

Improving Your ROI for PeopleSoft Enterprise

Introduction

PeopleSoft Enterprise is a powerful suite of products designed to meet the full spectrum of enterprise software needs. However, it is possible to significantly improve your ROI for PeopleSoft Enterprise by

- Simplifying complex IT infrastructure;
- Providing visibility, management, and control of business processes;
- Mitigating risk by controlling your most mission critical business processes;
- Providing business with the agility to respond to a dynamic market.

This white paper details the challenges businesses face in a PeopleSoft Enterprises environment and shows why the UC4 platform is the best choice for remediation. If you have not yet purchased Enterprise, or are just starting an implementation, we discuss at the end of this paper the significant benefits of adopting UC4 solutions as early as possible in the implementation cycle.

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UC4 Software is a leading provider of innovative Intelligent Service Automation products that have automated application business processes, improved efficiency, and significantly reduced IT operating expenses for over 1,600 companies worldwide. When applied to PeopleSoft Enterprise, the UC4 platform eliminates many of the challenges faced by organizations both large and small.

There are many common challenges addressed by the UC4 platform:

- Visibility Over Entire Business Process
- The Care & Feeding of Critical Processes
 - Finance Period Close
 - Payroll
 - Invoicing
 - Billing Cycles
 - Financial Aide
- Sending Accurate Information to Partners
- Potential Performance Bottlenecks
- Failure to Detect Errors
- Delayed Error Notification
- Integration of Applications
- Data Corruption
- Number of Steps Required to Complete Task
- Lack of Control
- Business/IT Alignment
- Control of Ad Hoc submission
- Coordination of Requests Beyond Core Application
- Missing Service Level agreements

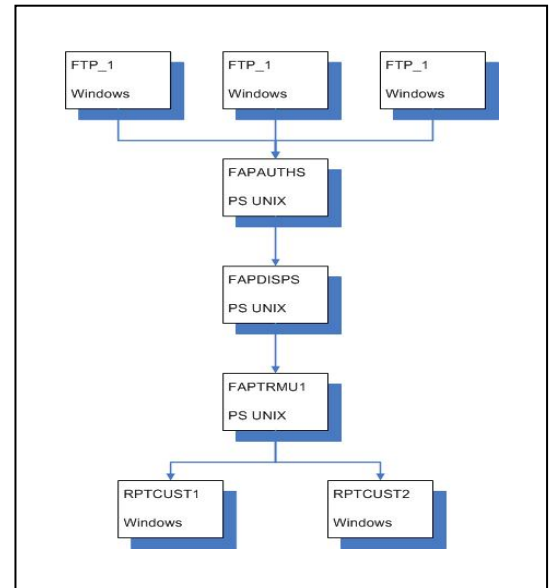


Figure A. PeopleSoft business process spanning multiple people, departments, applications and servers.

Opportunities for Enhancement

When you purchased PeopleSoft Enterprise, most likely your goal was to improve recurring business processes. You probably purchased one or more of the following Enterprise solutions:

- Campus Solutions
- Customer Relationship Management
- Financial Management
- Human Capital Management
- Service Automation
- Supplier Relationship Management
- Supply Chain Management

The level of improvement provided by these solutions justified the cost, and was a great improvement over the previous procedures they replaced. However, if you are like many other organizations that implemented PeopleSoft Enterprise, you soon became aware of areas that could be enhanced. There are many common challenges that face PeopleSoft Enterprise customers. The UC4 platform has assisted many organizations like yours in solving these complex problems.

Visibility over the Entire Business Process

A business process spans multiple people, departments, applications, and servers. The fundamental issue is providing visibility, management, and control across these layers.

Coordination of the process between people and departments can result in delays, errors, and inaccuracies. A delayed response between departments could cause unacceptable delays in the entire process. Penalties may be incurred by your organization if processing is not completed in a timely manner.

Several business software applications or disparate PeopleSoft modules may be required to complete the business process. Many business processes extend out of the traditional PeopleSoft Enterprise environment. These applications may reside on multiple servers. A complex and heterogeneous IT landscape can be difficult to manage. When a failure occurs, it can be difficult to identify where the issue occurred.

The UC4 platform provides visibility over the entire process. UC4 provides a platform that allows for the creation and management of the process. UC4 provides a single console to manage these processes across these layers. Your organization will gain control of your processing, enabling reliability. UC4 provides the visibility, management, and control that allow you to recognize and remediate errors and take control of your business processes.

The Care & Feeding of Critical Processes

The processes running in PeopleSoft Enterprise are the core processes your business relies on. Below is a sample list of the processes you may be managing:

- Finance Period Close
- Payroll Processing
- Customer Invoicing
- Utility Billing Cycles
- Financial Aid Disbursement

These processes are often times extended outside of the PeopleSoft Enterprise environment. For example, system utilities such as file transfers may need to occur to deliver information to an internal or external business partner. Data warehouse feeds may need to be initiated after these core processes. External business intelligence processes may need to be refreshed after the core processing is completed.

UC4 Software brings the expertise and the tools to assist you in bridging IT processes and business requirements effectively, without error-prone human interaction. This alignment of your business processes to your IT infrastructure provides an incredible amount of flexibility. The elimination of human intervention allows for consistent and reliable straight through processing. The process becomes more predictable and auditable.

Sending Accurate Information to Partners

Inside of your business units and your IT departments, data is shared between internal and external partners on a daily basis. These can be as simple as file transfers or as complex as published WSDL web services. The processes that create the information must be highly reliable and timely. By using calendar, event, or manual initiation, the UC4 platform can ensure the appropriate delivery or availability of the information required by your partners.

Potential Performance Bottlenecks

Like many ERP applications, PeopleSoft Process Scheduler permits individuals to submit jobs— typically reports that provide the user with needed information—on an ad hoc basis,. This is a valuable feature, but ad hoc jobs can consume scarce computing resources and often prevent regularly scheduled jobs from running on time.

In Process Scheduler, ad hoc jobs can be assigned priorities by process type and individual processes, and you can set the maximum number of processes to run on a server. But Process Scheduler does not distinguish between a job submitted ad hoc and one submitted at a regularly scheduled time.

The result is that ad hoc jobs can take up valuable resources, delaying regularly scheduled business processes tied to SLA agreements. If you choose to have individuals submit ad hoc jobs through the UC4 platform, you can manage the jobs and make sure they do not disrupt batch processing. UC4 can bring to bear its full range of job management features such as queuing for later execution, or even checking server capacity before releasing.

UC4 provides intelligent queues and job priorities, and the capacity of queues can be automatically changed throughout the day. For example, low priority ad hoc jobs can be assigned to a queue that can process only one job at a time during regular business hours, but changes to a capacity of 10 jobs during the night hours. Queues themselves can be assigned priorities, so jobs are processed through a high priority queue before jobs in a low priority queue. Individual jobs can be assigned priorities ensuring that high priority jobs are processed first, even if they were submitted after lower priority jobs.

With the UC4 platform, you can easily accommodate ad hoc jobs knowing they will be processed in a timely fashion without compromising regular operations.

Failure to Detect Errors

There is a direct correlation with the recognition of an issue and the effort to resolve it. The earlier an issue is identified the lower the effort is to remediate that problem. If an issue is identified at the point it occurs, then it can be address immediately and thus dramatically reduce its impact on your business processing.

The UC4 platform provides the ability to extend error checking beyond the status that is returned by PeopleSoft Enterprise. Often times a SUCCESS status is returned from a PeopleSoft process and a message indicating an error is located inside of the log or spooled output. Many organizations require a business user to examine the output of the process to look for specific message to determine if the process actually completed. The UC4 platform can parse output to specifically look for messages you define. These business rules can be easily extended to PeopleSoft Enterprise jobs.

The UC4 platform can additionally extend error checking to the PeopleSoft repository. Data can be easily evaluated and business rules can be initiated based upon the results. This enables the use of complex conditional logic to fully automate processing as well as relieve business users of the requirement to manually check post process conditions.

Delayed Error Notification

The recognition of errors is critical to creating automated straight through processing. Once an issue has been identified action must be taken quickly to allow for timely completion of your business objectives. Delays in notification of the error can result in lost efficiency and potentially introduce unwanted errors to the process.

The UC4 platform can identify errors and notify the appropriate individual or group to begin issue resolution. Notifications can come in the form of email, text message, pager, creation of a help desk trouble ticket, or issue identification in network management tools such as HP Open View, Patrol, and Tivoli network monitor. Escalation rules can be defined if the problem is not acknowledged within the desired time frame.

Immediate notification of your errors is critical to timely processing. Your organization may have Service Level Agreements with internal and external customers. In order to meet or exceed the SLA you need to recognize and remediate errors in the timeliest manner possible. UC4 provides that timely notification. The UC4 console provides that single point of control with the most information to allow you to address the issues and get your business back in line.

Integration of Applications

Business processes span multiple people, departments, applications, and servers. PeopleSoft Enterprise is a modular application. Each module can be upgraded individually and can even reside on separate hardware. Even residing on the same hardware, each PeopleSoft Enterprise module can be installed in separate code trees and data bases. These modules are managed as separate applications including separate Process Schedulers.

Integration of business processes across applications including PeopleSoft Enterprise inter-module dependencies is critical to meeting your business objectives. Processes such as Financial Period Close, Inventory Replenishment, Project Billing, Customer Invoicing, Utility Bill Processing, Financial Aid Disbursement, etc are core to the success of your organization. Manual integrations between applications can result in delays, errors and inaccuracies. These issues can have adverse effects on your business. The UC4 platform can eliminate the need for manual integrations. By automating the integrations between applications your core processing becomes more predictable. Consistent results can be achieved by automating with UC4 solutions, mitigating risk in your heterogeneous application infrastructure.

Data Corruption

Often times data corruption is introduced by human error. Processes being run out of order or processes being run with incorrect values in run control ids can introduce data corruption to your PeopleSoft Enterprise environment. This can be detrimental to your business if your core processes are run with incorrect results.

The UC4 platform can eliminate the human intervention that can introduce these errors into your PeopleSoft Enterprise environment. The UC4 platform can ensure the appropriate process submission order eliminating the potential of corruption and can additionally pass values to your PeopleSoft Enterprise run controls making them dynamic. This eliminates the need for manual updating of run controls which will eliminate human error.

Number of Steps Required to Complete Task

PeopleSoft Enterprise processes are very extensive with an incredible amount of functionality. With this increased functionality comes an increase in application administration overhead. Your business processes inside PeopleSoft and extending outside of PeopleSoft requires a significant number of tasks to complete the entire business process.

The UC4 platform can integrate deeply into applications including PeopleSoft Enterprise. It can execute processes at the operating system, data base, application, and web service layers. This comprehensive functionality allows for the complete automation of most business processes. By extending the error checking beyond the usual return code manual steps can be eliminated.

Benefits of Early UC4 Implementation

If you are considering purchasing Enterprise or have just purchased it, you are aware that implementing PeopleSoft Enterprise is a major undertaking. You can greatly reduce your implementation costs by using the UC4 platform from the beginning of the project.

It's easy to think of UC4 as just a job scheduling tool that automates Enterprise processes. But the UC4 platform is a powerful business process development tool that you can use to:

- Automate testing
- Eliminate redundant scripting and script maintenance
- Document workflows and procedures
- Maintain a history and audit trail of production runs
- Automate migration from development to QA to production environments
- Reduce training
- Improve output distribution
- Automate Testing

During implementation, you must test the PeopleSoft Enterprise processes you create. Without UC4 solutions, this can be a time-consuming procedure that someone must monitor step-by-step. UC4 automates the procedure, monitors return codes, extends error checking where needed, and flags failed processes, freeing your development staff to work on other tasks.

Reduce Custom Scripting

The UC4 platform uses an object-oriented approach that allows you to define a process once, and reuse it multiple times. If you change a run control parameter, login, or other variable, you only need to change it once and the changes cascade to every instance of the object. Complex libraries of scripts that must be maintained individually become a thing of the past.

History and Audit Trail

During testing, it is important to track each action taken so that if problems occur, you can determine the cause. The UC4 platform automatically keeps a history of every job run, the parameters that were used, and the output generated at each step. These records are readily available for viewing online and can be printed easily.

Document Workflows and Procedures

One of the most critical aspects of a PeopleSoft Enterprise implementation is documentation of the workflows and procedures. The UC4 platform provides tools that make documentation an integral part of the development process.

In the UC4 platform, "chains and job plans" represent PeopleSoft Enterprise jobs. Each step in the process is represented by a component. UC4 can display defined processes graphically, giving you a visual representation of the business process. By printing the graphic displays, you have a workflow diagram for each PeopleSoft Enterprise Job including the extensions outside of the PeopleSoft Enterprise environment.

To provide additional information, you can attach written documentation or documentation links to each UC4 defined component in the process. The documentation can explain the function of the process or component, and provide information and procedures to operators in case of a problem.

Automate Migration

One of the more error prone tasks is migrating procedures from a development environment to a QA environment, and subsequently to a production environment. The UC4 platform export and import utilities make migration an error-free, repeatable process. Variables such as logins entries, printers, and libraries can be mapped when moving objects into a new environment, eliminating potentially erroneous code changes and reducing the time to deliver new PeopleSoft Enterprise solutions.

Improve Output Distribution

For each process in PeopleSoft Enterprise, you can send report output to only one type of device. Process Scheduler forces you to select printer, email, file, or Web. You can use email distribution lists. However, you cannot send output from a process to two or more output devices.

The UC4 platform provides output distribution capabilities usually found only in third party print utilities. With UC4 you can send output to multiple devices.

For example, you could send a report to five printers in five different offices, to 10 users via email attachment, and to an HTML file for viewing on the Web. You can change output distribution for different days of the week, and control how long output is retained.

UC4 Increases the Return on Your Investment in Enterprise

You purchased PeopleSoft Enterprise to streamline your administrative functions and make them more efficient. This was critical if your organization was going to remain competitive in these challenging times.

Now it's time to take the next step and further improve your ROI by improving the efficiency of your business processing and centralizing automation across all applications in your enterprise. If you are just beginning a PeopleSoft Enterprise implementation, you want to streamline the implementation process.

The UC4 platform is the clear choice. It is a true enterprise automation platform that is fully integrated with PeopleSoft Enterprise, enhancing PeopleSoft Enterprise in the critical areas. It also provides a development environment that can significantly shorten implementation time.

For more information on the general features and benefits of the UC4 platform, visit www.uc4.com.

About UC4 Software

UC4 Software is the leading provider of intelligent service automation solutions that enable organizations to connect IT service delivery with business demand. Combining real-time intelligence with just-in-time execution ensures customers can automate processes that traverse on-premises, virtualized and cloud computing platforms at low risk and cost. In excess of 1600 organizations worldwide trust in UC4 to automate the mission-critical IT systems that drive their business operations.

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