

## Automation Within, Around, and Beyond Oracle E-Business Suite

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## Executive Summary

The Oracle E-Business Suite is an extensive set of business applications for managing important business processes across your organization. UC4 Software provides an advanced solution for the Oracle E-Business Suite that reduces implementation time, accelerates business processes, and provides true enterprise process management within, around, and beyond the Oracle E-Business Suite.

This white paper will examine how to significantly improve your ROI and describe how the UC4 platform enhances and extends the Oracle E-Business Suite.

- It is possible to significantly improve your ROI for the Oracle E-Business Suite 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.

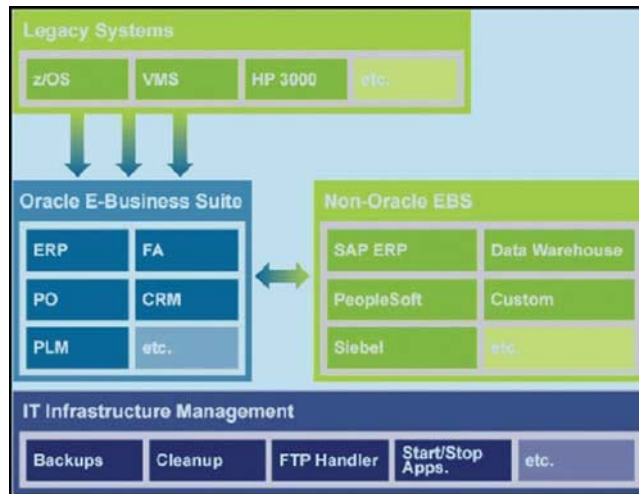


Figure a. Oracle E-Business Suite relationship to the

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 the Oracle E-Business Suite, the UC4 platform eliminates many of the challenges faced by organizations both large and small.

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

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
  - Project Accounting
  - Manufacturing

- Sending Accurate Information to Partners
- Potential Performance Bottleneck
- 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

### Opportunities for Enhancement: Automation Within, Around, and Beyond

When you purchased Oracle E-Business Suite, most likely your goal was to improve recurring business processes. You probably purchased one or more of the following E-Business solutions:

- Financial Management
- Human Capital Management
- Project Management
- Manufacturing
- Supply Chain Management
- Customer Relation Management
- Procurement
- Asset Lifecycle 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 Oracle E-Business Suite, you soon became aware of areas that could be enhanced. There are many common challenges that face Oracle E-Business customers. The UC4 platform has assisted many organizations like yours in solving these complex problems.

By gaining visibility, management, and control of all processing within, around, and beyond Oracle E-Business Suite with the UC4 platform parallel processing, automated parameter entry, advanced error checking, enhanced conditional logic, and notifications, you will eliminate data entry errors, shorten the batch processing cycle, and free staff to work on other projects.

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 an Oracle E-Business Suite implementation, you want to streamline the implementation process.

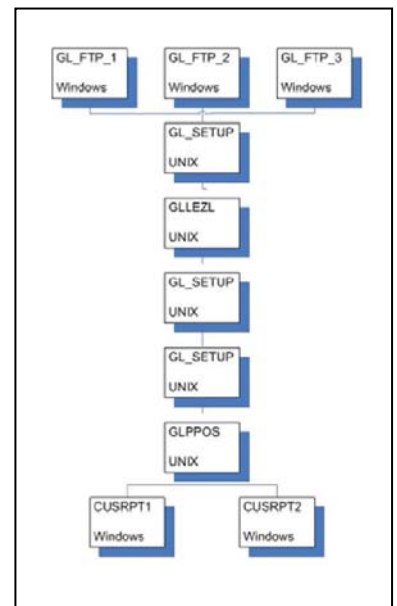


Figure B. Oracle E-Business process spanning multiple people, departments, applications and servers.

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

### **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 Oracle E-Business Suite modules may be required to complete the business process. Many business processes extend out of the traditional Oracle E-Business Suite environment. These applications may reside on multiple servers, and 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 adds visibility over the entire process. It provides a platform that allows for the creation and management of the process. The UC4 platform provides a single console to manage these processes across these layers. UC4 solutions provide the visibility, management, and control that allow you to recognize and remediate errors, take control of your business processes, and enable reliability.

### **The Care and Feeding of Critical Processes**

The processes running in Oracle E-Business Suite are the core processes your business relies on. Below is a sample list of the processes you may be managing:

- Financial Period Close
- Payroll Processing
- Customer Invoicing
- Project Accounting
- Manufacturing Replenishments

These processes are often extended outside of the Oracle E-Business Suite 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, Oracle E-Business Suite permits individuals to submit jobs. These are 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.

The UC4 platform ad hoc request capture facility along with an advanced queuing mechanism that controls the number of tasks executed at any given time can manage the load placed on computing resources. Each queue is controlled separately, with a Monitor queue controlling the total number of tasks that can be processed. Queues can also be prioritized, so tasks assigned to a high priority queue will execute before tasks assigned to a lower priority queue.

The UC4 platform uses operating system CPU utilization percentages to control Oracle E-Business Suite process initiation and to work with other system performance analysis tools in order to dynamically increase or decrease throughput. UC4 platform customers have used dynamic processing control to make better use of their computing environment while maintaining an excellent service levels for their business user customers.

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 the Oracle E-Business Suite. Often times a COMPLETED status is returned from an Oracle E-Business Suite concurrent request 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 concurrent request to look for specific message to determine if the process was actually correct. The UC4 platform can parse output to specifically look for messages you define. These business rules can be easily extended to Oracle E-Business Suite concurrent requests.

The UC4 platform can additionally extend error checking to the Oracle E-Business Suite 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 alerting 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 errors is critical to timely processing. Your organization may have Service Level Agreements with internal and external customers, and in order to meet or exceed SLAs, errors must be recognized and remediation must occur as quickly as possible. The UC4 platform provides that timely notification. The operations console provides a single point of control to allow you to address these issues and get your business process back in line.

### **Integration of Applications**

Business processes span multiple people, departments, applications, and servers. The Oracle E-Business Suite is an extensive application covering most business unit functions. Often times custom reporting, data warehousing, or other industry specific applications may be implemented outside of the Oracle E-Business Suite. Integrating a heterogeneous application landscape with dependencies across external processes can be challenging from the Oracle E-Business Suite.

Integration of business processes across applications is critical to meeting your business objectives. Processes such as Financial Period Close, Inventory Replenishment, Project Billing, Customer Invoicing, Utility Bill Processing, 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 parameter values can introduce data corruption to your Oracle E-Business Suite 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 Oracle E-Business Suite environment. The UC4 platform can ensure the appropriate concurrent request submission order eliminating the potential of corruption and can additionally pass values to your Oracle E-Business Suite concurrent requests making them dynamic. This eliminates the need for manual updating of concurrent request parameters which will eliminate human error.

### **Number of Steps Required to Complete Task**

Oracle E-Business Suite 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 Oracle E-Business Suite and extending outside of Oracle E-Business Suite can require a significant number of tasks to complete the entire business process.

The UC4 platform can integrate deeply within applications including Oracle E-Business Suite. 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 Oracle E-Business Suite or have just purchased it, you are aware that implementing Oracle E-Business Suite 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

During implementation, you must test the Oracle E-Business Suite request sets you create. Without UC4 solutions, this can be a time-consuming procedure that someone must monitor step-by-step. The UC4 platform automates testing, checks concurrent request return codes, extends error checking where required, 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 concurrent request 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

### 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 concurrent requests and external job runs, 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 process flows and procedures

One of the most critical aspects of a Oracle E-Business Suite implementation is documentation of the back end business processes and procedures. The UC4 platform provides tools that make documentation an integral part of the development process.

In the UC4 platform, "chains" represent Oracle E-Business Suite request sets. Each concurrent request in the process is represented by a component. The UC4 platform can display defined processes graphically, giving you a visual representation of the business process. By printing the graphic displays, you have a process diagram for each Oracle E-Business Suite request set including the extensions outside of the Oracle E-Business Suite 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 chain or component, and provide information and procedures to operators and application administrators in case of a problem.

### Automate migration

One of the more error prone tasks is migrating concurrent requests and request sets 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 Oracle E-Business Suite solutions.

### **Improve output distribution**

For each concurrent request in the Oracle E-Business Suite, you can send report output to only one type of device. Concurrent Manager forces you to select printer, email, fax, FTP, or AS/2. You can use email distribution lists. However, you cannot send output from a process to two or more different 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.

### **The UC4 Platform Auditing**

Most companies must pass audits for their critical processes such as financial statements. All steps leading to the initiation, execution, and the results of the execution must be captured. The UC4 platform can be used to manage most if not all IT-based business processes. This central point of control allows for the complete auditing of these critical processes.

The UC4 platform provides a complete audit trail of all changes made. All changes to process definitions are audited with who made the change, when it was made, and what the values were changed from and to. All submissions, executions, and restarts of an entire process or a step in the process are audited including any operational changes which again will detail who made the change, when it was made, and what the values were changed from and to. The parameter values, execution times, and outputs for the entire process or each step are available for auditing as well.

The UC4 platform provides on-line query ability to review processes to determine if any exceptions occurred during the execution of a defined business process. Canned reports are delivered to provide this information as well. The UC4 platform will provide you with more than enough information to assist in meeting your auditing requirements.

For more information on the general features and benefits of the UC4 platform, visit [www.uc4.com](http://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. Visit [www.uc4.com](http://www.uc4.com) for more information.

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