



## Unified enterprise-wide performance management

Wholesale distributor United Pipe & Supply was looking to re-engineer the company to grow revenue and profitability. SAP BusinessObjects Planning & Consolidation provided a unified platform to improve accountability and performance while streamlining processes across the business.

### QUICK FACTS

**Industry:** Banking, Securities  
**Headquarters:** Dallas, TX  
**Website:** www.swst.com  
**Revenues:** \$478 million (2008) / \$11 billion assets  
**Employees:** 1200+  
**SAP® Solution(s) and Services:** SAP BusinessObjects Planning & Consolidation (BPC)  
**Implementation Partner:** Column5 Consulting  
[www.column5.com](http://www.column5.com)

### Key Challenges

- Little or no accountability for or commitment to top-down sales forecasts
- Little or no transparency into marketing programs
- Limited transparency into headcount changes
- Manual process for sales reporting
- Inventory reporting only monthly

### Implementation Best Practices

- Secured executive sponsorship
- Got input from key users during the design phase
- Focused on user acceptance and training
- Provided both system and financial training
- Defined clear project scope and actively managed project

### Financial & Strategic Benefits

- More accurate sales forecasts, with buy-in, commitment, and accountability
- Forecasts informed by historical product mix and seasonality
- Marketing programs funded according to benefit provided
- Resource costs allocated accurately
- True cost of operations understood, able to optimize business decisions
- Profitability proactively managed by business units
- Sales and inventory performance reported daily

### Operational Benefits

- Cross-functional collaboration within operations for forecasts
- Commission calculations aligned to individual sales reps
- Collaboration among division managers to rationalize marketing budget
- Vendor contributions to cooperative marketing programs ensured
- FTE planning by position, branch, department, and state
- Automated nightly load of sales and inventory information
- Automated metadata update (new customers, products, sales reps)
- Reports available on-demand via web portal

### Why SAP Was Selected

- Unified platform: supports system and company expansion
- Ease-of-use: drives user adoption, Finance to Branch Managers
- Lower TCO: due to Microsoft-centric platform

### Why Column5 Was Selected

- Expertise in business process optimization
- Experience in both financial and operational application development
- Business intelligence (BI) and data integration capabilities



**United Pipe & Supply (UP&S)** has exceeded 50 years as the Pacific Northwest's premier distributor of irrigation, pumping, waterworks and HVAC equipment. Founded in 1953 and headquartered in Portland, Oregon, this privately held company has sales and distribution facilities in over 35 locations throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

UP&S is committed to growth through the use of technology, information and branch locations. Management saw the need for systems to improve accountability and productivity. They felt that their business was constrained by ineffective processes and an inaccessible source system for financial and operational data. In short, spreadsheetbased budgeting and reporting processes were strangling growth.

## Objectives

UP&S sought to improve the ability of the company to drive revenue and profitability. They felt the key was better planning, collaboration, and accountability. They turned to SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation (BPC) and Column5 Consulting for a solution.

## Across the Board Performance Management

SAP BPC gave UP&S a unified platform to support system and company expansion. Other key factors in the selection were ease of use to drive user adoption, both by finance and branch managers, and a low total cost of ownership (TCO) due to the Microsoft-centric platform.

With the help of Column5 Consulting, UP&S was able to impact processes across the business.

Sales forecasts are now bottoms-up and more accurate, with greater buy-in and accountability. Forecasts can be mapped against historical trends relating to product mix and seasonality, and rolled up across geographies as well as by branches.

Thanks to automated nightly uploads, sales and inventory numbers are now reported daily, rather than monthly. Updating of metadata such as new customers, products, and sales reps, has also been automated. So performance shortfalls or sales spikes can be quickly spotted and proactively managed.

Marketing programs now also benefit from performance management to measure ROI and determine which programs are most effective and therefore deserving of priority in funding.

Even human capital planning has been brought onto the SAP BPC platform where it can be proactively managed by business units, with resource costs accurately allocated so that the true cost of operations can be understood.

The end result: better decisions, faster execution, a healthier bottom line.

## About Column5

Column5 is one of the fastest growing consulting organizations in the U.S., and provides top expertise in business performance management. Founded in 2005, Column5 consultants have implemented SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation (formerly OutlookSoft) for over 300 customers across the Globe.

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