



eBook

# Upgrading From Microsoft Dynamics NAV to Business Central

Everything you wanted to know...but didn't know to ask

# “Should I Upgrade?”

Upgrade.

Just hearing the word makes your heart rate race.

And it's no wonder. It conjures up thoughts of money, pain, aggravation, retraining, interruptions to your business, and never-ending visits from consultants and calls to support.

But if you're still using Microsoft Dynamics NAV, or an older version of Dynamics 365 Business Central, you know you will have to upgrade at some point. Even if NAV meets your needs now, it will become either cost-prohibitive or downright impossible to maintain, and that's not even considering everything you'll be missing from new features regularly being added to Business Central and the advantages offered by rapidly evolving cloud technology.

## Questions and Concerns

If you're a Microsoft Dynamics NAV/BC user—whether you're considering upgrading now or down the road—you probably have questions about upgrading to the latest Business Central (BC) version.

You're not alone! Most organizations looking at the move from Dynamics NAV to Business Central have concerns about upgrading.

So, let's tackle the hard questions most NAV users are asking as objectively as possible.

*“There are plenty of resources for learning about Dynamics Business Central and plenty of opinions about it, but there is a lot of misinformation about upgrading to it from Dynamics NAV.”*



## 10 Most Common Questions

1. *Is moving from NAV to BC an upgrade or a re-implementation? Or is it something else?*
2. *What will happen to my customizations? And what is all this discussion about Events and Extensions?*
3. *What about my add-ons? Are they ready for BC? And do they have an upgrade path?*
4. *Is moving my data going to be painful?*
5. *How long will the upgrade take?*
6. *How much will it cost?*
7. *What about future upgrades? Will they be different?*
8. *If we're not ready for an upgrade right now, is there anything we can do to make the transition easier when the time comes?*
9. *With everything that can complicate an upgrade, why shouldn't we stay where we are and work with what we have?*
10. *Shouldn't we consider other ERP options if we must upgrade anyway?*

### The Short Answer

The problem is, there is no single, reliable place to get answers to these questions. The purpose of this document is to answer all the most asked questions in a clear, question-and-answer format—and in an objective manner.

Yes, we love BC. Yes, we think you should upgrade to it...and sooner than later because of new and additional functionality that enables you to do business more effectively.

But we also understand that some organizations will not make a big investment in money, time, and resources unless and until it becomes too painful to stay where they are—and when they do decide they need to change, they need the facts. This eBook discusses the Dynamics NAV to Business Central journey.

## Question 1

### Is moving from NAV to BC an upgrade or a re-implementation? Or is it something else?

We all assume we know the meaning when we use "upgrade." Several types of project engagements fall under the upgrade umbrella. But don't be concerned about what to call it. To avoid confusion, we will use the term "upgrade" in this document to refer to moving from Dynamics NAV (or a not current version of Business Central) to the latest version of Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Remember that the best approach for your company will depend primarily on the age of your current version of NAV (the older the version, the more involved the upgrade), your integrations, your customizations, your processes, and other factors that depend on how you do business.

That's why it's imperative to have a knowledgeable partner to help you determine the best upgrade path for you. There's no reason to be anxious about an upgrade—whatever it might look like—as long as you understand what needs to happen and what you can do to prepare for it.

It's also vital to understand that once you have completed the initial move to Business Central, future upgrades should be much easier.

## Choosing the Right Upgrade Option

Native functionality within Business Central has advanced substantially since the NAV days. These advances are made possible by taking advantage of the extraordinary technological advances in cloud computing. Discuss the best upgrade option for your company with your upgrade partner.

Here are the current options:

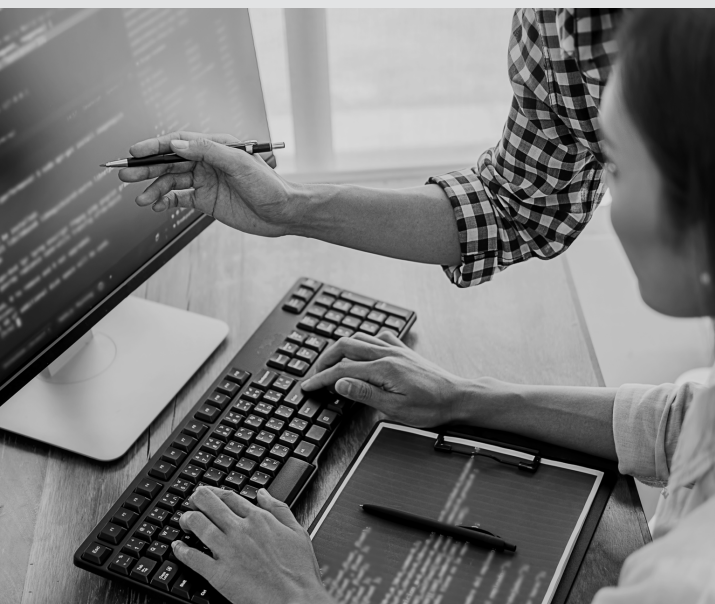
- **Business Central SaaS:**  
Deploy BC on Microsoft's Dynamics 365 Platform, where Microsoft manages the entire back-end infrastructure related to the deployment.
- **Business Central Azure:**  
Deploy BC in an Azure instance managed by you or your partner using Azure SQL.
- **Business Central Hosted:**  
Deploy BC in an environment hosted by a third party.
- **Business Central On-Premises:**  
Deploy BC on a physical server or in a virtualized environment you manage and maintain.

Regardless of your upgrade path, all customizations must be removed from the base business logic and translated into the AL programming language as Events and Extensions.

## Notes on Customizing and Eventing

Here are some best practices for creating customizations and events:

- All customizations must be translated to AL to be available for future versions.
- All custom code must be removed from the base business logic.
- Most modifications can be moved easily with conversion tools. More extensive modifications—typically integrations with other software— might need to be re-written.
- Microsoft has instituted fees for non-cloud-compliant code, even for on-premises implementations. [Microsoft's Universal Code Initiative](#) requires that all custom code be removed from the Business Central base code and added to Events and Extensions. [Microsoft will assess financial penalties for non-compliance](#).



## Question 2

### What will happen to my customizations? And why is everyone talking about Events and Extensions?

This is one of the biggest concerns expressed by customers—and understandably so. You've invested a lot in your NAV solution to meet your needs and don't want to lose that investment or have to start over. So, what about Events and Extensions? What are they, and how do they impact your upgrade?

Events and Extensions are the next generation of cloud architecture, and Microsoft developed them to make upgrades more accessible, faster, less disruptive, more stable, and more cost-effective. It's all about taking the "upgrade" out of upgrades once you've made the initial move to BC.

Events are pieces of code that allow customizations to be placed in a separate, custom object (i.e., codeunit) away from the base code, but they still execute as if they were in the base application. In short, it takes customizations OUT of NAV base objects, which allows Microsoft to upgrade the base code without affecting your customizations. This process makes upgrading to a new version easier and less expensive because it removes the object merge step and decreases the compile and issue resolution step.

When moving from NAV to Business Central, Microsoft replaced the C/AL coding language with AL. Extensions are "packages" of Evented AL code that layer on top of BC like layers of an onion. For example, 50 Evented/custom objects might form one Extension. An Extension sits on top of BC like a downloadable app that also interacts with BC but does not have its customizations "inside" of BC. Extensions are more manageable to layer onto BC without merging code into the base objects.

With the introduction of Events and Extensions, Microsoft has radically changed how upgrades will look after your initial move to BC—whether you move to an on-premises or SaaS deployment. Testing and turnaround will be significantly faster and less disruptive.

### Question 3

## What about my add-ons? Are they ready for BC? And do they have an upgrade path?

If you're a Dynamics NAV user, you are likely using at least one add-on developed by an Independent Software Vendor (ISV). Microsoft has always depended on ISVs to offer industry-specific or function-specific solutions that seamlessly connect with NAV. So, it's understandable that a big question would be: Will your add-ons be available if you move to BC?

All [ISV products available on Microsoft AppSource](#) are cloud-ready and can be installed as Extensions. However, not all ISV products have an upgrade path for your data. This is a question to ask your upgrade partner.

Another question to ask your partner is whether the ISV products you are using now are even necessary. Business Central now comes with functionality that used to require add-ons in NAV. Replacing an ISV product with native Business Central functionality simplifies your upgrade and saves on recurring licensing fees.

### Question 4

## Is moving my data going to be painful?

This is a legitimate concern. Your data is your gold, and you don't want to lose it or be put into a position where it's difficult to get to it. The short answer is all data and history can move forward; you do not have to worry about losing it. Make sure you discuss your data migration plans with your partner.

### Important to Keep in Mind

ISV add-ons can add many variables to your upgrade project, so we recommend using a partner dedicated to upgrades. It's their job to sort out the details and recommend the best path. This is also why ArcherPoint recommends an upgrade subscription...to cover unforeseen variables so you don't get hit with unexpected costs.

## Did You Know?

We understand that you might not have the budget for your upgrade today.

To make upgrading even more cost-effective, ArcherPoint provides a free upgrade quote and Get Current, Stay Current upgrade plans that spread your upgrade costs over the contract period (usually three years). This plan will get you to Business Central now and help make the costs of future upgrades more affordable.

## Question 5

### How long will my upgrade take?

This is another good question. Unfortunately, there is no clear answer. The time it takes to perform an upgrade depends on many things, including your company size, database size, and customizations. In general, however, this is what you can expect:

- 2-4 months for your partner to convert your database and create/deliver a test database
- Two months minimum for testing
- Two days (usually over a weekend) for go-live

Your partner will be able to assess your situation and give you a firm time estimate.

## Question 6

### How much will my upgrade cost?

This is another question that is challenging to answer because of the same variables that impact how long it takes to upgrade. It's important to provide your upgrade partner with as much detail as possible to get an accurate quote. Also, an upgrade should be viewed as an investment that will deliver returns that ultimately save you money. Upgrading helps you comply with business regulations, increases productivity by applying advanced technology, enhances the security of your data, and provides opportunities to grow and expand your business. The results are lower costs, more opportunities, and a more competitive position.

It's essential to remember that Eventing and Extensions change the game regarding upgrades. By investing in the initial move to Business Central, you are basically "front-loading" your upgrade costs for as long as you're on BC. Once you are 100% Evented, future upgrades will be faster and less complicated.

Any partner with an experienced upgrade team will consult with you about the information they need before they can provide you with an accurate quote.

## ArcherPoint's Get Current, Stay Current Plan

Upgrades can quickly become expensive, usually because the upgrade process is not well thought out or the partner did not gather enough information in advance to understand what would be required. With ArcherPoint's Get Current, Stay Current Plan, we provide a fixed price so you can budget for all upgrades during the subscription's lifetime.

Along with budget planning, we also provide detailed future estimates. We are confident in our work, so we have no problem forecasting a fixed price several years into the future.

### Question 7

#### What about future upgrades? Will they be different?

Events and Extensions were developed to make upgrades easier, faster, and less disruptive. Removing your customizations from the base objects makes the upgrade process much easier and less impactful on your operations.

You will still be able to customize Business Central, but your customizations must adhere to Microsoft's coding standards using Extensions, be "cloud-ready," and stay updated with any code changes Microsoft makes in the base app.

User testing is critical to ensure that all your customizations, add-ons, and integrations are compliant throughout the upgrade process. Ask your upgrade partner to help you [automate your testing procedures for greater efficiency with future upgrades](#).

## Key Benefits of Our Get Current, Stay Current Plan

- Get current on Business Central and stay current for the life of the contract.
- Get all C/AL converted to AL.
- Move all your customizations out of base objects.
- Have access to a 24/7 Project Team to ensure the quickest turnaround possible.
- Potentially cut your upgrade costs in half.
- Help with add-on/ISV conversion/integration.
- All services to provide a turnkey upgrade of your NAV system.



## Did You Know?

When you're ready to upgrade, we've got you covered. Along with ArcherPoint's [Get Current, Stay Current Plans](#) for on-premises, our [Stay Current Assurance Plans](#) for SaaS users ensure your custom code and add-ons integrate smoothly with every update, giving you full control over your go-lives, no matter how you're deployed.

## Question 8

**If we're not ready for an upgrade right now, is there anything we can do to make the transition easier when the time comes?**

Although there are many reasons for upgrading, you might not be ready to commit the time, money, and resources required now. However, there are things you can do that will make it easier when the time comes:

- **Get it into your budget:**  
Start planning for it by getting it into your budget. It shouldn't cost you anything to get a quote from a partner. In fact, ArcherPoint offers a quoting service free of charge—one that is so accurate you can take it to your board or the bank.
- **Get current on your maintenance contract:**  
This makes a dramatic difference in the cost of your upgrade.
- **Start Eventing now:**  
If you are on NAV 2016 or later, start Eventing your customizations now, and make sure you use Events for any customizations moving forward.
- **Put extra development time towards Eventing:**  
Tell staff developers and your NAV partner to use their downtime/extra budget to move your existing customizations to Events.
- **Consider moving to BC on-premises now:**  
Even if you're not ready for the cloud, you can upgrade to BC on-premises. It lays the foundation for moving to SaaS, reducing the time and effort required for that upgrade.

## Question 9

### With everything that can complicate my upgrade, why shouldn't we stay where we are?

We understand everyone has concerns about upgrading. While we can't argue that it comes with a cost and requires some work, many concerns are simply unfounded.

Let's clear those up:

- **My NAV database is too customized:**

There is no such thing as "too customized." All customizations can be Evented. Because of our automated processes, upgrading your customizations is much easier.

- **My NAV database is too large:**

The size of your database will impact how we approach your upgrade, but there is no such thing as "too big." We've upgraded databases of over three terabytes; in fact, we reduced a 56-day data migration to approximately two hours.

- **My version of NAV is too old to upgrade:**

No version of NAV or Navision is too old to upgrade. We will create a personalized upgrade plan to address the unique characteristics of your current version. But the longer you wait, the more expensive the upgrade will be.

- **Any NAV developer can do upgrades:**

Upgrades are different from other development projects in nearly every way. The requirements, methodology, tools, and the professionals who plan and execute them should be suited to the singular goal of your successful upgrade.

### Did You Know?

Our ArcherPoint upgrade team has successfully upgraded databases of over 3 terabytes in size; in fact, we reduced a 56-day data migration to approximately only 2 hours. [Find out how!](#)



## Learn More

Find out for yourself the benefits Business Central can offer your company. [Request your free quote to upgrade your Dynamics NAV to Business Central today.](#)

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## Question 10

### Shouldn't we consider other ERP options if we must upgrade anyway?

Since you're facing a major upgrade by moving from NAV to Business Central, you might consider switching to another ERP system. As a general rule the only reason to consider changing your ERP is if your business has changed to that point that remaining on your current software no longer makes sense or your existing ERP software is being discontinued.

In addition, chances are the role of an ERP within an organization has changed significantly since you purchased your Dynamics NAV software. Most ERP systems today offer comparable features and functionality, so using the traditional RFP/checkbox approach is no longer helpful.

With the advent of the cloud, ERP software is not so much an application anymore. Instead, it has become a business platform that integrates with and supports your business processes across the organization and adapts and grows as you do, giving you access to data companywide and facilitates strategic decision-making.

So, having used NAV for years, your staff will already be familiar with the processes and interfaces of Business Central, reducing the learning curve substantially. In addition, if your company uses Microsoft products, like Office, then Business Central is a natural fit because it natively integrates with Microsoft Office, Power Platform, and the Azure platform and tools.

See our blog, [Debunking the Myths: Upgrade to Business Central, DON'T Reimplement](#), to understand more about ArcherPoint's upgrade Methodology. Our blog, [Upgrading from Dynamics NAV to Business Central: A Guide for Seamless Upgrades](#), offers advice that will make updating from NAV to Business Central go much more smoothly.