

Case story

Delivering customer solutions 50% faster with Companial's Upgrade services

2021

CTM Computer Technik Marketing GmbH is a Microsoft Dynamics ISV and VAR Partner for Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. Based in Bremen, Northern Germany, the CTM team consists of 40 regular employees and 10 external development partners. Primarily serving customers in Germany, CTM develops and distributes vertical solutions focusing on the printing, machine, container and rental industries. The CTM team is taking on increasing numbers of customers for ERP projects.

Upgrade challenges

With the Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central 2020 Wave 2 release (version 17), CTM decided to upgrade one of their long-term customer solutions. The customer solution was on Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2017 with modifications in the base app and add-ons. All of these had to be transitioned to the new version. The whole upgrade process was time-consuming and very resource intensive.

"It was a complicated solution because of the amount of the add-ons and the high number of modifications needed to enhance standard functionality and fit the system to the special business process needs. The customer solution also had modifications specifically for integrations to other systems. The more add-ons and modifications the solution has, the more challenging the upgrade process is", says Christian Lenz, Development Facilitator at CTM.

An additional challenge was that the customer solution had a multi-region database. While the database centralized all regional branches under the same business processes, the different formats and languages for each region had to be considered. The main database and the regional databases had to be upgraded together, which added complexity to the project.

Reviewing the options and making the right choice

To solve all the challenges previously mentioned, CTM sought out 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) to perform the solution analysis. Companial presented two analyzers for the solution assessment to CTM; C/AL to Extension Analyzer or [Upgrade Analyzer](#). The Upgrade Analyzer ended up being a better fit for this project, so that's the route CTM took.

"Even though we didn't use the C/AL to Extension Analyzer for this project, it's still valuable. The C/AL to Extension Analyzer is a very good indicator that helps us to get an impression on how many issues the solution has regarding moving C/AL customizations to AL without base app modifications. We use the C/AL to Extension Analyzer when we do upgrades ourselves. This way we can decide much earlier if we want to do an upgrade ourselves or if we want to request an upgrade proposal from 1ClickFactory (currently Companial). It depends on how many customizations the solution has and how time-consuming it is to bring them to AL. But when 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) does the upgrade, we get an upgrade proposal through Upgrade Analyzer", explains Christian Lenz on why they went the Upgrade Analyzer route.

Companial's Upgrade Analyzer is an online service that provides technical upgrade options at a fixed price and helps choose the best upgrade path for the solution. After assessing all the upgrade options, CTM and the customer decided to upgrade to Business Central On-Premises.

"We advised making the solution cloud-ready. Currently the customer prioritizes the On-Premises solution on their own server, which allows them to do upgrades whenever it is convenient and not necessarily every 6 months," says Christian Lenz.

After a solution analysis, CTM proceeded with Companial's scope clarification workshop and delivered the upgrade proposal to the customer. *"One of the benefits of 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) services is the structure and content of proposal and contract, which makes it clear what will be delivered. And all of this is followed by the structured guidance through the project management",* adds Christian.

Major steps in the upgrade process

The customer's solution was upgraded from Dynamics NAV 2015 to Dynamics 365 Business Central 2020 Wave 2 (version 17). The project was carried out in two steps. The first step included:

- Upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central version 14.
- Transitioning from C/AL to AL.

The second step included an upgrade from Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central version 14 to version 17, which comprised:

- Object upgrade.
- Web Client redesign.
- Upgrade to Standard Event Publishers.
- Conversion to On-Premises Extension.
- Replacing existing six Add-ons with the new add-on versions.
- Test data, pre-live data and live data migration tasks.

The upgrade became more complicated because there were base app modifications, the code had to be transitioned from C/AL to AL and redesigned from RTC to Web Client, and data had to be migrated from one add-on version to another.

To start with, there were challenges with the add-on data migration tools. To solve the challenges, Companial got in touch with the add-on providers, got the required add-on prerequisites ready, and repeatedly performed data migrations until any occurring problems were resolved.

For this upgrade project, after the test data migration was done (with the database received before the beginning of the upgrade project), Companial also carried out the pre-live data migration. Pre-live data migration is done with the most recent customer database to mitigate any possible risks of the live data migration, which is done during non-working hours so as not to disrupt customer business processes. The Go-Live also included a free three-month warranty from Companial.

"The Companial team is always ready to help Partners overcome any problems that may arise during the upgrade project and warranty period afterward. We also consult our Partner on the steps required for the project's success. I hope that in this case both the Partner and the customer are happy with the results we achieved and that we will continue our successful cooperation in the future projects", says Mindaugas Berlickas, NAV/Business Central Team Lead at Companial.

Meeting partner expectations with successful project results

After the Go-Live, the upgrade efforts and Companial response during the warranty period met partner expectations and achieved positive feedback.

"There were some issues even after Go-Live with the add-ons, ISV partners struggled with the modified base app, and there were also issues with the migration routines that the add-on ISVs provided, but for the Go-Live it was OK. The response time from support during the project was good. My impression is that the more add-ons you have, the more complex the project is. But during the warranty period, everything was successfully resolved", says Christian.

The top benefits CTM got out of using Companial Business Central upgrade service are:

- Delivering more upgrades to customers in a given time.
- More customers on an up-to-date solution.

"If 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) didn't have this service, we would experience longer lead times for our customers between requesting the upgrade from us to the delivery of the upgraded solution and Go-Live. For the overall project timeline, it's more than 50% faster to deliver the solution to the customer with 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) than if we did it ourselves. It would have taken more resources for us to do this because each developer on our team works on many other projects at once, so they don't have the time to spend on a singular project. 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) enabled our developers to focus on their current projects. When we don't allocate resources to one upgrade project, we can allocate them for many other projects," says Christian Lenz.

By outsourcing the upgrade projects to Companial, CTM can rely on a trusted partner that shows 100% commitment and exercises conscious control of time spent on all project activities.



"I would definitely recommend 1ClickFactory (currently Companial) to the other Microsoft Dynamics Partners. I highly appreciate that you provide a very good structure of the projects, which challenges us to come up with actions that are very restrictive in the timeline. But the final result is very good. It is invaluable that you have someone who is taking care of the schedule and the project steps. When it comes to how we should act on issues, you also provide some options for us to discuss with the customer and enable us to make a well-informed decision. I also appreciate working with you not only in the upgrade projects, but also in the development projects". says Christian Lenz, Development Facilitator at CTM.

Christian Lenz,
Development Facilitator at CTM

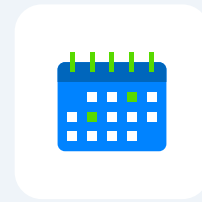
Results



50 %
Saved time



100 %
Commitment



100 %
Time management

High-quality Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central Upgrades with Companial

Companial has over 13 years of expertise in helping Microsoft Dynamics Partners to successfully upgrade any Dynamics NAV/365 Business Central solution no matter how complex, and this experience allows us to solve any challenges that crop up on-time and risk-free, while still providing upgrades at a lower cost. Using automation tools to optimize performance (such as the [Upgrade Analyzer](#) and C/AL to Extension Analyzer), Companial saves 70% of the time that's typically utilized during the upgrade process. We provide a free upgrade project assessment, a fixed price proposal and a free upgrade project warranty for up to 3 months, helping Microsoft Dynamics Partners to deliver the best possible service to their customers.

Request an upgrade service today for a FREE upgrade analysis or contact us at service@companial.com if you have any questions.

