Top 10 Reasons

Business Central is the Perfect Nonprofit Solution

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10 Features that make Business Central a good fit for Nonprofits

Nonprofits worldwide are discovering the benefits of Microsoft's cloud-based ERP for nonprofits, Dynamics 365 Business Central. Here are some of the top reasons your peers suggest for making this move:

10 No need to maintain servers, backups, or upgrades.

Your IT team will be able to focus on other organization initiatives when they are freed from ongoing server maintenance, backups, and upgrades. Dynamics 365 Business Central is a cloud-based ERP solution that works well for nonprofits. Microsoft maintains the servers, backups, and upgrades so you don't have to worry about them. You'll also save long-term on the hardware and facilities costs for on-premise servers.

Anytime availability and easy access. 09

Your team will be able to securely access the system at any time of the day or night. All they need is an electronic device, an internet connection, and a browser. Being an organization that offers remote work allows for flexibility in hiring the best talent for your team. The Business Central App is available to download on your phone or tablet for on-the-go access.

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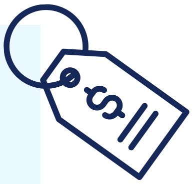
Reasonably priced.



Microsoft offers some of the best nonprofit software subscription rates in the industry. A Dynamics 365 Business Central "Essentials" user license includes all core modules of Sales, Purchasing, Inventory, Warehouse, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, General Ledger, Fixed Assets and Banking. Your licensing costs don't increase when you add additional companies or up to three sandbox test environments either.

Strong accounting functionality.

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Business Central was developed based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV, a proven on-premise ERP solution for over 30 years. Business Central's early versions included most of the same features that NAV offers. Microsoft continues to invest heavily in its cloud ERP system and releases two major updates each year. This has quickly made the cloud ERP solution even stronger than its on-premise predecessor. Plus, enhancements include features from two other well-loved Microsoft ERPs – Dynamics GP and Dynamics SL – so Business Central now has the best features from each.

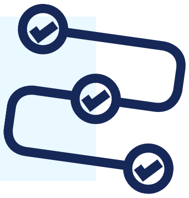
06 Personalization tools.

Using Business Central's built-in personalization tools, you can hide, add, and move fields on any transaction, master card or list window. Personalization can be done per user or per group of users through what is called a Role Center. Tailoring data entry windows improves the efficiency of your team and enhances their user experience.

Search, save filters, and bookmarks. 05

Search capabilities are simple using the magnifying glass available globally or within a list of data. The system will look at all fields for the search criteria you enter. For example, if you enter "south" in a search of customers, the system will filter all customer records that contain the word "south." It could be part of the customer name, address or city. Filters work in a similar way to sort data based on desired fields, and can be saved to use again. Bookmarking menu items provides a way to have all your common tasks on your menu bar for quick access.

04 Built-in approval workflows.



Workflow templates allow easy setup of approval workflows. The three most common nonprofit workflows are approvals for general journals, payment journals and purchase invoices. Approvers get email notifications to review and approve. Approver setup can vary from a direct approver per person to an approval chain based on dollar limits. You can also eliminate frequent trips to the office and signing approvals in person. Instead, let the system time/date stamp these approvals for each user and make your auditors happy.

Dimensional reporting. 03

One of the strongest features of Business Central is the ability to report on multiple dimensions. You as the user will define the Dimensions, which function similar to a sub-account. Common dimensions for nonprofits include Grant, Fund, Department, Location, Event, and Project. Rules and defaults can be set up for the dimension values, making it easier for a user to enter transactions. Dimensions are tagged to transactions and saved in the general ledger. You can shrink your Chart of Accounts with dimensional reporting and easily slice and dice data to bring up financial reports and views by dimension.

02 Capability to integrate with other solutions.

Business Central includes built-in API's to integrate with other applications. This allows you to choose the best applications for your organization. It also ensures your system can scale as your organization grows. Common integrations for nonprofits include Donor Tracking, Fundraising, or Payments that originate in other systems and need to get recorded in Business Central.

Out-of-the-box integration with other Microsoft products. 01

With a single click, you can open your Business Central data in an Excel spreadsheet to view in more detail. An "Edit in Excel" feature allows you to publish data back and forth between the two Microsoft solutions. Security layers authenticate the user's ability to edit the data and ensure fidelity to audit-sensitive fields. Word templates for purchase orders, invoices and credit memos can be modified in Word and imported into Business Central for custom formats. Organizations often use Business Central's Outlook integration to email vendor remittances and customer invoices. Outlook automatically detects an invoice number and creates a link to the invoice in Business Central. All emails sent through Business Central are found in the sender's "Sent" folder in Outlook.

Microsoft's Power Platform integrates with Business Central out of the box: Power BI lets you build reports and dashboards based on your Business Central data, Power Apps lets you build Apps that can populate Business Central data, and Power Automate provides additional workflow automation.

Those are just 10 reasons nonprofits are choosing Microsoft's cloud ERP solution to manage their finances. Combined, these benefits will help you increase efficiency and flexibility.

Want to learn more? Boyer's nonprofit experts can meet with you to discuss your current system and processes and what a migration would entail. We're happy to walk you through an evaluation of the system and demonstrate the ERP software for your nonprofit

Questions nonprofits frequently ask about Business Central

01 How do I know Business Central (BC) is a good fit for my organization?

Understanding and documenting your system requirements is critical in determining if Business Central meets your nonprofit's needs. In documenting requirements, consider how to improve your existing processes. Maybe you need to automate vendor invoices or general journal approvals, for example. The next step is to share those requirements with a software vendor like Boyer & Associates. They can provide a demonstration of the software as it relates to your needs. This will allow you to compare your requirements to Business Central's capabilities.

02 What hardware do I need to run Dynamics 365 Business Central?

Dynamics 365 Business Central is a cloud-based application. You will no longer need to make investments in servers or resources to maintain the servers. You will need an Internet connection and an electronic device with a browser. Devices include desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

03 How often does Business Central update, and how are updates deployed?

Major system updates are released automatically twice a year, in April and October. Minor updates are released throughout the year. Major updates can be scheduled within a provided timeframe from Microsoft. Clients are not allowed to skip an update entirely. Minor releases are updated by Microsoft as needed.

How does Microsoft decide what new features to add to Business Central? 04

Many of the features added are based on requests from existing BC customers. There is a website to add your ideas, and the partner/user community votes on the suggested features. Each feature is reviewed by Microsoft. Those that are voted the most have a higher chance of being added to the product. In addition to customer-based requests, Microsoft also maintains an overall roadmap of future enhancements.

05 Do I need to implement Business Central if I'm already on Dynamics SL or Dynamics GP?

Microsoft is strongly encouraging SL and GP customers to migrate to Business Central. They continue to enhance BC and the migration tools to make it easier to transition. Microsoft will no longer provide mainstream support for SL 2018 or GP 2018 (those on Fixed Lifecycle) starting in 2023. Mainstream support includes product enhancements, service packs, tax updates and fixes. Extended support will be provided until 2028 for both on-premise ERPs.

What is the timeline for the implementation of Business Central?

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Timelines vary. Small or mid-size nonprofits can expect an average of 4 to 6 months if there are no customizations or major integrations. Your team will need to assist with planning the implementation. For example, you might want to restructure your chart of accounts and dimensional reporting. You might want to enable new functionality or automate fixed assets. A great time to make those changes is when you're already putting in a new ERP system. You will also need to prepare any historical data for migration into the new system, test processes and train on the new system.

Training and testing is critical to the success of the implementation. A successful implementation occurs when users test all their processes to make sure that they know how to perform them in the new system and that the processes are working as expected.

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How do I integrate my donor, billing, fundraising and other software with Business Central?

Microsoft provides many tools for integrating data into Business Central. Working with your Business Central partner will help define the correct tools and costs. The solutions will vary based on the product capabilities you are integrating from, along with the complexity of the integration. One common nonprofit integration is to a general journal to record money and revenue received. The simplest way to complete that integration would be an Excel file upload. More complex would be an automated integration with no user intervention.

What financial reporting tools are available in Business Central? 08

Business Central includes base financial reports that can be printed, viewed or sent to Excel. Account Schedules and Analysis Views are used to generate financial statements. Account Schedules is a simple-to-use report writer for designing financial statements. This tool can report on both actual and budget data by dimensions. Jet Reports and Power BI are additional report-writing tools that work with Business Central. Both pull data directly from Business Central for reporting purposes.

09 Can I track Restricted and Non-Restricted Funds in Business Central?

Yes, this can be tracked several ways. The most common way is with dimensions. Dimension tracking could be based on the fund code with unique codes for the restricted funds or nonrestricted funds. Transactions processed in the system would have the fund code and when posted, would be available in the general ledger.

Does Business Central have electronic bank features? 10

Business Central has several electronic banking tools that provide capabilities to pay vendors electronically (ACH or EFT), generate safe pay, import bank statement activity and integrated banking tools. In addition, banks are starting to release their own direct integrations with Business Central for vendor and employee payment automation.

11 How difficult is it to set up approval workflows in Business Central?

Business Central has pre-built workflow templates that can easily be updated and enabled. Approval users can be set up with dollar limits or set to a direct approver. Approval notifications can be emailed to be approved directly within Outlook or accessed from the inbox on the Business Central home page. Approval users that only need access to Business Central to approve or review data require a Team license. The cost for a team member license is significantly less than the full license that your everyday users need.

Key Features of Dynamics 365 Business Central for Nonprofits

The chart below identifies key features of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central that nonprofit organizations commonly require. Third-party applications can be implemented to enhance the core solution if needed.

System Admin

- Multiple Company
- Multi-Currency
- Multi-Language
- Job Queue (Scheduling and Automate)
- Audit Log
- Role Centers and Users Permissions
- Standard Approval Workflow
- Power Automate Workflow
- Email and Excel Integration
- API Integration
- Excel File Upload and Copy/Paste

Finance

- General Ledger
- Basic Dimensions
- Advanced Dimensions
- Dimension Combinations
- General Journals
- Allocations
- Deferrals
- Consolidations
- Intercompany
- Sales and Use Tax
- Budgeting

Cash Management

- Bank Account Management
- Electronic Payments
- Automatic Transaction Reconciliation
- Automatic Bank Account Reconciliation
- Positive Pay

Fixed Assets

- Basic Fixed Assets
- Maintenance and Insurance
- Fixed asset allocations
- Asset Component Tracking

Sales & Receivables

- Customer Management
- Sales Order Management
- Sales, Invoice and Customer Approval
- Accounts Receivable
- Sales Invoicing
- Basic Receivables
- Statements and Reminders
- Finance Charges

Purchases & Payables

- Vendor Management
- Purchase Order Management
- Purchase Document, Vendor, and Payment Approval
- Accounts Payable
- Vendor Invoicing
- Basic Payables

Business Intelligence

- Account Schedules
- Analysis by Dimension
- Analysis Reports
- Standard KPIs and Charts

Business Central includes inventory, job management, warehouse management, service management and manufacturing that are not reflected in the grid above since they are not commonly used applications for nonprofits.

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Execute Your Move to the Cloud the Right Way

For those with advanced fund and grant accounting needs, Boyer offers FUNDamentals.

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Powered by

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, FUNDamentals extends this functionality for nonprofits with more complex accounting needs.

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