

Expanded Use of UMS in the Tokai Area

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Abstract

NTT WEST has been promoting the introduction of a unified management support system (UMS) since fiscal year 2011 to improve the efficiency of its optical circuit activation operations. In Japan's Tokai area, the Optical Circuit Activation Departments have been playing a leading role in promoting UMS in each of the four Tokai prefectures. This article introduces a UMS promotion project that has been launched to expand the application of UMS to other business tasks in the Tokai area with the aim of achieving highly efficient and standard operations.

Keywords: UMS, promotion project, UMS summit

1. Introduction

At NTT WEST, the introduction of unified management support system (UMS) tools began in fiscal year (FY) 2011 under the guidance of the Service Management Department with the aim of improving the efficiency of optical circuit activation operations. The plan was to make business operations more efficient by providing a core system for optical circuit activation operations in the plant system. It was found, however, that there were many operations that required manual entry of large amounts of data. The number of lines to be activated was also increasing annually, so UMS tools were introduced to automate terminal operations in optical circuit activation to make this task more efficient. These tools took on groundbreaking significance, as they were able to greatly reduce the time required for those terminal operations. About the time of the FY2012 Kaizen Promotion Conference in Fukuoka, promoted by NTT WEST Group every year, personnel at each optical circuit activation center began to adopt these UMS tools, commenting that, "These tools make work easier!" and "They make work practically error-free!" The use of UMS tools exploded as a result. This development also had a supplementary effect in that skilled personnel at the various centers began to hold energetic exchanges on successful case studies in their prefectural areas and to brainstorm on how

they could further improve the efficiency of their work through UMS.

2. Independent efforts at Tokai branches to expand UMS

To further stimulate the NTT WEST movement described above, each of the four Tokai prefectural branches began implementing their own UMS efforts in the first half of 2013. Specifically, the Optical Circuit Activation Department at each of these branches took on a leadership role by holding study sessions and presentations on expanding the use of UMS to other business tasks. The following projects were launched at these branches.

- (1) UMS48: Launched in March 2013 by the Mie-branch business department with the aim of creating 48 UMS scenarios and expanding the number of UMS tool engineers (Team UMS48 members).
- (2) Toko-Ton (Thoroughly) UMS: Launched in May 2013 by the Shizuoka-branch business department with the aim of further utilizing UMS by increasing the rate of UMS usage as well as securing UMS engineers.
- (3) Gifu-Ai UMS★106 Project: Launched in May 2013 by the Gifu-branch business department to develop UMS engineers (106 individuals) and formulate UMS scenarios (106 measures).

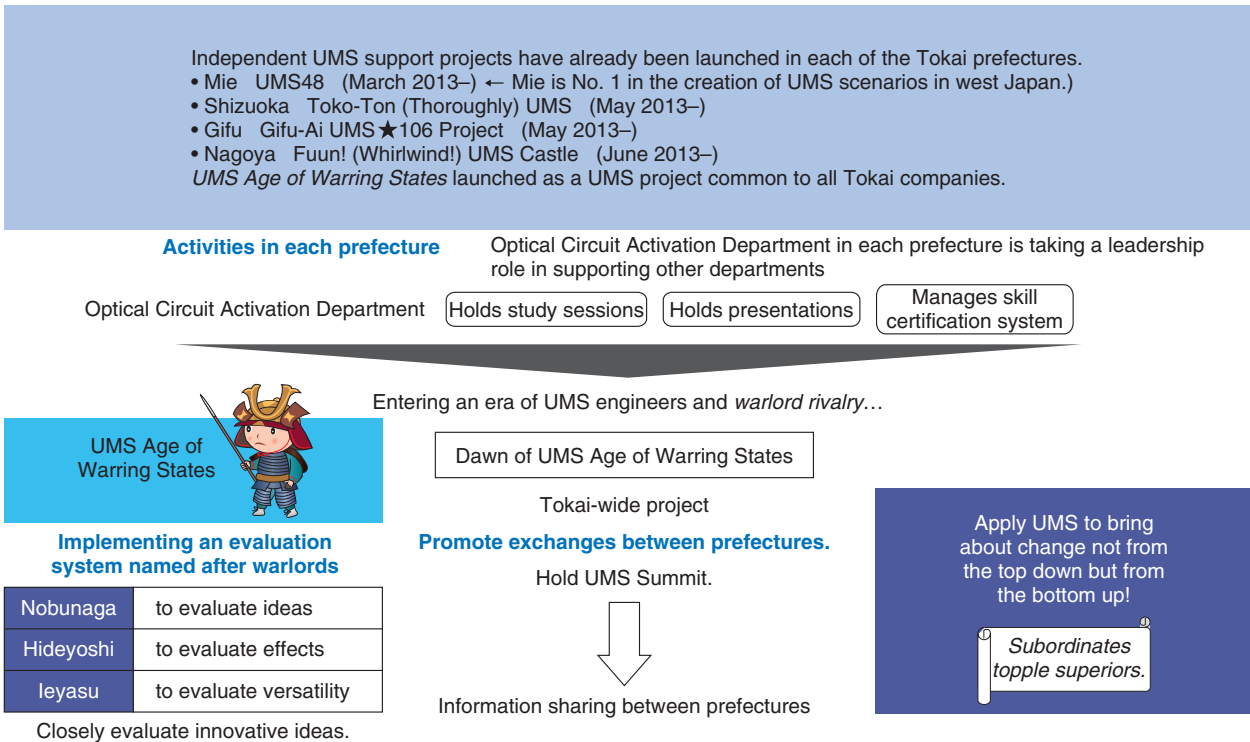


Fig. 1. Dawn of UMS Age of Warring States.

- (4) Fuun! (Whirlwind!) UMS Castle: Launched in June 2013 by the Nagoya-branch business department in collaboration with NTT Access Network Service Systems Laboratories to raise UMS awareness in other business operations and to develop UMS engineers.

3. Launch of UMS Age of Warring States as a Tokai area UMS promotion project

While the independent UMS expansion efforts at each Tokai prefectural branch were underway, a UMS promotion project named *UMS Age of Warring States* was launched in July 2013 with the aim of expanding the application of UMS throughout the Tokai area. The naming of this project is based on the fact that the Tokai area is now entering a period in which the number of UMS engineers is increasing, which is similar to the rise of warlords during Japan’s civil war period and in which the driving ideology behind UMS is not a top-down approach but rather a bottom-up one in which *subordinates topple superiors* (Fig. 1).

A project system was constructed under the guidance of a project leader, namely, the plant department manager of the Nagoya branch. In this system, vari-

ous types of business operations (concerning the plant, sales, the corporate office, and common planning) are laid out along a vertical axis, while the four prefectural areas and their respective systems, which are based on efforts and activities to date, are laid out along the horizontal axis. The elements of the horizontal and vertical axes are systematically connected to construct a system that takes expandability into account.

The system includes project-promotion and technical-support roles such as:

- Formulation of plans such as UMS-promotion measures
- UMS technical support and help desk

It also includes news-provision and progress-management roles such as:

- Providing news on proposed business measures and support for managing them
- Assessing UMS progress and effectiveness

Furthermore, as business managers are actively recruited to be UMS promoters, they can continue to improve based on their knowledge and daily work experience in applying UMS in order to utilize UMS thoroughly in any field in the early stages of tasks (Fig. 2).

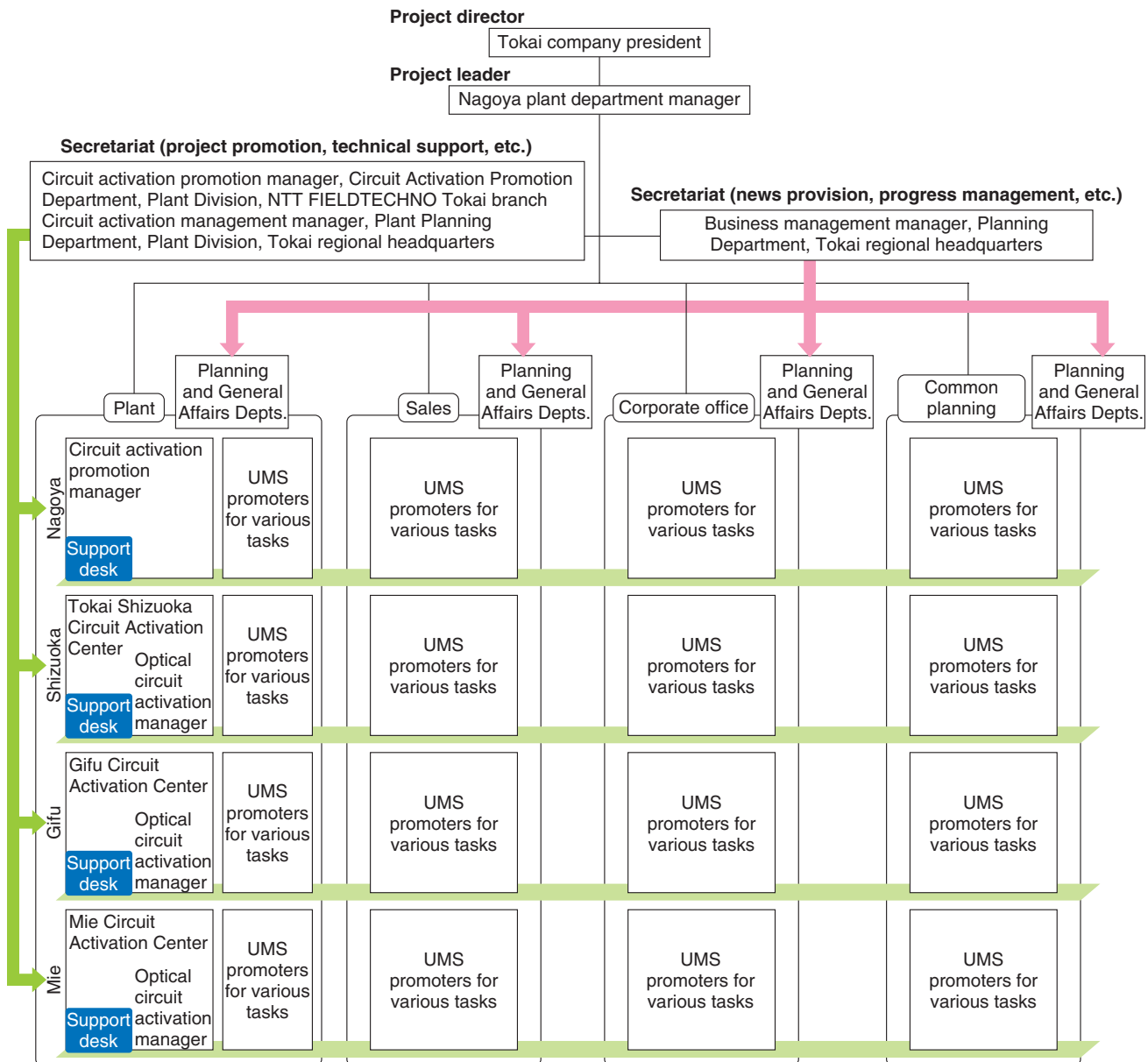


Fig. 2. UMS introduction/promotion project system.

4. UMS Summit

For this project, plans were made to hold a UMS Summit every quarter as a forum for presenting achievements and promoting horizontal development, and on the basis of these plans, the 1st UMS Summit was held in Nagoya City on September 20, 2013. About 80 employees participated from the four Tokai prefectures, and presentations were made on ten measures.

This 1st UMS Summit included presentations on measures to be implemented in business operations other than those in optical circuit activation, for which UMS has already been adopted. These include utility-pole test data preparation (Optos) and FLETS TV terminal management (Optos) in the plant system, service order submission (ARENA/IP-OPS) in the sales system, work table preparation (e-Human II: human resource and salary integrated core operation system) and payment of external expenses (N-

ACTIVE: a bookkeeping system commonly used in the NTT Group) in the common-planning system. Since UMS-applicable operations and systems are quite diverse, it had been thought that the adoption of UMS was simply in its initial stage, but this summit was proof that UMS was definitely beginning to spread to a variety of areas. The versatility of UMS is extremely high in operations such as work management and payment of expenses that are not specific to any one area of business, and the plan within the project is to support the expansion of UMS to such operations in conjunction with the 2nd UMS Summit in Shizuoka (held December 20, 2013).

5. Future developments

A key issue in expanding the use of UMS is the creation of a mechanism that would enable personnel skilled in UMS to exchange their opinions and provide mutual technical support, thereby facilitating the rapid horizontal development of UMS measures. The ultimate goal here is to unify and refine UMS scenarios and achieve a smooth transition from *quantity* to *quality*. NTT WEST plans to continue its efforts in promoting this project with the aim of producing maximum results in the Tokai area.



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