



One Platform for Growth

GROW YOUR BUSINESS

As organisations grow, so too does the number of software applications needed to support increasing requirements by team members. At typically around 50 staff, HR teams emerge with their own software requirements. The small business accounting system designed for ease of use and simplicity of processing often gives way to mid-range ERP solutions as business complexity increases.

As sales teams grow, modern CRM solutions are required to enable sharing of information about prospects and leads with their opportunities to capitalise on the marketing activities escalating their positioning within crowded markets. Everywhere you look, someone wants a new piece of software.

Shadow IT and Cloud Apps

Cloud computing has revolutionised the way organisations build out their IT infrastructure. A special type of cloud application, the SaaS App, or software-as-a-service app, provides for almost immediate access to new software without the costs and delays of having to purchase and implement servers, databases and other IT infrastructure.

Costing models have evolved with SaaS Apps too, so that in most cases licences are charged on a per-user, per-month basis, without long term contracts. This has meant that a lot of teams within organisations are able to purchase their own software, without approval, using nothing more than the swipe of a credit card.

The outcomes of this, mean a potential sprawl of new applications, that aren't integrated with other software, creating information silos and integration nightmares, all with possibly different levels of security.

Virtually all organisations have been through a stage where some employees have stored corporate information on a personal cloud storage solution without any understanding of the risks associated with those decisions.

Most would be unaware of where the data is actually stored, what backup systems are available or what regulations might apply to their industry regarding storage and use of personally-identifiable information.

Shadow IT is the term generally used for IT systems being purchased in the shadows, by individual teams without the recommendation, approval or knowledge by IT departments. IT teams generally, have been asking for it.

A failure to engage with the business on understanding their requirements and responding to their business needs in a timely way, has met with underinvestment in IT, at a time where expectations have grown to believing that IT professionals are always skilled in new technologies, data privacy legislation and cybersecurity platforms.

It's no wonder things have got so out of hand for so many organisations, so quickly.

Solutions to the problem

The news isn't all bad however. Some vendors have been working hard on fully integrated platforms that provide a single suite of applications, all wrapped up in strong cybersecurity protections, available on any device from any connected location, with enterprise management features for IT teams to do their job. Shadow IT and a best-of-breed approach to new applications in the absence of a strategic technology roadmap are the enemy of fully integrated platforms.

There was once a theory that organisations should spend inordinate amounts of time perfecting requirements specifications, to then go to market and identify potential applications, which were then matched against requirements (which never lined up perfectly), to find that by the time investments were made and projects were initiated, the business had moved on and now needed something different.

Platforms provide an alternative approach of "get most of the way there quickly", deliver some quick wins, build on to what is working, and get the benefits realised fast. The old approach also suffered from the misconception that one day everything would be integrated.

Starting from an integrated suite of applications avoids the inevitable realisation that building large-scale integration between vendors solutions never seems to be delivered on-time, within budget, or works for very long.

And without cybersecurity and data privacy being part of the platform from the ground up, chasing down vulnerabilities and continually adding more and more complexity to defend against the bad guys is just too difficult to do well with limited resources.

And keep in mind that for almost all organisations, technology and cybersecurity are not core business.

Dynamics Platform and Business Central

The cloud accounting and ERP system from Microsoft, Dynamics Business Central, is part of an integrated solution within the Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365 and Azure cloud platforms.

It provides a comprehensive suite of ERP solutions, within a platform that includes advanced HR and CRM capabilities. It goes well beyond the feature set of a small business accounting system, incorporating advanced budgeting, allocations, intercompany transactions, consolidations, supply chain management, warehousing, project accounting, production scheduling and service management.

The platform provides for customisation of user interfaces, available on mobile devices and web apps to support remote workers easily. Robotic process automation, artificial intelligence, data analytics and machine learning are all embedded in the solution, together with an ability to leverage the full force of cybersecurity protections available with the Microsoft Cloud Framework.

Destroy your information silos, improve your organisation resilience and agility with Business Central and the Dynamics Platform from Microsoft today.