



Developing Agility

A Quarterly Newsletter for Unisys EAE and Agile Business Suite Customers

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Q&A with United Fire Group: Pioneer EAE and AB Suite User

Founded more than 60 years ago in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, United Fire Group (UFG) has grown into a publicly traded, multi-billion-dollar property, casualty, and life insurance carrier. The company offers products for both personal and commercial insurance needs. UFG is licensed as a property and casualty insurer in 43 states, plus the District of Columbia, and is represented by approximately 1,300 independent agencies. As a life insurer, UFG sells in 36 states – represented by more than 900 independent life agencies.

UFG is a Unisys Enterprise Application Environment (EAE) and Agile Business Suite (AB Suite) shop. Its application portfolio has the following profile:

- Eight major applications totaling ~ 5,800 Specs and ~ 4,100 reports running on a Unisys ClearPath Libra (MCP) platform
- Five apps, including its personal lines insurance system, have been migrated to, and are running on, AB Suite

Needless to say, EAE and AB Suite are essential tools for UFG. Scott Minkel, VP, Director of Information Services, explains: “Our changing business environment introduces the need for additional information to be captured and processed, as well as the need to enable process changes and enhance how we interact with business partners and clients. EAE and AB Suite allow us to respond to these requests in a more efficient manner.”

And UFG’s IT team delivers a lot of bang for the buck. “The backbone of our commercial lines product is our Automated Commercial Lines (ACL) system, and new development and maintenance is accomplished with just four EAE developers,” says Ina Boeke, Associate VP, Programming Manager. “Most insurance companies our size have ten times that many.” >>





Developing *Agility* recently had the opportunity to talk with Ina and her team about their experiences with AB Suite.

- Run end-of-day WFLs. We generally run these against the development environment and review reports.
- Conduct formal training. We'll make sure to enlist the help of Unisys for training in the new environment.
- Complete final testing.
- Use the AB Suite Runtime Transfer Utility to move the application into production.

Developing *Agility*: You started using AB Suite in 2007. What changes have you seen over the years?

Rusty Wright: The time required to build the system is significantly reduced. And we are able to navigate more quickly within Microsoft® Visual Studio®.

Mickey Lowe: I agree, gens are much faster.

DA: When you decide to migrate an EAE application to AB Suite, what process do you follow?

Ina Boeke: Everyone on my team has some tips related to migration. But in general, our process is as follows:

- Run an initial “test” migration of the application. This way, if the application’s developers haven’t worked with AB Suite before, they can look at code they already know, get familiar with Visual Studio, and compare what the logic looks like in AB Suite versus EAE.
During this initial period, developers may also spend time observing one of our experienced AB Suite developers. Some have even taken it so far as to make a change in EAE and then see if they can replicate it in AB Suite.
- Clean up the EAE application. This means deleting things like obsolete Specs and reports, replacing auto.write&clear with auto.write when possible, organizing folders, and so on.
- Finish up all current projects and release them to production.
- Run the migration again. During this step, we typically use the final model that was just released to production.
- Build development and test environments.
- Review all screens. Look for alignment problems and other issues.

DA: How has the transition been for developers going from the EAE development environment to the AB Suite development environment? What training did you get?

Jacci Melter: I think the transition was pretty easy, not nearly as bad as I expected.

Rusty: We had a one-week class with Jim Nichols from Unisys. It’s important to start using what you learn right away. It has been slow, but once a person “cuts the cord” with EAE, learning AB Suite gets much faster.

Brian Terry: I worked with Visual Studio and object-oriented programming before. So, it was very comfortable learning AB Suite. It works like any other product in Visual Studio. Ina had some small projects for us that helped us get into it right away. And we have mentors in the department, too.

Ina: With EAE, my colleague, Denise Easton, and I did all the training. With AB Suite, we arranged for formal training from Unisys and I think that was important.

DA: What do you like best about AB Suite? What are its key benefits?

Brian: I recently joined the UFG development team following a merger. Most of my development experience is with Microsoft tools, like C#, ASP.NET, Visual Basic .NET, and Microsoft SQL Server®. After a two-week class on AB Suite, I was able to start contributing as a developer on our applications. >>

Sue: Now that I am in AB Suite, I think it's awesome. I like the things it lets us do and the versatility it delivers. For example, it brings up items to select from as you start typing in names of SDs that are group items or multiple group items. That saves me time because I don't have to look them up to get the name exactly right or type the entire thing. I also like that I can bring SDs up in the main window and see them in "entered order" or "alpha order" – whatever is needed. And, I can customize the view to the way I like to work.

Jim Sharman: I think AB Suite and the Visual Studio environment make project development much easier. When you open a project, you have access to all of the Specs contained in the Class View window. In addition to the Properties and Members windows that open, the main window gives you point-and-click access to the Spec's painter, properties, members, and logic. And with the properties window open, you always have instant access to the properties of any object you click on – whether it's the project itself, an Spec, or the members of an Spec. This behavior is a lot more intuitive and faster than having to click the "GO" button and type in memorized commands, such as "LG" and "SD." Together, these changes create a faster learning curve for a new developer versus learning EAE.

Rusty: AB Suite provides a platform that is customizable and flexible to program with.

Mickey: You don't have to add a no.lookup on automaint memo components anymore!

DA: What are your plans for AB Suite 3.0?

Ina: I would like to migrate our MIS application to AB Suite 3.0 in March of 2013, and then move our existing AB Suite 2.0 applications to 3.0 after that.

DA: Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Rusty: After an application is migrated to AB Suite, shut down its EAE environment. You have to remove the crutch, cry, and move on.

Ina: The support we have received from Unisys has been excellent. I have had conference calls with people from all over the world at any time, and even on weekends. Once I had to submit an urgent service incident and within an hour I was on the phone with four Unisys support people who figured out the problem.

I also tell everyone who is thinking about migration to make sure you have a powerful enough build server. I think a lot of our initial problems were because of lack of memory on the server.

Many thanks to the United Fire Group team for sharing its experience with EAE and AB Suite. And best of luck with your future endeavors!



Compensar Migrates Health Services Application to AB Suite

One of the largest, most comprehensive family compensation funds in the country of Colombia, Compensar has earned this position by relying on its 5,000 employees to provide attentive service to the country's citizens. A primary contributor to this goal is the organization's health services division.

One key to the health services group's success is an application that was developed more than 15 years ago using LINC. Today, the system helps Compensar provide a range of healthcare services – including affiliations, medical authorizations, and scheduling, among other business-critical functions – to more than one million beneficiaries.

Compensar migrated the original LINC application to EAE running under the control of the Microsoft Windows® operating environment in 2003. And following years of successful use by the organization's 1,200-plus health services employees, Compensar determined in 2012 that the time was right to make the move to Agile Business Suite.

Compensar wanted to achieve several key objectives during its migration, including:

- Minimize downtime by completing the final migration within an eight-hour window
- Ensure that there is no discernible difference to end users – in functionality or performance
- Migrate the system without having to deploy any new software components onto users' workstations
- Include printing and output management capabilities in the updated system
- Maintain – or even improve upon – the same high levels of performance
- Finish the project by the end of 2012

The migration process began with an intensive, collaborative, one-week assessment workshop in which Unisys worked with stakeholders from Compensar's team to gain an in-depth understanding of the application's components

and the various integrations it maintains with external systems. The Unisys team spent time observing the application's end users in the real world, which helped to build a clear picture of the specific ways people interact with the system. In addition, the workshop helped both parties identify key subject matter experts, designate roles and responsibilities, and build an agreed-upon approach for the migration project.

Migration activities were guided by an iterative process that gradually expanded the breadth of testing over time. For example, after validating a limited number of transactions, the initial testing phases were broadened to include more parts of the application, as well as its various external interfaces. In addition, Unisys helped Compensar perform function, stress, load, and interface testing. This methodical approach allowed the team at Compensar to feel extremely comfortable with the new environment prior to going live on AB Suite.

This strategy, combined with specific tools to transfer data and source code, enabled Compensar to execute the migration within the eight-hour window – without disrupting the application's user population or requiring end users to install new components.

In addition to a seamless transfer to the AB Suite environment, Unisys integrated [Enterprise Output Manager](#), a comprehensive output management solution, with the migrated application. With Enterprise Output Manager, Compensar's employees are able to streamline and automate the distribution of key documents to all of the organization's laser printers. The solution is >>

also managing the communication of medical appointment notifications to the organization's subscribers via email and SMS text message – helping to significantly enhance the service Compensar delivers to the public.

A Truly Successful Migration

Working closely with Unisys throughout its migration project enabled Compensar to successfully achieve all of the objectives it identified during the assessment workshop – and complete the entire project before the calendar changed from 2012 to 2013.

The migrated application delivers impressive levels of performance. During a typical weekday, the AB Suite application executes anywhere between 2.3 and 2.6 million transactions – and several hundred thousand during the weekend – with an average response time of .03 seconds.

The team at Compensar attributes much of the project's success to several factors. In particular, the work done during the assessment workshop proved to be incredibly valuable. Clearly defining the project's scope and identifying the roles and responsibilities of both Unisys and Compensar personnel during this phase ensured that all subsequent migration efforts followed the expected progression. And, ongoing communication between teams, as well as the iterative, phased testing methodology, helped the project progress at an efficient rate and complete within the desired timeframe.

“Working closely with Unisys to build a comprehensive migration plan, and collaborating throughout every phase of the project, played a critical role in our ability to successfully move to AB Suite.”

– Alvaro Pinillos, Gerente de Proyecto, Compensar

Live on AB Suite since November of 2012, Compensar's future plans include updating the application's capabilities to reflect emerging internal and external requirements in the healthcare market, as well as new state regulations. Moreover, the organization looks forward to exploring the new capabilities presented by the AB Suite environment, including adding a graphical interface to specific functions, extending the system to mobile devices, and offering subscribers new ways to manage their medical appointments.



Engineering Corner: Automated Testing Made Even Easier with AB Suite 3.0

By Tomas Liu, AB Suite ATT Technical Lead, Unisys TCIS, Global Technology Center – China

First introduced with Agile Business Suite release 2.0, Automated Test Tool (ATT) is designed to help developers and test teams bring more rigor and consistency to unit and regression testing activities.

With ATT, you can easily record and edit test scripts and automate the process of playing tests back and evaluating the results. By using a tool like ATT, your organization can:

- Improve application quality by identifying unintended software regressions before they hit production
- Reduce costs by eliminating manual, error-prone test activities and more effectively delegating test execution to less-experienced personnel
- Enforce quality processes by making unit and regression testing a part of your standard check-in and build workflow
- Improve productivity while making test activities broader and deeper by using defined test scripts and data to ensure that all conditions of a transaction are confirmed

ATT is all about simplicity – record test steps once, and play them back many times. With just a minimum investment of time, you get a huge return – better quality for your AB Suite applications.

What's New in 3.0?

The biggest change with AB Suite 3.0 is that ATT is now integrated with the Microsoft Visual Studio environment. This means developers can record, edit, and play back test scripts and suites in the same familiar environment they use for programming and debugging. With the move to Visual Studio comes many ease-of-use features, such as specialized results windows with hyperlinks into a specific test script. >>

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Visual Studio interface with the Test View and Test Results windows open. The Test View window shows a tree view of test scripts under 'System Modeler Ordered Test' and 'System Modeler Test'. The Test Results window shows the results of a test run for 'productmaintenance', which passed. The Test Results window also shows a summary of the test run, including the test name, project, and duration.

Result	Test Name	Test Type	Duration
Passed	AddProduct	Ordered Test	00:00:01.6322054
Passed	QueryProduct	Ordered Test	00:00:01.0503904
Passed	ChangeProduct	Ordered Test	00:00:01.4496240
Passed	DeleteProduct	Ordered Test	00:00:01.5619824

Test Results Summary:

Result	Test Name	Project	Error Message
Passed	productmaintenance	SampleTestProject	

This new ATT release also offers enhancements for test teams. For example, we have introduced the ATT Client, a new component that allows testers to record and play back scripts without the expense or complication of having Visual Studio or System Modeler installed on their systems – or knowing how to use these tools. In this way, organizations can more effectively separate developers and testers – providing a level of independence that boosts quality.

Another great new feature is the ability to handle the recording of multiple sessions of a client application, as well as multiple applications. After the recording is initiated, ATT keeps track of the sequence of operations that you perform in each session, which can then be used for a synchronized playback.

Finally, the 3.0 release of ATT adds support for Presentation Client, in addition to the previously supported WinForms client, ASP.NET client, and Visual Basic. NET client.

Will My Test Cases/Suites Still Work?

The answer is “yes.” If you’re currently using ATT in AB Suite 2.0, the new release includes a wizard to migrate your existing scripts to 3.0. Just note that because we’ve added two custom test types, some of the terminology has changed.

The two custom test types are System Modeler Test (SMTTest) and System Modeler Ordered Test (SM Ordered Test). The SM Test is a test that records transaction data and is similar to Unit Test in Visual Studio. The SM Ordered Test is a container that holds SM Tests or other SM Ordered Tests and guarantees a specific execution order (it is similar to a Visual Studio Ordered Test). After these two custom test types are added into Visual Studio, a developer working on AB Suite can create

and run tests for an AB Suite project in the same way as a C# engineer working on a C# project.

What can ATT do for YOU?

With an endless stream of user requests to fulfill and fires to put out – not to mention new business initiatives to support – it can be tough to find the time to adopt a new tool or set up a completely new test strategy. That said, I encourage you to consider the time you could save over months and years from simply having more stable code. Unit and regression testing are hallmarks of sound application quality-control practices. What are you doing today to confirm your application is working as intended? If you’re doing a lot of manual testing – why not let ATT give you a hand? And if you’re not doing the level of testing that you would like to do – ATT can help.

ATT is data-driven testing. This means that ATT records and plays back data on the form, compares the new results with the expected results, and flags any issues. As such, your test scripts have a longer lifespan – many form changes won’t require any changes to your ATT scripts. And, if there is a change, you can simply edit the script – instead of starting over from scratch.

And because this latest release of ATT works within Visual Studio, there’s really no reason not to give it a try. The tool is part of AB Suite Developer – you have it right in your hands, so it’s easy to get started. We’re developing an example you can reference (using the SAMPLE system), which is planned for AB Suite IC 3.0.1200. In the meantime, if you have any questions about using ATT, contact your support analyst or send [me](#) a note – I’ll be glad to give you a hand.

CSC Analyst Spotlight: Roberta Vasques

This article is part of a series showcasing the Unisys Customer Support Center (CSC) Analysts who support EAE and Agile Business Suite. Interested in seeing a support analyst featured? [Send us](#) your nomination.



Roberta Vasques began her career with Unisys as a Trainee Analyst in 1991, when she was just 20 years old. Over her tenure, Roberta has worked with LINC, EAE, and AB Suite, as well as with ClearPath MCP, Microsoft Windows, and UNIX® operating systems and related databases.

Developing *Agility* recently talked with Roberta about her role as a CSC analyst and what she likes best about working in the Latin American CSC organization.

Developing *Agility*: Please describe your current job responsibilities.

Roberta Vasques: Currently, my focus is on supporting customers that use EAE and AB Suite across Latin America.

I've been in this role for a while, but there's always room to learn more. In 2010, I went to Australia for an intensive, two-week training course on AB Suite 2.0. We learned how to use and support the software, gained in-depth technical knowledge, and learned problem-solving techniques. It was the best technical training I've ever experienced. Even though I felt my knowledge of the product was good before going, the training session made it that much better.

DA: Do you support customers just in Brazil or in other Latin American countries as well?

RV: In addition to working with customers in Brazil, I've traveled to México and Argentina to work with clients with EAE applications running under the UNIX operating environment. I've also given a course about EAE on UNIX in Chile, and one on AB Suite in Costa Rica.

DA: What do you like best about being a CSC analyst? What gives you the most satisfaction?

RV: Over the 22 years I've worked in the CSC, I've enjoyed the opportunity to continuously improve my technical and non-technical skills. In addition to providing clients with telephone support, I've identified other areas where Unisys can help the client because I work very closely with customers and really get to know them and their needs.

DA: What have been some of the highlights in the last year?

RV: Since 2009, I have been mostly dedicated to helping a major government agency migrate from EAE 3.3 to the AB Suite environment on MCP. I provided technical support throughout this period and would often do independent research and enlist the support of my peers whenever a difficult issue came up.

It was a complex, but rewarding project. My close contact with both the customer and engineering contributed a lot to progressing the migration project, improving the AB Suite software, extending my technical skills, and increasing the customer's confidence in AB Suite and Unisys ability to support it.

DA: What do you think customers don't know about the CSC and customer support that they should?

RV: Customers should know that we work as a team, and that we routinely share the knowledge within the Latin American CSC, as well as with CSC analysts in other locations. We meet regularly over the phone, and use a knowledge database, the support web site, and other tools to share >>

information and materials. In Latin America, we also share equipment when necessary and maintain reference documents specific to customers in our area. All of this collaboration enables every analyst to help customers address a wide array of topics.

DA: The CSC support centers were recently merged into the Global Services Delivery organization. How do you see your role changing in the future?

RV: I think this change will give me more opportunities to do different tasks, like designing a project from the start. Of course, we have been providing technical services, such as installation and configuration, for years, but I look forward to learning new technical and non-technical skills. In addition, I believe we'll be able to work more closely with our customers and Unisys colleagues to define best practices.

“Roberta came in quietly, quickly made a name for herself, and today is certainly part of Sefaz. She’s competent, extremely attentive, and very friendly. Even when she’s very concentrated on her work, Roberta always shows that quick willingness to provide clarification or resolution for a problem. In summary, Roberta is outstanding.”

– Lucinéa Meyrelles Marques,
Information Analyst, Sefaz

About Unisys Global Services India

Unisys Global Services India (UGSI) is a global delivery center that was established by Unisys in the middle of 2004. Today, the center includes over 3,800 staff members – all of whom are dedicated to helping you adjust to rapid change and address demographic challenges or skill shortages. In all aspects of our operations, UGSI makes scalability, agility, and quality a priority – enabling you to leverage the capabilities you need to effectively address your short- and long-term goals.

All UGSI staff members are well versed in development, support and maintenance, migration, and testing functions. In addition, the close proximity of the UGSI offices to the EAE/Agile Business Suite plant helps the team familiarize itself with new ways to resolve business and technical issues. Plus, this enables our staff to provide a wide array of EAE and AB Suite migration support services – many of which we'll cover in an upcoming issue of *Developing Agility*.

If you're interested to learn more about UGSI, please contact [Vittal Gundurao](#).



Info Center

Reference Materials Available from Unisys Support Site

Be sure to check out the Documentation Libraries available in the [Public Information](#) section of the Unisys Support Site. They hold a wealth of information for EAE and Agile Business Suite users alike.

New additions to our libraries of How To documents, white papers, and other useful information include:

- **How To:** Set Transaction Isolation Level in Windows Runtime (**NEW**)
- **How To:** Use Non-Phased SQL in Windows Runtime (**updated**)
- **How To:** Restore Windows Runtime from SQL Server Database (**updated**)
- **White Paper:** System Modeler and Source Control (**updated**)
- **White Paper:** Change Analysis Improvements and Best Practices (**updated**)

No special login is needed. Visit public.support.unisys.com, choose “Documentation” in the “Public Information” box located on the left-hand side of the screen, agree to the terms of service, and you’re good to go.

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