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Scorecard Summary: Ultimus' BPM Suite 6.0

Key findings from Forrester's Business Process Management TechRankings

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ultimus is a profitable ISV with 200 employees. Its extensive VAR network and strong partnership with Microsoft have helped it build an installed base of more than 1,100 customers. The vendor's product, Ultimus, is best suited for automating people-intensive business processes with minimal integration requirements. Microsoft shops can also pair it with BizTalk Server to automate more complex processes that include a balance of people and systems.

We evaluated Ultimus BPM Suite 6.0 in the lab against approximately 250 criteria. Read the scorecard summary for key findings from the evaluation (see Figure 1 and see Figure 2). To view the complete scorecard and see how the product stacks up against the competition, use the links below to access Forrester's interactive TechRankings tool.

SCORECARD SUMMARY

Ultimus is a privately held ISV with 200 employees and an extensive VAR network, which has helped the vendor build an installed base of more than 1,100 customers. Ultimus is a profitable company with steady year-over-year revenue growth. The vendor has a strong relationship with Microsoft, and its product, BPM Suite, is completely focused on Microsoft technology. This makes the product a good fit for Microsoft shops.

Ultimus' BPM Suite is best suited for automating people-intensive business processes. Its comprehensive organizational management and workload-balancing features are combined with a robust workflow portal and strong UI design tools. BPM Suite has some native integration tools, but it doesn't provide data transformation tools and has a limited set of adapters for external systems. Firms should couple the product with Microsoft BizTalk to support processes that span multiple systems.

The product also provides an intuitive process-modeling tool with a separate business-level modeling environment. This makes it well-suited for supporting design collaboration between business users and IT staff.



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Figure 1 Ultimus BPM Suite 6.0 Scorecard

| Attribute | Score | Explanation |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| Design | 3.6 | <p>Ultimus BPM Suite provides an intuitive process-modeling tool that incorporates all model components. Ultimus offers a separate business-level modeling environment, as well as some simulation features. The product also provides solid repository features like automatic version management and check-in/checkout functionality for unpublished processes. This makes the modeling environment a strong tool for supporting team-based design collaboration.</p> <p>The product provides strong tools for discovering Web services but doesn't import existing process logic using standards like BPEL.</p> |
| Automation | 3.3 | <p>Ultimus BPM Suite has solid flow control capabilities, including support for do-while and do-until looping with minimal scripting. The product also provides flexible options for handling dynamic changes of long-lived processes. But it lacks sophisticated multistep transaction management features, so firms may struggle to handle exceptions that arise in complex processes.</p> <p>The product doesn't provide data transformation tools and has a limited set of adapters for external systems. Firms should couple the product with Microsoft BizTalk to support processes that span multiple systems.</p> |
| Human workflow | 4.9 | <p>Ultimus BPM Suite provides a robust workflow portal and strong UI design tools. The product supports an extensive list of client options and works with third-party form tools like Microsoft InfoPath. This means that firms can use the product to automate people-intensive processes, and users will find it easy to interact with the processes.</p> <p>The product can interact with external systems for organizational information, but it also provides sophisticated native organizational management tools that include custom role attributes and a graphical tool for manipulating organizational structures. The product also supports systematic workload-based workload balancing.</p> |
| Monitoring and management | 2.5 | <p>Ultimus BPM Suite lets authorized users redirect, suspend, and change the data of single in-flight instances. This gives firms the flexibility to manage real-time changes.</p> <p>The product ships with several prebuilt reports that can be filtered through wizards. But the monitoring capabilities don't include a generic query tool and are limited to generic process metadata. This means that firms may struggle to track more complex process metrics.</p> |
| Analysis and optimization | 2.6 | <p>The product provides some basic analysis tools that include incident-level and step-level reports, each with a unique wizard for customization. But it lacks more sophisticated features like aggregate-level alerts and optimization tools.</p> <p>The product offers flexible options for introducing process changes to in-flight instances, but it lacks basic deployment features like an audit trail and deployment packs. This means firms that will struggle to use the product to manage business processes that change frequently.</p> |

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 2 Ultimus BPM Suite 6.0 Scorecard

| Attribute | Score | Explanation |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| Product architecture | 3.8 | <p>Ultimus BPM Suite is best suited for Microsoft shops. Its architecture is completely focused on Microsoft technology and only runs on Microsoft platforms that include Windows Server 2000/2003. The product also relies on third-party products from Microsoft for load balancing and fault tolerance features.</p> <p>But the product provides strong support for Web services, including process interrogation and automatic WSDL generation for all processes. This means that firms will be able to integrate Java-based components into process designs using Web services.</p> |
| Market presence | 2.3 | <p>Ultimus' direct sales force and extensive VAR network have helped the vendor build an impressive installed base of more than 1,100 customers. Top customers include Microsoft, Lancaster General Hospital, and Citizens Bank. The vendor has partnerships with several regional systems integrators, but no large, global systems integrators.</p> <p>Ultimus is a privately held company, so revenue numbers haven't been disclosed. But the vendor is profitable and its revenue increased 51% year over year in Q4 2003. Its current employee headcount is 200, with 40 engineers dedicated to the product.</p> |
| Cost | 4.8 | <p>Ultimus sets the pricing based on a blended model of the number of active users, process steps per day, and concurrent developers.</p> <p>Ultimus BPM Suite's minimum license cost is \$10,000. The product's average sales prices is \$95,000 in the US and \$50,000 internationally. Maintenance cost is typically 20% of license fees.</p> |

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

TECHRANKINGS RESEARCH PROCESS

Forrester analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each product through a hands-on, scenario-based laboratory process. We evaluate products in a controlled setting and check facts and analyze the results carefully.

These scores reflect our assessment of Ultimus BPM Suite 6.0, including the BPM Server, Process Designer, BPM Studio, Flobots, Clients, Administrator, Reports, and Enterprise Integration Kit (EIK) components. Throughout the scorecard we refer to this set of components as "the product."

This product was lab tested in January 2004.