

Dynamic NAV or Dynamics 365 - What's in a name? asks The NAV People

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Well, actually quite a lot. Names are funny things – when choosing a name that will suit a child many parents want it to reflect what they want their newly produced offspring to be. It's often claimed that a name can help children as they grow up and say something about them, even before anyone gets to know them. And when you do finally find that elusive name, people then choose to shorten it, lengthen it or rename completely. You may be William at home, Billy to your close friends, Billy-Bob at the football club.

So when I first met Navision Financials 22 years ago, I puzzled over her name. This new born fresh, Windows version 1.0 beauty certainly had finance functions, but she also had sales order processing, purchase order processing and stock management. Once a few more versions rolled along she acquired manufacturing, human resource management (yes I admit the latter rather basic) and service management modules. But still she was Navision Financials. Never mind, we called our company The Navision People and found ourselves explaining, 'yes, I know it's called Financials but it's actually a fully functional ERP solution'.

Navision Financials then became Navision Attain, then Microsoft Business Solutions NAV then simply Dynamics NAV. And we became The NAV People.

In the UK we have 'Dynamics 365 Business Edition' - Microsoft's new baby, or just another name?

We have been following this development closely and can now confirm that Dynamics 365 is Dynamics NAV. OK, slightly over simplified, but importantly, the software that you use to run your business if you use Dynamics 365 BE is Dynamics NAV hosted in a Microsoft Cloud, by Microsoft. If you use Dynamics NAV and keep on the latest version you are using exactly the same software, just hosted somewhere else (either on your servers or looked after by someone else like The NAV People). Dynamics 365 is NAV hosted by Microsoft. NAV is Dynamics 365 on other servers.

A quick guide to the various Dynamics 365 editions

Dynamics 365 for Financials – a simplified Finance, Stock and Order Processing solution all based on the Dynamics NAV platform. Only available in a shared cloud, only available on a subscription basis, but with some slick new setup assistance and a bagful of new technologies that will really kick start your cloud and digital transformation.

Dynamics 365 for Sales & Marketing - we all thought this was just CRM online rebadged, but it isn't. Microsoft have learnt a lot over the last few years and are using that knowledge to do a ground up rewrite for the CRM space. Also cloud only, this promises to be something very exciting and with its seamless integration to Dynamics 365 for Financials, a true pioneer for the next generation of business apps.

Dynamics 365 Business Edition – Microsoft are serious about leading the charge into the digital future and that can be clearly seen in their commercial approach for Dynamics 365 Business Edition. You will get D365 Financials, Sales & Marketing and the extended NAV functionality, in one neat subscription price.

Simple, competitive and the best value for money we have seen for a long time.

So those are the platforms that have been getting the investment, the vision and when you hear Microsoft talk about cloud first, these are the applications leading the way.

So what about the rest of the portfolio?

Dynamics NAV – remains a strong fixture on the Microsoft roadmap. It will continue to be the on premise or private cloud option for those looking at a Dynamics ERP solution not in the shared cloud. You can still buy it as well as subscribe to it and as the core platform for Dynamics 365 Business Edition it will benefit from the huge investment being made by Microsoft for many years to come.

Dynamics 365 for Operations – a simple rebranding exercise of Dynamics AX saw their Enterprise platform get a new dress and some lipstick. The biggest and bravest move was to make it a subscription only platform. If you want an on premise option you have to buy an old version of AX. It's either an incredibly insightful move by Microsoft or the more cynical may say a final roll of the dice for this oft troubled platform.

Dynamics 365 Sales, Customer Service, Field Service, Project Service Automation. Marketing and Customer Insights – gosh, that's a mouthful! Actually they are all separate components, but in effect they were Dynamics CRM online. Microsoft realise that when buying a CRM solution you may not want everything it has to offer, so part of the Dynamics 365 rebranding was to offer the modular elements as separate offerings.

Dynamics 365 Enterprise Edition – a bit like Business Edition, Microsoft are taking the commercial initiative and bundling Dynamics 365 for Operations and the various modules that were Dynamics CRM online in to a neat little bundle to make it easier for everyone to buy everything.
Ok, so hopefully you have an idea how the new Dynamics 365 landscape looks.

What is exciting for your first steps on the digital transformation highway?

The challenge in the ERP and CRM world for many years has been, how do you make it simple enough that everyone can join the club?

In a lot of cases, making simple has meant simple solutions with limited functionality, Xero, QuickBooks and Sage are great examples, they serve a purpose, but often don't offer the breadth or growth capability that exciting young businesses need. At the other end of the spectrum have been traditional platforms such as SAP, Infor and Epicor, systems so complex and consultancy heavy that rapid deployment and simplification are almost impossible.

Welcome the new dawn of cloud ERP and CRM. The last few years have seen the rise of platforms such as NetSuite, complex solutions, delivered from a shared cloud and without the heavy CapEx costs of buying software and hardware, and boy, haven't they done well. But all things evolve and businesses are starting to realise the limitations and constraints of a shared cloud. You can only configure so far, you are reliant on the author delivering the next generation of functionality, the extensibility is far from

that of a traditional ERP/CRM platform. This is where Microsoft have a game changer and something that really promises to deliver digital transformation.

Take a highly flexible platform (Dynamics NAV), completely change the way personalisation and customisation is done (apps and extensions), make it an integral part of your cloud and digital suite (Office 365), deploy it on a leading cloud environment (Azure) and you have a complex ERP and CRM solution with all the extensibility of traditional on premise platforms but in a shared cloud.

If you are a simple business with limited requirements, then great, you have a range of assisted set up options, data migration templates and pre-configured integrations (such as Bank statements, payment providers and postcode lookup) as well as simplified screens, integrated Power BI as well as Word, Excel and Outlook, all working seamlessly with your Dynamics 365 Business Edition platform.

If you are a more complex business that requires more from your ERP and CRM solutions then you have options. You can still have your solution on premise or in your private cloud and you can still buy it, if a subscription model doesn't quite fit your requirements today. Or you can adopt Dynamics 365 Business Edition and turn on the extended functionality to give you everything that a Dynamics NAV on premise solution offers.

The beauty is, they are the same thing and offer the same the benefits of the new extensibility, the O365 foundation and the roadmap stretching out in to our digital future. And talking of futures, if you decide later on that the shared cloud or the subscription option are a better fit for you, it's an easy migration.

One final thing we haven't mentioned

There is one final thing we haven't mentioned and it really is a key part of the Dynamics 365 Business Edition story, App Source. Microsoft know, from years of experience, that every client has different demands and needs from a system, after all, Dynamics NAV has over 20,000 registered add-ons around the world, probably the biggest ERP Ecosystem out there. What a shame it would be to lose that community of innovation, adaptation and vertical focus. Well luckily you won't, because 20 plus years of knowledge and technology is evolving in to its new form as apps, available from Microsoft App Source, a market place for any Dynamics 365 customer to go and find the perfect extension to their digital platform.

If you'd like to learn more about both Dynamics 365 and Dynamics NAV and whether they are the right fit for your business, have a think about signing up for our total free events which will be running in July:

Demystifying Dynamics 365 Tuesday 11th July, Manchester
(<https://thenavpeople.com/uk/demystifying-dynamics-365---manchester/>)

Demystifying Dynamics 365 Tuesday 18th July, Newbury
(<https://thenavpeople.com/uk/demystifying-dynamics-365---newbury/>)

Upgrading from NAV to NAV ... or NAV to Dynamics 365: Should I take the plunge? Wednesday 12th July,

Manchester (<https://thenavpeople.com/uk/upgrading---should-you-take-the-plunge---manchester/>)

Upgrading from NAV to NAV ... or NAV to Dynamics 365: Should I take the plunge? Wednesday 19th July, Newbury (<https://thenavpeople.com/uk/upgrading---should-you-take-the-plunge---newbury/>)

We hope you can join us.

We are The NAV People. We are The D365 People.

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