


Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central Action Plan: A 30-60-90-Day Framework for Cloud Readiness

Why Stratos Cloud Alliance?

Cloud has transformed how small and medium-sized customers consume information technology, and that includes financial and business management software. Stratos Cloud Alliance (SCA) provides a business platform that brings together the components that partners need to build a profitable cloud solutions business with Microsoft Dynamics 365.

Microsoft's mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. Stratos Cloud Alliance, a Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) partner program from Velosio, is committed to supporting Indirect CSP resellers with their Microsoft Cloud initiatives, uniquely offering deep specialization in Dynamics 365 business solutions and backed by over 30 years of business management implementation experience.

SCA supports your Microsoft Dynamics 365 practice growth, giving you a competitive edge by providing access to deep industry expertise and IP, consulting, application development and implementation services. SCA manages the platform, bidding, licensing, contracts and call-center support. Or, just the areas where you need support.



The Stratos Cloud Action Plan helps partners develop their journey, integrating Dynamics 365 offerings into their existing offer portfolio, reducing common growth challenges.

Action Plan Focus Areas:

- Business Management
- Cloud Solution Development
- Marketing
- Focused Sales
- Service

Building Blocks:

- Cloud Solution Provider Program
- Microsoft AppSource
- Dynamics Learning Portal
- Ready-To-Go Workshop
- SCA Action Plans

Each partner organization embarks on its journey from a different starting point – Stratos can support *your* path.

Why Microsoft Dynamics 365

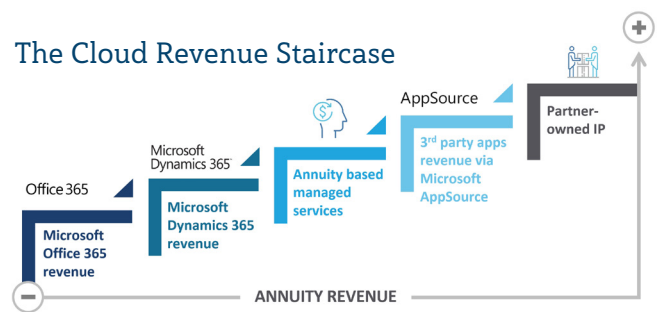
Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central is a game changer for ERP and CRM resellers, managed service providers, accounting and consulting firms. With cloud solutions, building a growing and significant revenue stream year after year, requires selling more subscriptions to the same customer, while driving down internal costs, balanced with meeting ever-changing customer demand. Dynamics improves and automates a company's business operations – and since businesses are always changing – their operations change – that results in revenue opportunities for you. Customers using Dynamics have among the highest lifetime value, often with relationships lasting multiple decades. They consume professional services on an ongoing annual basis, well beyond initial implementation.

For managed service providers, adding the Dynamics 365 annuity to your existing portfolio can improve your margins, drags along consulting revenue, and provides the platform to offer more solutions. For ERP resellers and accounting firms, partners need to sell and support cloud infrastructure, productivity **and** business applications to strengthen revenue potential.

Developing a cloud practice that leverages the entire Microsoft Cloud – Dynamics 365, Office 365, Azure, ISV solutions on AppSource, and partner business and technical IP with high-value solutions that drive recurring revenue at higher margins, requires new thinking, new business skills, new resources, and new ideas. The return on investment? A building annuity stream that benefits your bottom-line year over year.

Cloud Practice Considerations

The SCA Cloud Solution Action Plan outlines the primary activities to consider while planning and building a scalable cloud practice. This action plan is designed to reduce risks most commonly associated with building a *profitable* Microsoft Dynamics cloud solutions practice



First realization, Dynamics 365 Business Central enables not only traditional Dynamics Value Added Resellers (VARs) to deliver Microsoft business management software, but now Office Partners, Service Providers, competing ERP VARs, and accountants who provide their client's with recommended solutions. This makes it all but impossible for most partners to compete on price point, but conversely, not competing results in your customer finding solutions elsewhere. So, it is increasingly important for vendors in the Dynamics space to clearly define their **Value Proposition** and **Value Add**:

- Is it a unique IP solution?
- Is it the level of industry knowledge and experience?
- Is it people and processes?

Answers to these questions can guide your decision process.

Action Plan for Implementation

There is certainly a lot to consider, so let's start by breaking down your action plan into five key focus areas. While these focus areas are not unique, the guidance outlined is specific to supporting practice development around a business management solution offering.

Five Critical Focus Areas

1. Business Management

Make and communicate the organizational commitment to develop an industry, vertical, or workload-oriented cloud solution, ideally one that compliments a broad and differentiating Microsoft solution set.

2. Solution Set Development

Start by designating a Project Champion, who will assemble a cross-functional team to define their optimal cloud solution set. The solution should contemplate the minimum functionality required to address one or more of the target customers' significant business challenges. Solutions that address business process challenges spanning multiple Microsoft Cloud practice areas drive differentiation, and by default, higher margins. The solution should include the whole Microsoft Cloud stack to benefit the client's entire business ecosystem. For example, a professional services organization (PSO) solution would include:

- Dynamics 365 for Business Central
- Progressus PSA for Project Accounting
- Dynamics 365 Customer Engagement for opportunity and incident management
- SharePoint Online for document management, version control, report distribution, and compliance
- Microsoft Teams or other collaboration tool

3. Reboot Marketing

Healthy cloud practices require a constant and predictable flow of inbound leads. Given that most lead generation today is anchored in traditional outbound tactics like telemarketing, trade shows, and email campaigns, your marketing program will likely require significant adjustments. As inbound traffic effectively drives a higher volume of lower value leads, marketing will need to develop a content calendar and asset inventory. As nurturing early-stage leads and tracking their responses is critical to driving higher conversion rates, selecting and implementing a marketing automation system (MAS) to effectively manage the higher volume of interactions is strongly recommended.

4. Optimize Sales

Repeatable (scalable) cloud sales cycles require dedicated sales professionals focused on a higher volume of transactions. Avoid re-purposing under-performing traditional outside sales professionals. Also, resist the temptation to assign repeatable cloud opportunities to solution sales professionals who are also responsible for large, complex, project-based opportunities. Hybrid roles simply do not work. Source repeatable cloud sales candidates from within your target industry or segment or target recent college/university graduates with 1-2 years of business experience.

5. Evolve Services Delivery

Repeatable cloud solutions are pre-configured to address very specific industry or workload business challenges, so most deployment projects should be very similar. Contrary to historical time-and-materials based implementations, most cloud solutions will be fixed-fee projects delivered within a defined number of hours/days.

30-60-90-Day Action Plan

Now let's break these five focus areas down into 30, 60 and 90-day time increments with specific objectives to be completed.

Business Management Action Plan

Timeline	Objective	Guidance
30 Days	Select an industry/vertical or workload focus	Review your existing client base to identify customer concentrations and/or unique client scenarios that you feel represent a significant market opportunity. Confirm there is a sufficient market opportunity.
	Develop a cloud practice economic model	Develop an economic blueprint of your repeatable cloud practice. Document the assumptions, capital investments, resource requirements, and revenue projections required to develop a business case.
60 Days	Develop a cloud practice business plan	Develop a business plan that contemplates solution development, marketing infrastructure, sales resource costs, pricing strategy, and customer acquisition rate.
	Recruit a marketing leader	If one is not in place, recruit and hire a dedicated marketing professional to drive cloud solution demand.
	Design a cloud sales compensation plan	Draft a balanced cloud compensation plan based on revenue and customer acquisition targets defined in the business plan.
90 Days	Define Partner to Partner growth/scale opportunities	Explore the potential for Partner to Partner discussions. Post cloud offer(s) on AppSource.

Cloud Solution Development Action Plan

Timeline	Objective	Guidance
30 Days	Define a repeatable solution offering	Define the high-level functional elements that need to be included “in-the-box” to satisfy the majority (80%+) of your target customer requirements.
	Identify IP elements	Review previous projects to identify leverageable (existing) IP or potential labeled solutions. Explore incremental IP elements as well as AppSource ISV capabilities that could be developed to expand your solution footprint.
60 Days	Define minimum viable product (MVP) scope	Document and validate the cloud offer scope. Include recommended project and managed services to drive adoption and consumption.
	Define cloud solution packaging, pricing, and positioning	Determine subscription and services pricing, packaging strategy (three offers), and core differentiation messaging.
90 Days	Identify or source a product manager	Determine your ongoing product management requirements (part-time, full-time, or outsourced), based on solution complexity and customer acquisition goal.

Marketing Action Plan

Timeline	Objective	Guidance
30 Days	Develop a marketing plan (and budget)	Write a cloud/industry/workload specific marketing plan that describes and measures the addressable target market, lead, and conversion targets, as well as the budget and resource requirements.
	Develop a Messaging Framework for your target market	Build out an industry or functional-specific Messaging Framework that captures the drivers and market forces, key operating metrics, trigger events, and critical business processes relevant to the focus industry or workload.
60 Days	Document a 12-month content calendar and lead nurture rhythm	Document the industry-specific “what,” “how,” and “why” oriented digital assets and online content required to optimize prospect engagement and lead conversion. Define the optimal nurture contact rhythm (based on budget, asset, and resource availability), to ensure continuous prospect engagement.
	Define your trial strategy	Determine the best use of trials for your solution/industry. Note that while trials drive high web conversion rates, they can often undermine the sales cycle if they are perceived as complex or confusing.
90 Days	Select and implement a Marketing Automation System (MAS)	Identify and trial a MAS that automates most of the prospect interactions.
	Develop an industry or cloud offer microsite.	Develop an industry/offer landing page that speaks specifically to the challenges and objectives of your target customer.

Optimized Sales Action Plan

Timeline	Objective	Guidance
30 Days	Optimize your cloud sales process	Modify your current sales process to align with your solution offering (3, 4, or 5 step sales motion).
	Define your target prospect profile and qualification criteria	Clearly define the attributes and conditions of your cloud/ repeatable prospect profile to ensure leads are routed to the appropriate sales resource (or nurture program).
60 Days	Identify/source and onboard a cloud sales professional	Identify an internal or external cloud sales candidate. Your traditional business applications solution sales professional is not usually a good fit for this role. There is a low probability the position will be filled internally.
	Configure sales assets for your cloud offer	Utilize Microsoft online tools to modify your sales process templates and assets to reflect your focus industry/vertical workload or solution area.
90 Days	Design buy-in demonstration scenarios	Define and document 4-6 high-impact, buy-in demonstration scenarios that will emotionally resonate with your target prospect profile.
	Develop comprehensive solution demonstration	Configure a prescriptive sixty-minute solution demonstration focused on your target customers' primary change/pain drivers.

Service Delivery Action Plan

Timeline	Objective	Guidance
30 Days	Identify new services offerings that support your cloud offer	Define the selection, project, managed, and optimization services that will drive incremental business value and consumption.
	Identify or source a dedicated cloud/repeatable implementation resource or team	Deployments are largely similar in nature. Traditional (expensive) “problem solver” implementation resources are often poorly suited for a repeatable cookie-cutter approach. Junior resources with a lower cost base will ensure that you stay within the scope of the project.
60 Days	Define a streamlined cloud solution implementation process	Develop repeatable implementation processes and explore automated deployment tools.
90 Days	Develop on-demand training assets	Develop a library of on-demand training assets (videos, tutorials, etc.), to reduce post-deployment support requirements and accelerate client adoption.

Practice Development Building Blocks

Dynamics 365 Business Central is Microsoft’s next generation of intelligent business applications in the cloud. What makes Dynamics 365 unique is that it harnesses the power of One Microsoft. Deep integration between Dynamics 365 and Office 365 brings together the two worlds of business process and personal productivity and allows users to leverage familiar tools like

Excel and Word within the context of business processes to significantly increase productivity and decrease context switching. Businesses can also adapt and innovate in real-time with a common data model and an extensible business application platform, including PowerApps, Flow and Power BI embedded. Additionally, Azure IoT brings device data to enable preemptive action in business functions like field service. Now let’s look at some of the tools at your disposal to support building your cloud practice.

Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider Program

The Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) program enables your path to the Microsoft Cloud. Microsoft continues to expand the CSP program to more partners with access to new cloud services, more markets and new capabilities. Partners own the end-to-end customer lifecycle with direct provisioning, billing and support of Microsoft cloud services. Partners combine their own services and IP with Microsoft solutions, set the total price and terms with their customers. [Learn More](#)

Partners in the past focused on particular workloads, industries, or domains. They often identified themselves by their Microsoft competencies – ERP, CRM, Infrastructure, Business Productivity, BI, Application Platform, and by their business model – Learning Partner, ISV's, VAR or Reseller, Managed Service Provider. The Cloud Solution Provider programs levels the field across these models, allowing partners to quickly expand their offering. Now it is more important than ever to demonstrate value-add through targeted solution bundles, vertical IP, and process expertise to cater to your specific market audience.

Microsoft AppSource

Microsoft AppSource provides a modern discovery and provisioning system for Dynamics 365 solutions and is a one-stop destination for customer business development managers to discover, trial, and acquire line-of-business (LoB) SaaS apps. Resellers can package IP and service

offerings and list their offerings as well. For ISVs, **Microsoft AppSource** is your destination to market line-of-business SaaS apps to business users.

- Simplifies the discovery, trial, and acquisition of line-of-business apps
- An ecosystem to help business users get started using apps faster
- Helps business users do more with their existing Microsoft Apps
- Allows Dynamics Partners to easily market their Apps/IP at scale
- Partners can add packaging and bundle solutions

Dynamics Learning Portal

Dynamics Learning Portal (DLP) is now FREE to all partners with Microsoft Partner Network (MPN) access. DLP is a great resource for all technical and functional training for Microsoft Dynamics. It is continually being updated with new content on Dynamics 365 solutions such as Business Central, Finance & Operations & CRM. It's easy to navigate and build custom learning plans with videos, as well as Dynamics 365 tutorials and exam prep capabilities to help your team develop its skills.

[Learn More](#)

Ready-To-Go Workshops

The Ready-to-Go (RTG) Workshop is a Dynamics 365 Business Central partner enablement program funded by Microsoft, delivered by Stratos Cloud Alliance. Through our affiliation with Velosio, we are exclusively authorized by

Microsoft to deliver this program, providing resellers with the knowledge and resources they need, and an action plan they can execute to get a jump on the competition and seize the Business Central opportunity. We will assess your readiness, align you with Microsoft, identify possible challenges and risks, and provide tools to simplify your journey to Dynamics 365 Business Central success.

Putting These Building Blocks into Action

Partners now must evolve and understand how to build the right App/IP on top of the Microsoft Platform, leveraging modern methods to market and deliver solutions to customers. For most partners, Office 365 is the base of the pillar since it's so dominant and pervasive in the market. Revenue from the Microsoft Business Application services becomes the base for business functionality. Then ongoing support and service helps secure recurring revenue growth. Also important to revenue growth is adding ISV solutions to increase monthly billing and margin.

- **Up-sell and cross-sell:** Identify the areas where your IP and Microsoft's Platform and Services (like Machine Learning/ AI, BI, IoT etc.) allows you to extend your business.
- **Customer lifecycle:** Managing the customer on an ongoing basis to ensure ongoing annuity and capturing cross sell and up sell opportunities.
- **Service capabilities:** Subject matter expertise adds value to services and solution

recommendation, justifying a higher wallet share.

- **Sales and marketing efficiency:** Identify and target customers and prospects and differentiate yourself to that market to improve win rates and lower costs.
- **Service margin:** Consistency increases efficiency and reduces the dependency on high cost technical staff.

Conclusions

For ERP and CRM resellers, managed service providers, or accounting and consulting firms, the question is which approach to adding Microsoft Dynamics 365 to your cloud solution portfolio is right for YOUR business. Depending on your starting point, combined with your desired output, Stratos Cloud Alliance offers several options to support you.

There are partners who would like to add Dynamics to their business to satisfy customer demand, but want to outsource the entire operation. The SCA Referral program provides a simple, convenient way to outsource your entry into Dynamics 365. SCA will handle the entire sales process as well as implementation for you. You'll earn fees based on the business generated from your customers with little to no investment.

Partners who are new to ERP sales and implementation often want to step their investment as their sales increase. SCA has a program for that as well. Our engagement team will help guide you with training and other

resources to build your knowledge of Dynamics 365 and you can utilize our professional services team to help you sell and implement until your team is certified and ready to go. Our pre-sales architects will work with your sales team to guide you through discovery, demo, and proposal.

Finally, there are partners who either already have a Dynamics 365 practice or are ready to build one. They are all in and want to ramp up as quickly as they can.

SCA helps those partners with marketing and enablement programs to scale their Dynamics practice. They leverage our resources to help them train new consultants, learn about new ISV solutions for Dynamics, and take advantage

of our 30 years of experience in implementing Dynamics. They want to increase their margins and take advantage of our ecommerce platforms for billing and CSP management. They value having an Indirect CSP Provider who knows the difference between Dynamics CSP SKUs and can help them put together a total solution with ISV solutions, customization, and Dynamics 365.

Whichever path you take to add Dynamics 365 to your cloud practice, helping you to increase your customer value and stickiness, the Stratos Cloud Alliance has a program that fits you. Combine the SCA partner program right for your business with our 30-60-90 plan and begin developing an executable and successful cloud practice for your business.

Stratos Cloud Alliance

Learn more about our program that offers four flexible partner models with value-added features and benefits for ERP/CRM resellers, Managed Service Providers, Accounting and Consulting firms.

[Download the SCA Brochure](#)

Ready to Build Your
Dynamics 365
Practice Today?

CONTACT US:

866.644.7066

info@dynamics365partner.com

Stratos Cloud Alliance (SCA) is a Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) partner program from Velosio, supporting Indirect CSP resellers' Microsoft Cloud initiatives, uniquely offering deep specialization in Dynamics 365 business solutions. Microsoft's CSP program helps you go beyond reselling licenses to being more involved in your customer's business, SCA provides all the services a partner needs to build a profitable cloud solutions business with Microsoft Dynamics 365. With over 30 years' experience implementing business management solutions, SCA offers partners a comprehensive portfolio of Microsoft Cloud Business and Productivity Solutions, ISV Products and Tools, Customer Services and flexible Partner Programs supporting transformation at the pace and investment level that is right for you.