

# **Unit4's** Vision for Ambient ERP as the Path to Enterprise Value



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Traditional ERP systems have not kept pace with modern constraints on time and budget. Implementations often run far beyond initial plans due to poor organizational change management and low user adoption, primarily driven by a lack of training. This means that even after long and expensive projects, user adoption may still fall short. The result is inconsistent processes and an ERP that fails to provide business benefit.

As a solution to this problem, Unit4 proposes a new direction with its ambient ERP strategy. Rather than asking users to navigate a full ERP interface, ambient ERP brings key capabilities directly into everyday workflows through familiar tools such as Microsoft Teams and AI.

This approach will allow users to interact with ERP wherever they happen to be, helping them complete tasks more quickly. A manager could approve a finance request while waiting in a checkout line, using a mobile app instead of logging into a separate ERP station. By meeting users where they work, Ambient ERP reduces change management challenges and accelerates value realization.

## **Ambient ERP Will Accelerate Time to Value**

Unit4 states that its future goal is to deliver an ambient ERP, underlying a strategy that supports the structural change in how enterprise systems will operate in the future. It wants to go beyond just refreshing the interface to redefine how people actually engage with an ERP. By embedding ERP functions into the way people actually work, Unit4 proposes to reduce adoption barriers and the support burden that typically accompanies new system rollouts. Ava, Unit4's agentic AI, enhances usability by anticipating user needs and helping them complete tasks in a simple and clear manner.

For CIOs, this approach aligns directly with a digital transformation strategy. It reduces reliance on customized interfaces, limits the need for complex integrations, and simplifies workflows that historically required manual intervention. As Unit4's vision for an ambient ERP matures, they state it will improve data quality, strengthen process consistency, and provide a scalable foundation for automation.

## **Vertical-First Approach at a Fixed Price**

Unit4 has reinforced its vertical first strategy with preconfigured models for professional services, public sector, and nonprofit. These templates embed industry-specific processes within the product itself, helping organizations avoid customization that slows implementation and increases long-term maintenance. For CIOs under pressure to deliver value quickly, the ability to adopt standardized processes is a significant advantage.

Unit4 has also refined its partner ecosystem, ensuring that all partners are vetted. In addition, improvements in customer success and service delivery support a more structured lifecycle approach under its subscription model. Unit4 reports that the Success4U subscription model reduces procurement delays and gives customers ongoing access to the expertise they need without additional costs.

Unit4 states that its ability to provide pricing predictability is a key differentiator. It offers packaged pricing by vertical, using a point-based structure rather than unpredictable implementation fees. This gives organizations greater clarity and stability in long-term cost planning, as opposed to traditional costing models that often go beyond budget when scope changes.

## Ava AI

Unit4 continues to look at pragmatic and practical ways to use AI. Its AI assistant, Ava, is designed to bring practical help directly into day-to-day operations (like approving expenses). It already supports activities such as purchase approvals and anomaly detection, and the roadmap includes capabilities that will allow Ava to monitor project performance, recommend resource changes, and act as a proactive digital assistant throughout the work cycle.

## Limitations and Considerations

While Unit4's direction aligns with the needs of modern organizations, CIOs should plan for new responsibilities in governance, integration, and workforce readiness. As AI becomes more embedded in day-to-day operations, leaders must establish clear guidelines for data access, model oversight, and auditability. These requirements will become more important as Ava evolves from a task-level assistant to a participant in complete work cycles.

Ambient ERP will be built on collaboration platforms like Microsoft Teams, so it is important to have the identity management tools and security frameworks in place to support the use of these apps from mobile devices.

Migration, even with improved tooling, requires more than technical conversion. Organizations should evaluate which processes need to be redesigned rather than copied. Without this effort, outdated practices may persist. IT teams will also need skills suited to modern ERP delivery, including low-code configuration, data architecture, and AI monitoring.

Global organizations will need to look at regional partner support. As Unit4 continues refining its pricing structure, CIOs should model different scenarios to understand the long-term implications on budget.

## **Our Take**

The point-based pricing model gives organizations confidence that annual ERP costs will remain stable. Unit4's Ambient ERP vision offers a practical and forward-looking path for organizations that need to modernize without the high-level of disruption typical of ERP transformation programs. By integrating ERP functionality into daily workflows and using AI to support and anticipate work, Unit4 reduces the friction that has historically limited ERP success.

The combination of vertical templates, industrialized migration, and an AI-enabled user experience gives CIOs a reliable and lower-effort approach to modernization.

For project-driven organizations, Unit4 is a strong option. It supports faster time to value, simpler operations, fixed cost, and a direction that aligns with the future of ambient enterprise systems. CIOs in professional services and nonprofit environments evaluating ERP solutions should consider Unit4 when seeking a system that reduces complexity across finance, people, and project operations.