

# OneNeck White Paper

Microsoft Dynamics AX Managed Services and Application Hosting



## FOCUS ON YOUR BUSINESS, LEVERAGE YOUR TECHNOLOGY

Businesses today are bombarded with pressures: customer pressures, regulatory pressures, competitive pressures and more. Many companies have found that a key to surviving in this high-pressure environment is to focus on your business's core competencies and engage external resources for those activities that are outside of them. A common area to engage external resources is data center operations. Operating your own internal data center can be costly. In many cases, it can be a business risk, especially if your enterprise applications, such as Microsoft Dynamics AX, and data are not as secure or available as they need to be.

Infrastructure, managed services and application hosting can provide a number of benefits and improvements when compared to an in-house data center, often at a fraction of the cost. Leveraging managed services for your enterprise technology can help your bottom line and free up your internal resources to focus on more strategic top-line initiatives such as innovation, marketing, sales and customer relationship management.

Managed services is about understanding the customer's business and providing total solutions for the business with the appropriate technology and service.

## A HOST OF BENEFITS

AX managed services and application hosting can provide major benefits. Some companies opt for just a hosting services model and continue to have their internal IT staff manage their AX application. This option saves on infrastructure costs, improves performance, enhances scalability and increases agility. Other companies pursue a more comprehensive solution and discover the following benefits that world-class AX managed services provide.

### Cost containment and predictability

- Maintain predictable costs over multiple year agreements while avoiding many of the capital expenditures so common with technology.

### Strategic advantage support

- Focus on core competencies while the service provider manages the AX environments.
- Shift accountability for the day-to-day availability and stability of the mission-critical AX environments, including patches, upgrades, enhancements and more.

### Centers of excellence

- Access top-level talent, latest technologies and proven processes on an as-needed basis.

### Tailored solutions with a single point of accountability

- Tailored solutions to be flexible and address the specific functionality and performance needs of the company.
- Provide a single point of accountability through the management of all related IT systems and third-party partners, aligning all resources to support the company's mission-critical environment.

## BETTER BY DESIGN

In addition to all of the benefits listed, another key area of improvement is in data management and reliability. Engaging with a managed service provider typically means you will be able to leverage a network of data centers that provide redundancy beyond what most in-house data centers can provide, especially given the economies of scale the provider brings to bear. You gain access to experienced subject matter experts in software, security, hardware, networking and other areas to ensure your environment and your data are safe and accessible while your system is scalable and reliable.

An AX managed services provider's facility is better equipped to withstand a natural disaster than most companies' internal operations. In addition to maintaining the latest technologies and processes to keep applications running, in the rare event of a system or hardware malfunction, an experienced AX service provider can restore service quickly through sophisticated backup, restore and disaster recovery capabilities.

Human error is drastically curtailed in an AX service provider data center as well. Unlike internal data centers which often employ limited-experience staff, qualified managed services providers, such as OneNeck® IT Solutions, hire and train certified AX experts, use Type 2 SSAE 16 (SOC 1) audited processes and offer third-party, objective validations to confirm consistently high levels of performance.

## MANAGING THE FUTURE

One of the most difficult aspects of business planning is forecasting. How much revenue will you generate? How many employees will you have? What resources will be required to support your business? Guess low and you'll stress your environment. Guess high and you're wasting money on resources you'll never use. Engaging an AX management partner solves these challenges, providing you with state-of-the-art resources and the flexibility to scale those resources as your business requires.

Finding the ideal partner, however, is no longer a matter of determining how many servers are needed or how much bandwidth is available. Your ERP partner must understand your business, your applications and your goals. Only then can they create the optimum solution comprising strategic planning, hardware, software and ongoing services. Since your enterprise systems are critical to your success, it's essential that your partner not be merely service-oriented, but service-obsessed.

In addition to exhibiting unmatched attentiveness and leadership qualities, you must be assured by your provider that:

- You can scale your application requirements up or down as needed.
- You are benefiting from operational processes that are tuned to serve a company of your size.
- You have access to the highest levels of AX domain expertise and best practices to help manage your complex AX environment.

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- You know exactly what costs, deliverables and benefits the relationship will provide before you begin the engagement.
- Your AX management provider understands your market and has deep vertical knowledge and experience.

## A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON CUSTOMER INTIMACY

Managed services is not just about hardware and software. It's about understanding the customer's business and providing total solutions for the business with the appropriate technology and service. The success of an strategic sourcing relationship should be driven by how well the partners understand the role mission-critical applications play in the company's business. The partner must be able to demonstrate exceptional knowledge not just in technology and applications, but in the customer's vertical market and in its business specifically.

Your service provider must also clearly communicate how they will work with you – the processes they implement and rules of governance they establish – to drive continuous improvement, bring innovation to the table and adapt to changing requirements.

Based on decades of experience managing AX environments, OneNeck believes a customer intimate model is the right model for an strategic relationship. We act as a single point of contact with the customer. We use a scalable and integrated model with built-in checks and balances. The foundation of this model is our customer management team. This team understands and communicates customer needs and coordinates all the elements of our engagement within OneNeck and at every customer location.

Our customer management teams are backed by such resources as:

- A team of application administration, database administration, operating system administration and support center professionals dedicated to that customer.
- Support that includes application development, application integration, functional support, network management, security administration, desktop services and shared services professionals.
- Community team members: software vendors, hardware vendors, telcos, the ITIL community, user groups, resourcing vendors, IT market research, other customers and more.

In addition, it's our stance that every AX management solution must include:

### Delivery model

- A robust delivery framework so customers get the maximum value from their IT investment.
- High-touch, two-in-a-box oversight of day-to-day governance and administration.
- Monitoring of system functions to uncover potential issues and alert customers before problems surface.

### Service model

- High-touch service to ensure high availability of the entire IT infrastructure and applications.
- Monitoring and service desk activities enabled through ITIL-compliant tools.
- The combination of on-site and remote service for high uptime and management of hosted applications.

### Infrastructure management

- Responsive 24/7, scalable support.
- Large increases in availability and reliability for relatively modest investments in services and tools.
- Proven processes for seamless transitions.

### Continuous improvement

- An established Continuous Improvement program that evolves and improves services and execution over time.
- A program that identifies and addresses inconsistencies in process execution while creating consistent, predictable outcomes.
- The tools to measure productivity and adopt new ways to improve.
- A plan to discontinue activities that add no value.

## MAKE YOUR NEXT MOVE THE RIGHT MOVE

Many organizations struggle to keep up their data center investments and manage their AX environments due to budget pressures and strategic priorities. Partnering with an independent IT solutions specialist for your AX application management is a proven way to reduce or avoid costs associated with in-house IT operations. It can also provide your management team with consistent, predictable costs while actually improving application performance and reliability.

For more information on selecting an AX management service provider, download our white paper titled "How to Define a 'Best-in-Class' AX Management and Hosting Provider."

## ABOUT ONENECK IT SOLUTIONS

OneNeck IT Solutions LLC offers hybrid IT solutions including cloud and hosting solutions, managed services, enterprise application management, advanced IT services, IT hardware and top-tier data centers in Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon and Wisconsin. OneNeck's team of technology professionals manage secure, world-class, hybrid IT infrastructures and applications for businesses around the country.

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