

UI, Unplugged

Workday Re-invents the User Experience in Enterprise Applications

UI, Unplugged



At some point over the past couple of decades, enterprise applications acquired a reputation of being hopelessly complex and hard to use.

Well, it's true. They are.

But it's not surprising why. Today, vendors of legacy enterprise applications still try to put a pretty user interface (UI) on top of ancient technology history – a client/server architecture that hasn't changed much since the late 80s. And it just doesn't work.

Music history is much kinder, and cooler. In 1989 MTV debuted "Unplugged," an acoustic, stripped-down-to-the-core musical performance show that remains one of the network's most popular.

In 2008, Workday takes its inspiration from the "unplugged" notion that technology is at its best when it's first focused on the user experience – and secondly on the robust back-end infrastructure and processes required to make business happen. Our applications embody both elements.

This booklet shows you the results of Workday's "unplugged" approach to building a UI. We've made complicated enterprise applications simple, awesomely simple, with a user interface that is:

1. Quintessentially Workday
2. Navigable
3. Natural
4. Personal
5. Durable

Flip through the next few pages and you'll see why what we're doing at Workday is not only creative, it's cool.

Charles Mingus
(1922 – 1979)

Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.



Quintessentially Workday


One of the most important figures of postwar American art, Hans Hofmann would dig what we're doing today at Workday. Our user interface emphasizes graphical elements over text as much as possible, to allow the necessary information to speak clearly to the user.

Workday believes that users should not only see information in a way that's easy to understand; they should also be able to take action within the context of what's presented. This guiding principle has allowed us to build unique features that users and the industry consider to be quintessentially Workday. No other ERP vendor offers quintessential Workday features like:

- **Drill Down:** We built our applications on the simplest of Web navigation concepts, embedding Web-centric hyperlinks everywhere in the product. Whenever users click on a link, they are applying the Web behaviors they know and love to a business app, to get greater detail on what makes up an entry.
- **Related Tasks:** Any time users see the Related Tasks arrow, they can see all of the things they can do with just one click – whether they're looking at a report, an org chart, or any other element of Workday applications. This ability to take action anywhere is consistent across Workday, saving time and improving productivity.
- **Actionable Reports:** Our core philosophy of being able to take action anywhere holds true to Workday reports. In Workday, every page is a report and can be shown as a PDF or Excel file. Using the Related Tasks arrow, users can take action directly on the data they find in these reports. For example, a manager can run a headcount report and, from it, can initiate a transfer, create more headcount, or make a comp change – and then some. This is a stark contrast to existing applications where, once the data is displayed, nothing can be done with it, and the data becomes outdated almost immediately.

Workday helps users get things done quickly, in a way that is easy to learn and easy to remember. This has made Workday applications as recognizable in the enterprise arena as the Apple iPhone is to consumers, inspiring confidence that our software will be adopted quickly, and successfully, by your organization.

Hans Hofmann
(1880-1966)



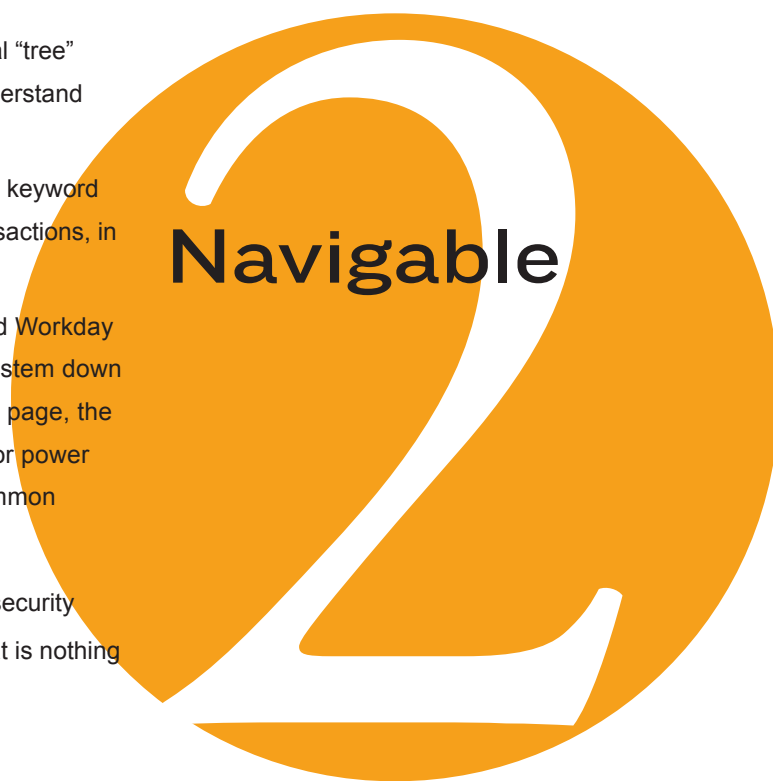
The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

Let's be clear. For all of our emphasis on UI simplicity, Workday is delivering very complex applications. The typical enterprise application has thousands of pages that are used in executing transactions. In applications this comprehensive, a lot of thought has to be put into navigation, to make it as easy as possible for users to get done what they need to. Form and function need to be the same thing.

Consistent with our view of dividing users into three distinct communities, Workday offers three different ways to navigate our applications:

- **Traditional hierarchy** presents information in a typical “tree” fashion, making it easy for casual users to quickly understand how to find the information they need.
- **Keyword search** allows Web-savvy users to type in a keyword such as “hire” and receive a ranked list of related transactions, in a format similar to Google search results.
- **Related tasks** is a navigation feature for experienced Workday users. To present related tasks we bring the menu system down to the object level; wherever you see that object on a page, the navigation will be attached to it. This makes it easy for power users to easily find and execute an action's most common related tasks.

All of these options are based on the user's profile and security clearance. And they join form and function in a union that is nothing short of spiritual.



Frank Lloyd Wright
(1867-1959)

Form follows function – that has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union.



Natural

Our navigation philosophy is to stay natural – to have the system work the way you do without your even knowing it.

Workday's UI is so natural that casual users can walk up to the application and jump right in. They can submit paid time off requests and expense reports as easily as placing a call on an Apple iPhone or poking a friend on Facebook.

As a result, no training is required for the masses of users that make everyday contact with Workday applications.

Workday provides two additional distinct classes of users – managers and power users – with an equally intuitive experience. We zeroed in on two key characteristics about these users:

- They typically spend a lot of time with Workday applications, and are frequently interrupted.
- They often need to access ancillary information to complete their task at hand.

In designing their user experience, Workday put a considerable amount of thought into how to best enable *context switching*, so power users could be interrupted and not lose their work, or train of thought.

For managers, Workday's slide-out workpane gives dashboard access to analytical data and contextual information, helping them to make better business decisions. Let's say a manager wants to hire a new employee. However, halfway through the transaction they need to find out whether headcount is available. With Workday, managers can access their slide-out dashboard, view their open headcount for the quarter, and continue on with the transaction, without losing any of their data or needing to log in and out of the system.

Workday applications anticipate what managers and power users need to do and help them do it, whether "it" is:

- Executing complex transactions behind the scenes, triggered by a few quick mouse clicks.
- Always being able to get to your inbox items and decide if you want to take action or not.
- Checking the status of your workflows through a slide-out pane, which lets you jump off, and right back onto, your current task.

These and other UI capabilities help Workday users to make better decisions, naturally – which is what enterprise software is supposed to be all about, right?

Steve Jobs

Most people make the mistake of thinking design is what it looks like. It's not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.



Personal

In creating the Workday experience, our user interface designers recognized that “one size does **not** fit all.” Different people use the system in different ways, requiring the UI’s design elements to be arranged, and re-arranged, accordingly. Having one approach to do everything has never worked, so by providing multiple ways to accomplish a task, Workday users can quickly get comfortable in a personalized environment.

The Workday experience therefore has been tailored to fit each of three user communities: casual users, managers, and power users.

- **Casual users** typically drop in to Workday to access self-service applications. They want to get in and get out without getting bogged down in any instructions or help screens. Notoriously impatient, the casual user will sooner bail on a task than read directions. For these users, Workday has instilled the philosophy that links will always lead the way.
- **Managers** typically access self-service applications related to their jobs, such as approvals. They also participate in a wide range of workflow processes. This group needs a bit more access than casual users to detailed information, but is less involved in Workday applications than power users. That’s why Workday has a tailored welcome page that presents the tasks managers need to accomplish.
- **Power users** need fast access to a wide range of tools to optimize their productivity. As with the other user communities, time and efficiency are everything. So is the ability to multi-task, which is easy with Workday’s context switching capabilities.

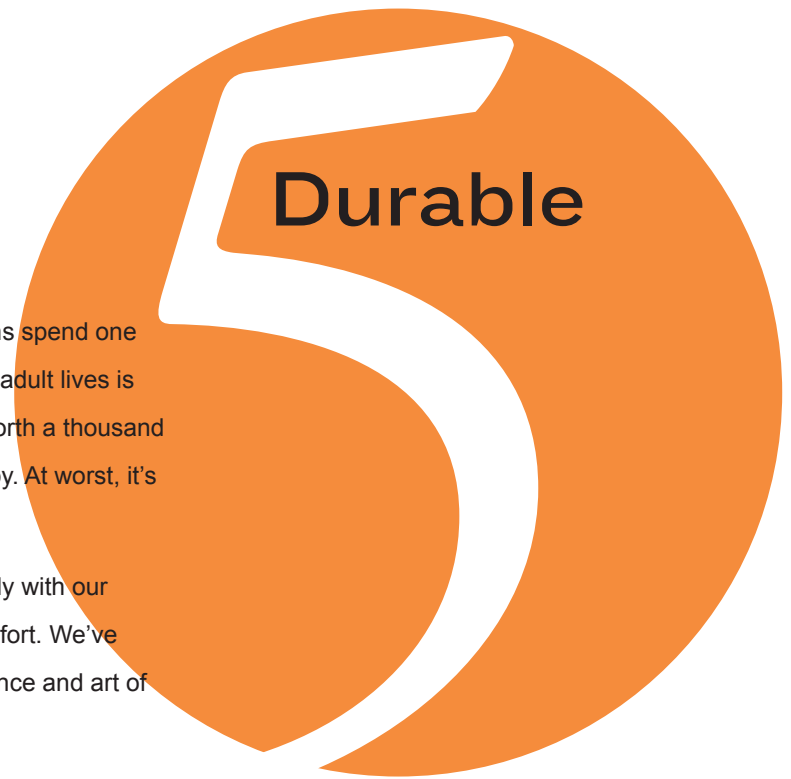
Based on these roles, upon login, Workday automatically presents users with a UI that **predictively** guides them through tasks. This predictive application behavior takes the idea of effective design one step further, ensuring not only that users have everything they need to get something done, but that they actually **do** it.

Charles Eames
(1907-1978)



Design is a plan for arranging elements in such a way as best to accomplish a particular purpose.

*A picture is worth a thousand words.
An interface is worth a thousand pictures.*



Anyone who's bought a mattress knows that we humans spend one third of our lives sleeping. Perhaps another third of our adult lives is spent in front of a computer. Because an interface is worth a thousand pictures, at best a poorly designed one is quick to annoy. At worst, it's slow torture.

Workday users can interact either casually or continually with our applications, experiencing the same level of visual comfort. We've spent an extraordinary amount of time on both the science and art of interface design.

For example, most Workday users are unaware that the retina contains some five million cone receptors and 100 million rod receptors. The cones are sensitive to color, and the rods to brightness. But our UI designers know that, which is why we focused on colors, icons, and a presentation that minimize eyestrain and don't age over time.

We also recognize that one of the key components of UI durability is, paradoxically, design change. Workday constantly solicits user feedback on all aspects of our software, including how to keep the application fresh. Any design enhancements to the UI are available immediately because our software is regularly updated and delivered on demand – you don't have to wait to install the next big release behind the firewall.

At the end of the day, communication is what we strive to achieve – communication between people, systems and data. We've consumed crazy amounts of time, brainpower, and caffeine to make sure that Workday applications maximize the flow of enterprise communication with a user interface that is:

1. Quintessentially Workday
2. Navigable
3. Natural
4. Personal
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And, of course, cool.

To find out more about how Workday can improve the way your business communicates and functions, please visit www.workday.com.

Ed Schlossberg
ESI Design

True interactivity is not about clicking on icons or downloading files, it's about encouraging communication.



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