



Tuning In to Process Management: SpectraSite in the Spotlight

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INTRODUCTION: MANAGING MARKET GROWTH

Surging use of wireless telephones and computing devices had created an insatiable demand among carriers for new towers on which to place their antennas. To satisfy this demand, SpectraSite – which operates wireless transmission towers throughout the United States – was forced to hire more and more staff and operate from more and more locations.

SpectraSite depended on paper-based procedures and multiple computer systems to process leasing and service transactions, and the system was buckling under the weight of new business. At the same time, executives who needed to make quick decisions about where to build new towers and how much to spend on construction and maintenance found themselves waiting far too long for the information they needed to make those choices.

It was clear to management that the company needed to radically streamline the way it handled both customer transactions and internal decision-making. Like a growing number of business organizations in a variety of industries, SpectraSite turned to workflow automation and business process management in order to regain control of its destiny.

Partnering with software vendor Ultimus Inc., SpectraSite studied the way its employees completed business operations and used Ultimus technology and its own IT savvy to design and test new automated workflows and put these automation schemes into operation. Along the way, SpectraSite executives, business analysts, and IT managers developed a keen appreciation for the way technology can transform not only specific workflows but entire critical business processes such as leasing and investment analysis.

This Kinetic Information Value Publication describes how SpectraSite successfully managed its business processes, dramatically improved its operational performance, derived maximum total value from its technology investment, and now serves as a role model for other “process-minded” organizations.

SECTION I:

SPECTRASITE'S ROAD TO BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT (BPM)

Growth in wireless telephony, and in related forms of wireless computing, has changed the dynamics of the communications market, created new industry segments, and altered the business landscape for companies like SpectraSite Communications Inc., whose well-being depends on the ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Research figures underscore three important factors at work:

- **The Web drives wireless telephony:** Allied Business Intelligence predicts that by 2008, “smart phones” with Web functionality will represent 85% of all phone shipments. IDC says worldwide IP (Internet Protocol) telephony equipment revenue will grow from \$2.3 billion in 2003 to \$15.1 billion in 2007.
- **Business is going wireless in spades:** An October 2003 IDC survey of 450 corporate decision makers identified a widespread belief that investing in wireless technology would improve productivity and operational efficiency. In addition, an earlier survey by *InfoWorld* and *CTO* magazines found that the use of wireless and pervasive computing was the second-highest concern among corporate technologists.
- **Wireless networking is on the rise:** Cahners-Instat predicts that the wireless LAN (local area network) market will be worth \$5.6 billion by 2004, and Yankee Group forecasts that wireless WANs (wide area networks) will be used by 50 million users in 2004.

In the early to mid '90s, wireless service carriers built and operated their own antenna towers, but as demand soared and competition intensified, this became undesirable for two major reasons. First, these organizations were under investor pressure to minimize cost and maximize short-term profitability, and the continuing expense of finding and buying real estate, erecting towers, and maintaining the sites was deemed unacceptably large. Second, committing to long-term ownership of specific tower locations might prevent carriers from moving nimbly into new geographies and service markets, such as corporate and industrial email and Internet services.

The SpectraSite Business Profile

In the end, many carriers found it far more attractive to lease tower space, often co-locating with other carriers' antennas on the same towers, and to contract out antenna maintenance services. Thus a new industry – wireless tower operation – was born, and SpectraSite soon became an acknowledged leader in the space.

Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Cary, NC, SpectraSite builds and operates wireless towers and also operates wireless transmission sites on rooftops. Recently, the company became one of the first firms to operate wireless backbone sites inside buildings such as hotels, casinos, and shopping malls. Customers among wireless carriers include



AT&T Wireless, Cingular, Nextel, Sprint PCS, and Verizon Wireless. A subsidiary, SpectraSite Broadcast Group, builds and operates tall transmission towers for broadcasting customers, including ABC television.

Capturing the emerging opportunity, SpectraSite moved quickly to acquire land and build towers, and in the process acquired 25 smaller companies. After a heady period of rapid growth, a combination of recession, telecom industry woes, and falling real estate values took its toll. In November 2002, the company filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. SpectraSite successfully reorganized and emerged from Chapter 11 in February 2003, and in October 2003, the company's stock began trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

SpectraSite's continued financial success depends on controlling sites in metropolitan areas having high population density and on maintaining a high level of recurring revenue on its portfolio of wireless transmission sites. Despite the recessionary climate of the past year, the company has continued to make gains on both fronts.

SpectraSite now claims approximately 10,000 sites, including 7,539 wireless towers. Three quarters of these are located in the top 100 wireless markets in the United States, where 72% of the population lives.

For the fiscal quarter ended June 30, 2003, SpectraSite reported revenue of \$80.9 million, with leasing revenue accounting for \$77.5 million. Total revenue was 11% higher than that reported for the same quarter of 2002, and leasing revenue 15.8% higher than in the same quarter a year ago.

SpectraSite's Process Pain

Aware of the existence of new market opportunities, and conscious of investor scrutiny, SpectraSite's line-of-business managers and top executives have focused as never before on efficiency enhancement and operational excellence. Yet it was clear as long ago as the spring of 2002 that SpectraSite's business processes weren't functioning optimally. In particular, there were four acute "pain points":

- **Decentralized organization vs. centralized approvals:** As the business grew, engineers, consultants, and sales staff operated further and further from the main office. A system that relied on manual approvals for each step of a business process couldn't keep pace with their needs.
- **Paper forms vs. e-business reality:** Much of the business data at SpectraSite existed on faxes and in colored file folders that were passed from department to department as needed. This was partly the legacy of the company's early growth spurt and partly the result of working in a highly regulated industry. There was no standard, computerized way of finding and sharing this content.
- **Slow data vs. quick decisions:** Top executives needed detailed supporting data from engineering, accounting, sales, and legal staff when deciding when, where,



and how much to invest in new sites. A 60-day turnaround period wasn't satisfactory for a company building a number of sites each month.

- **Faster customer and prospect growth vs. slower response times:** A faster pace of business required the company to cut its response time for such customer-related tasks as lease signings, implementing and tracking order changes, and regulatory approvals.

Even before the company's restructuring, SpectraSite had invested significantly in information technology (IT) to drive costs out of the business. Now, the company began to look for a way to coordinate its applications and systems to adopt a more efficient method of sharing and using information.

Choosing the BPM Path

Besides employing real estate specialists, attorneys, engineers, and business analysts, SpectraSite also enjoyed a sophisticated IT department that had already spent months integrating the company's own inventory systems with software solutions such as J.D. Edwards Property Management and CA Unicenter. SpectraSite also developed some of its own applications, including one that tracked lease operations.

Nonetheless, SpectraSite's infrastructure – like that of most every organization of any size – featured application “islands” that still needed to be bridged. In a happy convergence of perspectives, the push to use workflow automation for this purpose came from top management, line of business managers, and from IT itself. The rationales of these three groups differed in their details, but in general top executives were concerned about improving capital management, business managers sought better operational control, and IT managers wanted a more efficient development environment.

It quickly became clear that there were scores of potential candidates to be the subjects of the first workflow automation projects, and a committee was formed at the vice-president level to sort out the requests. Two project areas stood out as critical for the business: co-location, with its layers of approvals and multiple forms of content; and capital authorization, which involves top management and requires travel-related logistics.

Selecting a Solution Provider

In its search for a specific software solution, defined at that time as a “workflow tool,” SpectraSite polled users to create a description of the desired functionality, and had the IT department distill that description into a request for proposal.

Of the half-dozen responses SpectraSite received, three vendors' solutions were selected for testing. Key criteria were the abilities to support a Microsoft environment, provide functionality throughout an application lifecycle, and enable ease of use and ease of installation.



The Ultimus BPM Suite met each of these criteria and was chosen over competing solutions. However, SpectraSite battle-tested the product anyway before committing to the product. Meetings were held between Ultimus sales reps and the SpectraSite business analysts who “owned” workflows that would be affected, follow-up meetings were convened with SpectraSite’s CIO, and two months of work with an evaluation copy of the product then ensued. During the test period, SpectraSite modeled a complex 20-step workflow and built a prototype for users to try out. After this prototype validated their recommendation, SpectraSite and Ultimus finalized the license agreement, and the project continued to move forward.

Besides contracting with Ultimus, SpectraSite also opted to work with a local integration consultant, ChannelFlex, which had experience using Ultimus BPM Suite and BPM Studio.

Modeling Workflows – and Learning Along the Way

Before computerized workflows could be designed, modeled, or tested, SpectraSite needed to focus on its human collaboration and communication mechanisms. Feedback was collected from users and managers at all levels, and basic objectives were discussed with Ultimus representatives. This non-technical exercise proved crucial, since different departments understood the company’s business in different ways.

SpectraSite executives carefully committed to paper detailed maps showing each step in the workflows they planned to automate. To their surprise, initial testing with the Ultimus software revealed elements of their business operations they hadn’t been aware of. While this necessitated some re-thinking about project details and schedules, it resulted in a reduction in the amount of rework required during implementation, and it improved the planning and technical skills of the SpectraSite employees, and better prepared them to tackle future projects.

Ultimus knew from experience that customers likely would experience this kind of learning process, and as a result, it equips its BPM solution with tools for optimizing the results of analysis and testing. These tools, of which SpectraSite made good use, include:

- **Ultimus Process Designer**, a process design and modeling tool that can be used by IT or non-IT staff
- **Ultimus BPM Studio**, a collaborative process design and integration environment for teams of IT developers
- **Ultimus Discovery Workshop**, a three- to five-day working session with customer business units and IT



Implementing, Refining, and Training

SpectraSite was able to use the Ultimus BPM software to automate more than 20 workflow processes between June and October 2003. New workflow processes are now rolled out within 40 days of an approved request, on average.

Implementing BPM is not an “out-of-the-box” experience, especially in a complex environment like SpectraSite’s, but only minor changes to the initial Ultimus software configuration were required. An interface change was needed, for example, to facilitate interoperability with a J.D. Edwards application. Overall, the resource requirements were quite manageable, with only one new hire required to help with the first automation project.

Workflow and process changes were accelerated by the use of Ultimus Flobots, which are reusable software objects that allow standard business software applications to perform specific tasks without human intervention. In one instance, SpectraSite IT developers streamlined financial deliberations by creating a Flobot from a large Excel spreadsheet, thus allowing executives to view budget updates without changing computer screens or waiting for printouts.

User training was completed within a few weeks under a prepaid Ultimus support package and focused primarily on such features of the Ultimus user interface as the “send/receive” function. While the look and feel of the interface was consistent with the Windows applications familiar to most employees, the complexities of a workflow diagram or process map were far less familiar. Employees needed reassurance that their individual use of the software encompassed only a few of the workflow steps, rather than every single one of them.

A cultural adjustment was needed as well. Because SpectraSite’s financial and technical record-keeping and approvals had been intensely paper-based, some users initially were reluctant to trade their paper forms for new computer-based procedures – even though the actual work being done was the same.

Solution Payoff

By October 2003, SpectraSite was able to report significant improvements in customer service and operational efficiency. Top executives, IT managers, and business users cited the positive outcomes summarized in Figure 1 and described immediately thereafter.



Figure 1 Improvements by the Numbers

- 50%** Reduction in turnaround time on many investment decisions
- 85%** Reduction in time to complete complex customer agreement documents
- 50%** Amount of development work completed on a major wireless co-location BPM initiative by staffers who were not developers when they started

Source: SpectraSite Communications Inc.

- **A better handle on business investment:** SpectraSite spends roughly \$10 million a year in capital improvements to tower sites, and decisions about new sites must be weighed carefully. Executives now have an efficient method of pinpointing specific information about the results of prior spending, delivering clear informational requests to the business analysts, and quickly getting answers that are derived from process models. As a result, the turnaround on some kinds of investment decisions has been cut fully in half, from 60 to 30 days. The shorter the turnaround, the faster productive tower sites can be launched, and the sooner SpectraSite can start collecting revenue.
- **A clear view of the flow of business content:** The agreements between SpectraSite and its customers are complex documents that require input from a variety of departments. Authorized managers now can see from their desktops how a given document is progressing through the process and on whose desk it is sitting, something that required a round of phone calls prior to using workflow automation and BPM. Formal documents that used to take six weeks to complete are now often completed in a week or less.
- **Greater productivity from the IT development team:** Approximately 50% of the development work on a major wireless co-location BPM initiative – “Collo 4” – was being done by staffers who were not even developers when the Ultimus solution was implemented. Besides flattening the learning curve for IT, the use of design and modeling tools in a desktop environment allows users for the first time to see in advance the consequences of the changes they request. The result is shorter turnaround in the development phase and more efficiency for the IT department.

The View Ahead

The experience SpectraSite personnel had of brainstorming computerized workflows and then implementing them apparently has overcome early skepticism many felt regarding the impact of new software on day-to-day work. SpectraSite executives find themselves fielding more and more automation proposals, ranking them by urgency, fiscal impact, and ease of implementation.



One overriding objective is to replace all manual tracking of tasks with the use of Ultimus. Collo 4 – launched in November 2003 – will replace the simple tracking of co-locating sites with a far broader set of process management capabilities. Looking ahead, business managers want to use a combination of BPM and portal technology to create and managed online interactions with anchor tenants of in-building wireless sites – an important growth market for SpectraSite.

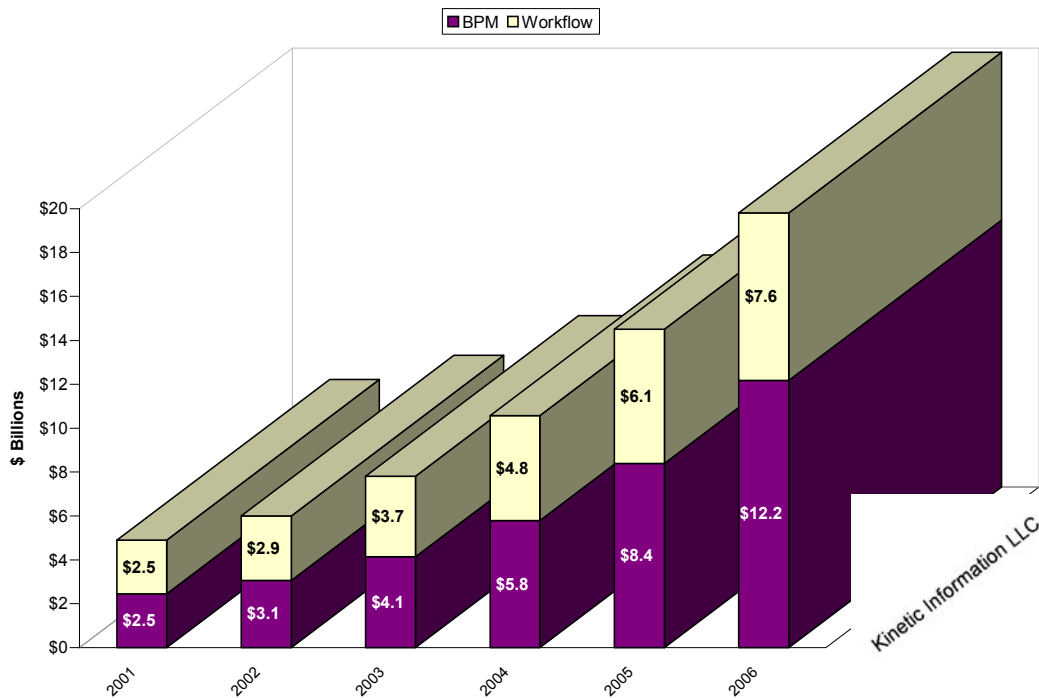
SECTION II: VALIDATING THE BPM DECISION

Business process management expands significantly on the workflow movement that began in the mid- to late '90s. Workflow routs content from user to user according to business rules, loosely coupling information systems to meet immediate business objectives. BPM builds on this by chaining flows of work together, and encompasses the design, simulation, and implementation of optimal business processes that frequently span multiple systems.

Beyond the creation and management of individual procedures and sub-level tasks, BPM tools clearly can be critical to building effective computing infrastructures. BPM therefore addresses directly the need of modern businesses to maximize growth opportunities by swiftly adapting their technological underpinnings to meet changing market conditions.

The chart below depicts the likely level of investment organizations will make in BPM and workflow solutions over the next few years.

Figure 2 BPM/Workflow Investment Levels, 2002-2006



Both BPM and workflow powerfully support the drive by organizations of all kinds to synchronize their IT resources and business processes to create value for customers, employees, partners, and investors. Kinetic Information describes the overriding goal here as “getting everything to work together” and calls it Enterprise Interoperability



(EIO), for regardless of the specific technology recipe followed, the idea is to allow people, departments, and systems to interoperate without gaps. Portals and a raft of integration techniques – middleware, Web services, EAI, application servers, etc. – are often seen in the mix of solutions found here.

Increasingly, IT customers are demanding – and IT vendors are delivering – “converged solutions” that combine several of these technologies to better solve critical business problems with optimal interoperability. Of the various combinations of technologies, BPM and workflow are expected to experience the highest degree of convergence. BPM/workflow provides high tactical value and involves relatively small implementation costs, especially when compared to solutions like ERP and CRM.

Why SpectraSite Was the Perfect Candidate

SpectraSite was particularly well suited for a BPM initiative. First and foremost, it had compelling business reasons to make a radical change in the way it linked and managed its workflows. The company could only realize its growth potential by speeding up the process of acquiring new transmission sites and signing up customers. For the in-building segment, in particular, it was critical to respond in real time to customer demands. Investors and market analysts would be looking carefully to see whether SpectraSite could continue to build on the success of its restructuring.

The complex transactions that take place within the wireless-deployment industry produce a host of operations and workflows to coordinate. This industry is highly regulated, adding compliance issues to the mix. Users vital to landing new business are geographically dispersed. And the very nature of decision-making regarding capital investment made it obvious to executives that they lacked timely information.

Another plus for SpectraSite as a candidate for BPM is the fact that the company came by its process mindset naturally, as an outgrowth of its day-to-day business experience. Although top executives strongly supported process initiatives, this was not a case of what Kinetic Information calls “management by magazine,” where a CEO reads an article about a particular IT solution and demands to know “why aren’t we doing this?” Even today, SpectraSite managers, developers, and analysts use the word “work-flow” far more frequently than they mention process management – despite the fact that their projects sit squarely in the center of BPM’s functional sweet spot.

Why Ultimus Filled the Bill

Since its founding in 1994, Ultimus has broadened its offerings from being a workflow automation product to a fully Web-enabled BPM solution. In order to support its BPM value proposition, Ultimus over time has incorporated a collaborative design environment, management interface and reporting capabilities, and automation and integration tools with its workflow server.

As a result, Ultimus was able to meet a key requirement for SpectraSite: that the solution support workflow development, testing, pre-production, and production in a



Windows environment. The closest competing vendor's solution, by contrast, worked only in the production phase. The pace of automation at SpectraSite required that new workflows be created in days, rather than weeks, and process changes implemented within weeks rather than months. Ultimus was able to support this rigorous schedule consistently over the initial six months of implementation.

Geography also played a part, since Ultimus is based near to SpectraSite headquarters, as is the Ultimus reseller ChannelFlex. This proximity helped Ultimus meet the challenge of handling requirements and analysis for more than 30 different workflow situations. Knowledge that support would be readily available raised SpectraSite's comfort level with the solution and its expectation that maximum total value would be provided.

Kinetic Information's Value Perspective

When Kinetic Information speaks of "maximum value," we do so with a very specific meaning in mind that ranges far beyond conventional value metrics. We learned years ago that focusing primarily on return on investment (ROI) and total cost of ownership (TCO) doesn't adequately capture the true value a solution can provide. So instead, we approach the issue more holistically, and measure value in terms of all three of the following elements:

- **Economics:** ROI and TCO, for we do recognize that these are critically important yardsticks; but also
- **Process Change:** improved support for key business operations, consistently, repeatably, and flexibly over time; and
- **Collaboration:** enhanced communications among and between systems, applications, and people, within the organization and beyond

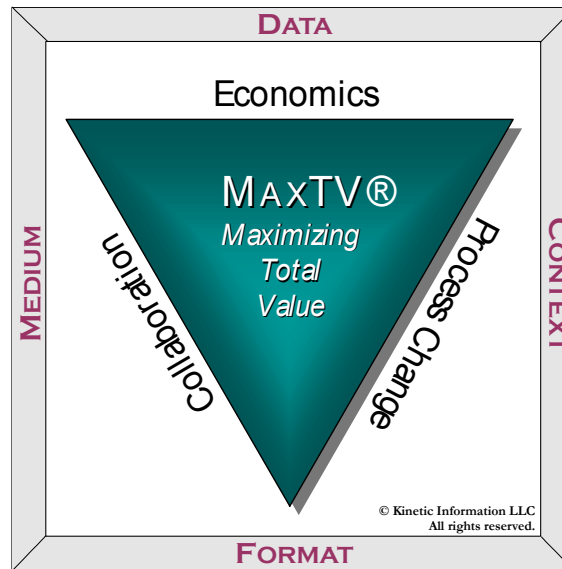
In addition, we look at the orchestration of these critical aspects as well:

- **Data:** the fundamental building-block of any business operation;
- **Context:** the business environment – which is ever changing – required to give the data value;
- **Format:** the "language" in which data is presented, and
- **Medium:** the substrate on which the data is delivered

We call this seven-pronged methodology MaxTV[®] (short for "Maximizing Total Value" – see Figure 3) and describe it simply as a way to evaluate a solution's ability not only to generate a cost benefit, but to help people work better, and work better together as well, thus helping the business grow.



**Figure 3 The MaxTV® Triad:
Methodology for Maximizing Total Value**



Source: Kinetic Information LLC

In the next section, we will show how MaxTV® can be applied when engaging in initiatives that combine BPM with workflow automation.

SECTION III: BLUEPRINT FOR BPM SUCCESS

After observing scores of organizations struggle to automate and manage their business processes, we believe fervently that in BPM – perhaps more than in any other technology endeavor – it is essential to understand and synchronize all the elements required to achieve MaxTV[®]: economics, process change, and collaboration. The experience of SpectraSite, among others, points to the steps described below as keys to success.

Choose the Right Workflows and Processes

There may be hundreds or workflows and dozens of business processes in a medium-sized to large organization. Department heads may argue passionately that their own pet project be chosen as the BPM pilot, or they may argue strenuously *against* being chosen for fear of the unknown. The following factors should be considered when determining where to begin:

- **Budget impact:** Will this project reduce costs, accelerate revenue collection, or open a new stream of revenue, preferably within the next fiscal quarter?
- **Growth potential:** Is this project related to one or more of the organization's key business goals, such as entering new markets, supporting partnerships, or emphasizing recurring service revenue?
- **Ease of implementation:** Can this project be launched within 60 days and without disrupting the normal flow of business more than would occur with normal systems maintenance?
- **Relief of a major pain point:** Does this project address a problem that customers, employees, and partners have identified as a chronic organizational problem?

Draw (and Redraw) Detailed Process Maps

Inevitably, project teams will find that the business processes they are working to automate or manage have implications and lead in directions they didn't originally anticipate. Although this experience is normal – and even healthy – it's important to be thorough in mapping the process up front, especially with regard to:

- **Workflow elements**, encompassing business-oriented components like rules and departmental functions, and technical elements such as the network interfaces, specialized hardware, databases and repositories, and communications platforms that may be involved in all likely business scenarios.
- **Content issues**, embracing the data types, content formats, transaction protocols, and rich media types (audio, video, holographic etc.) that will come into play as



the process plays out. Existing content management systems, if any, will have to be engaged here as well.

- **Enterprise interoperability**, including all applications, databases, Web sites, portals, operating systems, and other systems that now operate in isolation but really ought to be working together. Ensuring the presence of the connectors and integration skills required is critical here.

Total Quality Management gurus correctly preach that “you can’t continuously improve what you haven’t measured,” so periodically and systematically redrawing these maps is important as performance reports – a fundamental requirement for any BPM solution – flow in, preferably in something close to real time and accessible to both IT and business managers. Beyond drawing and redrawing, it is important to implement and test to accurately judge the impact of the mapped process. With modern BPM solutions like Ultimus’, changes can be made easily during and after implementation.

System-to-system and system-to-human reporting should be augmented with a collaborative feedback loop for end users – possibly an excellent use of an internal Web site or instant-messaging platform.

Proactively Manage BPM Vendor Relationships

BPM marketing slogans and product descriptions can be confusing as vendors from all over the EIO market map work to learn the language of “process.” To mitigate the FUD (fear, uncertainty, and doubt) they can create, get in front of the initiative and lead it forward by bearing these suggestions in mind:

- **Involve top management:** SpectraSite’s BPM initiative was driven from the top right from the beginning. As a result, maximum energy was devoted to finding the right vendor with the right solution. All organizations aren’t so fortunate, so BPM champions in the ranks should be prepared to make the strongest possible business case to their bosses before they start shopping. Another key role for top management is settling the competing claims of different departments. Senior managers must be encouraged to articulate their goals, rather than assume that these are generally understood, and work to synthesize them into the overall organizational picture.
- **Rank the contenders against specific requirements:** A great deal of information is available about vendors – through customer case histories, keyword Web searches, trade shows, analyst newsletters, and conversations with peers in your particular industry and role. However, that information matters only in the context of your own business and infrastructural requirements. For example, analysts may “ding” a particular vendor for not being sufficiently Java-focused, but that is not a significant problem if your organization is standardized on Microsoft technology. Depending on what you find in your market research, you also may want to adjust your requirements.



- **Test the product rigorously:** SpectraSite put an evaluation copy of Ultimus through its paces for two months before committing to purchase. While that made for some anxious moments among Ultimus salespeople, the result was thorough familiarity with the product and optimal use of the post-sales support available. Despite the complexity of BPM and its potential bottom-line consequences, as few as 25% of prospective customers actually work with evaluation copies of solutions before making their decision, and many end up suffering time or economic consequences as a result. Ultimus and other forward-thinking vendors have learned that extensive testing and competitive analysis actually pays off in a better understanding of the product and its potential.
- **Choose the right integration partners.** Geographic proximity, familiarity with the prime vendor, and industry expertise are the major credentials to consider when choosing a reseller or integrator to assist in your BPM project. Because BPM is usually complex, often time-consuming, and always business-critical, some integration help will probably be needed. Few organizations are as technologically adept as SpectraSite, and even BPM vendors like Ultimus that provide service staff and implementation methodology cannot focus long-term on specific post-sales issues. Integration partners therefore are often involved and warrant close inspection at contract time.

Figure 4 shows some of the key ways in which SpectraSite maximized the total value of its technology through BPM.

Figure 4 SpectraSite's MaxTV® Accomplishments		
<u>Element of MaxTV®</u>	<u>BPM Task Accomplished</u>	<u>SpectraSite Value Achieved</u>
Economics	Reduced the time and complexity required for capital investment decisions	Faster return on investment Tighter budget controls
Process Change	Automated complex approvals processes and made them computer- not paper-based	More efficient real-time management of business transactions Increased visibility and accountability
Collaboration	Modeled, tested, and retested new workflows, with input from business analysts, IT, and support staff	Departments operate in sync as processes execute across functions New level of cooperation achieved between IT and business management

Source: Kinetic Information LLC, SpectraSite Communications Inc.

SECTION IV: CONCLUSION

SpectraSite's venture into business process management achieved both short-term positive return on investment and long-term strategic value. Short-term ROI included:

- Streamlined decision-making, particularly in the realm of capital management;
- More efficient completion of complex documents;
- Quicker response to requests from customers and prospective customers, and
- A more productive IT staff.

Longer term, SpectraSite acquired both tools and methodology for continuously improving the way its technology supports its changing business objectives. As important as the technology itself has been the "process mindset" developed by working closely with Ultimus. Continuously analyzing and re-engineering its business processes puts SpectraSite in a position to tap growth opportunities in the rapidly-changing wireless telecom market.

The level of success SpectraSite achieved wouldn't have been possible without support from top management, owners of the various workflows, and a well-informed and activist IT department. The use of BPM technology to support collaboration and communication between all these groups, and between users, customers, and partners, will be crucial to SpectraSite's future success.

The SpectraSite engagement held lessons for Ultimus as well, lessons that other software vendors will need to apply in order to succeed in the BPM marketplace. For instance, vendors must remember that customer organizations complex enough to need process management are also complex enough to contain several constituencies of users, each with its own beliefs about the way the business runs. Whenever possible, vendors should work with customers prior to implementation to make sure there is agreement on the goals to be achieved through BPM and a clear understanding of how a project will cross departmental lines.

A common user interface is key to successful BPM, but within the various user constituencies, there may be radically different conceptions of "ease of use." For example, automated e-mail alerts useful to managers may prove a nuisance to employees who only need to know about a few of the steps in a complex workflow. So be sure you are able and willing to make specific configuration changes quickly. Report generation can be a valuable component of a BPM solution, but solutions should be interoperable with reporting systems already in use. This same principle of EIO extends to operating systems, databases, storage architectures, content management systems, and even the processes themselves.



Although a number of software vendors have turned to industry-specific management tools and application templates to boost profit margins, such vertical approaches are limited and costly. Even though SpectraSite's market is vertical in nature with very specialized technical requirements, the company found that taking a holistic approach to BPM by leveraging the Ultimus solution was the best way to minimize the total cost of ownership across the enterprise.

Process issues frequently cut across departments and industries, and savvy customers and vendors alike will take the lessons learned in one arena and apply them across the entire business – thereby finding another way to maximize the solution's total value.

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