



Adopting AI-powered cloud technology

An SMB's guide to growing faster with
Microsoft Dynamics 365
Business Central and Copilot



Introduction: systems overload?

Your business processes need to run smoothly, like a well-oiled machine.

With systems ticking along nicely in the background, you and your team can get on with the job of providing value to your customers, all the while building a healthy pipeline of prospects as you aim for growth.

For any SMB to succeed, that means having a reliable and flexible Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution in place. But this is easier said than done. SMB leaders regularly complain that their existing technology is not coping with ever-decreasing demands on their business.

Common legacy technology issues include:

- Use of several disparate, inefficient on-premise solutions
- Limited interoperability; systems don't talk to each other
- Data required for decision-making is hard to find, or lost
- Manual processes still required to fill the ERP system's gaps

The good news is, the market is awash with more cutting-edge solutions for SMBs to lay the foundations for a steadier operation.

In this e-book, we'll examine the options and discover why new technology - not least AI-based ERP systems - are too important to overlook.

What's new in ERP

The ERP revolution has begun.

In fact, it's moving at pace as part of the global drive for digital transformation. In 2024, business spending on digital innovation was projected to reach \$2.5tn¹. By 2027, global digital transformation spending is forecast to total \$3.9tn.

Technology is driving big shifts in business. PwC research finds that more than 3 in 4 (78%)² organizations have already moved some or even all of their operations - not least ERP - to the cloud. How SMBs work internally and how they serve external audiences is being remolded as a result.

The ideal ERP system for an SME should be:

- affordable
- scalable
- user-friendly

An ERP solution should also be capable of handling essential business functions such as finance, inventory, sales, customer relationships and supply chain management.

As we'll see, while there are many ERP system providers operating at the top of their game Microsoft Dynamics Business Central can help companies get on top of technological developments and become innovators in their industries.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/870924/worldwide-digital-transformation-market-size/>

² <https://www.pwc.co.uk/issues/value-creation/insights/unlocking-value-of-cloud-investments.html#:~:text=While%2520many%2520businesses%2520are%2520engaged,all%2520areas%2520of%2520their%2520organisations.>

AI is changing the game

With the rise of AI, business needs are changing faster than ever.

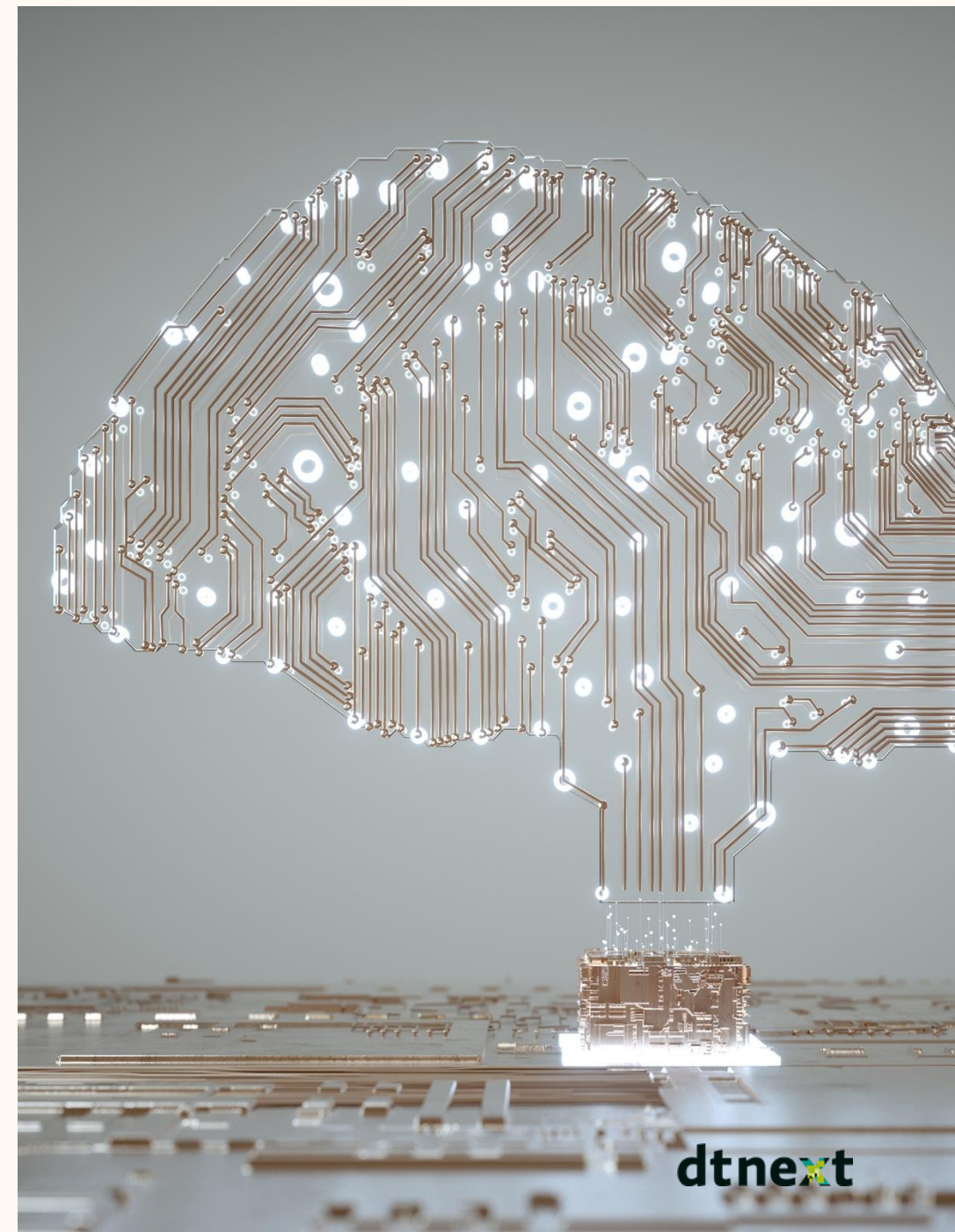
AI has become a fundamental tool in the way that people get their work done. It's also shifting how businesses find new ways to stay ahead of the competition.

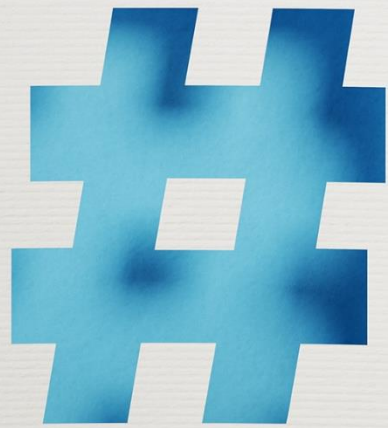
And while 71% of SMB leaders believe that AI adoption is critical for their company to remain competitive, 61% admit their company lacks a vision for AI implementation.¹

As the pace of business continues to increase, AI offers growing businesses the support they need to streamline manual processes, connect teams in a unified solution, and keep pace with evolving organizational needs.

For organizations to thrive in today's business landscape, they will need an AI-powered cloud-based business management solution that enables them to transform operations, and connects their team in a single application.

1. ["Workers worldwide are embracing AI, especially in small and medium-sized businesses,"](#) Microsoft, 2024





Digital-first customer service

Growing businesses need a cloud solution powered by AI to keep up in today's digital-first customer demands. This allows SMBs to adopt new business models with flexible deployment, reliability, security and customer service - fueling growth and satisfying key business priorities.

SMBs that decide to stick with legacy ERP solutions may fall behind the curve. According to one study, 66% of businesses in this cohort plan to invest in technology to diversify their products and services as they bid to meet new market demands.¹ That's 2 in 3 of your competitors that are making positive change.

Companies that choose AI-powered ERP solutions to run their business are not only securing their future in a digital-first world. They are also showing up for their customers as innovative, modern companies which are digital innovators and AI-savvy.

¹ [2024 SMB Priorities. Aligning Technology Investments to Business Requirements, SMB Group, 2024](#)

² [Microsoft small and medium business \(SMB\) voice and attitudes to technology study, Analysys Mason, 2022](#)

How to transform well

But digital transformation isn't easy. It comes with challenges around change management, long adoption cycles and technical complexity.

No wonder a quarter (24%) of surveyed SMBs cite migrating ERP to cloud-based solutions as a common primary business challenge.

Tech-savvy vendors recognize that no two digital transformations are the same. Every business has unique transformation needs and a desire to differentiate their product from their rivals' offer. Yet when it comes to the process, most organizations will encounter similar pain points and challenges.

There are many moving parts to digital transformation, multiple aspects to consider and plates to keep spinning. To avoid the common pitfalls, a framework that offers a firm foundation for any digital strategy is key.

When drawing up a digital transformation plan for your business here are some steps to consider:

Set a vision – What impact do you want your business to make with the new technology?

Start with the goal –How do you want technology enable your vision?

Be customer-centric - It's great to have business goals in view; but are they aligned with what will keep your customers coming back for more?

Seek a wider view - You might have a clear vision for how you want tech to reshape your operations, but have you checked in with colleagues across the business?

Design your team - Who will be in charge of your digital transformation? Consider the resource you can realistically spare, and what support external partners can provide.

No quick fix - You're in it for the long haul. Digital innovation that breeds new success won't happen overnight. Nor should the tech be switched on and forgotten - transformation is an ongoing strategy.

Measure of success - Consider how you will assess the initial and ongoing success of your systems refresh. Create KPIs for each key step, and an overall outcome you would be happy with.

1. Microsoft small and medium business (SMB) voice and attitudes to technology study, Analysys Mason, 2022; 2. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/transformation/our-insights/perspectives-on-transformation>



The Microsoft Cloud difference

For years, we have seen cloud technologies provide a critical advantage for addressing the top business priorities and enabling businesses to:

- Adapt to new technologies.
- Improve security, privacy, and reliability.
- Enable scalability, flexibility, and easier onboarding.
- Free up IT resources to focus on high-value work.
- Accelerate business insights.
- Remain current and compliant.

The Microsoft Cloud takes these benefits a step further so you can run your entire digital infrastructure within the cloud. In fact, Dynamics 365 is the only business management platform that natively integrates with Microsoft 365, giving you unparalleled integration across systems and processes for better productivity and collaboration in one solution.

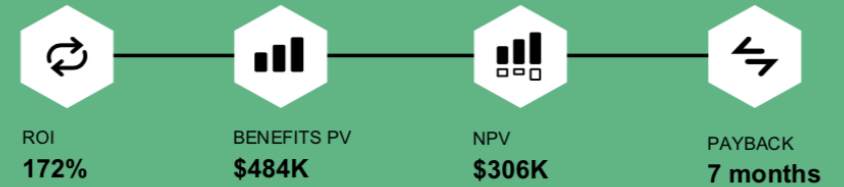
Business Central ERP

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central allows small to medium-sized organizations to modernize ERP capabilities and scale in the cloud.

This yields productivity improvements to staff including finance and operations , better decision-making based on real-time information, and opportunities for more profitable operations — all while avoiding costs associated with on-premise infrastructure.

After investing in Business Central, users describe improvements to:

- **Staff productivity**
- **Cost savings associated with third-party reporting, consulting fees and on-premise infrastructure**
- **Greatly simplified and less costly ERP deployments in the cloud**



Benefits (Three-Year)



“[Business Central] is making it possible for us to chase those new revenue opportunities because we can actually manage it now with our current resources.”

— VP of commerce operations, technology manufacturing

Grow your business with Dynamics 365 Business Central

It's now easier than ever for growing businesses to modernize their tech stack and outpace their competitors with a cloud solution featuring built-in AI capabilities.

As a cloud adoption and transition partner, dtnext has the expertise to align your finance, sales, service, and operations teams with a single, easy-to-use application: Dynamics 365 Business Central with Copilot.

Dynamics 365 Business Central is the first comprehensive business management solution that uses Copilot to boost productivity, spark creativity, and improve business performance with next-generation AI. It also allows users to work seamlessly with familiar Microsoft 365 apps like Outlook, Excel, and Teams to reduce app switching while offering world-class security, flexibility, and scalability only available in the Microsoft cloud.

2. "The Total Economic Impact™ of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central," Forrester, 2023

40,000+

growing businesses are already benefitting from Dynamics 365 Business Central.

172% ROI in three years.²

Up to 18% increase in productivity.²

\$30,000 savings in avoided third-party fees annually.²

Dynamics 365 Business Central offers the flexibility to meet your business needs.

Our Microsoft experts can work with your team to transform and grow your business by tailoring Dynamics 365 Business Central to meet your needs today and for years to come.

Increase financial visibility and performance.

Accelerate financial close, improve forecasting, and get timely performance metrics to enhance financial performance.

Meet your sustainability goals.

Track and report greenhouse gas emissions with ease and accuracy to manage your environmental impact.

Finish projects on time and on budget.

Complete projects successfully and profitability with planning, resourcing, tracking, costing, billing, accounting, and timely intelligence.

Optimize inventory and supply chain management.

Deliver products on time and adapt to changing business models with visibility across purchasing, manufacturing, inventory, and warehouses.

Boost sales and improve customer service.

Improve the customer experience by managing the entire sales process within Microsoft Outlook and delivering better outcomes with connected service operations.

Realize more value with Copilot in Dynamics 365 Business Central

Copilot capabilities are natively available in Dynamics 365 Business Central and Microsoft 365 applications, so users can take advantage of leading AI to accelerate productivity and enable a whole new way to work.

The ability to access Copilot within the tools they work best enables users to improve the end-to-end customer experience, reduce costs, and boost financial success. Additionally, Copilot can automate repetitive tasks, analyze data, and provide personalized recommendations for more efficient business operations that support growth goals.



A close-up of a white and black robotic hand reaching towards a glowing digital interface with blue and white light trails. The background is dark with bokeh light effects.

Copilot is already evolving

According to the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report¹, AI is expected to be adopted by nearly 75% of surveyed companies by 2027. And, states an Accenture survey², as many as 98% of global executives expect AI foundation models to play an important role in their organisation's strategies within the next three to five years.

AI development moves on at pace, and Microsoft has already released an updated iteration of Copilot.

It hails the latest version as a place where users and Copilot technology can work in tandem to simplify complex tasks; bringing results that can push your organization into sustained growth.

Copilot's second wave offers new ways to work, designed to ensure you are organized without dragging you away from your workflow.

The technology takes the weight off your shoulders by handling hefty tasks, allowing you and your team to be more productive and add value for your customers.

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/>

² <https://www.accenture.com/content/dam/accenture/final/accenture-com/document/Accenture-A-New-Era-of-Generative-AI-for-Everyone.pdf>

Unlock more possibilities with Copilot

dtnext can train your employees on how to put Copilot to work for them across the use cases that are most relevant to their functions.

Copilot as an assistant

Stay organized, collaborate better, and improve communications with the AI capabilities in Copilot to stay focused on the most impactful work.

Hold more productive meetings.

Provide a list of all the action items from this meeting and send it to all invitees.



Summarize conversations quickly.

Summarize all the Teams threads regarding the new product update and highlight any key takeaways.



Copilot as an advisor

Analyze complex data sets and get clear, actionable recommendations from Copilot to navigate challenges, predict trends, and make more informed decisions to drive optimal business outcomes.

Maximize untapped insights.

Review our latest water and electricity consumption data. Provide an update on how it aligns with our annual sustainability goals.



Draft story-driven presentations in seconds.

Build a PowerPoint presentation for a company update on last quarter's financial performance.



Copilot as an orchestrator

Benefit from continuous process optimization for smooth operations across your entire business with Copilot.

Coordinate data, privacy, and security.

Summarize the latest compliance update document. List out any changes that could impact our data and security protocols.



Unlock improvement opportunities.

Identify bottlenecks in our current month-end close process. Recommend ways to streamline reconciliations and automate routine tasks for faster completion.



Make your plans happen with Business Central and Copilot

Digital innovation is disrupting every industry, all around the world.

Getting to the cloud faster and more efficiently is therefore a game-changer for modern SMBs. They need a solution that allows them to adopt new business models with flexible deployment, reliability, and security.

We have the expertise and experience to deploy Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central and Copilot. We can help you to innovate and adopt new business models faster, with an adaptable solution that grows with your business.

Our technical knowhow allows you to quickly adopt Microsoft's powerful solution, providing you with a scalable, customizable and accessible tool.

As your cloud adoption partner, we can help you grow your business with Business Central—the first comprehensive business management solution that uses Microsoft Copilot to boost productivity, spark creativity, and improve business performance with next-generation AI. As a result, you can connect finance, sales, service, and operations teams within a single application to streamline processes and empower data-driven decisions.

So, are you ready to switch to Microsoft Dynamics Business Central?



Dynamics 365 Business Central with Copilot transition checklist

dtnext makes switching to Dynamics 365 Business Central easy.

Our expert guidance during the decision-making, planning, and execution stages of the cloud migration process not only minimizes potential downtime but also ensures your employees adapt to Dynamics 365 Business Central quickly and with ease.

Use this checklist to help plan for success:

- ☐ Set up an initial consultation with dtnext.

Our experts will meet with you to understand your challenges, goals, and current solutions and how to modernize and optimize your business best.

- ☐ Analyze the IT ecosystem.

We will work with your IT team and business leaders to document existing IT infrastructure and apps, including dependencies, security needs, usage, and the business content for each app.

- ☐ Define and prioritize.

Identify the business platforms you want to address and the outcomes you aim to achieve in detail. Outline the benefits that can impact the entire organization.

- ☐ Plan migration.

We will create a comprehensive plan for which apps to migrate, how, and in what order to avoid business disruptions. We can also outline the total cost of ownership of the proposed plan and get buy-in from additional company leadership.

Take the next steps

The time to move to the cloud and embrace AI is now. To avoid falling behind in today's competitive business landscape, dtnext can guide you throughout the entire journey for a smooth transition and get the most out of Dynamics 365 Business Central with Copilot so you can:

Adapt faster

Transform business operations with the security, flexibility, and scalability of a Microsoft cloud solution that grows with your business.

Work smarter

Empower people with Copilot capabilities and connectivity to Microsoft 365 so your team can be more productive, collaborative, and impactful.

Perform better

Access guided workflows and timely data that drives continuous process optimization, accelerates financial close, and improves decision-making.

Contact us to get started today

Call us at +31 85 303 07 81 or email us at info@dtnext.nl — we're happy to help.

