E-kwip

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SMART BUILDINGS SHOW 2026

Why Modern ERP Is the Business Backbone of Smarter Buildings

From building signals to financial outcomes for AI

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A QUESTION BEFORE WE START

When did you last prove, in pounds, that an operational change paid off?

Not estimated. Not assumed. Proved – with numbers finance and operations both trust.

From Signal to Outcome in Six Steps

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1 Signals

Smart buildings produce signals – BMS, IoT, meters, occupancy and CMMS.

2 What's happening

Signals tell us what is happening: a chiller fault, an energy spike, an empty floor.

3 The connection

ERP connects events to financial outcomes – because it's where the context already lives.

4 Whether it matters

Financial context tells us whether it matters – what it costs and whose budget it hits.

5 Action

That lets people, automation and eventually AI act on numbers they trust.

6 Proof

Start small and prove the value: one building, one service line, one budget holder.

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Smart Buildings Produce Signals

Step 1 of 6 | Collecting operational data is no longer the hard part – most estates do it well.

Data from every direction

BMS, IoT sensors, smart meters, occupancy counters and maintenance systems all produce a constant stream of operational data.

Every signal is an event

A fault alarm, a meter spike, an occupancy drop – each one is something happening in the building.

Collection is largely solved

BMS, IoT and CMMS platforms already capture, store and visualise these signals well.

More data ≠ better decisions

More signals mean more dashboards and alerts – not automatically better decisions.

STEP 2 | SIGNALS TELL US WHAT IS HAPPENING

Your BMS can tell you something is failing.

It can’t tell you what that costs, whose budget it hits, or whether last year’s fix paid off.

The Cost of Missing Context

Step 2 of 6 | Without financial context, operational data stays interesting rather than useful.

Investment goes unproven

No one can show the return on smart technology already installed – so the next budget round, or client pitch, is harder to win.

Clients mis-charged

Cost per site stays a guess – so clients get over- or under-charged, and margin quietly leaks.

Service charges drag

Recharges stay manual and disputed – and cost-conscious clients remember it at renewal.

Budget holders fly blind

Decisions wait for the numbers – and every day of delay costs uptime and service.

Where Does the Context Live?

Step 3 of 6 | Everything that turns a signal into a decision – and the system it already lives in.

What it costs

Supplier prices, invoices and labour
→ **ERP: purchasing & payables**

Whose budget

Budget by building and service line
→ **ERP: budgets & dimensions**

Who can approve

Spend limits and approval routes
→ **ERP: approval workflows**

Who pays

Tenant recharge and service charge
→ **ERP: sales & billing**

Repair or replace

Asset age, book value, spend history
→ **ERP: fixed assets**

The work order

The job, the engineer, the SLA
→ **CAFM / CMMS**

Why the ERP Is the Backbone

Step 3 of 6 | Other systems show or record. The ERP runs the process.

Dashboards & BI

Shows the problem
Great for spotting trends. Can't raise a PO, enforce an approval or pay a supplier.

CAFM / CMMS

Knows the job
Tracks the work order and engineer – not the full cost, the budget or the recharge.

Accounting software

Records it afterwards
Captures the invoice once it arrives. Doesn't run the process that led to it.

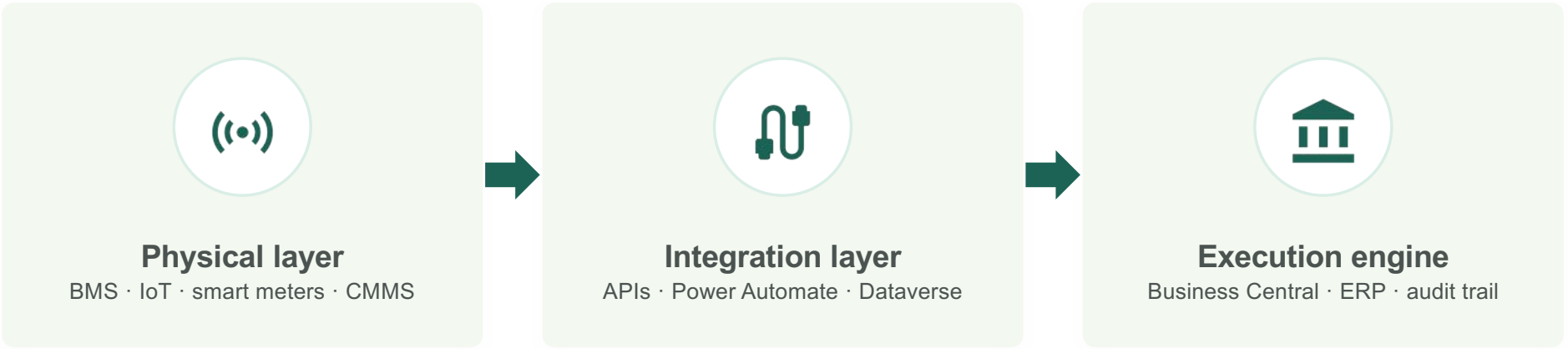
ERP

Runs the process
Commits, approves, records and recharges the money – against the right building.

Sensors are the nervous system. The ERP is the spine that connects what's sensed to the parts of the business that act.

How the Pieces Connect

Step 3 of 6 | The ERP isn’t a BMS and shouldn’t ingest raw sensor streams. Operational systems summarise, an integration layer carries it, and the ERP makes it financial.



Anatomy of a Signal

Step 4 of 6 | The same alert – with and without financial context.

Signal alone

Chiller 3 fault – Building A

Raised by the BMS at 07:42 on Monday

WHAT YOU KNOW

Something is failing. Not what it costs, whose budget it hits, who pays, or whether to repair or replace.

Signal + financial context

Chiller 3 fault – Building A

HVAC · £4.2k budget left · owner: Building A FM

WHAT IT TELLS YOU

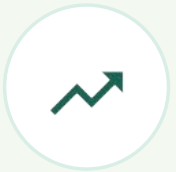
Third fault this year: £11k on repairs vs £8k to replace. 60% rechargeable. Decision: replace.

Financial Context Shows What Matters

Step 4 of 6 | Every budget holder should be able to answer these three questions – by building and by service line.



What's working?



What should we do more of?



What should we stop doing?

One Source of Truth

Operational activity, expressed in comparable financial terms

From Sensor to Decision

Step 5 of 6 | A worked example – illustrative, built on Business Central's APIs and Power Platform.

01

Sensor flags



The BMS flags a failing chiller at one site – the part most estates have solved.

02

Integration



Power Automate picks up the alert and raises a job or purchase request in BC.

03

Guardrails



Dimensions and approval workflows check it against that building's budget.

04

Owner decides



The budget holder approves; the cost lands against the right building and service.

People, Automation and AI Can Act

Step 5 of 6 | Once every event carries financial context, each layer can act on it safely.

01

People decide

Budget holders see cost by building and service line, and make the call with the numbers in front of them.

02

Automation executes

Approval workflows route the spend, raise the purchase order and post the cost to the right building.

03

AI agents assist

Business Central agents – Payables, Sales Order, Expense – draft the routine work for people to review.

AI Is Only as Good as What It Stands On

Step 5 of 6 | Agents can’t safely act without a governed financial foundation underneath them.

Signals only

Observing more data

Stage one: dashboards and alerts

WHAT’S MISSING

Disconnected finance, no comparable cost by building or service, and no agent anyone would trust to act.

Signals + financial context

Acting on trusted data

ERP as the governed system of record

THE PAYOFF

Budget holders direct the agents for their own building or service line – agents surface the options, people decide.

Proving It in Pounds

Step 6 of 6 | Illustrative: one building, the HVAC service line, twelve months after connecting signals to finance.

£38k → £24k
Reactive HVAC spend in Building A, year on year

9 days → 2
From fault alert to approved purchase order

100%
Of HVAC cost tagged to building and service line

That’s the answer to the opening question

Not estimated. Not assumed. Proved – with numbers finance and operations both trust.

Start Small and Prove the Value

Step 6 of 6 | Don’t try to connect the whole estate. Pick one place to prove it, then scale what works.



One building



One service line



One budget holder

Connect its data. Hand it to the owner.

Prove the value in pounds – then roll out what works.

BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED

When did you last prove, in pounds, that an operational change paid off?

With signals connected to financial context, the answer can be: every time.

Thank You – Let's Talk



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Come and find me after the session to see what this looks like in Business Central:

- Connect building signals to financial outcomes on one governed foundation
- Put the numbers in front of the people who own the budget
- Start with one building, one service line, one budget holder
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