



eBook

Business Central SaaS Updates Made Easy

How to Take the Headache Out of Staying Current

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Introduction

Microsoft releases major updates to Dynamics 365 Business Central SaaS **twice a year**. These updates deliver valuable new features, performance improvements, and critical security patches, but they can disrupt business processes if not managed properly. This guide helps Business Central SaaS users—whether in IT, finance, or operations—understand what’s required to stay current and how to simplify the process without draining internal resources.

What you'll learn:

- The risks of ignoring SaaS updates
- The unique challenges of cloud-based release management
- How to build a repeatable, low-stress process



Critical Reality

Organizations with customizations and extensions can face disruptions during updates when proper preparation isn't in place.

Chapter 1: Why SaaS Updates Can't Be Ignored

Microsoft's Cloud-First Approach

Microsoft delivers **two major updates to Business Central SaaS each year**—typically in **April** and **October**—with monthly minor updates in between. Unlike on-premises software, where you control timing, SaaS updates deploy automatically according to Microsoft's schedule. Currently, **all major and minor updates are mandatory**. Microsoft is developing functionality to allow customers to skip minor updates and receive only major updates. When this feature becomes available, you'll only be required to apply the major releases, as all minor updates will be consolidated into the following major update. Each major release includes:



What Happens When You're Not Ready to Update

The automatic nature of SaaS updates creates unique risks that didn't exist with on-premises deployments:

- **Extension conflicts** can halt critical business processes
- **Integration failures** cascade across connected systems
- **Unplanned downtime** can stall operations while scrambling to fix compatibility issues



Real Impact

Unlike on-premises, where you could postpone indefinitely, SaaS updates happen whether you're ready or not. Organizations that don't prepare can face significant disruption when updates deploy automatically.

Chapter 2: The SaaS Update Challenge

Why "Just Click Update" Doesn't Work

Business Central SaaS updates aren't like updating your smartphone. Organizations with customizations, extensions, or integrations face a complex web of dependencies that can break when Microsoft changes Business Central's underlying code. Here's why Business Central SaaS updates are different:

No postponing major updates indefinitely

Unlike on-premises systems, where you control the timing, Microsoft enforces mandatory update windows that give you limited flexibility to delay major releases, forcing organizations to adapt to their schedule rather than their own business readiness.

Breaking changes can disable functionality

Microsoft regularly introduces changes that can render existing customizations, third-party extensions, or integrations non-functional, potentially disrupting critical business processes without warning if proper testing hasn't been conducted.

Deprecation warnings require immediate action

When Microsoft announces that features or APIs will be removed in future updates, organizations must quickly assess their dependencies and implement alternative solutions before the deprecation deadline arrives.

Automatic deployment as per Microsoft's timeline

Updates roll out based on Microsoft's global deployment schedule rather than your organization's preferred maintenance windows, which can conflict with busy periods, month-end processes, or other critical business activities.



The 5 Critical Phases of SaaS Success



Chapter 3: Building Your Release Management Process

Creating a Repeatable Framework

The most successful Business Central SaaS customers treat updates as predictable business processes, not IT emergencies. This requires documented procedures, clear responsibilities, and consistent execution.

Your Update Readiness Checklist



Monitor Microsoft release announcements and timelines



Inventory business-critical processes and extensions



Test updates in sandbox environments first



Document validation scripts and test procedures



Assign clear roles and deadlines to team members



Plan user communication and training sessions



Get Prepared

Make sure you're fully prepared for the next release. Get the complete [Update Readiness Checklist](#).

What Internal Release Management Actually Requires

Successfully managing Business Central updates internally demands more resources than many organizations initially anticipate. Here's what you'll need to allocate:

- **Time Investment:** Each major update requires significant preparation work, including testing, validation, and coordination across multiple team members and departments, often more than organizations initially anticipate.
- **Technical Skills:** Your team needs proficiency in AL development and extension management, as well as the ability to troubleshoot compatibility issues between your customizations and Microsoft's changes.
- **Business Process Expertise:** Someone must understand your critical workflows well enough to validate that updates haven't disrupted essential functionality or introduced unexpected behavior.
- **Project Coordination:** Updates involve multiple stakeholders, testing phases, and communication touchpoints that require dedicated project management to execute smoothly.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** Staying ahead of updates means regularly reviewing Microsoft's roadmap, deprecation notices, and pre-release documentation to identify potential issues before they become problems.
- **Pro Tip:** Establish a regular review cadence by scheduling team meetings every 6 months to assess your readiness for upcoming releases and incorporate lessons learned from previous updates.

Chapter 4: The ArcherPoint by Cherry Bekaert Advantage

Why Smart Organizations Leverage BC Release Management Services

Many businesses find that managing Business Central SaaS updates internally consumes significant resources needed for strategic initiatives. The twice-yearly cycle creates competing priorities that can compromise preparation quality. ArcherPoint's [Stay Current Assurance Plans](#) solve this challenge by providing dedicated expertise focused exclusively on keeping your Business Central environment stable and current.

Our Proven Methodology



Proactive Code Analysis

We identify potential conflicts before Microsoft releases updates, using automated tools and expert review to examine your customizations for compatibility issues and deprecated code usage.



Dedicated Testing Environments

Our team creates a sandbox environment specifically for testing and validation, so you can thoroughly test before updates reach your production system.



Automated Test Scripts

We can develop automated test scripts to remove manual testing of well-documented processes.



Expert Issue Resolution

When problems are identified, our developers provide immediate solutions that maintain your business processes while incorporating necessary updates.

Stay Current Assurance Plans

Feature	Basic Plan	Essential Plan	Advanced Plan
Proactive code conflict identification	✓	✓	✓
Code refactoring support	8 hours/year	20 hours/year	40 hours/year
Testing sandbox creation	✓	✓	✓
Go-live planning and support	✓	✓	✓
Automated test scripts	+	2 scripts/year	4 scripts/year
New feature review for major releases	+	+	2 hours/year
Planned resource scheduling	✓	✓	✓
External integration testing	2 hours/year	4 hours/year	12 hours/year
ISV add-on upgrades	+	+	✓

✓ Included

+ Can be added for an additional fee

Chapter 5: Your Path Forward

Step 1: Assess Your Current Situation

Evaluate your organization's release management maturity:

- How many customizations and extensions do you have?
- What issues have you encountered with previous updates?
- Does your team have adequate testing processes and environments?
- Can you identify and resolve compatibility issues independently?



Step 2: Choose Your Approach

- **DIY Path:** Build comprehensive internal capabilities by investing in team training, establishing standardized tools and processes, and creating detailed documentation for your unique Business Central environment. This approach requires the most significant time investment and dedicated resources, as your team must develop expertise across all aspects of release management while maintaining daily operations.
- **Partnered Path:** Leverage external expertise for release management while keeping your internal team focused on day-to-day operations and strategic business initiatives. This approach reduces the learning curve and provides access to specialized knowledge without expanding your headcount.
- **Hybrid Path:** Maintain internal coordination and oversight while bringing in external specialists for complex technical challenges like integration testing, custom code refactoring, or ISV compatibility issues. This balanced approach lets you retain control while accessing expertise when needed.

Step 3: Get Started Now

Don't wait for the next release cycle to identify problems. Whether you choose to handle updates internally or leverage external assistance, preparation should begin now. Here are the immediate actions:

- 1. Document your current customizations and extensions
- 2. Identify key stakeholders for release planning
- 3. [Schedule a consultation](#) to discuss your specific needs

Conclusion: From Stress to Strategic Advantage


Microsoft's commitment to continuous innovation means Business Central SaaS updates will deliver new capabilities twice yearly. Organizations that master release management transform what many consider a burden into a competitive advantage. With proper preparation and the right support, your team can leverage new features immediately, maintain system stability, and focus resources on strategic initiatives rather than crisis response.

The time to act is now. Each update cycle provides learning opportunities that improve your organization's management maturity. Don't let the next automatic deployment catch you unprepared.

Make your next update your easiest yet. [Contact ArcherPoint by Cherry Bekaert](#) to discover how our [Stay Current Assurance Plans](#) eliminate update stress and turn mandatory changes into business advantages.

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