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The Partner's Guide to Assessing AP Transformation Risk During Dynamics GP-to-BC Migrations

*What partners should assess to
reduce AP risk and guide clients
toward the right next step.*

Executive Summary

For Microsoft partners, a Dynamics GP-to-Business Central migration is about far more than moving data from one ERP to another. Migration is an opportunity to help clients evolve one of the most business-critical functions in finance: Accounts Payable (AP).

Of course, every migration carries risk.

Ensuring data remains accurate, controls are protected, and users feel confident in the new process is vital. Timelines, budgets, and integrations all require careful planning.

But there's another type of risk that is often overlooked: the risk of maintaining the current state. For many organizations, continuing to rely on legacy AP processes or aging technologies can increase technical debt, perpetuate manual inefficiencies, make it harder to strengthen financial controls, and create additional compliance or operational challenges over time.



**AP modernization carries risk.
So does standing still.**

As organizations evaluate their options, the most fruitful conversations begin not with whether or not to modernize but how they can do so confidently while managing both implementation and operational risk.

Successful AP transformation begins with understanding risk before selecting technology.

Partners who lead with governance, process design, and thoughtful architecture can help clients make better long-term technology decisions while often reducing implementation challenges.

This guide provides a practical framework for assessing AP transformation risk during Dynamics GP-to-Business Central migrations.

Drawing on Microsoft guidance, ERP implementation research, and recognized risk management frameworks, this whitepaper outlines the questions partners should ask, the risks they should evaluate, and the decisions that help organizations modernize Accounts Payable with greater confidence.

The Risks Hiding in Every GP Migration

For many organizations, Dynamics GP has supported financial operations for years or even decades. Over time, AP teams have built dependable processes around the platform, often supplementing native capabilities with manual workarounds, spreadsheets, paper approvals, and specialized third-party tools.

As Microsoft continues encouraging customers to move toward Business Central, organizations need to plan for more than the technical migration itself. Organizations that account only for a technical roadmap may overlook the process, governance, and organizational changes needed to support AP over the long term. At the same time, postponing migration planning can lead to compressed timelines, increasing technical debt, shrinking support resources, and growing pressure to modernize critical business processes. Delaying a migration does not remove risk. It simply changes the nature of the risks an organization must manage.



**Delaying migration doesn't eliminate risk.
It changes where the risk lives.**

Accounts Payable is especially vulnerable to risk as it sits at the intersection of financial control, operational efficiency, vendor relationships, and cash management. Every invoice received, every approval granted and payment released depends on processes that must remain accurate, secure, and reliable throughout a migration.

Rather than beginning with software features, successful migration engagements begin by helping clients understand their current operating risks and their future objectives.

Use these questions to help guide more productive discovery conversations:

- ✓ *Where do manual processes create delays or increase operational risk?*
- ✓ *Which approval controls are essential to maintain during migration?*
- ✓ *How prepared is the organization's vendor data for migration?*
- ✓ *Which processes will create the most value from automation to effectively allow the organization to scale over the next five year?*
- ✓ *What risks does the organization see in changing, and what risks do they see in maintaining the current process?*

By answering these questions early, partners move the conversation beyond software selection and toward business outcomes, organizational readiness, and long-term operational resilience.

Why AP Transformation Projects Go Off Track

It is easy to assume that AP transformation projects struggle because of technology. In practice, ERP implementation research consistently points to a different conclusion. Rather than software, the primary causes of project failure or underperformance are actually:



Weak
planning



Ineffective
governance



Poor stakeholder
engagement



Inadequate change
management

Successful projects treat AP transformation as a business initiative supported by technology, not simply an ERP implementation. That distinction shapes every decision that follows, from stakeholder engagement to solution selection and proactive change management practices.

The following framework can help evaluate a client's readiness for AP transformation.

A Practical Framework for Assessing AP Transformation Risk

1. Assess Data Maturity

Data maturity includes both the quality of the data itself and the processes used to maintain it. Before discussing automation or workflows, evaluate the condition of vendor records, approval structures, payment information, and historical transactions, as well as how consistently that information is reviewed and maintained.

Consider:

- ✓ Is vendor master data accurate and complete?
- ✓ Are there defined processes for reviewing and maintaining vendor data over time?
- ✓ Have duplicate or inactive records been addressed?
- ✓ Are banking details current and validated?
- ✓ Is there a reconciliation plan for open transactions?



Reliable data and consistent data management practices create a stronger foundation for every decision that follows.

2. Evaluate Process Maturity

Migration is an opportunity to improve business processes—not simply recreate existing ones.

Review the current invoice lifecycle from receipt through payment and identify where manual effort, inconsistent approvals, or unnecessary handoffs create delays.

Ask:

- ✓ Which processes are standardized?
- ✓ Where do employees rely on spreadsheets or email?
- ✓ Which approval steps add value, and which exist only because of historical limitations?
- ✓ Could processes be simplified before migration?
- ✓ Which process improvements should happen before migration, and which can reasonably wait until after?



Organizations that simplify intentionally—and sequence process changes at a pace users can absorb—are often better positioned for smoother implementations and stronger adoption.

3. Understand Integration Complexity

Accounts Payable rarely operates in isolation. Banking platforms, procurement systems, document management solutions, expense applications, and reporting tools all influence the migration strategy.

Partners should document:

- ✓ Existing integrations
- ✓ Critical business dependencies
- ✓ Required data flows
- ✓ Opportunities to reduce unnecessary complexity

Every integration introduces additional testing, support, and maintenance requirements. Where possible, partners can help clients reduce complexity by considering native, out-of-the-box, or embedded solutions before introducing external systems. Fewer integration points can reduce testing requirements, ongoing maintenance, and the risk of disruptions between systems. Understanding these relationships early helps reduce surprises during implementation and over the life of the solution.

4. Review Financial Controls

Modernization should strengthen, not weaken, financial governance.

Review existing approval policies, segregation of duties, audit requirements, and payment controls to determine what must be preserved, what can be strengthened, and how those controls should carry forward through the migration.

Questions to consider include:

- ✓ How are approvals managed today?
- ✓ Are payment controls consistently enforced?
- ✓ How are vendor changes reviewed?
- ✓ Which audit requirements must be preserved?
- ✓ Are any current controls dependent on manual processes that could be improved before or after migration?



Strong governance should remain a constant, regardless of technology.

5. Determine Organizational Readiness

Technology can only succeed when people are prepared to adopt it.

Evaluate executive sponsorship, project ownership, communication plans, training strategies, and user readiness alongside technical planning. Partners should also consider whether the organization has mapped a best-practices roadmap alongside the migration roadmap.

Those two timelines do not always need to move together. Some process improvements may reduce risk if introduced before migration, while others may be easier for users to adopt after the new ERP is in place.



Successful projects recognize that change management is an ongoing activity, not a task reserved for the end of implementation.

Choosing the Right AP Architecture & Timeline

Selecting the right technology is an important decision, but it should follow a thorough risk assessment process. The technology roadmap should also account for when the organization is ready to adopt new AP practices, not simply when the new ERP will go live.

In some cases, process improvements can begin before the Business Central migration. In others, sequencing those changes after migration may reduce the amount of change users must absorb at once. With that broader roadmap in mind, organizations generally evaluate three approaches when deciding how to modernize Accounts Payable alongside Business Central.

1. Business Central Native

For organizations with relatively straightforward accounts payable requirements, native capabilities in Business Central may provide an appropriate starting point.

Businesses with lower invoice volumes, simple approval workflows, a single legal entity, and limited payment complexity can often manage AP effectively without additional software.

Native Business Central offers the benefits of simplified administration, reduced solution complexity, and a familiar experience for organizations migrating from Microsoft Dynamics GP. However, as organizations grow, increasing invoice volumes, more complex approval processes, multiple entities, or evolving payment requirements may reveal the limits of native functionality.

Evaluating both current needs and future growth can help ensure the chosen approach continues to support the business over time.

2. Embedded Business Central Solutions

Many organizations reach a point where native Business Central functionality no longer provides enough automation or control, but a standalone AP platform would introduce unnecessary complexity. Embedded solutions are designed to extend Business Central's capabilities while keeping users within the familiar ERP experience.

This approach is often well suited for organizations experiencing growth in invoice volumes, approval complexity, or payment requirements. By building on existing financial processes, embedded solutions can improve automation, visibility, and efficiency while allowing Business Central to remain the system of record.

For Microsoft partners, embedded solutions often provide a practical middle ground between native functionality and standalone platforms, helping clients modernize accounts payable while avoiding architectural complexity that may not be necessary.

3. External AP Suites

Organizations with highly specialized procurement processes, global operations, or enterprise-wide finance requirements may benefit from a dedicated procure-to-pay platform. These solutions are designed to support broad business processes that extend beyond accounts payable alone.

While they often provide extensive functionality, they also introduce additional considerations around integration, governance, implementation effort, and ongoing administration. As with any technology decision, the right choice depends less on feature comparisons and more on aligning the solution with business objectives, organizational readiness, and long-term operational strategy.

Helping Clients Balance Risk & Opportunity

No migration will ever be entirely risk-free.

The goal is not to eliminate every uncertainty, but to make informed decisions that balance implementation risk with the long-term risks of maintaining existing processes.

Partners who guide conversations around governance, process maturity, and organizational readiness help clients focus on business goals and outcomes rather than software alone.

When organizations understand both the risks of change and the risks of maintaining the status quo, they are better positioned to make confident decisions that support future growth.

Migration Readiness Checklist

The key to successful AP modernization is to understand current processes, align stakeholders, and define clear objectives before making software decisions. Organizations that take time to review processes and get aligned ahead of time are often better positioned to reduce project risk and achieve a smoother transition.

Before recommending an AP modernization strategy, consider whether the organization can answer "yes" to the following questions:

- ✓ *Executive sponsorship has been established.*
- ✓ *Business objectives and desired outcomes are clearly defined.*
- ✓ *Current AP workflows have been documented and reviewed.*
- ✓ *Best-practices roadmap has been mapped with the technical migration plan.*
- ✓ *Process changes have been sequenced based on risk, business value, and the organization's capacity for change.*
- ✓ *Vendor master data has been assessed for accuracy and completeness.*
- ✓ *Approval policies and financial controls have been evaluated.*
- ✓ *Required integrations and dependencies have been identified.*
- ✓ *User training and change management plans have been established.*
- ✓ *Success metrics have been defined before implementation begins.*

An unanswered question isn't necessarily a reason to delay migration. Instead, it identifies an area where additional discovery may reduce project risk, improve adoption, and help ensure the selected AP approach aligns with the organization's long-term goals.

Conclusion

No transformation project is without risk, but most risks can be identified and managed before implementation begins. Organizations that assess governance, business processes, data maturity, organizational readiness, and solution fit early—and consider how those areas should evolve alongside the technical migration—are better positioned to make informed decisions, reduce disruption, and realize the full value of their investment.

For Microsoft partners, successful Dynamics GP to Business Central migration projects should be measured not simply by whether or not the project was delivered on time, but also by how you helped your clients make informed decisions throughout their transformation journey.

When partners lead with thoughtful assessment rather than assumptions, they create stronger client relationships, reduce implementation uncertainty, and help organizations modernize Accounts Payable with confidence.



**Assess first. Modernize deliberately.
Build for what comes next.**

Ultimately, successful AP transformation is not about making every change at once. It is about understanding where risk exists, deciding what should change and when, and building a foundation that supports the organization's next stage of growth.

MEKORMA

Lead Change with Confidence

The strongest migrations start with a clear understanding of the client's needs, risks, and goals. Assess thoughtfully, plan deliberately, and help your clients build an AP foundation that's ready for what comes next.

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