ARCHERPOINT
by Cherry Bekaert

eBook

What Every Leader Needs to Know About Business Central

A Practical Guide

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Introduction

Today's business leaders are navigating an environment defined by rising costs, tighter margins, supply chain volatility, regulatory pressure, and increasing customer expectations. At the same time, they are expected to make faster, better decisions—often with incomplete or outdated information

Many of these challenges are not rooted in strategy or talent, but in technology. Disconnected financial systems, spreadsheets, point solutions, and legacy ERP platforms make it difficult to see what is really happening across the business. Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central was designed to solve these problems. It brings core financials, operations, supply chain, manufacturing, projects, and service management together into a comprehensive, cloud-based ERP platform—giving leaders visibility, control, and scalability.

This eBook is a practical, business-focused guide to Business Central. It explains what the platform is, what it does, where it fits best, and what leaders should consider when evaluating or adopting it. The goal is not to sell software, but to help you make an informed, confident decision about your next ERP.

What is Business Central—and why it matters

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central is a modern enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution designed for small and mid-sized businesses and upper mid-market organizations with complex operational needs. It serves as a single system of record for financials, operations, inventory, manufacturing, distribution, projects, and service delivery.

Business Central matters because it replaces fragmented systems with an integrated platform that supports end-to-end business processes. Instead of reconciling data across accounting software, inventory tools, spreadsheets, and custom systems, you gain an end-to-end view of company performance.

Business Central evolved from **Microsoft Dynamics NAV** (originally Navision) and has become Microsoft's flagship ERP for SMBs and the mid-market. Business Central builds on decades of trusted Dynamics NAV functionality while adding cloud deployment, a modern user experience, regular updates, and deep integration with the broader Microsoft ecosystem.

The value proposition is clear:

- **Visibility:** Real-time insight into financial and operational performance
- **Control:** Strong financial governance, compliance, and auditability
- **Efficiency:** Fewer manual processes and less duplicate data entry
- **Scalability:** A platform that grows with the business
- **Flexibility:** The ability to adapt processes without excessive customization

In short, Business Central is not just an accounting system—it is an operational backbone for growing organizations.

Business Central core capabilities

Business Central includes a comprehensive set of capabilities that handle most of an organization's core needs out of the box.

Financial management

The foundation of Business Central is a robust financial management engine that includes general ledger, accounts payable and receivable, bank and cash management, budgeting, fixed assets, and financial consolidation.
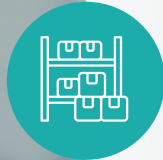
Finance teams benefit from multi-company and multi-currency support, a configurable chart of accounts for each company, dimensions for flexible reporting, and a wide selection of built-in financial statements. Period close processes are stream-lined, and audit trails are maintained automatically. This means faster closes, better financial visibility, and greater confidence in the numbers.

Sales and customer management

Business Central supports the full order-to-cash process. Sales teams can manage customers, pricing, quotes, sales orders, shipments, invoicing, and returns in one system. While it is not positioned as a full CRM replacement, Business Central provides strong transactional sales functionality and integrates seamlessly with Microsoft tools used for customer communication and collaboration.

Purchasing, inventory, and supply chain management

Purchasing and supply chain capabilities include vendor management, purchase orders, approvals, inventory tracking, warehouse management, and replenishment planning. Organizations can track inventory across multiple locations, manage lot and serial numbers, and optimize stock levels based on demand and lead times. These capabilities help reduce excess inventory while improving service levels.

Service management

For organizations that deliver services, repairs, or maintenance, Business Central includes support for service orders, service items, service contracts, warranties, and repair workflows. This allows service operations to be tightly integrated with finance and inventory—improving billing accuracy, margin visibility, and customer satisfaction.

Manufacturing

Business Central supports light to mid-level manufacturing scenarios. Capabilities include bills of materials (BOMs), routings, production orders, capacity planning, and consumption tracking, making it well suited for make-to-order, make-to-stock, and job-shop manufacturing environments where flexibility and visibility are critical.

Project and job management

Business Central enables **project-based organizations** to manage jobs, tasks, budgets, resources, costs, and billing. Teams can track planned versus actual performance in real time, improving project profitability and accountability.

Reporting and analytics

Business Central includes over 300 built-in reports and role-based dashboards. For deeper insight, **Business Central integrates natively with Microsoft Power BI**, enabling advanced analytics, KPIs, forecasting, and interactive dashboards.

Business Central licensing options

Business Central uses a subscription-based licensing model that aligns costs with usage.

→ Essentials

The Essentials license includes the functionality most companies require: financial management, sales, purchasing, inventory, project management, and reporting.

→ Premium

The **Premium license** includes everything in Essentials, plus manufacturing (including production orders, BOMs, and capacity planning) and service management (including service orders, contracts, and service dispatch).

→ Team Member

Team Member licenses are designed for users who need read-only access or limited functionality, such as viewing reports, entering time, or approving transactions.

Licensing costs for Business Central are charged per user, per month, and can vary by region. Recent pricing from Microsoft shows $80 per user per month for Essentials, $110 per user per month for Premium, and $8.00 per user per month for Team Members. The total cost depends on user counts, license mix, add-ons, and implementation scope.

Deployment, implementation, and partnering

Implementing an ERP system is a strategic initiative. The success of any implementation depends as much on people and process as it does on choosing the right technology. Business Central adoption requires careful planning, process alignment, and change management.

Most organizations implementing Business Central work with a Microsoft Certified Solutions Partner to guide the process. A strong partner helps translate business requirements into system design, manages data migration, identifies where Business Central can improve business processes and configures relevant workflows, and ensures users are trained and supported to make optimal use of the application.

A typical implementation includes:

- Discovery and business process analysis
- Solution design and configuration
- Data migration and validation
- Customizations and integrations with other business systems (where appropriate)
- Testing and user acceptance
- Training and go-live support

ArcherPoint by Cherry Bekaert is a Certified Microsoft Dynamics Solutions Partner that has been delivering Microsoft Dynamics business solutions for over 20 years. We specialize in Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, Dynamics NAV upgrades, Microsoft Power Platform, and Microsoft Azure solutions throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central America, and Europe. **ArcherPoint's implementation approach** is performed in iterative steps, allowing our clients to participate and provide feedback throughout the process.

Ongoing support: Upgrades, training, and managed services

For many Business Central clients, implementation is just the beginning of their relationship with their Microsoft partner. Training is an essential part of any ERP implementation: if your employees don't know how to use the system, your company will not realize the software's benefits.

Change management is another area of interest. As your business matures alongside your customers and competitors, your company will experience changes in how it operates, which means changes in how it uses Business Central.

Microsoft is continually upgrading Business Central, adding new features and functions, providing new security options, and introducing additional integrations with other business systems. Keeping up with these changes, testing and upgrading the software, and adjusting Business Central to accommodate evolving business requirements can be overwhelming.

ArcherPoint provides **ongoing support**, **user training**, and **managed services** to help organizations **stay current on the latest release of Business Central**, resolve issues as they arise, maintain user and system security, and continuously improve Business Central's role within the company.

When Business Central is a good fit for an organization

Business Central is particularly well-suited for organizations that need integrated finance and operations without the complexity of large enterprise ERP platforms.

Typical use cases include:

- Manufacturing companies requiring BOMs, routings, capacity, MRP/MPS, lot/serial tracking, and production orders for discrete manufacturing and make-to-stock or make-to-order manufacturing

- Distribution companies requiring warehouse management, inventory management, and supply chain visibility

- Service organizations managing service contracts, repairs, or warranty services

- Project-based businesses needing job costing and billing

- Growing companies outgrowing entry-level accounting software

- Organizations modernizing from older, on-premises ERP systems such as Dynamics NAV or Dynamics GP to make use of the modern cloud-enabled features, better integrations with external business applications, and greater security of Business Central

Business Central is especially attractive for businesses already invested in Microsoft technologies.

Integration and extensibility

Every company has its unique way of doing things. Business Central was designed to be flexible, capable of fitting just about any workflow imaginable using configurations, automations, and customizations. As a Microsoft product, Business Central integrates seamlessly with Microsoft 365 tools such as Outlook, Excel, and Teams, allowing users to work within familiar business applications. The **Microsoft Power Platform** enables organizations to build low-code apps, automate complex business processes, and create advanced analytics using Power BI.

For more advanced data analysis, Business Central data can be extended into modern analytics platforms such as **Microsoft Fabric**, supporting enterprise-grade reporting and AI-driven insights. Like most modern ERPs, Business Central is loaded with features that help streamline business processes. If you are still using an aging on-premises ERP, you might find that many of the customizations and add-on products you've been using are already incorporated into Business Central's base product.

But no ERP can anticipate every business scenario, and it will need some modifications to work within a particular company or industry.

One of the trademarks of Business Central (going back to the Navision days) is the ability to customize the program logic to fit a company's unique business processes. This means you can modify the software to fit how you work, rather than the other way around. Users can modify the application logic themselves or ask their partners to handle custom development tasks. In addition, thousands of industry-specific and functional add-ons are available for Business Central through **Microsoft AppSource**, allowing organizations to tailor Business Central without heavy customization.

Business Central also includes built-in integrations with many business applications (including those not made by Microsoft). Plus, Business Central's flexible Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) make it easy to create new integrations if none already exist. **ArcherPoint can help you optimize Business Central** to get the most out of your ERP investment.

Risks and considerations

Business leaders should approach ERP adoption with realistic expectations. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when looking at a new ERP implementation:

- Several factors can increase the complexity and risks of an ERP implementation, including the size of the organization, the number of custom processes, and the volume and format of the data to be migrated.

- Change is expected, not just in your company or industry, but also in the ERP software itself, the operating systems and computer hardware it runs on, the business applications it communicates with, and any customizations that were part of the initial implementation. Companies should consider the value of paying for **ongoing maintenance and support** from their partners to help ensure that technical issues are resolved quickly, features and functions are optimized, the application scales as your organization changes, and software updates go smoothly without service interruption.

- Keep an eye on costs–licensing costs increase with the number of users and add-ons. In addition, Premium licenses may not be necessary for all organizations. **ArcherPoint can help you choose licensing options** that meet your requirements and stay within your budget.

- While Business Central offers comprehensive ERP functionality that scales to accommodate different organizations, from small to large enterprises, it can be overkill for some and not enough for others. Work with your partner to ensure the ERP you select is the best fit for both your immediate and long-term goals.

- Even the best system will underperform without proper **user adoption and training**. Make sure you invest in employee training to ensure your investment delivers value.

- Security is top of mind for everyone these days. There are many moving parts to system security, from the platform it runs on to the privileges granted to users to industry and regulatory requirements. Work closely with your partner to ensure that your ERP is secure from day one. Learn how **ArcherPoint can help with system and cybersecurity management**.

Choosing the right partner and setting clear goals significantly reduces these risks.

Getting started with Business Central

Organizations often don't know where to start when considering a new ERP. Here are some recommended steps that have helped our clients approach their Business Central implementation:

1. **Perform an internal audit.** Understand your existing systems, processes, and pain points and be able to explain these to your partner.

2. **Create your business requirements.** Warehouse personnel will have different needs than your finance or IT departments. Talk to all departments and capture their requirements for a new system.

3. **Choose a partner with a successful track record in your industry.** You will have a close working relationship with your partner for months, if not years. Ask for and check their references. The partner you choose should have experience implementing the product for clients in your industry.

4. **Know your budget (and not just money).** An ERP implementation will require an investment in dollars, but your partner will also need regular access to subject matter experts from various departments across your organization for requirements gathering, data migration, testing, and go-live. Make sure you have budgeted headcounts for an internal project team to work with your partner. Your internal project team should also have a dedicated project manager to provide regular communication with your partner and your company's management.

5. **Understand what you're getting.** Make sure you are clear on what you're buying, including software licenses, renewal periods, partner costs, and post-go-live commitments. This extra effort will avoid surprises after the software is installed.

6. **Plan your data migration strategy.** Your company data, from financial records to customer contacts, can come from multiple sources, such as older ERP or CRM systems. A significant percentage of this data might be duplicated, outdated, or available in incompatible formats. Your partner will work with your internal project team to develop a plan to organize and migrate the data to the new system.

7. **Phased rollout vs. "big bang".** Some organizations find it easier to phase in the new system rather than change over all at once. A phased rollout lets everyone get used to the system gradually and allows you and your partner to identify gaps and correct them before moving to the next phase. Discuss your implementation options with your partner to determine the best strategy for your situation.

Keeping Business Central healthy long-term

Long-term success requires ongoing attention. Regular updates deliver new functionality, security enhancements, and performance improvements. **ArcherPoint offers ongoing support plans** to ensure issues are resolved quickly and that the system remains optimized and evolves with the business.

Final thoughts

Business Central provides business leaders with a modern, scalable ERP platform that connects finance and operations while supporting growth and innovation. With the proper planning, the right partner, and a defined long-term strategy, Business Central can serve as a strong foundation for data-driven decision-making and sustainable success.

As your organization grows, ArcherPoint can help you leverage Business Central's capabilities with additional modules, analytics, automations, and integrations so you remain competitive long after go-live. Contact ArcherPoint by Cherry Bekaert to **schedule a Business Central readiness conversation**.

Schedule a Call

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