No ERP Can Do It All

How to Fill the Gap With a Partner

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On its own, no ERP will exactly fit your company's requirements today and into the future.

It might be surprising to hear a Dynamics 365 Business Central Partner like Encore admit that no ERP can do it all. That's right – even a vendor as large as Microsoft hasn't created a one-size-fits-all ERP for you and your organization.

We've spoken with many business leaders about the difficulty of deploying a solution that fulfills their business requirements.

Nobody wants to be stuck with an ERP that:

- Frontline staff can't or won't use to get their work done.
- Leaders don't trust to give them accurate data to make strategic decisions.
- Is overly rigid, unable to adapt as your business grows and changes.
- Doesn't align with the processes in your specific business.
- Forces your team to duplicate data entry between multiple systems.

Over Encore's 35+ years in business, we've seen that one idea above all others helps clients avoid those bad outcomes and have success in an ERP implementation.

That idea is simple, although most vendors aren't willing to say it: no ERP can do it all.

There is not a single plug-and-play ERP – even Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central – that leaders can expect as a turnkey solution to secure ROI, support change, and cover every single functional requirement you have out of the box.

Any of the top-tier ERP solutions on the market can cover 80% of your requirements with their core functionality. But in practice, every company needs something more or different in their ERP – that extra 20%. For instance, you might need to automate a specific financial or manufacturing process, or integrate with an industry-specific tool.

So, How Do I Make My ERP Project Succeed?

Once you accept the idea that no ERP does it all, how can you get your full needs met in an ERP project? In the rest of this guide, we'll explain the context and solution to that problem in detail, but here's the summary of 3 action items for you:

- Assess your broader needs.
  Look beyond the traditional ERP areas of general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and inventory. Consider your team, strategy, and processes, as well as your technology. What are your plans for growth over the next 3-5 years, and what are the barriers to achieving those?

- Choose an ERP product that is made to work with a complete ecosystem of tools.
  Those tools can close much of the 20% gap between your needs and the out of the box ERP functionality.

- Choose a partner who has expertise across that ecosystem.
  They will help you assess your needs, match them up with specific tools and options, and tailor the complete solution to you.

Now admittedly, the approach we recommend isn't the only way to tackle the problem for ERP customers. So let's take a step back and talk about the market for ERP solutions.

52% of budget overruns in ERP projects are caused by the unplanned need to buy additional tools.

Source: 2025 ERP Report, Panorama Consulting Group

Templated ERP vs Tailored ERP

How Solutions Differentiate

During your evaluation of ERP systems, you may have noticed significant overlap in the features provided by Dynamics 365 Business Central and its many competitors.

It might seem like mid-market ERPs are all essentially the same, because they offer functionality for:

- General ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable
- Financial management and transaction management
- Inventory and/or warehouse management
- Manufacturing and production

When all the solutions have similar core functionality, it can be tricky to decide between them. The ERP vendors take one of two approaches to differentiate themselves in this crowded market.

Templated ERPs

Some ERP vendors attempt to differentiate their product from competitors by offering templated solutions that are meant to cover industry requirements. The idea is to fill the 20% gap for all companies in a certain niche by having them pay for a set bundle of “industry standard” extra features. At first glance, this might appear ideal.

But on closer inspection, these industry-specific ERP “packages” or “bundles” tend to have both:

- Features that your specific company doesn’t need, which increases cost and complexity,
- And functional gaps for things your company does need, which leaves you still without a complete solution.

After all, your processes, strategy, and technology aren’t the same as your competitors’.

Microsoft's Tailored Approach to ERP

Microsoft takes another approach to differentiating its mid-market ERP, Dynamics 365 Business Central. Instead of offering pre-made ERP templates or bundles, Microsoft's strategy for filling the 20% gap of specific needs for each customer is to:

- Design Business Central to be highly configurable.
- Foster a community of ISV add-ons for specialized needs.
- Rely on Dynamics 365 Business Central Partners like Encore to tailor a complete solution for each customer.
- Maintain seamless connections between Business Central and other tools from the Microsoft suite, like Excel, Outlook, Power BI, and Copilot.

Note that there is a trade-off for this tailored approach: you need to put in the time and effort up front to work with a partner through needs assessment, configuration, and training.

If you want your ERP delivered yesterday, you're willing to try to squeeze your processes into industry-standard configurations, and you're happy to have your ERP data siloed off from the rest of your business tools, then the templated approach of Microsoft's competitors may be a better choice for you.

If, however, you're planning for the long run, and you want an ERP that aligns with your processes and can connect with the other tools you'll need today and into the future, then it's worth taking time to learn more about Dynamics 365 Business Central and Microsoft's broader suite of tools.

More than 50,000 organizations have chosen Business Central to enhance productivity, fuel expansion, and drive long-term success.

What Is the Microsoft Ecosystem?

Microsoft has strategically created a whole ecosystem of business software, running from familiar Office applications like Excel through to Dynamics 365 Business Central itself and even Microsoft-verified ISV add-ons. These tools can share data and work together, so you can connect to the ones that suit your situation, creating a unified platform for your business.

At Encore, we have experts and relationships across the full ecosystem, and we help our clients select, configure, and connect the right tools for them. Here's a quick overview of the options available in the Microsoft ecosystem:

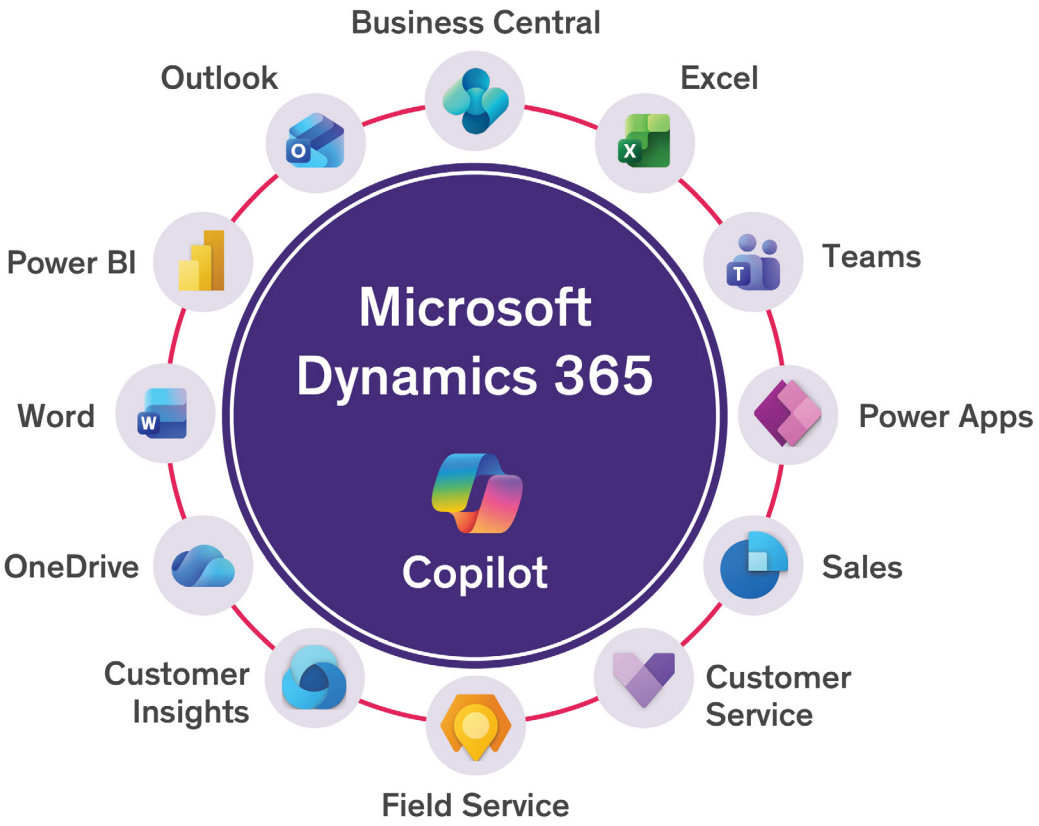
- Dynamics 365 Business Central, Microsoft's flagship mid-market ERP.
- Microsoft 365 (Excel, Teams, Outlook, etc.), which can hook into your ERP data, letting you edit transaction data in Excel or invoice customers directly from Outlook.
- Power BI for enhanced reporting, pulling together data sources both inside and outside of Dynamics 365.
- Power Automate and Power Apps, providing enhanced automation and low-code tools.
- Dynamics 365 CRM, for companies with more advanced needs in areas like marketing, sales, and customer service.
- Copilot AI, empowering your team with predictive intelligence and natural language answers to questions about your ERP data.

79% of leaders agree their company needs to adopt AI to stay competitive

Source: 2024 Work Trend Index Annual Report, Microsoft and LinkedIn

The Microsoft Stack for SMBs

All of these tools are built on Microsoft's cloud platform, giving you unmatched digital security, single sign-on, and the ability to share data and connect automations between them. The user interface is consistent between applications, reducing the training time needed for your staff.



Benefits of Choosing Dynamics 365 Business Central and the Microsoft Suite

This Microsoft approach to ERP, where the system is configured and connected with other tools to fit each client's needs, comes with important benefits:

- Accelerated processes in finance, warehouse, sales, and more.
- Shared data between teams and greater visibility for leaders, with a single source of truth you can all depend on.
- Enhanced digital security and compliance.
- Faster staff training time and user adoption due to the consistent user experience across teams and tools.
- Expert guidance from partners like Encore to help you through assessment, customization, training, and ongoing support.
- Future readiness, because the broad and growing set of tools in the ecosystem enables you to stay ahead as your business, customers, and competitors evolve.

However, to gain those benefits, you need to invest time in selecting a partner and collaborating with them to implement Dynamics 365 Business Central.

> *"The interoperability of Business Central with ... Outlook, Excel, SharePoint, and Copilot, has been excellent. Excel integration, in particular, has been transformative, allowing for efficient editing and uploading of entries, which has saved significant time and improved workflows.*

Maria Leonard, Corporate Controller, Omega Industries
Read the full case study of Omega's Business Central implementation with Encore

ISV Add-Ons and Integrations

There are also over 7,000 ISV add-ons available in the Microsoft ecosystem. The integrations and add-ons we commonly leverage in Business Central implementations include:

- Ecommerce and point-of-sale (POS) applications.
- Automations for payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable.
- Inventory management and warehouse management solutions.
- Various industry-specific tools.
- Budgeting, advanced reporting, and more.

Note that it's not realistic for a Business Central client to sift through the thousands of ISV options and select the best ones on their own. Collaborating with an experienced partner like Encore will help you find the ISVs that properly fit your requirements.

There are over 7,000 Microsoft-verified ISV add-ons for Dynamics 365 Business Central

Who Implements Dynamics 365 Business Central?

Unlike some ERP vendors with a more templated approach, Microsoft does not sell or implement Dynamics 365 Business Central directly to customers. Instead, Microsoft enlists the help of partners like Encore Business Solutions to work with customers like you.

Dynamics 365 Business Central is meant to be configured and connected – it's not a canned product you're supposed to use off the shelf in isolation. So, when you're choosing a partner for Business Central, look for a team that will:

1. Help you realistically assess your strategic needs.
2. Be forthright about the costs and risks of the implementation project in your specific situation.
3. Have cutting-edge skills and certifications for the latest technologies across the full Microsoft stack.
4. Also have decades of experience in the community, to help you select any ISVs you may need.
5. Expertly tailor the complete solution to fit your needs and connect with your other tools.
6. Advise you on future developments and decisions as your company grows and adapts.
7. Provide the training and change management necessary for your team to become able and willing to use the new tools effectively.
8. Also provide ongoing support after go-live, with certified Business Central experts who are already familiar with the specifics of your configuration.

> *"This was one of the most painless implementations we've ever experienced. Having worked with older ERPs in the past, Dynamics 365 Business Central's cloud-based solution has made the transition much easier and more efficient.*
>
> Eric Gier, Director of Finance, AltPep Corporation
> A Dynamics 365 Business Central Customer with Encore

Let's Build Your Dynamics 365 Business Central Plan Together

At Encore Business Solutions, we've been a Dynamics 365 Partner for 35+ years, completing over 2,300 implementations. We have Microsoft-certified experts in Business Central and the rest of the Microsoft stack who love working with clients, creating comprehensive solutions to business problems, and teaching teams to use the new systems effectively. We also provide ongoing support, training, and strategic guidance.

We won't sugarcoat it: ERP projects are challenging, and no ERP will fit all your needs out of the box. But that's why we're here to help you.

Together, we can help you gain the full benefits of a Microsoft solution that is tailored to your needs and works together with the rest of your tools.

Consult With Encore Experts Today:

Phone: 888.898.4330
Email: encore@encorebusiness.com

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Microsoft Solutions Partner

Additional Resources:

- How to Mitigate the Top 7 ERP Implementation Risks & Challenges
- Business Central Licensing and Pricing Answers
- Encore's Business Central Implementation Services
- Case Study: Transforming a 40-Year-Old Manufacturing Company with Dynamics 365 Business Central

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