



White Paper

BUSINESSES LIVING IN CHANGE (BLINC™)... PLEASE BLINK!

A WHITE PAPER BY UNIT4 BUSINESS SOFTWARE

EMBRACING **CHANGE**

The Business Scenario

The speed of change facing companies competing in this global economy is faster than at any other time in history. Economic cycles that once took seven years are now compressed to a matter of months. Competition is no longer just local, regional, or national, but in many cases global. Government regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) in the U.S. are a major concern and a compliance expense. Investors demand better returns and the promise of increasingly improving company performance. Suppliers are looking to partner with those companies that can ensure a mutually collaborative and positive relationship for all parties.

These changes are profound and rapid-fire for people-centric, project-based organisations – where the added volatility of the “people factor” hits hard on services revenue and services infrastructure. Project-based businesses are demanding higher quality products and services from their IT providers, but it’s Agresso’s opinion that in many cases, they are still settling for less than they deserve. This is particularly true in the midmarket sector, where the large ERP providers who focused for decades on tier one manufacturing companies are providing solutions that aren’t a great fit for people-centric businesses.

Agresso’s goal is to shake up the long-standing pervasive belief that back-office ERP solutions are all the same and difficult to change. We are asking you, as Businesses Living IN Change....to BLINK....versus accepting the same tired array of ERP solutions that, despite their SOA marketing spins, are not going to deliver the postimplementation agility you need

The Stare-Off

Given the requirements and corresponding state of infrastructure enablement, it is a wonder that most services firms can respond – let alone respond effectively – to current business challenges. Enterprises continue to invest in enhancements, upgrades, and auxiliary applications to pull information out of systems, and use middleware to bridge legacy and ERP processes. As such, corporations and their ERP providers seem to be frozen in a neverending cycle of need-spend-need-spend – in which nobody questions and no one EVER blinks.

Firm leaders say they want to transform and become more flexible, move to more real-time adaptive enterprise models, and provide competitive and performance information where and when required. CEOs, COOs, CFOs, CIOs aim to put their firms in the best possible position to move nimbly and profitably through both planned and unexpected change scenarios is their job.

The trouble is that the vast majority of C-level decision makers have become willing victims to the giant enterprise application providers’ cement-like solutions. It’s not that CxOs have not made enough of an investment in the tools to meet these requirements. In most cases they have spent dearly, often overspent, on IT and enterprise business applications.

What all ERP vendors are successfully able to provide these days is a process for managing enterprise transactions and automating financial accounting processes. What has not been achieved is the “P” in ERP – the planning component. And when it came to meeting the “reactive” change-oriented requirements of today’s midmarket, people-centric corporations, such as one-off events like acquisitions, divestitures, consolidations, or public offerings – traditional ERP installations remain as flexible as a PVC pipe after the glue has set.

Is it Getting Any Better and Is Anyone Happy?

The cycle of invest, upgrade, invest, upgrade every time business change affects the data, process or information delivery model – must change. In many cases, the Chief Financial Officer has morphed into a Chief Focus Officer, with the twin roles of enterprise change agent and business redirect maven. Many are optimistic that they can change the paradigm, but lack the tools to really move the enterprise forward. Worse, they face techno-speak – intentional or unintentional from the very same vendors that should provide those tools.

Agresso is the ERP Market’s Definition of Agility www.agresso.com (888) 247-3776 So in addition to shouldering the financial role, the change-agent role, and the corporate strategist role, today’s CFOs (or the CEO or COO) must also filter technology marketing hype from reality, without the benefit of a degree in technology. They must pan through the considerable marketing dollars spent on trying to convince the business that the answer to all of their change-related issues is service-oriented architecture (SOA).

SOA is not the magic glue that turns rigid into agile, that provides information that is not there, or that allows organisations to adapt with speed and efficiency to new corporate events. SOA does facilitate standardisation, allows for loosely coupled integration, and accommodates customised screen presentation (portals). And, it does make data integration work cheaper, faster, and easier to maintain. But, sadly SOA hype might fall woefully short from the Holy Grail that some ERP would like end users to believe, unless it can be coupled with the critical enablement listed below.

Where Do You Go From Here?

UNIT4 Business Software has been selling directly and ONLY to mid-market, people-centric businesses for 30 years. The company has 6,000 clients worldwide, 10,000+ deployments with applications in use in over 3,500 businesses and organisations. Here is what UNIT4 Business Software believes businesses really want from integrated enterprise application suites:

- Post-implementation agility: The ability to change enterprise processes in months not years to accommodate evolution in business scenarios;
- Planning/Forecasting/Performance Management: The evolution of BI, where there is not only a consistent base of information for reporting, but also the ability to really plan and understand where the business is going. This includes the ability to report at the highest levels and drill down to transactional details;
- Reorganisation/Modeling: The ability to change organisational boundaries for reporting, both actual and pro forma, to determine the appropriate performance requirements based upon multiple business models. This includes the ability to slice and dice the data model to truly model and understand the business;
- Support for end-to-end processes: The ability to automate a process effectively, from the beginning of the value chain to financial reporting....in fewer products sourced from fewer vendors, with fewer integration worries;
- Better business management: The ability to move beyond transactions and loosely linked business processes. Rather, to more tightly couple the data, business and reporting/analytics model to move in lockstep...where a change made in one area does not have to be re-done in each of the other areas.... saving time, resources and accelerating the executive's ability to leverage business opportunities/profitability;
- Visibility/Transparency/Accountability: The ability to put information before the right people, and with the desired format to create a well-documented and defined audit trail. Also, the ability to ensure that all compliance requirements and administrative controls can be met and implemented with minimal business disruption.

UNIT4 Business Software's Final Word

UNIT4 Business Software is not a newcomer to the market, but is relatively new to North America with investments over a 30 year history being directed to non-marketing initiatives. We ask this of the North American market: include Agresso in your short list. Then, we invite you to seriously evaluate ALL of the market alternatives and to look beyond the hype to the underlying architectures and inherent capabilities under the covers. Because if you ARE a Business Living in Change (BLINC™) – and you do your due diligence to benchmark against the ERP landscape – we will be the right fit for you!

About UNIT4 Business Software

UNIT4 Business Software in North America is a wholly-owned subsidiary of UNIT4, a \$517 million enterprise resource planning (ERP) company and a top six mid-market ERP software player globally. UNIT4 Business Software's leading ERP product for organisations living in change, Agresso Business World, is widely acknowledged as the business software solution that delivers the lowest Total Cost of Change. Thousands of professional services and public sector organizations, including cities and local governments, in over 100 countries use Agresso Business World for both operational support and strategic management.

About Agresso Pty Limited

Agresso Pty Limited (www.agresso.com.au) is a dynamic organisation providing innovative business information solution to leading organisations across Australia and New Zealand. Agresso provides, AGRESSO Business World (AGRESSO) for organisations that are people, project and service oriented. Over 2,900 private and public sector organisations, in over 100 countries, have deployed AGRESSO. AGRESSO's unique ability to change as new requirements appear, without incurring expensive programming costs, is its main competitive differentiator.

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