific processes. Engineering Industries eXcellence brought to the table a wealth of knowledge in SAP Digital Manufacturing solutions and a proven track record of successful implementations. Our ability to guide Howdens through the complexities of adopting new technologies, integrating systems and shifting strategic mindsets was instrumental in the project’s success. As Howdens continues its digital transformation journey, Engineering Industries eXcellence remains a trusted partner, ensuring the company leverages the full power of Industry 4.0 to achieve operational eXcellence.



## Engineering Industries eXcellence

Engineering Industries eXcellence is the global division of the Engineering Group specialized in the development, integration and implementation of holistic digital transformation solutions covering the end-to-end lifecycle and supply chain of all industrial products and processes.

A leader in digital transformation, the Engineering Group is a global software maker, a system integrator and a leading provider of technology solutions and services. With an annual revenue of over \$1.7 billion and around 15,000 professionals across 70 office locations worldwide, the Engineering Group manages projects in over 50 countries by designing, developing and implementing innovative solutions for the business areas in which digitalization is having the biggest impact today.



Delivering the Digital Thread for Industry X.0



Global System Integrator for All Industrial Sectors



End-to-End Technology Solution & Service Capabilities

## Contact Us

info@indx.com | www.indx.com