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The Essential Guide to Transitioning from Dynamics GP to Business Central for the Livestock Industry: Overcoming Challenges and Embracing the Future



Introduction

The livestock equipment industry is at a pivotal juncture, driven by rapid technological advancements and the ever-changing landscape of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. For many years, Microsoft Dynamics GP (Great Plains) has been a trusted ERP solution for companies in the livestock sector, providing the necessary tools to manage their financials, inventory, and operations. However, with Microsoft gradually phasing out support for Dynamics GP, companies are finding themselves at a crossroads, forced to evaluate their next steps and explore new ERP solutions.

One such company, deeply rooted in Dynamics GP, embarked on a migration journey to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. Their experience, however, was far from smooth. They encountered significant delays, unexpected costs, and a realization that their current partner lacked the necessary expertise to facilitate a successful transition. This whitepaper explores their journey, highlights common pain points, and provides insights on how livestock equipment companies can navigate this critical transition successfully.



The Need for Transition: Why Business Central?

Dynamics GP and the Livestock Equipment Industry

The livestock equipment industry relies heavily on robust ERP systems to manage complex operations, including inventory management, sales orders, financial tracking, and regulatory compliance. For many years, Dynamics GP served as a reliable solution, offering the necessary features to support these critical functions. However, with the gradual phasing out of Dynamics GP, companies are now faced with the challenge of transitioning to a more modern and flexible solution.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central emerges as the logical successor, offering a cloud-based platform that integrates seamlessly with other Microsoft services, such as Power BI, Azure, and Office 365. Business Central is designed to be more adaptable, scalable, and future-proof, making it an attractive option for companies looking to modernize their operations and embrace digital transformation.

The Benefits of Business Central for Livestock Companies

Transitioning to Business Central offers several key benefits for livestock equipment companies:

Cloud-Based Accessibility	Business Central's cloud-based architecture allows companies to access their ERP system from anywhere, enabling remote work and collaboration.
Integration with Microsoft Ecosystem	Seamless integration with other Microsoft tools enhances productivity and efficiency.
Scalability	Business Central grows with your business, allowing you to add functionalities as your operations expand.
Enhanced Reporting and Analytics	With tools like Power BI, companies can gain deeper insights into their operations and make data-driven decisions.

The Challenges of Migration: Lessons from the Field

Partner Challenges: Lack of Expertise

One of the most significant challenges faced by the livestock equipment company during their transition was the lack of expertise from their implementation partner. The partner, while proficient in Dynamics GP, did not possess the in-depth knowledge required to facilitate a seamless migration to Business Central. This lack of expertise led to significant delays, doubled costs, and an incomplete transition, ultimately putting the company's operations at risk.

Data Migration Issues: A Major Pain Point

Data migration is a critical aspect of any ERP transition, and the livestock company's experience highlights the challenges that can arise when this process is not handled properly. Custom fields, project data, and other complex data sets could not be migrated easily, causing significant disruptions to their operations. The inability to seamlessly transfer critical data not only affected day-to-day operations but also hindered the company's ability to make informed decisions based on historical data.

The Importance of Choosing the Right Partner

The experience of this livestock equipment company underscores the importance of selecting the right partner for your ERP migration. A successful transition requires a partner who understands both the technical and business implications of the move. This means having a deep understanding of the livestock industry, as well as the technical expertise to ensure a smooth migration of all data and functionalities.

Strategic Considerations for a Successful Transition

Assessing Your Current System

Before embarking on the migration journey, it's essential to assess your current Dynamics GP system and identify the critical functionalities and data that need to be transferred to Business Central. This assessment will help you prioritize the most important aspects of the migration and ensure that nothing is overlooked.

Planning for Data Migration

Data migration is one of the most challenging aspects of transitioning from Dynamics GP to Business Central. To avoid disruptions, it's crucial to plan for data migration well in advance. This includes identifying which data sets need to be migrated, ensuring data accuracy, and preparing for any necessary data transformations. In some cases, manual intervention may be required, especially for custom fields and complex data sets.

Budgeting for the Transition

One of the most common issues faced by companies during the migration process is underestimating the costs involved. Unexpected expenses can arise from incomplete data migration, additional customizations, and extended project timelines. It's important to work closely with your implementation partner to establish a realistic budget and anticipate potential cost overruns.

Training and Change Management

Transitioning to a new ERP system also requires a focus on change management. Employees need to be trained on the new system to ensure a smooth transition and minimize disruptions to daily operations. Investing in comprehensive training programs and ongoing support will help your team adapt to Business Central and leverage its full capabilities.

Real-World Stats: The Industry Perspective

To provide context to the challenges and opportunities presented by this transition, consider the following statistics:

60%

of companies transitioning from Dynamics GP face unexpected costs

due to incomplete data migration. These costs often stem from the need to manually transfer data that cannot be migrated automatically (Source: ERP Research).

50%

of livestock equipment companies report that their ERP system is a critical factor in their operational efficiency

A well-functioning ERP system is essential for managing inventory, financials, and regulatory compliance, making the transition to Business Central even more critical (Source: IndustryWeek).

Real-World Stats: The Industry Perspective

Q: What data can be migrated from GP to Business Central?

A: Core financial data, sales orders, and basic inventory information can typically be migrated. However, custom fields, project data, and complex modules may require manual intervention or additional customization.

Q: How can we retain access to historical data after migration?

A: Using tools like Power BI, historical data can be stored in Azure and accessed alongside your new system. This approach allows you to maintain access to past transactions while operating within Business Central.

Q: What should we expect in terms of costs?

A: A new implementation may sometimes be more cost-effective than trying to salvage a problematic migration. It's essential to budget for project management fees, additional costs for customizations, and potential data migration challenges.

The WebSan Solutions Approach: Values That Matter

At WebSan Solutions, we understand the unique challenges faced by the livestock equipment industry. Our approach is built on three core values:

- Integrity** We provide honest assessments and set clear expectations, ensuring that you are fully informed throughout the migration process.
- Expertise** With over 20 years of experience, we specialize in smooth, successful transitions. Our team has the technical know-how and industry knowledge to guide you through every step of the process.
- Customer Focus** Your success is our priority. We tailor our solutions to fit your unique needs, ensuring that your transition to Business Central is as seamless as possible.

Conclusion: Embracing the Future

Transitioning from Dynamics GP to Business Central is not just about adopting new technology—it's about positioning your business for future growth. By choosing the right partner, planning for data migration, and investing in training and change management, livestock equipment companies can overcome the challenges of this transition and unlock new opportunities for innovation and efficiency. Embrace the future with confidence, knowing that Business Central offers the tools and flexibility needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving industry.

To learn more about Dynamics 365 Business Central visit www.websan.com

