5 KEY FOCUS AREAS

to building a Microsoft Cloud Practice with Dynamics 365 Business Central

In order to remain relevant and continue working with Microsoft, partners need to begin to transform their practices. That means transitioning to a recurring revenue model and being able to digitally market, sell and deliver the Microsoft cloud platform and Microsoft cloud applications for business management, productivity and business intelligence.

Here are the 5 key focus areas to include in your action plan as you begin to build your cloud practice.

1 Business Management

You will first want to commit to developing an industry, vertical, or workload-oriented cloud solution, ideally one that compliments a broad and differentiating Microsoft solution set. **Industry expertise and functional IP are key differentiators in the cloud.** It is also important to communicate the company's commitment to developing a profitable cloud practice to ensure organizational buy-in.

2 Solution Set Development

Start by designating a Project Champion. The Project Champion can then build a cross-function team to define the optimal cloud solution set. **The solution should address one or more of your target customers' significant business challenges.** As example: an industry solution targeted at professional services firms might include:

- **Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central**
- **Progressus to address project accounting requirements**
- **Dynamics 365 Customer Engagement for opportunity and incident management**
- **SharePoint Online for document management, version control, report distribution, and compliance**
- **Skype or Teams for collaboration**

3 Reboot Marketing

A cloud software practice requires a constant and predictable flow of inbound leads. If current lead generation activities comes from traditional outbound tactics like telemarketing, trade shows, and email campaigns, your marketing program will likely require significant adjustments. **As inbound digital traffic tends to drive a higher volume of lower value leads, your marketing team 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.
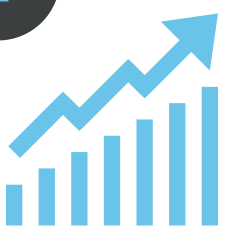
4 Optimize Sales

With lower margins, staying profitable in the cloud requires dedicated sales professionals focused on a higher volume of transactions. **Re-purposing under-performing traditional outside sales professionals is not the most effective route to take** here and assigning repeatable cloud opportunities to solution sales professionals who are also responsible for large, complex, project-based opportunities might not yield the best results. Hybrid roles generally do not work. **Instead, 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

Cloud solutions with sales repeatability tend to be 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.** With this understanding, you can more narrowly target your market, as well as transition to a fixed-fee sales model.

STRATOS Cloud Alliance

A Microsoft CSP Partner Program from Velosio

dynamics365partner.com

CONCLUSION: You don't have to go it alone. The Stratos Cloud Alliance has enablement resources to help partners start earning commission on the Microsoft Cloud right away as you develop your cloud practice. These 5 focus areas will help you start thinking about what you will need to do to build your cloud practice. <u>Click here</u> to download our Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central 90-Day Action Plan for a more in-depth strategy to drive your practice transformation.