

# Coverage Initiation: Ultimus focuses on digital business automation with DPA Suite

Analysts - Carl Lehmann

Publication date: Wednesday, November 2 2022

## Introduction

Ultimus offers a digital process automation platform equipped to support low-code application development; process and task automation use cases; and the integration of data, applications and services required of automations. It was an early entrant in a highly competitive and crowded field of automation vendors within the business process management (BPM), digital automation platform (DAP) and robotic process automation (RPA) markets. The company says the Ultimus Digital Process Automation Suite comprises capability sets that provide the application development, process automation and production technologies needed for digital business automation.

## The Take

Ultimus has created a user experience that is comprehensive and intuitive. Its graphic design environment includes many features and capabilities that make the platform adept at automating complex business processes, as well as straightforward workforce task automations. It has gone the extra mile in investing in a deployment architecture that can enable high performance and scalability. Its Adaptive Discovery technique is useful in identifying how a process should be automated; however, there are process discovery technologies that offer more accurate data-driven approaches to process analysis and design. Perhaps its most interesting capability is its Composed Process Solutions, which boil process designs down to their essence, creating a building block approach to rapid process automation development and deployment.

## Context

New York-based Ultimus was founded in 1994 with the vision of creating a complete software suite for workflow automation that is designed to be intuitive and used by nontechnical users. It was

originally backed by roughly \$30 million in venture funding. In 2012 the management of Ultimus bought the company from the investors. Today Ultimus employs a staff of 175 across offices located in New York; Cary, North Carolina; Panama City; Königsbrunn, Germany; London; Budapest; Dubai; Cairo; Shanghai; Beijing; and Taipei. Ultimus says it has over 450 paying customers and that it is profitable and debt free. No additional capital is being sought. Today, Ultimus positions as a "strategic business automation" vendor. The latest release of its flagship offering — Ultimus Digital Process Automation (DPA) Suite — became generally available in June.

## Platform

The Ultimus DPA Suite comprises capability sets that provide the application development, process automation and production technologies needed for digital business automation. It includes Ultimus' Adaptive BPM Suite, DPA Portal, Composed Process Solutions and Ultimus Advanced Task Service.

The bulk of Ultimus's offerings can be found in its Adaptive BPM Suite, which provides the foundation for process modeling, simulation, automation and documentation. It is composed of a set of modules. Design modules include the Ultimus BPM Studio, which enables business process design using a collaborative graphical environment. Ultimus Process Designer creates workflow diagrams of business processes. Ultimus Director enables the design of conditional business rules. Ultimus Organization Charts is used to graphically define process participant roles, relationships, groups and hierarchies.

RPA modules include Flobots (workflow robots) — to automate human tasks, simplify integrations and orchestrate complementary automation technologies to enable end-to-end process execution — and FloStation, which acts as a central location to perform automated tasks that do not require human intervention in a business process. It is important to note that Ultimus does not consider itself an RPA vendor. However, it does include some RPA capabilities to automate workforce tasks and some data integrations.

Administrative and managerial modules include Ultimus System Administrator, which administers the Ultimus BPM environment. Ultimus Process Administrator allows process owners and developers to administer their business processes. Ultimus BPM Server is a process-execution engine that monitors and controls business processes. Ultimus Reports generates report data such as incident cost or time. Ultimus iBAM Suite can create and visually monitor key performance indicators and expose them to users via desktops, portals or in key workflow documents.

The Adaptive BPM Suite also includes what Ultimus calls "adaptive discovery" — a technique to be used by IT and business leaders to reduce what is needed to be defined in a process automation (e.g., activities, tasks, data inputs and outputs, user interfaces, others). Ultimus says it reduces effort, time and cost of discovering what is needed to automate a process, thereby accelerating its design and implementation. While useful, we believe it is a less sophisticated approach to more comprehensive process discovery technologies available on the market. Indeed, Ultimus is likely to partner with other PDT vendors for such capabilities.

The Ultimus DPA Portal is a unified browser-based portal that hides the complexity of underlying infrastructure environments to provide a unified, role-based portal for all process participants and interactions, including tasks, dashboards and reports, administrative and business control applications, and solution composition.

Perhaps the most notable capabilities that differentiate Ultimus in the market are its Composed Process Solutions, and the Ultimus Advanced Task Service. The Ultimus Composed Process Solutions (CPS) platform is a development environment for creating composable digital assets, reports, business user and administrator applications, and integrations. It acts as what Ultimus refers to as a "solution factory," or a "software application that creates software." It is designed to automatically

generate customer-specific workflow applications in real time using a standardized architecture, structure and design. It includes interchangeable, prebuilt digital assets that are prewired with logic, as well as capabilities, business rules and content for specific process automation use cases. Essentially, we liken it to an intelligent set of automation templates to enable users to create standardized reusable workflow applications without writing code. CPS was developed after Ultimus examined over 1,400 workflows to discover commonalities and patterns in design, logic and execution. These patterns have become building blocks and are the bases of the CPS platform capabilities.

Ultimus Advanced Task Service (UATS) is a service layer designed to ensure the scalability, performance, availability and security of in-production workflows in multi-process, high-volume use cases. It does this by offloading data caching and task distribution operations from Ultimus BPM engines, and by synchronizing these operations in multi-server and network load-balanced environments. UATS reduces the computing load on Ultimus BPM servers to ensure scalable process performance and rapid end-user response times.

## Futures

Ultimus intends to enhance future releases of its platform with AI capabilities. It is planning to support conversational capabilities whereby process designers can verbally say how they want a process to be automated and the platform responds with sample automations. Natural language conversational development is a holy grail among vendors in the automation and integration markets. It is a nascent technology with a steep R&D curve, but vendors that experiment early with the enabling technologies are likely to benefit in the long run. Ultimus's CPS capabilities may give it an edge in creating early pragmatic deployments.

## Pricing

Ultimus can run on-premises or in a cloud; it is not a multi-tenant SaaS application. Pricing is either subscription-based or as a license fee; each is based on the number of users and the number of processes. Prices start at \$50,000 annually; many implementations range from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Ultimus has a direct sales organization and also sells through channels, claiming to have 60 implementation partners.

## Competition

Ultimus faces rivalry from a variety of BPM and DAP vendors, including Appian Corp., Camunda, FireStart, Hyland Software, IBM Corp., Kofax, Microsoft Corp., Pegasystems Inc., Salesforce Inc. (Flow, MuleSoft RPA), SAP SE (Signavio), Software AG (ARIS), TIBCO, Tonkean, Trisotech and Workato. Ultimus says that its market sweet spot is to compete against Oracle, IBM, Pega, SAP and Salesforce. It says it has found success in replacing these vendors when they have not lived up to customer expectations. Other vendors it sees more frequently in competitive situations include Agilepoint and Nintex.

While Ultimus does not profess to participate in the RPA Market, it does offer RPA functionality to some extent. In such cases, Ultimus will face several RPA vendors, among them Automation Anywhere, Blue Prism, UiPath Inc. and WorkFusion.

### SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Ultimus has created a broad range of design, development and runtime technologies to ensure rapid development,	Ultimus has been in the automation market for many years, and while it has accumulated its fair share of

Coverage Initiation: Ultimus focuses on digital business automation with DPA Suite

deployment of process automations and reliable scalable execution on a distributed architecture.	customers to run profitably, many other rivals have entered the market and have captured a greater share.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Enterprises concerned about process automations that must run at scale require automation vendors to do a better job of managing performance and the underlying execution infrastructure of automations. Ultimus is among the few vendors to have research and development in this area.	Ultimus can probably operate quite successfully in this market with its current offerings. However, developments in AI, process discovery technology and enterprise performance intelligence are driving the direction of future automation platforms.

Source: 451 Research