

AIM Advantage™

A Comprehensive Method and
Toolkit for Implementing
Oracle's Packaged Applications

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implementing mission-critical applications is a complex and highly challenging task. As a leading supplier and implementer of business application solutions for companies all over the world, Oracle has years of experience with thousands of successful business application implementations. Oracle understands that to successfully implement business applications today, organizations must embrace a proven, structured method to guide the implementation, manage risk, and avoid missteps. Within this structured framework, however, the method must be flexible enough for the implementation effort to be tailored to the specific and unique needs of the organization. Oracle's Application Implementation Method (AIM Advantage) is a proven, flexible and scalable process and toolkit used by Oracle Consulting and Oracle's select implementation partners to successfully implement Oracle Applications.

Definition: Oracle Accelerators - An integrated suite of methods, services and tools that enables you to evaluate, deploy and maintain Oracle Applications. Oracle Accelerators deliver faster implementations with lower costs, mitigated implementation risks and high-quality results,

AIM Advantage is part of the Oracle Accelerators suite of methods and tools. AIM provides a proven implementation approach and a toolkit to plan, execute and control the implementation. It is the only implementation method that is truly built for Oracle Applications. From redesigning business processes to production cutover, AIM Advantage encompasses all essential project steps for minimizing risk and facilitating a fast, high-quality implementation.

AIM Advantage provides direct, product-specific support for all of Oracle's application product families including: Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Financial Accounting, Human Resources, and Strategic Procurement as well as interlocks to other methods and offerings to support data warehousing, enterprise intelligence applications, reporting tools, and E-commerce

BENEFITS OF AIM ADVANTAGE

When facing the challenge of implementing new business applications, the goal is to achieve a balance between time, quality and cost. Oracle AIM Advantage supports this effort by providing an approach that is:

- Fast

- High Quality
- Cost Effective

AIM Advantage offers a method proven by thousands of successful implementations. It meets the demand for quicker, more efficient business system implementations by eliminating any unnecessary tasks from the project plan and reducing the implementation timeframe. AIM Advantage includes a set of deliverable templates, project workplans and detailed tasks so there is no need to reinvent the wheel. All of these features combine to support a rapid implementation.

AIM Advantage builds quality control checkpoints into the project. Periodic management reviews and acceptance points ensure that implementation efforts stay aligned with the project plan and the organization's business objectives. Through its integration with Oracle's Project Management Method (PJM), AIM Advantage provides complete guidance for the project manager.

AIM Advantage incorporates business process design and modeling to align the organization's business processes with strategic business objectives and build industry leading practices into the implementation. Through its integration with Oracle Business Models (OBM), AIM Advantage provides pre-defined, leading practice business process models to streamline the process design effort. Oracle Applications functionality supports OBM's pre-defined business processes.

AIM Advantage includes organizational change management processes to facilitate communication, learning and process adoption throughout the organization. The benefit to the organization is a solution that encompasses people, business processes and technology requirements.

AIM Advantage eliminates common implementation errors from the implementation. All implementation team members, regardless of the level of expertise, have a roadmap for performing their particular tasks. AIM Advantage helps each team member clearly understand the implementation process and their role on the team. The result is that time and budget are not wasted on unnecessary tasks.

KEY FEATURES

AIM Advantage was developed with the following key features:

- Flexibility
- Scalability
- Structured Framework
- Leading-Edge Technology
- Integration with Other Oracle Methods and Offerings

Definition: Oracle Business Models (OBM) is a full suite of process models that illustrate common and leading business processes. Oracle Applications functionality supports OBM process models.

Flexibility

AIM Advantage is flexible because it allows the organization to either use a pre-packaged approach or develop a tailored approach based upon the size and complexity of the proposed implementation and the organization's unique requirements. AIM provides specific guidelines to assist in determining which approach is appropriate.

A pre-packaged approach is a set of predefined activities using AIM Advantage tasks and deliverables. These pre-packaged approaches may be part of the FastForward or Oracle Point Solutions families of approaches and are typical of smaller, less complex implementations with no or few custom developed extensions and interfaces. A tailored approach allows an organization to have maximum flexibility and extensibility in implementing Oracle Applications.

Scalability

AIM Advantage was designed with scalability in mind. From the largest, multi-national, multi-site, multi-entity projects, through to the smallest, limited size, constrained scope projects—AIM Advantage provides the scalability required by each unique project. AIM identifies implementation tasks and task steps as either core or optional. A foundation of core tasks defines the minimum set of steps necessary to implement Oracle Applications. Task selection guidelines assist in determining which optional tasks to include in the project plan. This greatly reduces the complexity for the project management team in planning the work effort required for the implementation.

Structured Framework

AIM Advantage uses project phasing to include quality and control checkpoints and allow coordination of project activities throughout the implementation. During a project phase, the project team will execute tasks in several processes. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between phases and processes.

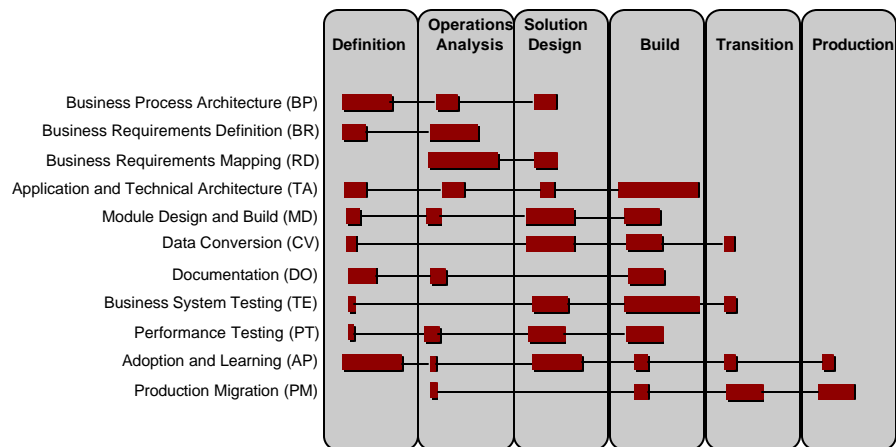


Figure 1—AIM Advantage Phase and Process Overview

Below is a description of AIM Advantage Phases and Processes.

Definition: AIM Phase - A chronological grouping of tasks in an approach. Implementations are delivered by phase in order to reduce project risk. Each phase allows a checkpoint against project goals, and measurement against quality criteria to be made.

Project Phases for Control

Definition

During Definition, the project management team plans the implementation project. The goals are to identify business and system requirements, propose the future business model, and propose the application and information technology architecture. The project team is organized and oriented. The team develops a learning plan to ensure team members receive training and support necessary to perform their roles on the project.

Operations Analysis

During the Operations Analysis phase, the project team collects management, technical, and end-user business process information and requirements. The project team develops business requirements scenarios used to assess the level of fit between the detailed business requirements and standard application functionality. The project team also creates a model for the application structure and suggests an overall technical architecture. Prototyping of business processes may begin in this phase to aid in analysis and demonstrate feasibility of design options.

Solution Design

The goal of Solution Design is to create the optimal business process solution to meet your future business requirements. During Solution Design, project team members design application configuration options and detailed business procedure documentation. Detailed design of any custom extensions, interfaces and data conversions occur during this phase. The team also identifies process and organizational changes required for implementation.

Build

During the Build phase, the development team codes and tests all custom extensions including application enhancements, conversions, and interfaces. The team creates and executes performance, integration and business system tests.

Transition

During transition, the project team deploys the finished application into the organization. Transition depends on the Build phase for the fully tested business system. The project team fully executes data conversion and uses the developed documentation to train end users and support staff. The organization conducts a production readiness check.

If the implementation includes a phased deployment, Transition occurs multiple times with subsets of the applications deployed to various geographical sites and/or business units at different times.

Production

The Production phase starts immediately with the production cutover. Production marks the last phase of the implementation and the beginning of the system support cycle. Included in this final phase is a series of refinement and measurement activities. The Information Systems (IS) personnel work quickly to fine-tune the system and begin regular maintenance. They provide ongoing support to the organization for the remaining life of the system.

If multiple deployments exist, Production occurs at different times for the various geographical sites and/or business units.

Definition: AIM Process - A discipline or sub-project that defines a set of tasks related by subject matter, required skills and common dependencies. A process usually spans several phases in an approach.

Project Processes for Continuity

All AIM tasks are organized into processes that group related deliverables together. Project team members are assigned to these groupings according to their specialization and background.

Business Process Architecture

Business Process Architecture addresses the need to understand organization business processes and alignment with business requirements and target applications. The team analyzes business processes to determine the degree of change required to bring them into alignment with organization business objectives, and designs new or improved business processes. The result is a set of optimized high-level designs that balance application and organization change.

Business Requirements Definition

The Business Requirements Definition process defines the business needs that must be met for the successful implementation of the application and technical suite. The project team documents business processes by identifying business events and describing the steps the organization takes to respond to those events. The team then organizes these processes into business scenarios that capture the organization's business requirements.

Business Requirements Mapping

The Business Requirements Mapping process produces and documents an acceptable, feasible solution to business requirements. As gaps between requirements and functionality emerge, the team resolves the gaps by documenting alternative solutions, designing application extensions, or changing the underlying business process.

Application and Technical Architecture

During the Application and Technical Architecture process, the project team designs an information systems architecture around the organization's business vision. Included are Oracle, third-party and custom applications; computing hardware; and networks and data communications infrastructure.

Module Design and Build

The Module Design and Build process produces custom application extensions to fill gaps in functionality identified during Business Requirements Mapping. Custom systems include program modules (forms, reports, alerts, database triggers, and so on) that must be designed, built, and tested before they can be incorporated into the new system. Module Design and Build addresses the design and development of the custom modules; the Business System Testing process supports testing of custom modules.

Data Conversion

The Conversion process defines the tasks and deliverables required to convert legacy data to the Oracle Application tables. The first step of this process is to explicitly define the data business objects identified for conversion along with the legacy source systems. System testing, training, and acceptance testing require converted data before production cutover.

Documentation

The Documentation process begins with documentation standards materials created early in the project to build quality operation support reference materials. Documentation requirements and implementation complexity are closely correlated, and the amount and level of detail of documentation varies by project.

Business System Testing

The Business System Testing process is a formal, integrated approach to testing the quality of all application system elements. It focuses on preparing for testing early in the project life cycle, linking testing requirements back to business requirements, and securing project testing resources.

Performance Testing

The Performance Testing process helps the project team define, build, and execute a performance test on specific system configurations. This process provides a powerful and direct means of assessing the performance quality of your system. This assessment enables you to determine whether performance is acceptable, and to propose changes and perform tuning to correct any initial performance shortfall.

Adoption and Learning

The Adoption and Learning process accelerates the implementation team's ability to work together through team building and organization-specific application learning. This process also helps determine human support requirements so that the organization structure and job roles align to meet new performance expectations resulting from the technology change. Learning needs of all personnel impacted by the implementation are considered, and appropriate training materials and learning events are developed and conducted.

Production Migration

The objective of the Production Migration process is to migrate the organization, systems, and people to the new enterprise system. Following production cutover, additional objectives include monitoring and refining the production system and planning for the future. The Production Migration process encompasses transition to production readiness, production cutover, and post-production support.

Definition: AIM FastForward - A fixed-scope offering for implementing Oracle Applications in the middle market (defined as companies with under 500 million US dollars in revenue), designed for low-risk, rapid implementation.

Leading Edge Technology

The AIM Advantage web-based interface provides ease of use. Users are working in a browser-based environment that is familiar and easy to navigate. With a single mouse click, users are able to display all tasks for the project or tasks for a single phase, process or intersection of a phase and process. With two mouse clicks users can drill down to a specific project task and open the deliverable template to begin work. All documentation is on-line and context sensitive so if users need help with a particular task the system takes them to the specific reference guide page associated with the task where they can find the help they need. Below is a sample of the web-based interface displaying the task list for the Solution Design phase. The 14 vertical bars along the top of the screen indicate the criteria used to determine core and optional tasks. Include or exclude tasks from the list by simply clicking on the appropriate optionality criterion.

Definition: Cooperative Applications Initiative (CAI) - A program for Oracle Partner Program members who want to integrate their products with the Oracle Applications product suite.

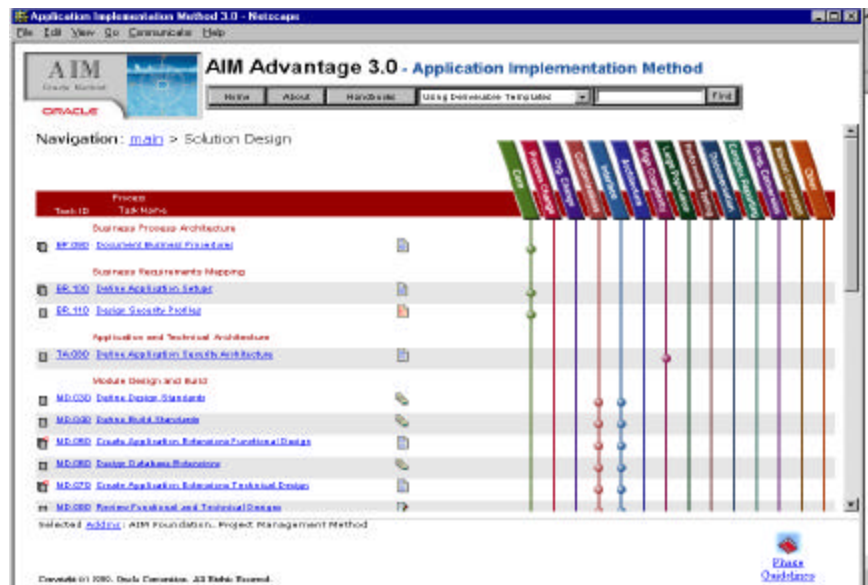


Figure 2—AIM Advantage 3.0 Web-Based Interface

AIM Advantage 3.0 is built using industry-standard XML (Extensible Markup Language), the web technology for structured information and dynamic web content. XML allows AIM Advantage to combine multiple sources of method content into a single integrated view, and also gives you the opportunity to further customize the view to match your project needs.

COMPONENTS OF AIM ADVANTAGE

With AIM Advantage 3.0 you receive the following:

- Web-deployed Deliverable Template Engine
- Customizable Workplans
- On-Line Method Guidelines
 - ◇ AIM Method Handbook
 - ◇ AIM Process & Task Reference
 - ◇ AIM Installation & User's Guide
 - ◇ PJM Method Handbook
 - ◇ PJM Process & Task Reference

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

The following hardware and software are required to run AIM Advantage 3.0:

- Pentium 90MHz or faster microprocessor
- 80 MB disk space
- 32MB RAM (64MB recommended)

- Windows 95, Windows 98 or Windows NT 4.0
- Microsoft Office 95 or Office 97
- Microsoft Project 4.0, Project 98 or ABT Project Workbench 4.0
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or later or Netscape Navigator or Communicator 4.0 or later.
- Visio 5.0
- World-Wide-Web connection for product updates and online references

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local Oracle Representative or aiminfo@us.oracle.com for questions or more information about AIM Advantage.

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