# 10 Proof Points for moving from Dynamics GP to Business Central (Cloud-ERP)

### ADAPT FASTER
*Ensure business agility and scale with a single adaptable cloud solution.*

### WORK SMARTER
*Embrace hybrid work using familiar Microsoft 365 apps and Teams.*

### PERFORM BETTER
*Reduce costs and better serve customers while on the go.*

Microsoft Dynamics 365
**Business Central**

ENDEAVOUR
Toronto | Halifax | London | Montréal

**MIGRATING TO MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 BUSINESS CENTRAL** (Cloud-ERP) can help lay the foundation for your continued success. Microsoft Dynamics GP (Great Plains) has been extended to 2028 and beyond. Based on this announcement, Endeavour has seen a number of clients expressing a sigh of relief and an ability to stay with the status quo. However, following the pandemic, we have also seen a number of more progressive clients, show a surge in optimism and an increasingly proactive business mindset. These leaders have displayed an interest and desire for innovation, process reengineering, and digital cloud transformation.
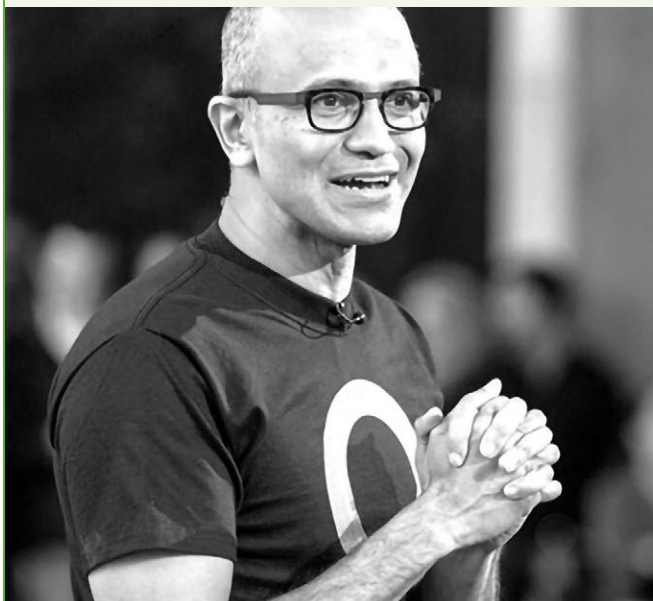
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*Just because Cloud-ERPs are increasingly popular, popularity alone is not enough to justify a business case for change. The following are 10 proof points worth considering in the evaluation of your short-term and long-term plans as you build a business case for migrating from Dynamics GP to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.*

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**10 PROOF POINTS** FOR MOVING FROM DYNAMICS GP TO BUSINESS CENTRAL (CLOUD-ERP)

"Our industry does not respect tradition, it only respects **innovation**"

Satya Nadella
CEO, Microsoft

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# 1 PREVIOUS DYNAMICS GP TO BUSINESS CENTRAL BARRIERS HAVE BEEN OVERCOME

When Microsoft first released its new Cloud-ERP for the Small and Midmarket (project Maderia) in 2017, it had an initial set of reduced functions and capabilities. However, there was confidence that over time it would mature to be on par with its predecessor Dynamics NAV, and eventually surpass it.

The tipping point happened in 2020, and Business Central is now far surpassing its predecessor in features and functionality, becoming a global leader in cloud-ERP. Over the same period large third-party ISV (independent software vendor) providers of Dynamics GP and Dynamics NAV on-premise add-ons were able to retool their apps and IP (intellectual property) to support Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Expanding beyond Dynamics GP, Business Central is able to support all clients within the SMB ($10M to $50M), the Mid-market ($50M to $500M), and the Upper Mid-market ($500M to $1B+), as well as can be configured to support select clients in the Large-enterprise market. Dynamics 365 Business Central is a viable option for supporting these large clients at a fraction of the cost of the Tier 1 ERP systems positioned for companies over $1billion in annual sales.

## As of 2022, Business Central is now able to boast:

- A large community of ISV add-on applications for Business Central comprised of new entrants and anchored by proven software companies who have modernized their on-premise add-ons for Dynamics GP and Dynamics NAV to work with the Cloud.

- A large community of Microsoft partners and resellers with talented consulting teams to support the implementation, training, and support of Business Central, Endeavour included.

- Specialized migration tools and techniques for moving from Dynamics GP to Business Central.

- Endeavour's own proprietary processes and methodology for Dynamics GP to Business Central migrations with a focus on accelerating skill adoption and process mapping between the two disparate systems.

- Emergence of new report migration tools to replace Management Reporter and SmartList reports with advanced reporting and analytics tools to augment the core functions within Business Central.

- Greater confidence in Cloud security. So much so, that Microsoft Cloud security is generally seen to be stronger than on-premise options. See more on Security in Proof Point 8 below.

# 2 AUTOMATIC UPDATES AND UPGRADES ARE INCLUDED WITH EACH MICROSOFT SUBSCRIPTION

Microsoft releases two major Waves of Dynamics 365 and Power Platform automatic updates each year. In contrast, a Dynamics GP upgrade is a largely manual effort, with most clients upgrading once every 1 to 3 years given the significant time and effort for each upgrade. An infrequent upgrade cycle results in missed opportunities for improved functions, security, and user productivity.

For Business Central, updates and new functions are rolled out automatically on a staggered basis, instantly updating the users with the latest version. In addition to pre-release apps, there is also an ability from an administrative IT perspective to delay major updates temporarily for up to 90 days. This allows for additional time to test in the Business Central sandbox, mitigate risks, and/or train end-users prior to updating the Business Central production environment.

> *As an active supporter of both Microsoft Dynamics GP and Business Central, Endeavour is in a unique position to help map out the differences in new features, functions and approaches as your team transitions from GP to Business Central.*

## Business Central is a Cloud-ERP:

- As a true SaaS, Software as a Service ERP the infrastructure headaches of managing on-premise applications simply go away replacing the need for a complex server room, power and cooling, limited lifespan servers and disk drives, and advanced application and security monitoring with a single simple per-user subscription.

- In addition to the security section outlined below, the Microsoft cloud hosting environment allows for the quick addition of users and database storage while expanding processing power and storage requirements as needed.

- For clients who need additional infrastructure control, Business Central can be implemented as a private cloud on-premise, or on Azure. In such cases, many of the benefits and automatic updates of the SaaS cloud-based Business Central Online would not be applicable.

# 3 GREATER ACCESS TO RECENT INNOVATIONS IN AI, DIGITAL PROCESS AUTOMATION, AND PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS BACKED BY MICROSOFT R&D

A foundational pillar of Microsoft's global growth strategy is a focus on Business Applications including the Dynamics 365 platform, of which Business Central is the core ERP for the Small and Mid-market. There is a strong set of embedded functions currently available for Business Central. These are a result of Microsoft's significant R&D investments and acquisitions in the fields of AI, Digital Process Automation, and Predictive Analytics.

Many of the advanced processes for larger more complex Enterprise systems (Dynamics 365 Finance & Operations for large enterprises), and via Microsoft's R&D partnership with SAP, have had a great influence on Business Central's evolution and product roadmap, further strengthening Business Central's role in supporting your Dynamics GP to Business Central Digital Transformation now and into the future.

## Innovation within Business Central that extends far beyond Dynamics GP includes:

- Tightly integrated email Inbox in Outlook using the Business Central add-in that provides added business insights such as credit status and matches documents with direct links within Outlook for Business Central customer and vendor-related documents. For example, when an email address is associated with a customer record the Business Central add-in for Outlook will review the email for specific keywords such as a sales quote number and suggest a direct, in-line link from the email body to the actual business document in Business Central. Similar processes are available for invoices and invoice number lookup in emails linked to vendors.

- Embedded predictive analytics, using Azure Machine Learning, for Late Payments, including a Payment Prediction confidence % for each entry within your Customer Ledger.

- Embedded predictive analytics, using Azure Machine Learning, for Inventory Stock-outs based on a sales and inventory forecast that predicts potential sales using historical data giving a clear overview of expected stock-outs.

- Extended integration into the Microsoft Dataverse through bi-directional, uni-directional, and virtual table integration points. The Microsoft Dataverse is the unified foundational data layer used for Microsoft Power Apps, Microsoft Power Automate, Power Virtual Agent, and Dynamics 365 CRM applications. Dataverse connections also serve to extend Business Central's reach into Microsoft's enterprise applications for IoT (Internet of Things), Big Data, and related analytics.

- Microsoft Power Apps is an award-winning leader within the low-code space for RPA (Robotic Process Automation) and DPA (Digital Process Automation) which focuses on line-of-business custom applications designed to further automate business processes outside of core ERP functions. With the Business Central integration and maturing processes within the Microsoft Dataverse, the opportunity for additional refinement and innovation far exceeds the future potential of Dynamics GP.

# 4 MORE FLEXIBLE WORKFLOW AND APPROVAL PROCESSES INCLUDING INTEGRATION INTO MICROSOFT TEAMS, MICROSOFT 365 AND THIRD-PARTY APPS

Workflow is a term related to the flow of information and supporting documents relating to key business processes, such as order-to-cash, and procure-to-pay, as well as a variety of administrative duties. Historically such processes were paper-based and manual, over time more and more of the steps were automated within ERP systems such as Dynamics GP, however, for many clients, additional supporting documents (paper or digital) are still included within key steps flowing from person to person.

Workflow automation and the automation of review and approval processes are key components of Digital Transformation. When done correctly, not only can approvals workflow provide additional financial and business controls but can also greatly free up time for finance teams and line of business leaders.

## Overshadowing Dynamics GP, Business Central has greater workflow capabilities:

- Being a cloud-based ERP greatly enhances Microsoft's ability to embed other cloud-based applications within the browser-based user interface within Business Central as well as, embed Business Central within other web applications. The Business Central app or Microsoft Teams allows for key Business Central customer and vendor cards to be embedded within Microsoft Teams for added collaboration that is ad-hoc and outside of standard repeatable workflow processes.

- Workflow approval request links for records can be viewed via using Microsoft Teams without leaving the application. This not only allows for fewer clicks and time savings but also supports a lower-cost subscription license as an approver would not need a full-function Business Central user license, thus contributing to a lower TCO.

- Microsoft OneDrive for Business and SharePoint Online have a tight integration with Business Central allowing for document storage outside of Business Central while providing a user experience that such documents appear to be within Business Central. Supporting documents needed for review, workflow, and approval processes, or that complement specific transactions and may be needed for auditing purposes can be attached and visible for a number of business processes with ease.
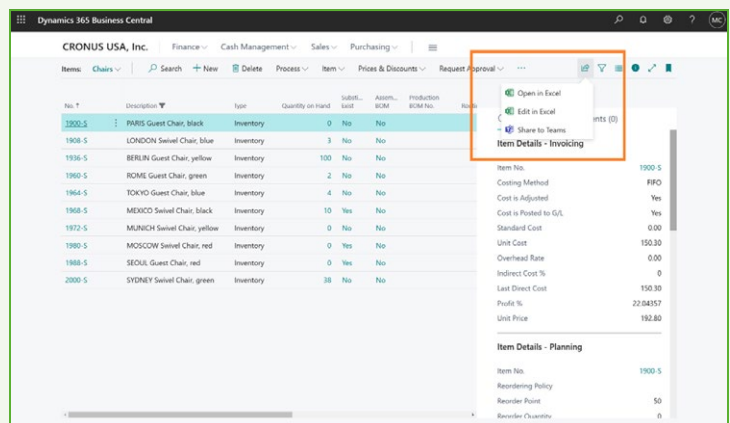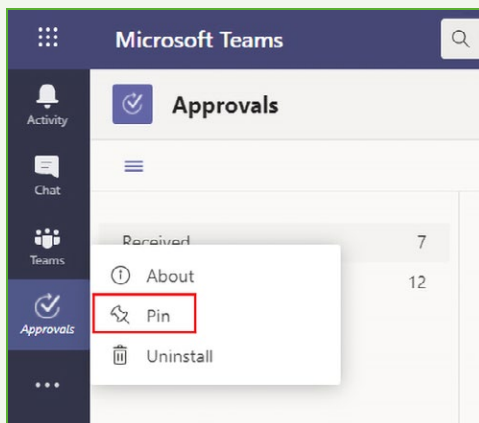
- Much like Dynamics GP, Business Central provides a home page and list of actions for a given user, who can then complete the assigned tasks or reassign the task to others. Additional business conditions can be added to workflows to automatically reassign tasks if they are not completed within a certain time. If an individual is away from the office, the task is re-routed to an approved delegate in their absence.

- The cloud-based nature of Business Central lends itself to a much easier and more cost-effective means of integration through Cloud-APIs (Application Programming Interface) that include secure re-usable connection points to a variety of third-party applications, in contrast to Dynamics GP where integration efforts, although achievable, take significantly more effort and cost.

- Microsoft PowerApps and Power Automate for low-code workflow and custom app development can be triggered from within Business Central. This serves not only as an integration to data, but also for tightly integrating workflow processes within Business Central with workflow processes that may happen for Line of Business needs outside of Business Central. Dynamics GP does not have this level of integration or capability.

# 5 STRONGER OUT-OF-THE-BOX MANUFACTURING, WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT, AND PROJECT COSTING ALONG WITH BUILT-IN CRM

With enough money and effort, virtually anything is possible. And when it comes to Dynamics GP, which is traditionally strong in financials and distribution, it is not known to be a leader in Manufacturing. However, Endeavour has a large number of clients who are very successful within the Manufacturing and Supply Chain industries, for these clients they either spent a lot of effort in configuration and augmenting Dynamics GP with third-party applications, or they used a completely separate system and integrated it to Dynamics GP solely for financial transactions.

In either case, with Business Central, the majority of the functions for Manufacturing, Distribution, and Financials are all included with core capabilities, requiring a smaller set of add-ins providing a handful of fields and functions in order to meet common business needs. For clients moving from Dynamics GP to Business Central, this translates into additional cost savings for implementation, while also providing a stronger foundation for automating business processes.

From a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) perspective, Business Central has built-in CRM functionality including contacts, accounts, notes, and quotes. The user interface is not as optimized for fast-moving salespeople as Dynamics 365 for Sales (CRM), but the majority of the day-to-day functions and reporting capabilities are available out-of-the-box. Whether integrating Dynamics 365 CRM with Business Central or using the built-in functions, the degree of process integration between order to cash is a lot smoother than would normally be seen with Dynamics GP and an external CRM system.

**Dynamics 365 Wheel of Functionality:**
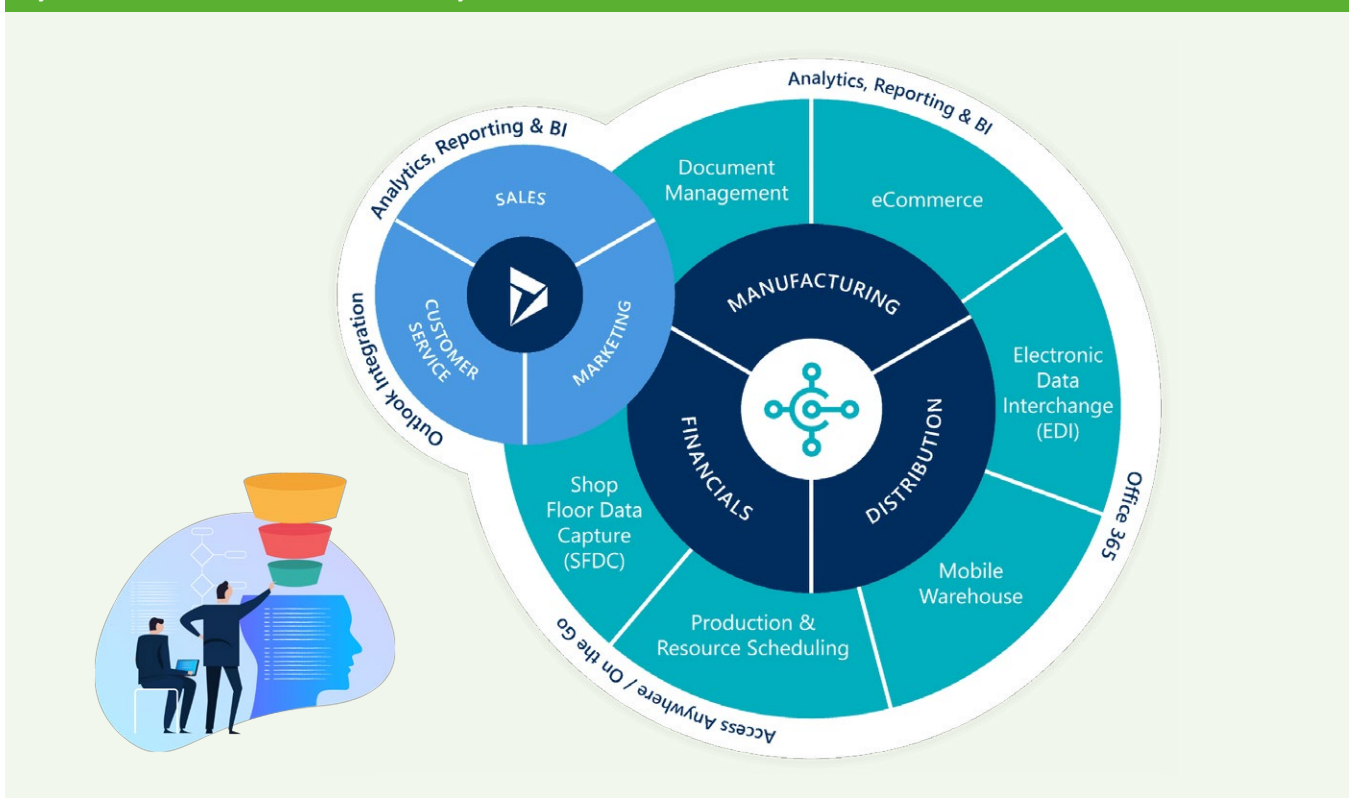
# 6 PERSONALIZATION AND ROLE-BASED ACCESS FOR A BETTER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE USER EXPERIENCE

With the ever-increasing speed and power of computers and the evolution of application design, it is no surprise that the user experience within modern cloud-ERP applications such as Business Central far exceeds that of traditional desktop applications. The Business Central UI is essentially rendered on the fly based on which user is logged in allowing for flexibility in Global, Role-based, and Individual user-driven personalization. This is not something that Dynamics GP can accomplish.

Business Central allows for three levels of screen personalization. First the general design and configuration of screens, fields, and processes at the time of your initial configuration, implementation, and migration from Dynamics GP to Business Central. The 2nd level being, centralized global changes that are created within a controlled environment, tested in a sandbox, and pushed out to all users, or to select user groups based on roles configured within Business Central. The 3rd is empowering individual end-users to modify sections of their screen to create a personalized layout based on their own preferences and work practices and linked to their individual login. Examples include hiding certain fields, changing the position of fields related to data entry and review, as well as adding individual fields from other related screens or processes (within reason) that a user has access to. End-user instructions for UI personalization at docs.microsoft.com.

**The value of personalization of Business Central screens includes:**

- Lower training costs and faster end-user adoption via role-based and individual personalization access to hide functions that are not needed for common business roles.

- Global changes related to changes in an organization's business processes provide greater long-term flexibility. For example, through M&A growth activities there may be new requirements for data capture and analysis related to a new line of business that affects certain user group requirements.

- Individual personalization allows for a greater feeling of ownership and can improve user adoption and productivity.

- Attracting and retaining top talent is important for most organizations. Once a user is exposed to the modern look and feel of cloud-based apps including Business Central, they develop a preference and shift away from traditional on-premise ERP designs like Dynamics GP.

# 7   AVOID ON-PREMISE HOSTING AND MONITORING COSTS

Moving to the SaaS Microsoft cloud with Business Central will allow your IT team to cut their infrastructure budgets for hosting Dynamics GP internally on servers, maintaining databases, backups and redundant power supplies. Hosting applications internally also requires additional measures for physical security, fire prevention and cyber security to ensure the safety of your corporate information.

With Dynamics 365 Business Central cloud subscriptions, much like Microsoft 365 (Office 365), Business Central is housed within your organization's private cloud-tenant leveraging economies of scale associated with large Microsoft global datacentres. Included are security and infrastructure monitoring as well as rapid response to external cyber-attacks.

Dynamics GP cloud hosting is available within a Private Cloud (datacenter) via Endeavour Solutions and is highly recommended to provide increased availability, back-ups, and security for Dynamics GP. The monthly fees are typically in the range of $100 to $150 per named user/month. These GP cloud hosting fees are often greater than the full subscription fee for Business Central which includes access to the software, annual software maintenance, and cloud tenant hosting.

## Business Central subscriptions include:

- User rights to access Business Central on a fully managed cloud infrastructure with security included.

- Options for specific regional hosting in support of Canada-only, USA-only, or European Union-only data storage, or optional global hosting with optimized remote access and secure tunnel from virtually any highspeed Internet connection in the World.

- Fully scalable system with high availability and automatic backups.

- Data safety and privacy following international standards including the USA Department of Defense, ISO, and standards mandated by the European Union.

- Sandbox for reviewing application updates, back-ups, testing, and development.

- The cloud tenant for Business Central provides a number of flexible options for back-ups and recovery. An administrator can make a live copy of the production system to the sandbox environment at any time. Automated processes are set up for back-ups within Business Central by Microsoft following standard best practices.

- Database continuity is protected by automatic backups that are kept for 28 days. The backup includes data from any production and sandbox environments that the database contains. Additional off-site backup and accelerated recovery options are also available to keep your business running.
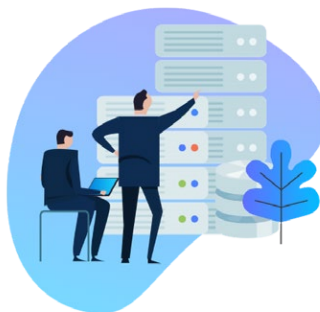
# 8 STRONGER SECURITY AND SCALABILITY WITH MICROSOFT AZURE CLOUD

As an on-premise ERP, Dynamics GP was initially designed to work within a local area network with desktop clients applications that connect to a back-end server and database. At the time, three decades ago, the greatest concern for security was on preventing physical access into your building and restricting access to desktop computers and server rooms. Fast forward 30 years, by exposing computers to the Internet through email, web browsers, and even providing remote access from home offices, the need for advanced cyber security has never been greater.

With increased remote access from anywhere in the world, ERP systems are becoming an increasingly attractive target for cyber-attacks, some of which are funded by organized crime and foreign government organizations resulting in not only a greater frequency of attacks but also a greater risk of fraud and related damages. The security functions for Dynamics 365 Business Central, powered by a Microsoft Azure backend, far exceed the provisions available in Dynamics GP. The security risks outlined below should be mitigated through a defined action plan, otherwise, moving to the cloud-based Business Central will quickly address many of the technical security gaps and threats.

## A high-level look at the evolution of ERP Security

The following chart compares the 1990/2000s (when Dynamics GP was originally designed), and the modern-day 2020s where Business Central lives.

| ERP Security Architecture | 1990's and 2000's when Cyber Risks were less prevalent (Dynamics GP stated here) | 2020's and modern-day (Business Central lives here) |
|---|---|---|
| **WHO** | Corporate users are all internal employees. | Users may include employees, partners, and customers for self-serve functions and/or integrated systems. |
| **AUTHENTICATION** | Passwords were often simple, re-used, and changed infrequently. | Two-factor authentication and more complex passwords are used to reduce remote attacks. |
| **DEVICES** | The majority of access was with desktop computers hardwired to the LAN in the office. | BYOD – Bring Your Own Device is more common, blurring the lines between corporate and personal applications. Most have some level of mobility, including laptops, tablets, and phones. |
| **WHEN** | Work was during office hours when in the office. | With flex hours and mobility, work may be done anytime, anywhere. |
| **PRIMARY SECURITY** | Restricting physical access. | Restricting live cyber attacks, malware, and trojan horses. |
| **CRIMINAL THREATS** | Lone players causing mischief, unsophisticated white-collar crime, and some large criminal organizations. | Highly sophisticated foreign state-sponsored organizations, sophisticated criminal organizations, and unknown players who are able to buy passwords and credentials on the 'dark web'. |

Although Dynamics GP can be hosted in a private cloud with outsourced professional monitoring by security experts, Business Central was designed to operate on Microsoft Azure in top-level secure datacenters managed by Microsoft for large enterprise and government organizations. SMB and Mid-market ERP users enjoy many of the same leading-edge security practices and controls available via Microsoft Azure.

**Business Central security overview includes:**

- Business Central SaaS cloud security for cloud protection, monitoring, breach detection, and eviction.

- In Business Central online, users are added through the Microsoft 365 admin center, and are assigned specific permissions based on defined user groups. Standard authentication is via Microsoft Azure Active Directory including 2FA (two-factor authentication).

- Microsoft maintains an ever-expanding network of data centers around the globe and verifies that each data center meets stringent security requirements. Microsoft's official documentation states that Geographies (such as the Canada or USA datacenters) allow customers with specific data-residency and compliance needs to keep their data and applications close. Geographies are fault-tolerant to withstand complete region failure, through their connection to the dedicated, high-capacity networking infrastructure. Microsoft may replicate customer data to other regions available within the same geography for data durability. No matter where customer data is stored, Microsoft does not control or limit the locations from which customers or their end-users may access customer data.

# 9 TIGHTER INTEGRATION WITH MICROSOFT 365 AND THE POWER PLATFORM FOR ADDED CLOUD PERFORMANCE

Although integration with cloud applications is possible for Dynamics GP via custom integrations, with Business Central, many of the same integrations are available out-of-the-box with published apps or quick to configure APIs. Integration efforts are often taken from weeks and days (GP), down to a matter of hours and minutes (Business Central). Additionally, the level of integration between Business Central and Microsoft 365 (Office 365) is much richer, even including familiar formatting and layouts.

## Business Central integration examples with Microsoft 365 and Power Platform include:

- Power Automate flows and apps can be triggered within Business Central to run based on a variety of fields and automated processes within Business Central.

- Reporting dimensions from Business Central are seen automatically within Power BI. Power BI can be used to create consolidated dashboards combining 200+ other available data sources.

- Virtual tables for Business Central are housed within the Microsoft Dataverse for easy access by Power Apps, Power BI, Power Virtual Agent, and Power Automate

- The Business Central add-in for Outlook 365 gives users quick access to documents with Document Links, using AI to lookup key Business Central records by matching key details found within email messages. The AI functions provide a document link if a document number from within Business Central is recognized within the body of the message. Opening the link provides quick access to the corresponding document within Business Central, contingent on role-based security. If users work with more than one Business Central company, they can easily switch between companies in Outlook via the 'More actions' dropdown.

- The Business Central add-in for Outlook 365 also provides users with an option to take all or selected attachments sent by the external customer via email and directly add them to Business Central records (as attached documents for contacts, customers, and so on). In Outlook, the add-in will display a list of the attachments to the email and provides an easy way for attachments to be moved to Business Central.

- The Business Central app for Teams provides the ability to view details of the shared content directly from Teams so that business decision-makers can act fast and collaborate with other stakeholders without leaving Microsoft Teams. When a link or record from Business Central is shared to Microsoft Teams, either through the Share feature or by copying the link from the browser tab, it renders an actionable mini-card that displays the most crucial information about the data that was shared. The card opens the Details view on a larger page and can also be pinned as a new tab in Microsoft Teams.

- Again, Dynamics GP does not have these functions. Migrating to Business Central will allow your team to embrace these technological advances.

# 10 EASIER ACCESS FOR MOBILE, BYOD AND ANYWHERE, ANYTIME ACCESS

Remote anywhere, anytime access is a breeze with Business Central. Business Central works on a variety of screen sizes and auto-adjusts for both screen size as well as for landscape vs portrait orientation. Although Dynamics GP has an optional HTML web interface, its functions are restricted and very few clients have chosen to adopt it. The majority of Dynamics GP users rely on a remote desktop for access to Dynamics GP, thus requiring specialized login and VPN connections for remote users relying on laptops and larger personal computers. For quick inquiry and analysis on the fly whether remote at a home office or simply down the hall in a boardroom, being able to access Business Central via BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) personal phone or tablet helps to further improve productivity and provide data at the touch of a finger supporting better business decisions.

Users can access Business Central on a multitude of devices, once authenticated against Microsoft Azure Active Directory via Microsoft 365 following any corporate security policies, including unique usernames, passwords, and two-factor authentication.

**Not only are screens resized automatically, but they are also re-arranged with a modified user interface and menu structure optimized for the screen:**
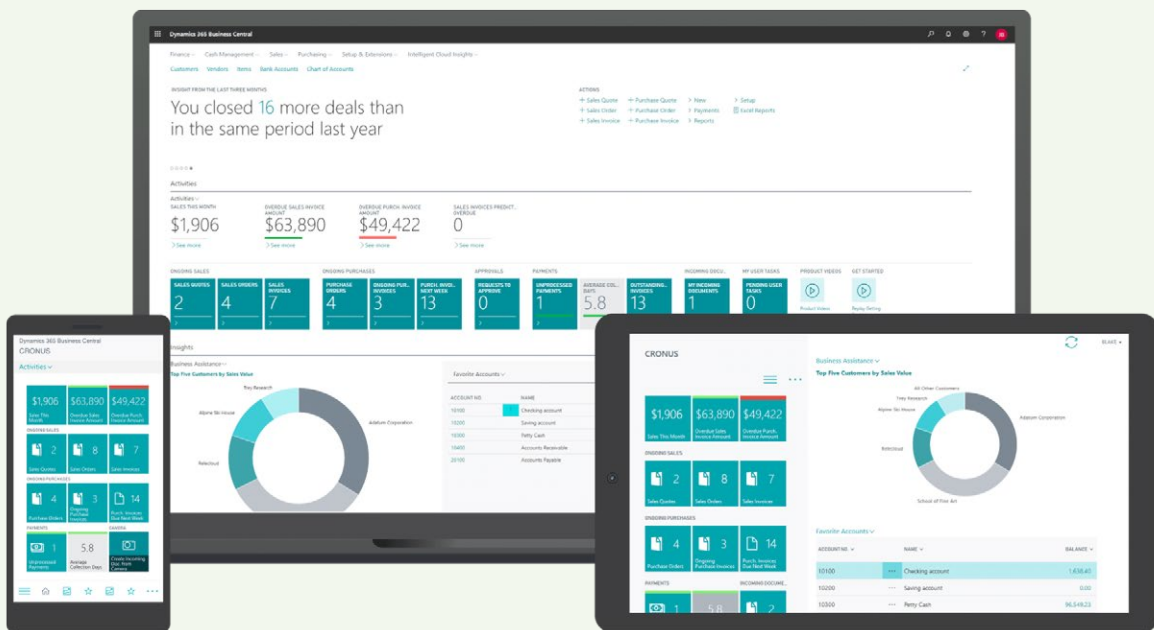
## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- To take full advantage of the latest functions within Business Central, we highly recommend that your team implement and embrace Microsoft 365 (Office 365) for business user productivity including Exchange online, Outlook365, Microsoft Teams, SharePoint and the Office suite of applications. If needed, Endeavour is Microsoft Gold certified for cloud applications and migration to Microsoft 365.

- Business Transformation and additional process automation often happens naturally during a GP to Business Central cloud migration with additional time allocated to tackle key processes, however, we recommend that you get input and feedback from your team early to help involve users in the design and prioritization of process changes that will have the greatest impact for your organization.

- Endeavour has a great set of Cloud migration processes and methodologies to safely help lead your migration from Dynamics GP to Business Central when you are ready. Contact our Professional Services team to discuss options for a GP to Business Central Discovery Assessment to help create a Cloud migration plan, including technical, accounting, and change management efforts.

- And finally, there are a number of Microsoft promotions available via Endeavour Solutions for qualifying clients, including 40% off annual subscriptions, or even matching total named-user subscription licensing (including cloud hosting) to your current annual Dynamics GP Business Ready Enhancement Plan fees paid to Microsoft. Engage with our team to validate your options and timing of your next Dynamics GP annual renewal.

**Contact Endeavour for assistance in defining your Dynamics GP to Business Central migration plan and estimates.**

**Dynamics GP to Business Central Upgrade:**
https://www.gpsupportnorth.com/gp-to-business-central

**Business Central Overview:**
https://www.endeavoursolutions.ca/businesscentral

## About Endeavour Solutions

Endeavour has been implementing, upgrading, and supporting Dynamics GP for over 30 years, and continues to do so through its GP Support North consulting team. Building upon this success, Endeavour's Business Central consulting team has expanded to become a significant North American provider and is backed by Endeavour's technical development team and our Microsoft Cloud consultants who have become experts in Dynamics 365 CRM, Power Apps, Microsoft 365 and Azure.

Endeavour Solutions is a Microsoft Gold Partner for ERP, CRM and Cloud Business Applications focusing on implementations, upgrades, development, data analytics, training and support for the cloud-centric Dynamics 365 Platform including, Business Central (ERP), Sales Enterprise (CRM), Microsoft 365, PowerApps, and Azure.

With offices in Toronto, Halifax, London, Montréal, and Edmonton, Canada, their consultants support more than 700 active clients throughout North America including clients using Dynamics GP and Dynamics NAV. Over the years, Endeavour has been named multiple times to the Microsoft President's Club – the top 5% of Microsoft Partners Worldwide.

**www.endeavoursolutions.ca**



Our team doesn't just implement software. We help you **make your business *better*.**



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