

The business owner's guide for replacing accounting software

Replacing your accounting software is easier and more affordable than you may think. Use this guide to learn about the benefits of a modern technology platform, better understand the advantages of a cloud-based solution, and know what questions to ask when evaluating your options.



Keep pace with evolving customer demands and business requirements



Your customers' needs and expectations have evolved, but your accounting and business management systems aren't able to keep pace with increasing demands. You need a modern technology platform that connects your business and your people like never before. A comprehensive business management solution for businesses that can:

- Automatically pull your systems and processes together so your people don't have to.
- Give you a complete picture from across your business, with reports when and where you need them.
- Get you up and running quickly, so change doesn't get in the way of your day-to-day.

With adaptable applications in the cloud. You can create efficiency across your business processes, help your people make informed decisions, and be ready for growth.

More than 90 percent of consumers said they would consider taking their business elsewhere rather than work with a company that uses outdated technology.

Information silos, disconnected systems, and manual processes keep you from delivering the experience your customers expect and ultimately can put your business at risk. But what kind of solution is right for your business needs today and your goals for future growth? How can you best prepare for change, and how will you know if you're ready to move your systems to the cloud?

This guide will help you evaluate the current state of your accounting and business management systems and processes, and outline considerations you should keep in mind when exploring new solutions.

** Source: Microsoft-commissioned research among 1,405 consumers, 2013.*

Signs your basic accounting software or legacy systems are putting your business at risk

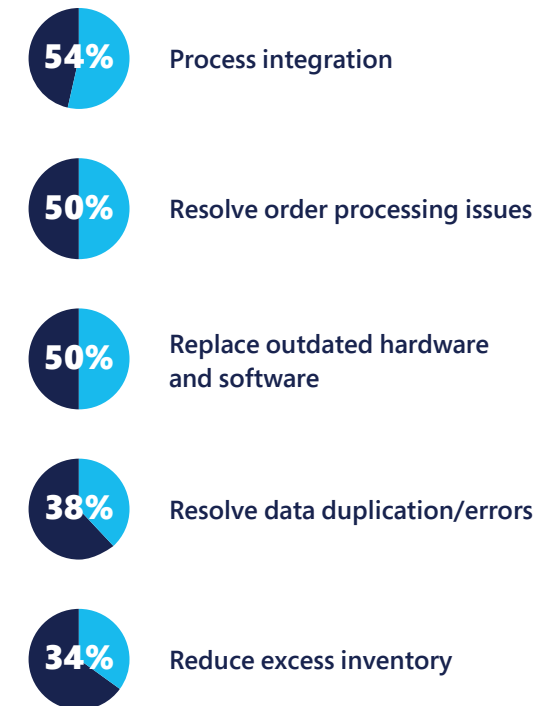
As your business grows in size and complexity, and your customers expect better and faster service, the tools that once supported you may now be standing in your way. For growing businesses, deciding to overhaul your accounting software or business management systems may seem like a daunting task.

But what is the real cost of trying to maintain a system that is no longer keeping up with demands? Whether the result is lost sales, customer dissatisfaction, or compliance risks, failing to update your technology can be a costly decision.

If you recognize any of these warning signs, the time has come to make a change:

- We waste too much time dealing with multiple systems that can't talk to each other.
- Manual processes are error prone and can't keep up with increasing demand despite added headcount.
- Creating and configuring reports is too complicated, and often doesn't give us the information we need.
- Incomplete or incorrect information creates customer dissatisfaction and lost sales.
- Increasingly stringent compliance and security concerns keep you up at night.
- Productivity is lost spending valuable time switching back and forth between multiple applications and disconnected systems.

Why growing businesses adopt new business management solutions:



Source: Nucleus Research: Microsoft Dynamics Enterprise Applications for SMBs

The signs are clear, now what?

There's never been a better time for businesses to update their systems. The cloud has opened up new avenues for companies of all sizes to affordably expand capabilities, create greater efficiency and mobility, and be prepared for ever-changing business conditions.

With so many technology vendors competing for your business, it can be tricky to differentiate between solutions and find the best fit for your business.

Characteristics of a modern technology platform like Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central include:

Comprehensive integration. Deploy one solution to manage your financials, sales, service, and operations with the ability to connect applications like payroll, banking apps, CRM systems, or custom APIs.

Connects your entire business. Automatically pulls your systems and processes together so your people don't have to.

Automates and secures business processes. Improve productivity and get more done with easy-to-create workflows, audit trails, and enterprise-level security—features that basic accounting software can't provide.

Provide an end-to-end view of your business. Centralize your data from accounting, sales, purchasing, inventory, and customer interactions to get an accurate end-to-end view of your business. All data stays up to date so you can spot trends, prevent issues, and deliver great customer experiences.

Trusted technology provider. Creates security as a trusted, leading technology provider for businesses of all sizes around the world.

Enables mobility. Empowers a mobile workforce by delivering the same experience across devices, regardless of their location.

Fast from the start. Delivers an easy-to-learn solution that people just intuitively know how to use.



You recognize the signs, now get ready to explore your options

Beyond evaluating the technical capabilities, here are a few questions to ask when meeting with potential solution providers.

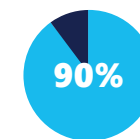
- » How easy is the solution to learn and use?
- » How will it integrate with our existing systems and applications?
- » If we deploy in the cloud, do we retain control over our data?
- » What will my price be after the initial contract expires?
- » How easily can I add or remove users, and how is that reflected in my pricing?
- » How often do you provide product updates and can we control when the updates are deployed?
- » What is your track record for service after the sale?
- » Who do you have locally that can help us with implementation and ongoing support when needed?

The dollars and sense of business applications in the cloud



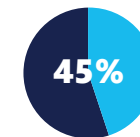
Businesses of all sizes are making the move to the cloud to modernize their technology platform, gain overall system efficiency, and enable their teams to stay connected to the data they need in order to meet customer demands from virtually anywhere. Here are the top business benefits that are driving businesses to move to the cloud.

Why should businesses move to the cloud?



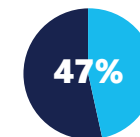
90% of consumers said they would stop doing business with a company using outdated technology.

Source: Microsoft commissioned survey



45% of businesses said their employees get more done in the same amount of time thanks to cloud and mobile technologies.

Source: The Boston Consulting Group



47% of businesses said technology is critical to their company's future.

Source: The Boston Consulting Group

Demystify the cloud

While the business benefits of moving technology to the cloud are clear, some of the technical jargon that surrounds cloud computing can be confusing. Here are a few terms that will increase your cloud IQ and help you understand the various options for deploying your solution in the cloud.

Cloud Jargon Translator

SaaS—software as a service. Specific applications delivered through the cloud, typically for scenarios such as email, office productivity, customer relationship management, marketing analytics, and so on.

IaaS—infrastructure as a service. IaaS enables businesses to move their entire datacenter, including storage, servers, and software, to the cloud, essentially outsourcing management, security, and maintenance to the cloud provider.

PaaS—platform as a service. PaaS provides a complete operating system environment in the cloud where customers can develop and deploy software, applications, and services. The advantage is that PaaS systems scale seamlessly to provide consistent quality of service.

Virtualization. Virtualization creates a layer of abstraction between hardware and software, enabling entire datacenters full of servers and microprocessors to operate as a shared pool of resources.

Public cloud. Public cloud refers to services offered to multiple users (or “tenants”) in a single datacenter.

Private cloud. Private cloud is a dedicated datacenter or server environment to deliver cloud services for a single customer or tenant.

Hybrid cloud. Hybrid cloud is an enterprise IT environment combining some private cloud services, some public cloud services, and some on-premises computing resources.

Why choose Microsoft Dynamics 365 to run your business

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central is a business management solution that's connecting people and processes like never before. From day one, it makes managing your financials, sales, service, and operations easier and faster.

Turn your multiple disconnected systems into one. Boost efficiency with automated tasks and workflows—all from within familiar Office tools like Outlook, Word, and Excel. Get a complete picture of your business and make better business decisions, with built-in intelligence when and where you need it.

With your business running in the cloud, it's easy to change and adapt at your own pace without IT. Start with what you need, quickly and easily, then be ready for growth.

Only Microsoft delivers a connected technology platform bringing together business applications with tools for productivity, communication, and collaboration. Microsoft business solutions deliver insight across your devices, all while helping you:



Connect your business

Bring your systems and processes together

Unify your business from finance and operations to sales and marketing with a comprehensive and modern solution. Easily integrate to applications like payroll, banking apps, or custom APIs.

Get the same consistent and secure experience whether on a desktop, laptop, tablet or phone. Access customer information, create sales orders, review and approve quotes and purchase orders—wherever business takes you.

Streamline quote to cash, all within Office 365

Shorten the time from quote to cash when you can set up customers or vendors, create quotes, process orders, and submit invoices without leaving Outlook. Send your invoices as PDF attachments that include a PayPal link to expedite payments.

Use familiar Office 365 tools to work together and connect with colleagues and customers. Create professional-looking business documents using customizable Microsoft Word templates. Easily export and update data in Microsoft Excel.

Automate and secure your processes

Improve productivity and get more done with easy-to-create workflows, audit trails, and enterprise-level security

Connect workflows across sales and accounting to automatically track cash flow. Secure purchasing, credit authorization, and vendor payment processes with pre-defined alerts and approval workflows.



Make smarter business decisions

Get an end-to-end view

Centralize your data from finance, sales, service, and operations to get an accurate end-to-end view of your business. All data stays up to date, so you can spot trends, prevent issues, and deliver great customer experiences.

Sell smarter and improve customer service

Configurable dashboards and multidimensional reports help you analyze key performance indicators (KPIs), inventory, sales, and order status. Easily track ongoing sales performance and leverage actionable insights to focus on customers that have the greatest potential for long-term growth.

Gain a comprehensive overview of your service tasks, workloads, and employee skills to effectively assign resources and accelerate case resolution.

Guide employees to optimal outcomes

Use built-in intelligence to predict when and what you need to replenish, ensuring inventory levels are maintained. Leverage sales forecasts to automatically generate production plans and create purchase orders.

Avoid shortages and lost sales by automatically offering substitute items when requested items aren't available. Get built-in recommendations on when to pay vendors to take advantage of vendor discounts or avoid overdue penalties.

Manage budgets and monitor progress with real-time data on available resources.



Start and grow easily

Tailor to your needs

Customize and adapt applications to support your unique business needs. With a simple drag-and-drop interface, you can rearrange fields, rename groups, and reposition elements.

Add industry or business extensions

Work with a Dynamics 365 partner and leverage pre-built applications (available through the AppSource marketplace) to easily and cost effectively extend Dynamics 365 to fit your industry or business needs. Combine with Microsoft PowerApps and Microsoft Flow to compose new applications and extend existing business processes.

Be ready for growth

Start with what you need and grow at your own pace to run your entire business in the cloud. Easily import data from other solutions using data migration wizards and assisted setup. Get contextual guidance with in-product tutorials, when and where you need it. Handle the most common business processes from day one, like quotes, orders, invoicing, purchasing, cash management, and reporting. It's built in the cloud, so it's easy to set up, manage and scale.