



Press Release

The Uttermost Company selects PLMresearch for eBusiness Development

For immediate Release

Plymouth, Massachusetts and Rocky Mount, Virginia – The Uttermost Company, *the* largest manufacturer of framed mirrors and wall décor in the United States, announced today that it has chosen PLMresearch, a leading Small to Midsize Business (SMB) eBusiness consulting firm, to develop its Internet based customer service portal system. The Portal will facilitate the administrative needs of Uttermost's sales channel by providing an online "self-service" customer service representative accessible anywhere, anytime via a standard browser (e.g. Internet Explorer™ or Netscape™).

"Current phone, fax, face-to-face, and snail mail customer service processes have (or soon will) become too intense and slow to accommodate the business demands of our sales channel and Uttermost's sales expansion plans into the future", commented Mac Cooper, President of The Uttermost Company. "We thought that administrative processes such as taking and entering orders and servicing the customer requests associated with these actions was an area ripe for automation. PLMresearch demonstrated how this could be done in a cost effective way via the Internet", Cooper added, "they focused on our business and business processes – cutting through all of the technology buzzwords and marketing chatter – and outlined an easy to follow development path to get us where we want to be."

The Portal will be available to retail consumers so they can research product, use a dealer locator to find Uttermost dealers, see Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), view suggested complimentary items (cross-sell) and place order directly upon approved dealer's websites. Additionally, Uttermost's wholesale dealers will be able to access a complete, up-to-date catalog with wholesale prices; read useful retail selling information, access a best seller list and suggested complimentary items that have sold well in their region; obtain their sales order history/status *and* place new orders on the factory.

Uttermost's independent sales representatives will also have access to the Portal, which will list their sales history as well as the sales history for each of the representative's dealers. Additional feature will include the ability to place new orders on the factory, create ad hoc "personalized" catalogs, and place Hold For Confirmation (HFC) orders. PLMresearch has already successfully deployed similar technology at O.C. Representatives (<http://www.OCReps.com>) a New England based furniture sales representative firm established in 1952.

"Basing the development on an open source¹ platform, PLMresearch will develop a portal that will meet the Uttermost's requirement at a fraction of the cost typically associated with such an effort", explained Mark Withington, Principal of PLMresearch. "Unlike traditional shrink-wrap software licensed products, open source provides coding stability *along with* the flexibility for customization that, until now, has been

¹ Open source refers to a distribution model that promotes collective software development by making a software program's source code – the "human-readable" computer code before it is compiled into "machine code" - freely available to outside programmers. This process fosters "global collaboration" amongst developers, allowing them to critique the code and contribute their own enhancements and bug fixes.

available only to large enterprises with equally large budgets. Used in conjunction with PLMresearch's Rapid Development Methodology (RDM) Open source development is an excellent alternative for the SMB to base their mission critical applications."

The Uttermost Company intends to unveil its Customer Service Portal toward the end of this calendar year

About The Uttermost Company

The Uttermost Company is the largest manufacturer of framed mirrors servicing retail stores in the United States, and one of the largest manufacturers of framed prints, decorative plaques, oil reproductions and lamps. The name Uttermost is taken from Acts 1:8, and expresses both a personal belief and the company's marketing plan to spread the gospel and sell its products "to the uttermost parts of the earth".

Founded in 1975 by Bob and Belle Cooper, Uttermost is still 100% family owned today. Its culture is founded on the concept of mutual respect for all of its partners in business: from the person in their plant running a mitre saw to the retailer who selects and merchandises that perfect mirror, "we're all dependent on each other".

Today's Uttermost has grown to include over 300 employees at the factory in Virginia, 120 sales representatives and thousands of retail partners throughout the world. Its growth is primarily due to their commitment to three things—superior service to retailers, maximizing the value of its products, and treating its employees and sales representatives as partners in business.

About PLMresearch

PLMresearch specializes in the automation and re-engineering of business processes that facilitate demand creation, information sharing and collaboration. It assists SMB stakeholders, shareholders and owners in evaluating, designing and deploying - primarily open source - technology within their underlying business process need or value proposition.

PLMresearch recognizes the Internet's ability to leverage current legacy systems - Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Distribution Resource Planning (DRP) and Materials Resource Planning (MRP) - via emerging open source technology platforms that address the challenges of the SMB in a cost effective way. Through its RDM deployment methodology and a combination of portal, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), content management, e-Commerce, and Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) technology, PLMresearch can streamline existing SMB business processes to facilitate demand creation and maximize profitability.

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