

Customer Success Story

Uniti Fiber

About Uniti Fiber

Uniti Fiber provides networking, internet, voice, and IT services that invest in the future of your company. With a fiber network delivering future-ready solutions that are designed to meet the unique needs of each customer - including enterprise businesses, network providers, wireless carriers, content providers and more - their proven industry expertise and dedicated teams create the foundation required to drive success and growth.



Industry: Telecommunications

Headquarters: Mobile, AL, United States, Alabama

Website: <https://uniti.com/>

Enhanced Business Operations Efficiency Addresses Increasing Complexity For Leading Fiber Optic Cable Solutions Provider

Uniti applies operational excellence across 123,000 route miles, 7.1 million strand miles of fiber, serving 25,000 customer connections.

Supporting the expansion of 5G technology and the accelerated digitization of nearly every part of our business and personal lives, the speed and bandwidth facilitated by fiber optic cabling are essential. However, building our fiber optic networks presents significant and increasing complexity.

While cable and copper wiring dominated the market for decades, the cost of fiber optic cabling continues to decrease, allowing an increasing number of homes and commercial buildings to benefit from the enhanced speed of fiber optic cable. At the close of 2020, fiber to the home (FTTH) exceeded 50.6 million homes in the United States, and an additional 20 - 60 million homes are expected to be connected within the next decade. Additionally, fiber providers pass almost 4 million businesses and connect about 1.5 million.¹ More than half of the companies in America have fiber access available, and adoption and access will continue to increase.

Capital intensive and not without challenges, laying fiber optic cable is a multifaceted process. Managing the building of 123,000 route miles of fiber optic networks and providing customers' customized and layered services presents much greater complexity.

Uniti, a leading fiber networking solutions provider, recognized the need to manage the increased complexity of deploying new networks by managing operational processes as projects.



Uncovering Complexity— Understanding And Managing Dependencies

Routine installations, while not without many details to manage, are pretty straightforward. “With a standard installation, we have a circuit that goes from point A to point B. There is nothing complex or different about these jobs,” shared Cathy De La Garza, Senior Vice President, Order Management & Service Delivery. “While there is still a lot to keep track of, like permits and other details, in the scheme

of complex work, when it’s standard, it is pretty simple.” She continued, “However when we’re building a new network in an area where we are not already well established, we are balancing the build-out of both the cabling and the logical network. This is where projects become complex, very quickly.”

Construction teams lay the conduit and pull fiber through the conduit; then, a network engineering team determines how to best build the logical network.

The engineering team makes decisions like establishing Point of Presence, determining which central offices we will use to segregate our traffic, working with different configurations, potentially buying services from other suppliers and a myriad of other decisions. Layered on top of these considerations are specific customer needs. “We serve a vast spectrum of customers.

For example, we built out a network for a large Florida school district. We also built out a network of small cell nodes for a major wireless carrier to prepare for the bandwidth needed for an upcoming Super Bowl. A federal military installation required an assembly of unlit services. Obviously, these customers each had very different requirements.”



While wide-ranging customer needs, new products, and an assortment of products and services are fairly typical for most organizations, the complexity inherent to Uniti’s business is the interdependencies of the many moving parts across their business operations. Uniti’s products and services are not discrete offerings - that is, networked services, by definition, rely on one another. In addition to the reliance networked solutions have on each other, different services implemented by various groups are often layered on other solutions, adding further complications in the pursuit of delivering seamlessly orchestrated solutions.

Managing Complexity Became Vital

With growth come challenges. New products and services, expansion, various mergers and acquisitions, and increased project volume produced difficult to manage workloads for Uniti's team of project managers.

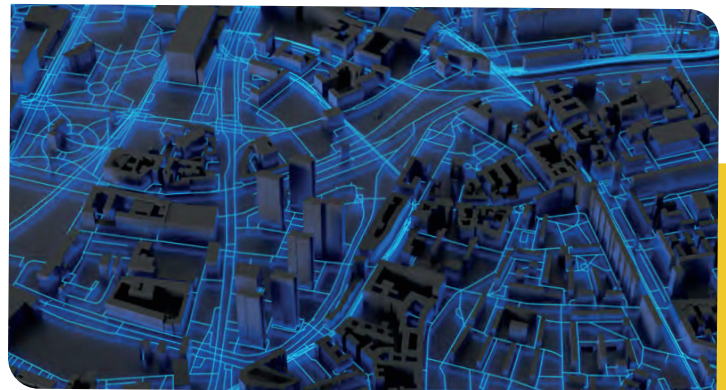
Salesforce is Uniti's database of record, and the challenges the organization faced were rooted in the fact that their billing records were also their implementation records. This configuration created the need for many orders to fit the billing model and assure the proper execution of the work.

Dividing jobs in this manner made it very difficult to track all the dependencies required to complete the order for the customer. The interdependencies were the source of complexity. Within the Salesforce.com environment, objects are representations of data used for classification purposes. Examples of objects include the contact, the company, the product, and more.

As the Uniti team staged a work order for execution and ultimate completion, there could be up to eight types of interdependent objects, and each object type might be included many times. The only work-around to link an order together was to link many objects and, importantly, associate them within a project.

"However, as we expanded locally and regionally, growing our footprint the last couple of years, the increased complexity and increased volume of projects were creating unsustainable workloads for our project managers," commented De La Garza. **"We had to find new solutions and new resources that would allow us to manage our opportunities better."**

The Uniti team explored two options: solutions integrating with Salesforce utilizing API calls or building a process management solution in-house.



Both of these options presented significant downsides. Solutions reliant on API calls, rather than native integration, always risk broken integrations and corrupted data. As Uniti explored developing a solution in-house, they built a solid framework but realized that they did not have the needed development experience in-house, and it would likely take years to complete the project.

While considering these first two options, the Uniti team discovered a third option in Work-Relay, a native Salesforce solution designed to do precisely what they were striving to do—better manage interdependent processes and business operations.

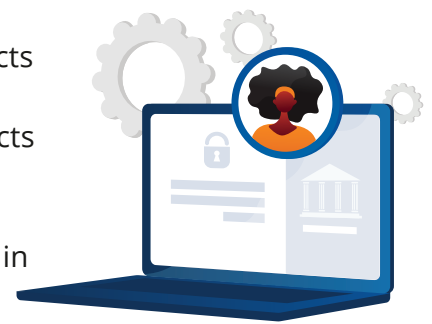
Managing Uniquely Assembled Processes As Projects

Many project management applications include scheduling tasks, tracking dates against schedule, reporting task/status, assigning resources, and resolving various issues. Yet, most project management platforms can't model, develop, deploy and adapt process automation.

To allow Uniti to execute customer orders more efficiently and effectively, it became apparent that they needed to organize repeatable and automated processes but configure the processes to meet specific customer needs, orders, and timeframes. Essentially, they needed to create projects that contained typical project management tools like Gantt diagrams and progress scorecards but consisted of a collection of repeatable processes assembled for the specific job. While no project was the same, every project contained a series of repeatable processes assembled in the right ways.

Partnering with Work-Relay, the Uniti team created the Multi-Order Tool (MOT). The Uniti team defined approximately eight commonly used objects that must be linked together to track the life of an entire project. These objects included customer order, primary contact, location, products ordered, and other objects needed for a given defined and repeatable project.

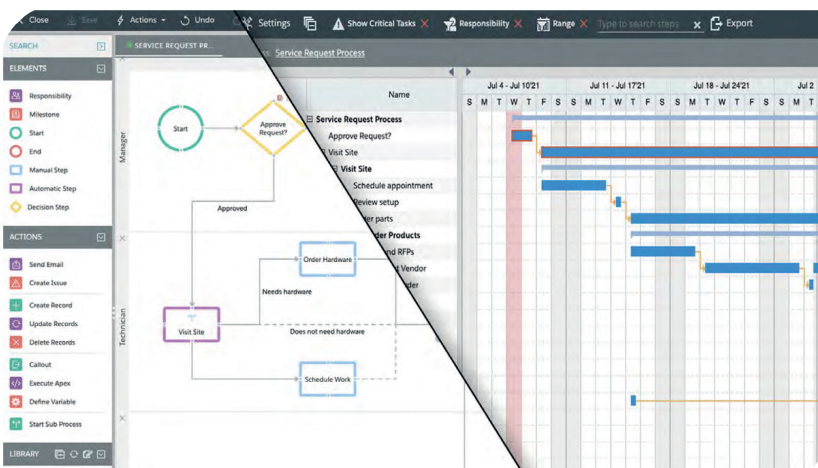
Work-Relay allowed Uniti to assemble defined and repeatable processes in ways unique to a specific customer project.



“Work-Relay allows us to do this. It has been a 100% game-changer in our ability to establish a project completion timeframe and complete projects on time. Basically, it lets us create a plan and stick to it. This is one reason we are growing so quickly.”

“Above all else, we needed to manage complex interdependencies, effectively managing how a change in one aspect of the project impacted all of the other objects,” Karen M. Dias, Director, Wireless Service Delivery. “Work-Relay allows us to do this. It has been a 100% game-changer in our ability to establish a project completion timeframe and complete projects on time. Basically, it lets us create a plan and stick to it. This is one reason we are growing so quickly.”

De La Garza expanded, “Work-Relay allowed us to create a building block approach using our defined objects and processes and move those building blocks around to effectively create an assembly of products and services for large and complex accounts. Because Work-Relay is designed to manage business processes, we can manage and control interdependencies—so that changes or delays will not adversely impact the entire project.”



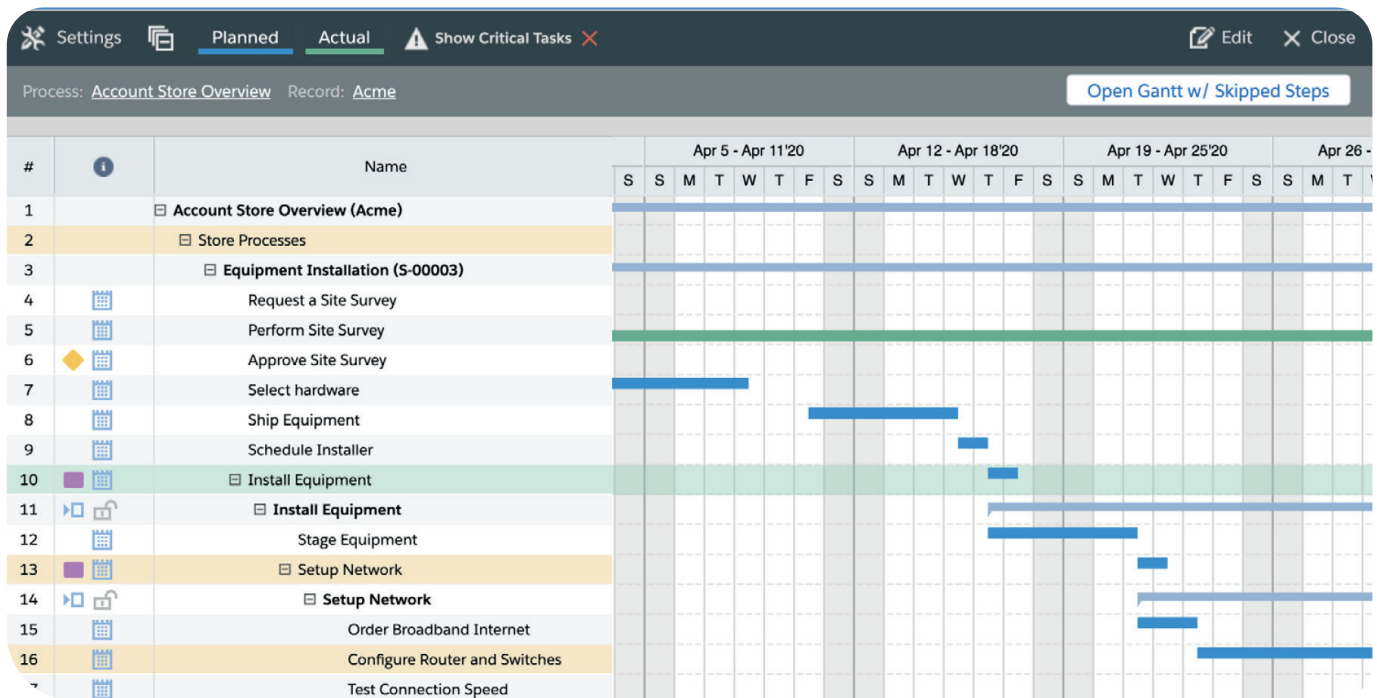
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A Vision Of Uniti And Work-Relay's Future Collaboration

Uniti is looking to apply Work-Relay to add efficiencies beyond its project management team. Their voice/IP team is the next group poised to implement Work-Relay. Because installation timing, signatures, and being very specific with the numbers the customer wants to port are critical to the voice team's work, Work-Relay could deliver tremendous value and increase revenue by dramatically increasing the percentage of installations completed on time.



“Not only is excellent customer service essential to us, but timely installation is also good for Uniti’s voice team,” observed De La Garza. **“Even one more day of revenue is very positive for our bottom line.”** Uniti is also working on ways to allow more groups within the Uniti organization to take advantage of Work-Relay delivered efficiencies without changing how team members need to enter data. **“We want to make things easier for the field team by allowing them to enter data as they currently do while allowing the collection of the data needed by Work-Relay to manage our processes,”** continued De La Garza. “This will allow our field teams to work as they have been working, but we will also gather the data we need. The vision is that a message will be generated when a field team member enters a new piece of information or changes information creating conflicts for the committed delivery. Approval will be required to make a change that impacts the project they are working on and perhaps other associated projects.”



Positioned To Meet The Challenges Of The Future

The 5G revolution, the ever-expanding internet of things, and overall increased digitization will continue to accelerate the pace of change, complexity, and sophistication within the fiber optic market and the communications industry as a whole.

Concluding her thoughts, De La Garza said,



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We know that our business will require the ongoing introduction of new products, continual geographic expansion, and the ability to successfully deliver in a market containing an increased number of technology configurations. Highly effective management of our complex business operations will allow us to rise to these challenges.

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About Work-Relay

Work-Relay is a global B2B SaaS development company based in the US with operations across four continents. Work-Relay offers a comprehensive solution built on Salesforce for managing and optimizing complex business operations. Work-Relay helps organizations systematize repeating work by modeling the structure of the work, the resources required to execute the work, and the timeframes required to complete the work. Work-Relay seamlessly overlays your Salesforce implementation, simplifying the design, management, and optimization of complex operational work to maximize worker productivity, increase company-wide visibility and enable business agility.

Work-Relay clients include large enterprises as well as small and mid-size companies across 12 industries. Typical use cases include installing fiber optics, managing clinical trials, coordinating custom manufacturing, and managing product design.

About Neostella

Neostella is a global enterprise software and solutions company that empowers organizations with the technology resources they need to exceed goals and push the boundaries of what is possible. Offerings include Legal Solutions, Work-Relay process and workflow solutions for Salesforce, Robotic Process Automation, and Application Integration. In addition to technology solutions, Neostella provides a wide range of professional services designed to help customers reap maximum ROI from their technology investments. With offices in four countries around the globe, the Neostella team is committed to providing exceptional customer support 24/7.