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## Build More Profitable Relationships with Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009

*Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 helps organizations manage growth and change to build more profitable relationships internally and with their business partners.*

It's no surprise that many companies and organizations want to grow their business. But there are few who can do so and still make a profit – especially during challenging economic times like these. That's probably why a report from AMR shows that managing growth is a top concern among companies who are considering an upgrade of their current ERP system<sup>1</sup>.

The report also shows that agility, or the ability to manage and respond quickly and efficiently to sudden or continuous change, is at the top of their wish list, too. Companies need to realize a faster return on investment because the nature of working with business partners has changed. Relationships with business partners have become fleeting and more dynamic due to shorter product life cycles and changing market needs.

Another report from Forrester confirms the need for agility while noting that most ERP users still are deeply dissatisfied with their applications and describe them as inflexible and irrelevant when it comes to their business processes, business functions, and requirements. Companies are looking for agile and usable solutions – solutions that enable more flexible ways of cooperating with their business partners.

Forrester refers to these kinds of solutions as Dynamic Business Applications<sup>2</sup> and cites design-for-people<sup>3</sup> and build-for-change requirements as key. Build-for-change means building ERP applications so that it is as easy as possible for people in an organization to make changes to their business processes, workflows, policies, and services in order to respond quickly to rapidly changing customer demands, market conditions or partner requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> AMR, Trends in SMB Applications: Enterprise Resource Planning, June05

<sup>2</sup> *The Future of Enterprise Applications*, Report from Forrester Research Inc. 2007

<sup>3</sup> See the feature *Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 Boosts Business Productivity* for more information about the usability breakthroughs in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 how Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 fulfills the design-for-people requirements.



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Growth and change go hand-in-hand. And, the ability to effectively manage growth and change can mean the difference between prospering and simply surviving. Organizations that can manage growth efficiently and respond and adapt to change quickly are able to *deliver value faster*. They can deliver on their promises to customers and partners and significantly improve customer service. Because at the end of the day, the companies who are able to build and improve their supply chain partnerships in a profitable way will be the ones who realize lasting business success.

To stay competitive, companies must be able to manage the factors driving growth and change by optimizing and adapting their processes, increasing visibility, sharing resources, and planning effectively. Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 includes many new features and enhancements that help organizations to do just that and become more flexible so they respond faster to the changes and challenges of a growing business in a global market.

### **Manage Growth and Change with Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009**

Companies and organizations can experience growth in a variety of ways. For example, growth can be organic – driven by an increase in output or sales. A company can also grow through mergers and acquisitions and from changes in external market dynamics. Whatever the reason, organizations are faced with these key challenges:

- Inconsistent and inflexible business processes across the organization hinder growth and decrease productivity
- Rapidly changing market conditions and customer and partner demands challenge companies to respond and act quickly
- Shorter product life cycles require companies to work even faster to build profitable supply chain relationships, capitalize on them, and then move on to build new ones

The new and enhanced functionality in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 delivers the flexibility and agility companies need to manage growth and respond to new opportunities quickly, efficiently, and profitably.

### **Workflow Enables Flexible and Consistent Business Processes**

Inconsistent and inflexible business processes continue to plague businesses because they slow productivity and hinder collaboration across the organization and with business partners. Rigid processes delay response times. Legacy and disparate systems lack the transparency and visibility into processes that are necessary for employees to respond and act quickly. Employees get bogged down in manual processes, errors, and inconsistencies. They miss deadlines, perform



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redundant or wrong tasks, send the wrong order – in short – they can't see the forest for the trees.

For example, take a company who experiences a sudden increase in sales. There is nothing worse or more costly than a pile of sales orders that can't be filled because the system can't keep up with demand or when an order is sent to the wrong customer because of a manual input error. What about the dream of a successful acquisition? It can suddenly become a nightmare because of legacy systems that clog processes and prevent visibility into revenue, sales, and production – not to mention the challenges that come from setting up new processes in the acquired company.

Workflow in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 makes it easy to automate and streamline business processes so employees focus on the right tasks and work productively. Workflow helps ensure that all tasks and approvals occur in the correct sequence. It's easy to create, customize, and configure individual workflows so companies are better able to adapt their processes in a more consistent way and improve visibility into processes.

For example, companies can easily configure workflows using the embedded workflow framework based on Windows® Workflow Foundation. They can define an automated approval process for specific documents, such as purchase requisitions and expense reports. Or, they can view and track the status and history of specific workflow instances and determine if changes are needed to improve efficiency.

High productivity depends a lot on keeping employees focused on the right tasks. Workflow in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 provides employees with a centralized work list that shows the workflow tasks and approvals assigned to them. The work list is available as part of the Role Center in the Microsoft Dynamics AX client and Enterprise Portal in Microsoft Dynamics AX.

An organization must be able to set up standardized processes quickly and cost-effectively. Workflow in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 provides out-of-the-box templates for many core business areas such as General Ledger, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Trade and Source, Expense Management, and Project Accounting. These templates enable companies to quickly configure workflows for common business tasks and activities, without the need for developer assistance.

Obtaining approvals for invoices, reports, and other activities can often delay response time and slow productivity. With Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 it's possible to configure escalation policies



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to prevent workflows from stalling. Employees can easily reassign tasks or approvals to another user.

Workflow in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 enable businesses to be more agile by helping them to streamline and automate vital business processes so they can deliver better service and take advantage of new opportunities without compromising productivity.

### **Real-world SOA Supports Changing Business Needs**

One of the challenges organizations face in staying competitive is being able to respond quickly to changing market conditions. New markets can force organizations to change the organization and business processes and many systems cannot keep up with the changes or are inflexible and unable to deal with the changes in an efficient way. Partner requirements are constantly changing, too, and a company's ability to respond to these changes is crucial for building and maintaining strong supply chain relationships and delivering superior customer service.

In addition to Workflow, Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 helps organizations respond to change with real-world Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).

IT assets that cannot flexibly respond to changing business needs can compromise business agility. SOA addresses this issue by providing a standards-based design that creates an integrated IT infrastructure capable of rapidly responding to changing business needs, without replacing the entire IT infrastructure. SOA projects designed to quickly and iteratively deliver on business goals are referred to as a "real-world" approach to service-orientation. This real-world approach to SOA enables organizations to align their IT assets with changing business needs.

Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 greatly simplifies real-world service-oriented architecture (SOA) projects and enables organizations to capitalize on new opportunities with partners or in new markets or distribution channels. The flexible service-oriented architecture eases functionality changes and vertical or horizontal extensions.

Core service-orientation capabilities are built not only into Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009, but also into the native infrastructure components based on the Microsoft Application Platform, such as Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft BizTalk Server, the Microsoft .NET Framework, Windows Server, and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server. Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 extends the reach of business solutions and enables business agility through real-world SOA.



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## Flexible Web Services Improve Collaboration

Organizations today are also faced with shorter product life cycles and the demand to deliver faster and better products and services. Companies must work quickly to build relationships with their suppliers in a profitable way and in a shorter time period.

Web services reduce the cost of integration and enable businesses to more easily create innovative cross-system applications. Web services give companies a painless way to link systems, as well as organizations and business entities, thereby making information available where it is most useful.

The use of Web services in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 enables the extension of business information across and outside the organization. Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 has 80 predefined business documents that can be exchanged with trading partners through Web services, including purchase orders, shipment notifications, requests for quotation, contacts making it even easier for organizations to collaborate across their supply chain.<sup>4</sup>

New enhancements to the Application Integration Framework in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 provides functionality for consuming external Web services and exposing Web services in Microsoft Dynamics AX to other systems. It's also possible to create, read, update, or delete business documents or forms (known as CRUD capability).

Online services are also available out-of-the-box including integration with credit card, courier and shipping companies to provide payment and shipping services. In addition, Web services in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 provide agility through standards-based loose coupling enabling customers to share information with trading partners and meet changing business requirements.

## Groundbreaking User Interface Makes Change Easy

Mergers and acquisitions can be traumatic for organizations and the people in them. User adoption of the new system often becomes a bottleneck – new employees have to learn the new system slowing down the process. The user interface in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 is unique and delivers real value to growing companies. Not only is it easy to set up the system, the user interface is familiar and easy to learn and work with. Employees are up and running and working productively fast.

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<sup>4</sup> See the Appendix for a complete list and consult the connectivity white paper coming soon.



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## **Record Scaling and Performance Mean Faster Growth**

During the development cycle for Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 we focused specifically on improving performance and scalability. This includes benchmark testing which measures performance and scalability based on real day-in-a-life scenarios. For example, Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 running on SQL Server 2008 and Windows Server 2008 show record improvement in this area. To maximize performance while minimizing database growth Microsoft Dynamics AX uses Microsoft SQL 2008 database compression to reduce the database size by 60% to 80%.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 is a comprehensive business management solution that provides growing organizations with the flexibility to scale their solution as their business grows. Because of the layered technology in Microsoft Dynamics AX, customizations can be easier to build and maintain. It's possible to customize one layer without affecting the functionality of other layers. This means that organizations can adapt and upgrade their solution over time with less disruption to business,

### ***Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 – Built for Change and Built to Last***

More than ever, companies are looking for ways to stay competitive by improving and building more profitable supply chain partnerships, empower their people to collaborate more effectively across the organization, and adapt internal processes quickly to meet constantly changing demands. Doing so requires that companies must be able to manage growth and change in a flexible and efficient way.

Today organizations need applications that are more flexible in terms of usability, the ability to upgrade and customize the solution, and consume and expose Web services. Even more importantly, organizations are looking for applications to help them adapt to and support ongoing change – to continuously improve their organization and its processes.

The new features and enhancements in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 make it even more people-ready and built for change and can help organizations manage growth and change to build profitable partnerships.

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<sup>5</sup> Official benchmark report coming soon.



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## ***Appendix***

### **Delivered Web Services in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009**

Absence Request	Inventory Dimension Combination
Address	Inventory Item Group
Agreement	Inventory Location
ASN	Inventory On Hand
Asset Condition	Inventory Size
Asset Fixed Asset	Inventory Transactions
Asset Group	Inventory Transfer Order Out
Asset Location	Item
Asset Major Type	
	Payment Terms
Bills of Materials	Picking List
	Price Discount Journal
Cash Discount	Price List
Chart of Accounts	Production Picking List
Configuration Table	Production Route Card
Contact Persons	Profit Loss Journal
Counting Journal	Project Electronic Invoice
Custom Payment Journal	Project Hour Journal
Customer	Purchase Invoice
Customer Groups	Purchase Requisition
Customer Quotation	Purchase RFQ Reply
Delivery Modes	Return Order In
Dimensions	Return Order Out
	RFQ Send
Exchange Rates	
Expense	Sales Confirmation
	Sales Electronic Invoice
Free Text Invoice	Sales Invoice
	Sales Order
General Journal	Sales Packing Slip
	SMA Order
Inventory Color	



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Transfer Journal  
Transfer Order Creation  
Transfer Order Posting  
Trv PBS Maindata

Unit  
Unit Convert  
Vendor Group  
Vendor Payment  
Vendor Table