



DELPHI GROUP

# Not Your Father's Workflow

5th Generation,  
Web-Based Workflow Solutions  
from Ultimus

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SNAPSHOT

*The ability to quickly innovate new products and continuously outperform competitors' time to market is a bastion of competitive advantage, especially when transfer time takes up at least 90% of the time in the innovation, production, and delivery cycle.*

~ Thomas M. Koulopoulos, *The Workflow Imperative* {1995}

## Workflow and the Quest for Productivity Improvement

In the New Economy, customers rule. Businesses today must operate in a customer-centric fashion, executing faster and with greater efficiency than ever before. Managers are realizing they are no longer in the business of designing products, but instead designing superior end-to-end customer experiences. If its core business processes are undefined, disorganized, or inefficient, the enterprise's ability to optimize profitability and satisfy its customers is seriously undermined. For this reason, management is once again focusing on the basics of business processes—not with the early 1990s zeal of the “reengineering” juggernaut, but seeking to connect applications and people across the enterprise to automate and improve their core processes.

Business processes define how: the organization's employees interact with each other, tasks get distributed and routed, and information is shared. The majority of business processes conform to the “90/10 Rule”—at least 90% of the total process time represents “lag time” (i.e., in transit or waiting in queue) while only 10% is concerned with actual performance of tasks. Focusing on increased productivity in task performance offers little opportunity for improvement. Even a 50% decrease in task performance time will only impact total process time by 5%. Yet a 50% decrease in queue time reduces total process time by 45%. The solution that enables companies to attack process lag time, improving process efficiency and responsiveness, is workflow automation.

Workflow automation involves intelligent routing and tracking of information based on predefined organizational policies. It emphasizes the importance of the process as a container for information, combining rules which govern the tasks to be performed and coordinating the transfer of the information required to support them. Workflow focuses on the issues and problems inherent in process automation such as the analysis of processes and the definition of role relationships. The renewed interest in process automation and management has prompted many companies to investigate the role workflow products might play in their application arsenal.

Ultimus is one company that understands how workflow automation can be employed to increase productivity and efficiency. Its Workflow Suite is a 5th generation, Web-based solution for general purpose business process automation that enables companies to develop and deploy workflow applications without requiring programming, scripting, or macros. According to the company, the product is currently in use by more than 550 Global 2000 customers.

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## Ultimus Workflow Suite Highlights:

*Object-oriented graphical designer requires no programming, macros or scripts*

*Design browser-based electronic forms as user interface for workflow*

*Configurable Task List with ticklers for late Tasks, uses existing email system for proactive notification*

*Uses existing databases via server-side ODBC connection*

*Use Excel, Word, e-Mail, and other applications as workflow robots, Flobots® to perform Tasks*

*Test workflow from start to finish prior to deployment*

*Graphically monitor status of workflow process; generates process metrics for detailed analysis; Web-based reporting*

*Generates time and cost reports to measure and improve processes*

*Monitor workload for each user and reassign Tasks to other users as necessary*

*Leverages power of XML; integrates with BizTalk*

*Automates processes involving people as well as applications*

*Supports conditional branching and routing, allowing processes to change depending on user inputs and real time conditions*

*Supports nested processing, allowing automation of complex processes by breaking them down into sub-processes*

*Supports process rollback*

*Automates processes involving people as well as applications*

*Automatically generates formal documentation of process definition, including tasks, conditional logic, forms, users, and groups involved*

*Localized in 11 languages, including Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic*

## It Works Hard for the Money

The Ultimus Workflow Suite attacks the 90% lag time in business processes by eliminating the task transfer time and moving the work to the workers electronically, proactively monitoring and escalating late tasks. Electronic implementation of business rules and logic ensure that nothing falls through the cracks while process metrics support managers in measuring and improving process results. It is a complete package for workflow automation of administrative processes, designed as a broad-based horizontal solution. Version 5.0 extends workflow beyond the enterprise to support interoperability between companies and their partners.

The product offers a broad array of capabilities and features supporting end-to-end design, execution, and performance monitoring of business processes. Five components comprise the Workflow Suite. The Ultimus Workflow Server, architected around Windows 2000 and other Microsoft technologies, is the process engine which monitors and controls workflow. It is a COM object, leveraging the power of COM+ and enterprise databases. This means any COM-compliant third-party application can be workflow enabled by embedding the Ultimus COM object into the application.

Ultimus Designer provides the tools necessary for nontechnical users to graphically design new processes without scripting or programming. Designer allows the creation of Workflow Maps that chart the flow of work and its various activities, including support for conditional branching and routing to enable exception management. It provides the capability to test the application from start to finish prior to deployment and can automatically generate formal process documentation. A forms design utility is included as is support for version control, subprocesses, parallel processing, and rendezvous.

Ultimus Org Chart allows users to graphically define job functions, roles, reporting relationships, departments and groups. The product uses this information to execute intelligent processes that are cognizant of the roles and relationships in the organization. It integrates tightly with Active Directory and supports NT Directory, LDAP, or a customized Directory DLL.

Ultimus Administrator provides the capabilities to centrally manage workflow applications, tasks, users, groups, and reporting; including the necessary tools to manage exceptions and reassign pending tasks. It supports a wide variety of administrative functions and allows administrators to see graphic depictions of any task and its current status. The product offers graphical and tabular reports using queries the user defines.

Ultimus Client is the browser-based interface that enables users to interact with processes. The thin client/thin forms capabilities enable participant involvement across multiple platforms, including PDAs, and deliver a simple, prioritized, and customizable Task List to the user.

In summary, Ultimus enables organizations to gain end-to-end control of core business processes with a workflow solution updated to meet the challenges and opportunities of the New Economy. As CEO, Rashid Khan, explains, "By leveraging the latest server and Internet technologies, Ultimus increases the power of workflow, giving companies the ability to expand the reach of their business processes beyond their own enterprise to integrate with e-business initiatives of key partners and suppliers." This is not your father's workflow... ❁



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