PIPOL

Whitepaper

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

This whitepaper explains why Microsoft Dynamics AX is particularly well-suited for supporting the needs of large enterprise-class organizations with a broad international presence.

INTERNATIONAL DEPLOYMENT

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX AND INTERNATIONAL ERP IMPLEMENTATION

This whitepaper explains why Microsoft Dynamics AX is particularly well-suited for supporting the needs of large enterprise-class organizations with a broad international presence. Organizations of this magnitude have unique challenges when it comes to large deployments across multiple countries, each operating in their own language and local requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Microsoft Dynamics AX is a highly configurable enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution with an impressive growing install base. It is designed for large, international, multi-site, enterprise-class organizations and it is ideal to operate from one centralized location and can be scaled along with your business.

It also offers industry-specific functionality to meet local and regional needs and is an end-to-end comprehensive solution that can help you manage complex supply chains and inventory, across border locations and business units.

BUILD-IN INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC FUNCTIONALITY

Microsoft Dynamics AX is perfectly equipped to address the specific size and scale challenges of enterprise organizations.

COMPATIBLE SOLUTIONS

To ensure that the entire organization achieves its goals, a business management solution deployed at multiple sites and business units must be consistent with the parent company IT system. This facilitates:

- Consolidation of all vital data
- Sharing of critical business information between the parent and its sites
- Cooperation, such as providing customer services or centralized service centers for purchasing or other functions
- Automated intercompany functionality

Parent companies want central management of an integrated system, both in terms of decision-making and project management as well as the actual deployment, while at the same time being able to maintain flexibility at sites to meet the requirements of local processes and procedures. Common objectives of a parent company include:

- Harmonization of business processes
- Improved reporting
- Fast and secure implementation at sites to decrease TCO and increase ROI
- The ability to share master data about customers, vendors, items, prices, etc.
- The ability to consolidate data and processes – from financial statements and a common chart of accounts to inventory or product availability across the organization
- Increased control of subsidiaries and branches through the application and implementation of standards and global business concepts
- Information and process support for efforts to realize the business vision (for instance, uniform and integrated work processes

2 | VISIBILITY ACROSS MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

SOLUTION AND DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Whenever you are implementing an integrated IT system, you must consider both the solution and the deployment. With an international deployment, these considerations take on an added complexity.

You want to have confidence that you are working with consistent data that can inform smart, strategic decisions and meet compliance. You want to give your people the tools to work more efficiently in order to evolve and boost your business agility. On top of this, complex enterprise companies need visibility across multiple locations and business units in different countries. Is one solution available to serve the different requirements of your local sites? In a multi-site and international deployment, it makes sense to standardize on the same solution across the countries where the solution is available. This will reduce the TCO and increase the ROI, providing efficiency gains through, for example:

- Integrating the various sites to the parent company from one application
- Common processes for the implementation plan, execution and methodology
- Cost savings developing customizations, and system configuration e.g., implementing a standard "core functionality"
- Training end users on one solution

WHAT IS MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX?

Microsoft Dynamics AX is an ERP solution that is simple to use so you can deliver value faster, take advantage of business opportunities, and drive user involvement and innovation across your organization.

You can run Microsoft Dynamics AX on premises or in the cloud. Running Microsoft Dynamics AX on Microsoft Azure can help you reduce operating costs, gain business value quickly, and enable rapid business transformations and growth. Dynamics AX supports and streamlines all critical business processes, including capabilities for multiple languages and currencies. Integrating seamlessly with your existing Microsoft software, Dynamics AX offers deep financial and business management capabilities that are quick to implement and easy to use.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX IS A GOOD FIT FOR:

- Large, enterprise-class organizations
- Enterprises that want to manage end-to-end global processes

THE MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX STORY

In 1998, Axapta (now Microsoft Dynamics AX) was released. Global by nature, it offered new object-oriented technology to companies that wanted a powerful, scalable business management suite to run their international operations.

Since the release of Axapta 1.0, the solution has expanded dramatically in both scope and capability. Initially, the solution encompassed functions for finance, inventory management, production, logistics and trade. Further development ensued over the following years.

The solution was renamed to Microsoft Business Solutions Axapta and ultimately, in the course of rebranding the Microsoft ERP products, to Microsoft Dynamics AX. Microsoft gradually adapted the solution to the look & feel of the Microsoft Office products and drove the integration of ERP with the remaining solutions.

Since then, Microsoft has continued to invest heavily in the further development of the product, including expanded functionality, upgraded architecture, mobile apps, enabling the product for cloud deployment, and ensuring a familiar, easy-to-use interface. Microsoft Dynamics AX continues to provide customers and partners around the globe with real business value, year after year.

3 | INTERNATIONAL ERP PLATFORM

MANAGING CHANGE AND STAYING AHEAD

For enterprise organizations, it is important to be able to share and unite your data. Otherwise, it can be overwhelming, or even impossible, to ensure that all your people have access to consistent information, while at the same time ensuring all legal regulations and customer requirements are met.

Expanding into new markets, adding products or services, or making adjustments after a merger or acquisition are just some of the challenges that businesses face today. A flexible solution like Dynamics AX can be configured to quickly adapt internal processes and supply chain relationships to reflect new demands in a changing enterprise organization.

Enhanced business intelligence and analytics allow people to make proactive decisions in real-time—an essential part of managing change and staying ahead of the curve. Dynamics AX also helps ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, even for businesses with industry-specific needs.

Office 365 is a Cloud Productivity suite delivering the tools people need to be productive in a digital world, unlocking data insights, and connecting and collaborating through enterprise social capabilities. With Office 365 services and Microsoft Dynamics AX, you can run your complete business in the cloud using Microsoft Azure, an open and flexible Cloud Platform that provides data and infrastructure services. These services enable customers and partners to build, manage and deploy applications quickly and to use predictive analytics to gain insights that help them be more proactive.

FAMILIAR USER EXPERIENCE

Enterprise organizations need to empower their staff with tools that people want to use and that help them to make smarter decisions faster. The user experience in Dynamics AX looks and feels like Microsoft Office, and delivers deep integration that seamlessly shares information between Dynamics AX, Dynamics CRM and Office 365.

Built right in to the application, Dynamics AX gives people near real-time analytics, providing not only the information they need, but also predictive capabilities. Dynamics AX is available across platforms and devices, and organizations can extend and build business-specific mobile applications. Dynamics AX provides a touch-enabled, modern user interface that users expect in their enterprise business applications.

A consistent user experience across devices makes it easy for people to complete their everyday tasks whether they are in the office or on the go.

DYNAMICS AX IN THE CLOUD

Dynamics AX meets the needs of global customers who want flexibility in the way that they bring their operational systems to the cloud. Building on the global Microsoft Azure platform, Dynamics AX is able to meet diverse

data locality needs and data sovereignty requirements. The benefits of the cloud for enterprise organizations include:

- A simple signup
- Immediate provisioning
- Built-in high availability
- Disaster recovery
- Elastic capacity
- The ability to add resources but only pay on use
- Web-based solution configuration and deployment via Life Cycle Service (LCS)

REASONS TO CHOOSE MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX

For international ERP implementations, Microsoft Dynamics AX:

- Grows with your organization – delivering rich, core functionality across business units and empowering your organization to evolve to meet future challenges
- Delivers value faster – it is designed to minimize the costs of growing, adapting and innovating to maintain a competitive advantage
- Includes all functionality on one license
- Can be rolled-out quickly and effectively
- Looks and works like other Microsoft technology
- Has Microsoft Office interoperability built in
- Works on Windows, SQL, and Microsoft Azure .NET (C# and/or X++)
- Delivers built-in actionable Business Intelligence, based on SQL, POWER BI and Microsoft Management Reporter

PROVEN INTERNATIONAL PRODUCT

International enterprise organizations have to comply with country-specific laws, regulations, and common business practices in many different countries, so that they can handle daily business transactions and operations, and meet legal obligations.

The business process functionality of Microsoft Dynamics AX has from day one been extended to address specific tax, accounting, and financial reporting requirements for many different countries. Specific commercial require-

ments, language, and non-vertical, national, or international functionality have been developed and Microsoft Dynamics AX is localized, translated, and made generally available in 24 languages. In addition, it includes specific localizations for 36 countries.

CUSTOMIZATION

Dynamics AX customers require significantly less customization to their ERP implementations than other ERP solutions. With prebuilt, industry-specific capabilities for manufacturing, distribution, services, public sector, retail and other key sectors, Microsoft Dynamics AX gives you greater out-of-the-box functionality and versatility.

When customization is required, however—for example, the need to track a key performance indicator that isn't part of the standard implementation—then the Dynamics AX architecture makes it easy to provide this, because it is so flexible.
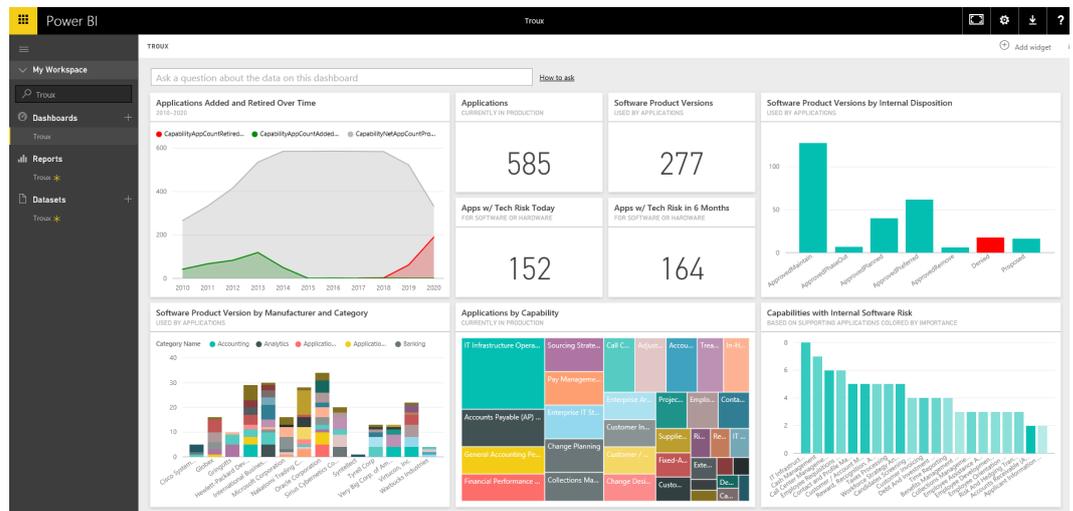
4 | COMPREHENSIVE TOOLS TO MEET GROWING BUSINESS NEEDS

DYNAMICS AX CAPABILITIES

In one streamlined package, Dynamics AX includes comprehensive capabilities for financial management, customer relationship management, supply chain management, human resource management, project management and analytics. It provides industry capabilities for retailers, manufacturers, service industries, and public sector organizations.

The fully customizable solution provides the agility you need to expand business opportunities, modify processes, and differentiate your business. In particular, clients looking for functionality within process industries, project management, and manufacturing will achieve excellent functional depth with Dynamics AX. Your manufacturing project management can benefit from the transparency and manageability of all the processes, resources, and interactions that contribute to complex projects.

Dynamics AX has extensive, intuitive decision-making tools, helping you to take the right action to ensure optimal revenue, and an excellent customer experience. Power BI is integrated as the native business intelligence, so you get deep-level analytics of financial data and can take advantage of the 22 out-of-the box financial reports.

With core strengths in manufacturing and e-business, Dynamics AX also delivers strong capabilities for the wholesale and services industry sectors and provides complete end-to-end scalability and flexibility.

CENTRALIZED ENVIRONMENT

If you have a wide range of systems that need to be updated, or complex real-time reporting requirements, then an integrated system is the best choice. The latest generation of Dynamics AX enables you to place all your financial and project management processes on a single, unified platform. It provides a real-time view across your entire organization, streamlining internal cost accounting and currency translation, and managing the relationships between subsidiaries and the parent organization.

MEETING YOUR EVOLVING BUSINESS NEEDS

The Microsoft business strategy includes promoting the core product values among customers and partners by:

- Growing Microsoft market share in enterprise scale organizations and the upper mid-market
- Targeting more subsidiaries and departments of large organizations, and technologies
- Continuing to drive innovation and integration with other Microsoft products
- Enabling existing customers to realize more value from their solutions
- Empowering partners with more productivity tools
- Accelerating Microsoft presence in vertical markets

Microsoft Dynamics AX follows the Microsoft Dynamics product roadmap and will continue beyond the current version with increased focus on developing partner productivity tools, making additional user interface and application improvements, enabling easier localization, providing leading-edge technology, and enabling companies to achieve higher levels of environmental sustainability via the information in their IT system.

With the solid backing of Microsoft, you can rely on Microsoft Dynamics AX to evolve with your growing business needs.

5 | BENEFITS FAR BEYOND COMPREHENSIVE FUNCTIONALITY

EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

When implementing an international ERP project, many considerations come into play to install a successful solution.

It's important that the right information is available at the right time, for the right people, helping to ensure repeatable, predictable success with each roll out of an implementation, update or upgrade.

By providing a collaborative workspace that can be used by both customers and partners, separately and together, implementations can be fast and efficient, and the time to value reduced.

LIFECYCLE SERVICES

Lifecycle services (LCS) helps to improve the predictability and quality of your Microsoft Dynamics AX implementation by simplifying and standardizing the implementation process. It is a Microsoft Azure-based collaboration portal, providing a unifying environment to help manage the whole lifecycle of your system, from planning and implementation, to ongoing support.

LCS helps to get your system up and running as quickly and efficiently as possible, while reducing the overall risk and interference to business processes. In Dynamics AX, LCS can provide proactive monitoring and real-time insights that help to optimize system usage and streamline business processes.

You can use the portal for end-to-end application management and avoid cost and risk by modelling and testing the system before deployment. Using automated best practices, deployment time can be reduced and updates are simplified and accelerated through predefined methodologies, automated testing, and code merging.

COMPLETE CAPABILITY FROM DAY ONE

You might have heard that a traditional ERP system is rigid, complex and involves slow deployments and implementations. However, with technology that continuously enhances rather than disrupts business processes

and operations, Microsoft Dynamics AX is a completely different kind of ERP solution.

Providing the deep functionality of proven business processes in horizontal and vertical industries—including retail, manufacturing, distribution, professional services, and the public sector—Dynamics AX delivers the complete capability of the product to market on day one. You get a flexible solution architecture that enables incremental implementations, changes, and updates, giving your business more agility and a faster time to value.

WHAT'S NEXT?

While the selection of the right solution is important, the selection of the right partner and partner organization is actually more critical to the success of a multi-site or international deployment. International deployment requires both expertise from the lead partner and an effective partner deployment framework (either an international partner or a partner alliance).

At Pipol, we help international organizations optimize, streamline and harmonize processes every day. If your company is planning for increased visibility, efficiency and collaboration across your international organization and want to have the best possible return on your investment, then let's have a talk about how we can assist. Contact **MarketingTeam@pipol.com**

Pipol A/S
Christianshusvej 193
DK-2970 Hoersholm
Denmark
P: +45 7674 3100
www.pipol.com