EXPERT TIPS TO PLAN A
MOVE FROM DYNAMICS GP® TO DYNAMICS 365 BUSINESS CENTRAL®

Created in Partnership with:

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INTRODUCTION

Dynamics GP has been a popular ERP system for small and mid-market businesses for decades. After Great Plains was acquired by Microsoft in 2001, the beloved ERP system grew to a community of 20,000 to 30,000 loyal organizations.

In September 2024, Microsoft officially announced the end of product support and updates timeline for Dynamics GP, stating 2029 as the ERP system's end-of-life date. While the announcement elicited shock from many community members and GP enthusiasts, with Microsoft's dedication to a fully cloud future, it's not necessarily a surprise.

While there are many viable options for where Dynamics GP users can go when they are ready, perhaps the most logical transition would be to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Business Central is an all-in-one, cloud-based ERP that provides small and medium-sized businesses with a complete financial management system. Microsoft has made a strong commitment to Business Central and has been clear that their intention is for Dynamics GP users to move to Business Central.

Why Move to Business Central?

As we look into the future, with the looming end-of-life date for Dynamics GP, the advantages of moving to Business Central are increasing. Business Central, as a modern, advanced ERP system, provides advanced tools that facilitate business growth and modernization in ways Dynamics GP was never capable of. This centralized, cloud-based ERP system helps businesses manage and integrate multiple core processes, centralizing data, streamlining operations, and enhancing decision-making across the organization.

This transition isn't just about keeping up with technology; it's about leveraging smarter decisions that drive your business forward.

> "When preparing to implement Business Central, clean up master data records as much as possible. You only want to bring over what is currently in use. Remove any unused master records, such as items, customers, vendors, etc. It will make a huge difference in the time it takes to migrate your data."
>
> – Brenda Emond, Senior Functional Consultant, *ArcherPoint*

Keys Reasons to Move to Business Central

1.

Cost Efficiency

Business Central operates on a subscription-based model, reducing the need for significant upfront investments. This model spreads costs over time, improving cash flow management and making financial planning more predictable. The cloud-based nature of Business Central eliminates the need for expensive on-premise hardware and IT maintenance, further reducing operational costs. In contrast, Dynamics GP, being primarily on-premise, requires significant investment in hardware and ongoing IT maintenance.
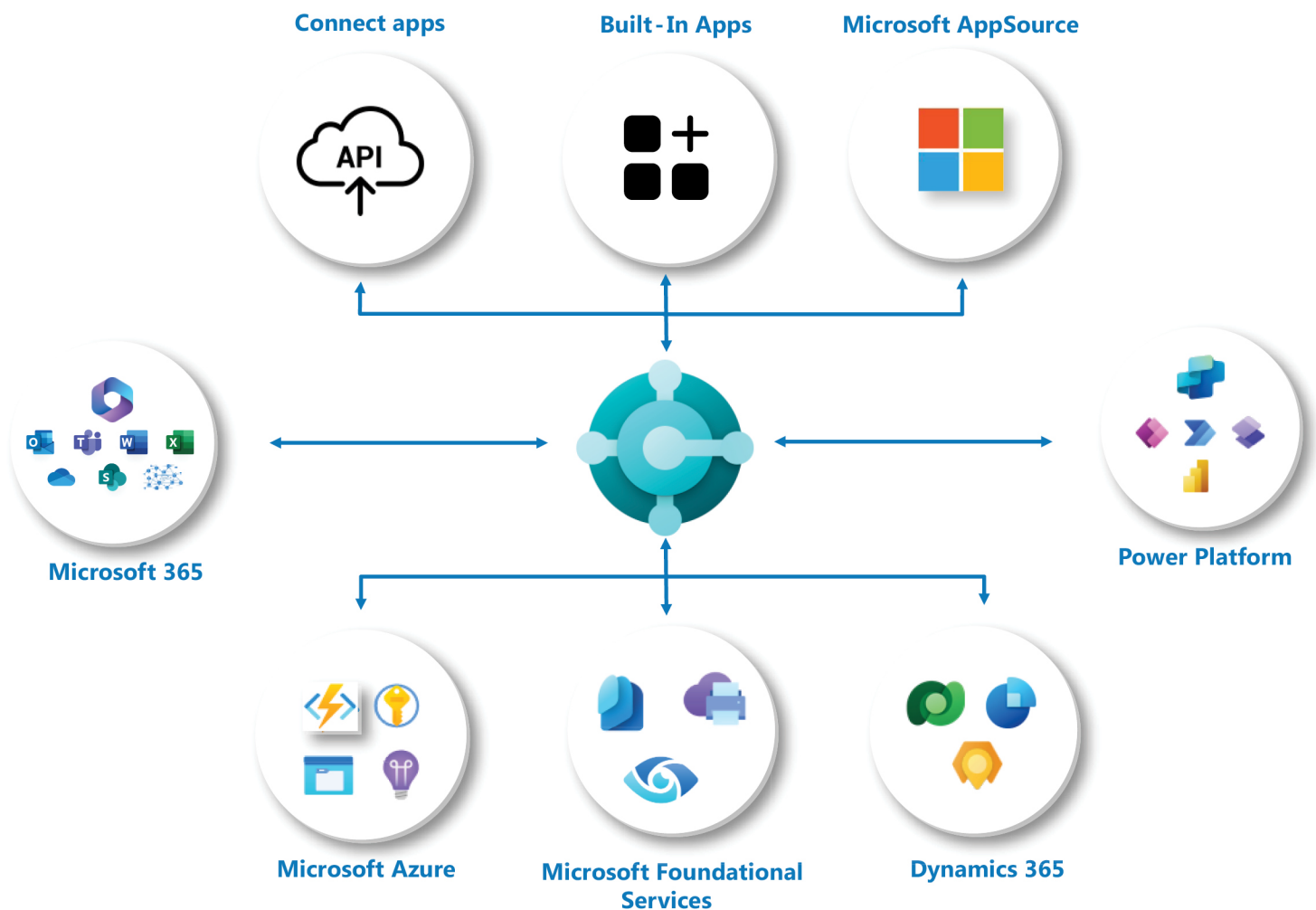
2.

Scalability and Flexibility

Business Central is designed to scale with your business, offering greater flexibility and adaptability. This scalability ensures that your ERP system can handle increased transaction volumes and more complex business processes without requiring significant additional investments. Dynamics GP, on the other hand, may struggle to handle increased transaction volumes and more complex business processes as your business grows.

3.

Enhanced Integration

Business Central's superior integration capabilities with other Microsoft products like Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Copilot and third-party applications can streamline operations and enhance productivity. This unified approach ensures that all your business tools work seamlessly together. Dynamics GP has limited integration capabilities with modern Microsoft products and third-party applications, which can hinder productivity and operational efficiency.

Connect apps

Built-In Apps

Microsoft AppSource

Microsoft 365

Power Platform

Microsoft Azure

Microsoft Foundational Services

Dynamics 365

4.

Future-Proofing and Innovation

Microsoft is heavily investing in the future of Business Central, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of ERP technology. Regular updates and new features keep the platform current, allowing businesses to leverage the latest advancements. Built-in compliance features and cloud-based security measures protect sensitive data and ensure regulatory adherence, providing peace of mind for both CFOs and CEOs. Dynamics GP, with its outdated user interface and limited automation and AI features, does not offer the same level of innovation and future-proofing.
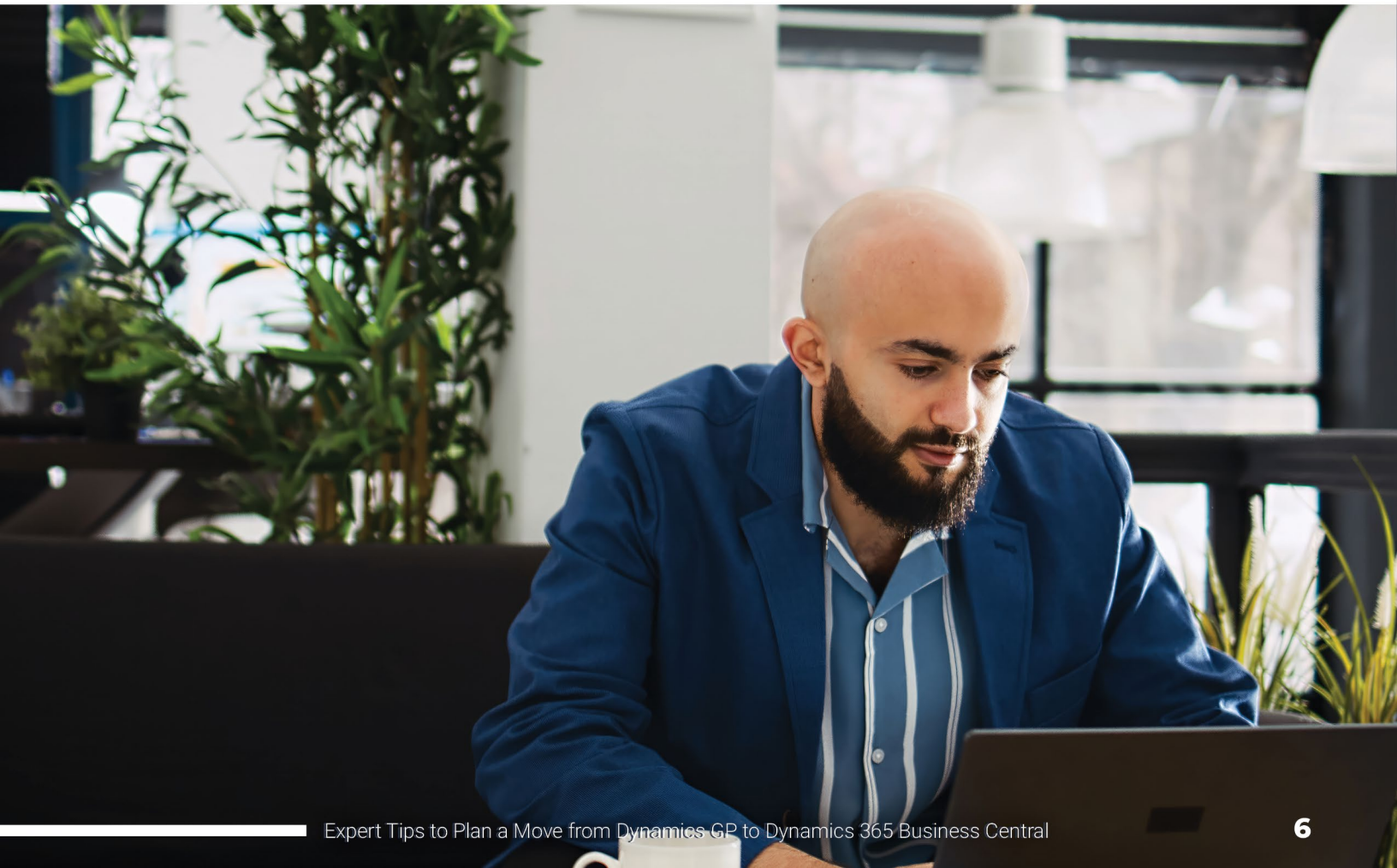
How to Prepare for a Move to Business Central

The first thing users should know about a transition to Business Central is that it is a complete reimplementation. It is not an upgrade. It is building a new solution from the ground up. And while that may seem intimidating, it actually provides a valuable opportunity to reassess and optimize existing processes and structures, rather than simply transferring potentially inefficient legacy systems.

Prepare for Migration

1. WATCH a Demo

If you haven't yet seen Business Central in action, book a demo with your Microsoft Partner. They can show you exactly how Business Central could work for your business and highlight some top features that may be important to you.

2. DEFINE Project Scope

Clearly define your business requirements and goals for the migration. Document current Dynamics GP functionality including workflows, customizations, and integrations, as well as must-have features in Business Central. Work to identify any additional functionalities needed.

3. EVALUATE Third-Party Solutions

Determine which of your ISV solutions can be replaced with native Business Central features, as well as which ones offer support for Business Central. Make a plan for necessary alternatives.

4. ASSESS Integrations

Review existing integrations and determine whether they need to be rebuilt or replaced with modern technology.

5. IDENTIFY
Key Reports

Document essential reports, dashboards, and analytics required post migration. If needed, research third-party reporting tools for additional reporting and analytics capabilities.

6. FORM AN
Implementation Team

Assign a champion leader and involve key users early to ensure a successful adoption. Executive commitment is crucial. Involving key stakeholders and end-users in the planning process will help keep everyone on the same page and guarantee needs are met.

7. BUDGET
for Costs

Allocate funds for migration, training, implementation, as well as ongoing support.

8. CLEANSE
Data

Review Dynamics GP data, decide what to migrate, and establish a plan for historical data storage or archiving.

A Successful Migration

Many assume that doing all of the above will guarantee a successful move from GP to Business Central, and while that may get you 90% of the way there, there is one key thing every business can do to make the move to Business Central a great experience for their company.

COMMUNICATE.

Communicate with your Dynamics partner about your business processes, needs, budget, timeline, goals – anything and everything that you feel is important for your business. If something goes wrong, ask questions. If you need help, ask for it. This is not a simple, or a fast, process; it's a slow and steady race. Your partner is there to support you every step of the way, even after implementation, and they can provide a wealth of knowledge to help you set realistic expectations for this move.

Beyond that, however, it is important to communicate internally. Business Central is about more than just the team working to implement it. Engage with training your users before, during, and after implementation. Provide resources that help them understand Business Central before they even have to use it. And after implementation, be patient with the learning curve. It takes time and grace for entire teams to learn a new system.

Differences Between Business Central and Dynamics GP

Another important thing to remember is that Business Central is an entirely different product, and some adjustments will be required. Many users who use Business Central expect it to look, feel, and function exactly like Dynamics GP, and that is not the case.

While many Dynamics GP users only saw the system as a tool for the finance team, Business Central's reach expands beyond the ERP. By expanding metrics and reporting and providing access to additional business operations, Business Central has the potential to impact the organization as a whole in a positive way.

While it is difficult to pinpoint how these changes will impact each organization, as every instance is different and unique, here are a few overall **system and functionality differences** to keep in mind:

- **Automatic Updates & Maintenance**
  Unlike Dynamics GP, where updates require manual installation and downtime, Business Central receives automatic updates from Microsoft regularly.

- **Modern Interface & Usability**
  Business Central has a web-based, cloud-native interface with automatic transaction saving. Dynamics GP requires users to manually save transactions.

- **Enhanced Integrations**
  Business Central natively integrates with Microsoft 365, Power BI, Power Automate, Copilot, and other Microsoft solutions. Dynamics GP integrations often require third party add-ons.

- **Licensing Model**
  Business Central operates on a per-user, per-month subscription, while Dynamics GP used a concurrent user model.

- **Scalability & Cloud-Native Features**
  Unlike Dynamics GP, which requires server capacity planning, Business Central allows easy scaling through Azure and AppSource add-ons.

- **Easier Customization**
  Business Central supports modern AI-based customization, making it easier to configure compared to Dynamics GP's Dexterity-based modifications.

- **Simplified Third-Party Integrations**
  APIs and cloud-based connections allow Business Central to integrate more seamlessly with banking, payroll, and expense management tools.
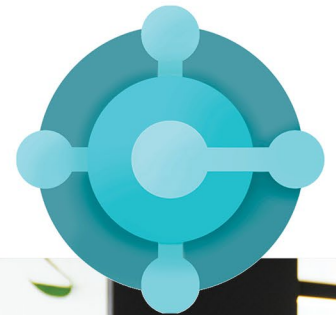
FINAL WORDS

Microsoft Community

One of the most amazing things about the Microsoft community is the wealth of knowledge available to all users, and that is especially true for Business Central. There are many events, online forums, user groups, experts, and more available to provide your business with the resources you need to be successful with Business Central.

Moving to Business Central requires time, flexibility, and motivation. However, it is a truly transformative process that can bring businesses into a new, modern way of managing their business processes. With Microsoft 365 integrations — AI and intelligent insights, ease of implementation, and more — Business Central is designed to modernize and enhance operational efficiency.

When Should I Move?

The time to start planning your move to Business Central is now. It will take longer than you expect. Thousands of companies across North America currently using Dynamics GP will need to migrate, and while not all of them will choose to move to Business Central, many will. Those who wait until the last minute may find fewer resources available to help them make the move.

Check out:

- [Dynamics Communities](#)
- [Dynamics User Group](#)

About

Founded in 2002, ArcherPoint by Cherry Bekaert is a global Microsoft Dynamics ERP Solutions Partner, providing modern workplace solutions such as Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, Dynamics NAV, Azure, Microsoft 365, and Power Platform to companies across the US, Canada, Mexico, and Europe. ArcherPoint's certified, experienced professionals collaborate with clients to design, implement, and support solutions tailored to their unique requirements — from back-office accounting to supply chain, inventory, and warehouse management. Serving multiple industries, including manufacturing, distribution, retail, logistics, food and beverage, professional services, and large equipment rental, ArcherPoint offers full-service ERP implementation, integration, development, 24/7 support, and upgrade services.

With a commitment to quality, ArcherPoint is dedicated to helping companies realize true business value by providing access to world-class ERP and cloud solutions that grow with them to meet their needs now and in the future. For more information, visit ArcherPoint.

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ERP/CRM SoftwareBlogs

About

Microsoft Dynamics Partners providing comparisons and opinions for the Dynamics ERP software selection process.

The *ERP Software Blog* and *CRM Software Blog* are the largest and longest-running group blog sites dedicated to Microsoft Dynamics. With thousands of expert articles, case studies, videos, and more, this platform empowers software buyers and current users alike.

Over 160 Microsoft Dynamics Partners contribute content to deliver comparisons, opinions, and guidance for selecting and optimizing Microsoft Dynamics software.

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