

Körber Supply Chain

Smooth transitions

Key planning considerations
for migrating to SAP EWM



Introduction

An evolution of the SAP Warehouse Management (WM) legacy solution, SAP Extended Warehouse Management (EWM) provides the performance, functionality and flexibility required in modern warehouses. It also supports high levels of automation and is a suitable replacement for SAP WM as well as for third-party WMS solutions.

With SAP discontinuing standard support for their legacy SAP ERP (ECC), and customers not able to use the full feature functionality of legacy SAP WM on SAP S/4HANA after 2027, users have little choice but to migrate the underlying ERP to SAP S/4HANA and migrate from SAP WM to the current SAP EWM.

There are a number of ways in which to accomplish these business-critical migrations. However, warehouse operations and processes are often highly specific to each business, and there is no “one size fits all” approach. Still, with thorough analysis and planning, a migration scenario can be found to match your business needs.

Choose the right time

When to migrate?

Ultimately, all customers must switch to the current SAP EWM solution by 2027. Until then, SAP WM can still be used with standard support on the legacy SAP ERP (ECC). However, SAP WM cannot be used on the current SAP S/4HANA with full functionality after that date.

There is still time to delay the migration for a few years; however, you should consider progressing the planning process right away. In terms of duration and effort, the transition to SAP EWM is essentially a greenfield project. It is therefore crucial to assess the complexity of your project, as determined by the size and number of warehouses, geographical spread, degree of automation and other factors.

The more complex the warehouse operation, the more planning is needed, and the longer the migration project will take.

Migrating before or after migrating the ERP to SAP S/4HANA

If you continue to run the legacy SAP ERP (ECC), you have a choice: upgrade to SAP S/4HANA before or after the migration to SAP EWM.

Alternatively, you could do both at the same time. Because this means going live with both SAP S/4HANA and SAP EWM simultaneously, this approach significantly increases project complexity and duration.

Your business environment and your supply chain operations will determine the migration sequence. Ultimately, it will depend on available resources, personnel availability, budget, and preference for complexity and timing.



Choosing an architecture option for SAP EWM

SAP EWM can be deployed as one of three variants: embedded, decentralized or through SAP Stockroom Management.

Embedded in SAP S/4HANA

SAP S/4HANA leverages in-memory data processing. As a result, it is highly performant and supports an embedded architecture for SAP EWM – in other words, the embedded architecture is only available on SAP S/4HANA. Immediate advantages of this are that the ERP and SAP EWM run on one system, which greatly simplifies integration. If your warehouse has no – or a moderate level of – automation and throughput requirements, this option might be the better choice.

Decentralized from SAP S/4HANA

SAP also supports running SAP EWM on S/4HANA as a decentralized or standalone version, with the two systems on separate platforms. SAP EWM, as a decentralized version, can also run with SAP ECC, but standard support will cease in 2027. In this scenario, customers can migrate the ERP to SAP S/4HANA, and the EWM can remain as is, except for some interface work. This approach essentially decouples the migrations of the ERP and the warehouse management system, helping to reduce project complexity.

Warehouses with continuous, very high throughput requirements and high levels of automation are ideal candidates for this architecture. A prime example is an eCommerce business, where warehouse operations need to process large numbers of orders 24/7, and where SAP EWM requires dedicated system resources and short response times to maintain performance.

SAP Stockroom Management

Existing small warehouses with straightforward processes running SAP WM may be a candidate for SAP Stockroom Management. This is an entry-level warehousing solution with a streamlined feature set. It is essentially a simplified version of SAP WM, and as such requires no migration.



Ensuring migration success

Once customers have decided on an architecture option for SAP EWM, and whether to migrate to SAP S/4HANA before or after migrating the warehouse management system, the project can be initiated.

The first major project phase is solution design, which sets the stage for the success of the overall project. It includes mapping optimized future warehouse processes, modeling different implementation options and defining all required process changes.

Solution design is followed by implementation, testing, go-live and transition of your SAP solution into production.

Both solution design and implementation need to take into account any industry-specific requirements and quality standards, all of which can impact supply chain processes. For example, businesses in the pharmaceutical industry must meet strict regulatory requirements for serialization and track and trace.

How can Körber help?

An experienced SAP supply chain consultancy, well-versed in these requirements, can be called upon to implement them appropriately. Similarly, a consultancy business will follow all standard practices; for instance, using established procedures for transferring existing inventory data.

Körber's SAP consultants have successfully executed a host of migration projects. Not only do we understand the pros and cons of different strategies, we can partner with you to determine the best path for your business, then implement the migration project for you.



Conclusion

Migrating from SAP WM to SAP EWM is, in essence, a complex greenfield project. However, by carefully evaluating which SAP EWM architecture and project timings work best for your business, you can determine key project parameters and set the stage for a successful implementation. Furthermore, by following best practices you can ensure an optimum project outcome and maximize the return on your investment.

Find out how Körber can help you evaluate, manage and implement your SAP migration.

Learn more about our consulting and implementation services for SAP EWM:

Read more →

Learn more about our consulting and implementation services for the SAP Supply Chain Logistics suite:

Read more →

