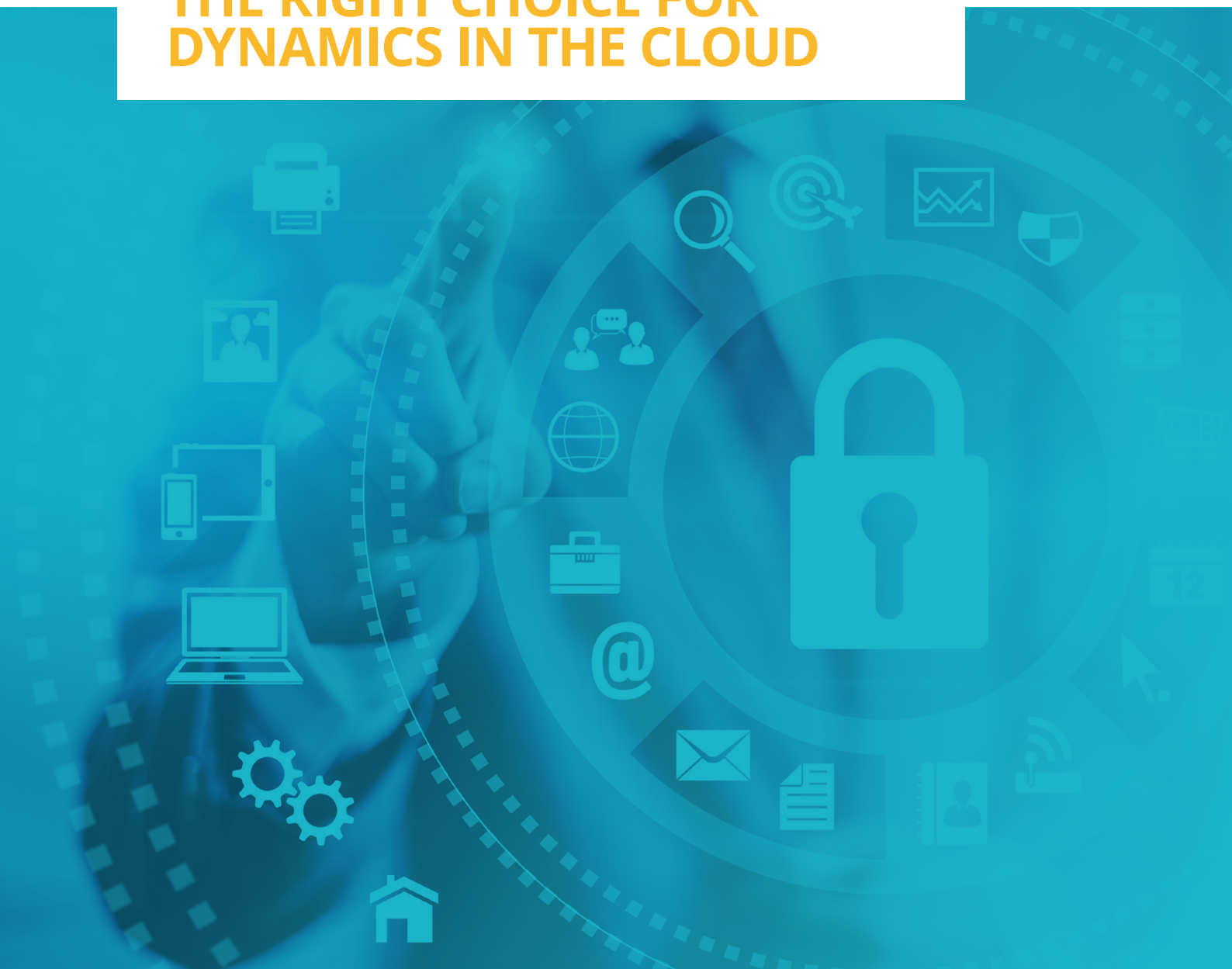# THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

HELPING YOU MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR DYNAMICS IN THE CLOUD

SAAS PLAZA

MICROSOFT CLOUD SOLUTIONS

Microsoft Dynamics can be deployed On-premise and in the Cloud. Many companies are considering changing the delivery method of their Dynamics application because hardware is end of life and they want to take advantage of the cloud as they look to upgrade. However, there are quite some aspects to consider when you choose to move to the cloud or not. Moreover, cloud comes in different shapes. How do you choose between Cloud and On-Premise? What is the best fit for your organization?

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This whitepaper aims to help you by explaining the most important aspects of cloud delivery of your business-critical Microsoft Dynamics application. SaaSplaza has identified the magnificent seven critical factors for businesses to consider when it comes to making the choice.

1. Application Uptime
2. Support
3. Scalability and Flexibility
4. Security
5. Accessibility
6. Lifecycle Management
7. Cost

Please note; this list is not in any order of priority. It's important to say here that each business has unique requirements, so the actual drivers for choosing Cloud will be a combination of all, or some, of these different factors. We discuss each of the seven more broadly in this document.

1. APPLICATION UPTIME

ERP is a mission critical business application that should be Always On. Keeping a server running can require a great effort, and it's not even enough to just run a server or cloud. Uptime on application level is crucial for your users to be productive on the ERP-application. People need to be able do their jobs on the systems that you've provided to them. When you consider on-premise or cloud deployment, bear in mind what it takes to keep your business applications running. How can you guarantee the highest application uptime, is running an ERP-application part of your core-business, or can a specialized ERP-hoster do a better job?

2. SUPPORT

Users are working outside of office hours and businesses are becoming more global. 24/7 Support and Monitoring of core business-applications is more important than ever. To stay ahead in this competitive landscape, you must be able to guarantee that the users get the right support from experts, whenever it is needed, and that your systems are monitored extensively, to prevent unnecessary downtime.

3. SCALABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

With an on-premise installation, adding more users often means investing in additional hardware. Cloud is far more flexible and capable of scaling up, and down, to your requirements. Not only in case companies grow organically or by acquisition, but also for temporary increased seasonal demands or reporting requirements. Even with peak of low times during the day, intelligent tooling in cloud computing is able to spin on extra servers or switch off capacity that isn't needed. On Public Cloud infrastructure, such as Microsoft Azure, and on Private Cloud, you will benefit from a Cloud Services Provider who can manage your consumption costs by scaling your resources down when their use is not required. Thus, you pay for what you need and never run out of capacity and performance. When it comes to IT-staff, cloud can also aid scalability and flexibility: many businesses can't afford to maintain an army of specialists needed for the wide array of knowledge you need to maintain, let alone if you need it 24x7. So companies rather outsource this to a larger pool of specialist people with a Cloud Service Provider, so their staff can focus on innovation and creating value for their core business.

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4. SECURITY

Confidence in cloud security is growing[1], although security is still a prime concern when considering moving to cloud. It is important to ask a potential cloud supplier about the certifications, privacy, confidentiality, integrity, processes and data location. Organizations' critical data, information and applications should by all means always be secure and compliant to country or vertical-specific legislation. There's a bunch of documentation, research and knowledge about cloud computing and security, and there's a firm belief that cloud is in most situations more secure than on-premise. Although still, there can be security or compliancy requirements that prevent data to be moved to public cloud. Let's explain which factors we take into account with regards to cloud security:

I. Audits and certifications

Why is the Cloud a safe choice? Part of it is due to regulatory systems set up to ensure safety and security, such as the SSAE-16 Type II and ISAE-3402 Type II. For instance, SaaSplaza is audited every year independently, on the security of our processes and employees. Or take into account that Microsoft's cloud has an extensive set of security and privacy certifications[2]. Be prepared and know which certifications are required by your business and ask proof from a cloud provider that the certifications and processes are in place.

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II. Recovery and Redundancy

The cloud offers amazing options for disaster recovery and business continuity. Data that is in cloud is easy to backup and store securely. Even for data and applications that are on-premise or in a third-party data center, cloud solutions backup or continuity services can be of significant benefit to your recovery plans. Bear in mind that due to the many options for cloud backup and recovery, you need to have a clear plan, investigate where your business is at its biggest risk and design your backup and recovery solutions according to your needs. It seems straightforward to just switch on the backup on your cloud, however you might want to distinguish and prioritize certain processes, to control the costs. Also take into consideration how much time is allowed until data gets restored (Recovery-Time-Objective, RTO), and the maximum time window allowed to lose data, Recovery-Point Objective, RPO.

III. People and processes

Despite all efforts to enforce and regulate access, use and security of company information, people and processes are a crucial factor that make the difference. If you work with a cloud provider, you outsource the security and compliancy of that part of the process, thus you need the guarantee that people, policies and processes are certified and enforced. Businesses need to have security policies and processes that are underwritten, understood and acted on by its employees. When it comes to security, SaaSplaza is always happy to provide recommendations and assistance.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

By default, Cloud computing can provide easy access to business data and applications, anywhere, anytime, on any device. Flexibility of workforce, globalization and digital transformation necessitate that employees can work with cloud applications[3]. ERP-applications are a great way to start your cloud journey, if you haven't already started. And to take a small step back on security: make sure that the right policies and security measures are in place, and consider strong (2-factor) authentication to access cloud applications.

6. LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

ERP-applications regularly have a long lifespan within a company, so you might not take lifecycle management into consideration when you think about moving Dynamics into the cloud. However, have you thought about the regular (security) updates and changes that Microsoft provides? With Dynamics in the cloud, in most cases product rollups and new releases can be

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seamlessly installed, with minimal interruption for your production environment and minimum attention of your IT-department to test and accept the changes.

7. COST

Hardware reaches end of life at some point, but you might not be willing to invest big budgets in replacing your server park. Even so, your business requires a SaaS-ready ERP application or you need to hire more skilled people to keep your key application always on and safe. Cloud computing can reduce the Total Cost of Ownership of your Dynamics application, moving the cost for hardware and software from CAPEX to OPEX on your balance and make your application SaaS ready. Furthermore, you free up your IT staff to focus on your core business and benefit from experts who operate efficiently at scale. Specialist Dynamics cloud providers can offer a fixed price per month per user, that comprise of deployment, management, support, security and application performance of your ERP-application. A cloud provider will be able to calculate the Total Cost of Ownership so you can compare this to the current on-premise/in-house cost (include hardware and software, power, personnel + replacement, support, training).

However, moving Dynamics to the cloud is not an instant cost-saving. There can be hidden costs[4] and the deployment and configuration of applications are a major part of the total costs of cloud computing. There is abundant tooling available, there are many options to consider with regards to storage, disaster recovery, networking, database, security and they all come at a price. Just installing applications in the cloud, without properly architecting and configuring, is probably costing more than keeping it on-premise. The true cost saving with cloud computing is achieved by making the right choices for tooling and technology, intelligently utilizing economy of scale and automation.

To prevent that the cost of cloud computing is getting out of control, you might want to consider working with a specialist cloud management provider. Expert knowledge and experience will lead to cost-savings in migration, support and continuous development.

We are committed to understanding your Microsoft Dynamics business requirements to find the best solution.

READY FOR DYNAMICS CLOUD?

When considering cloud computing providers for Dynamics applications, bear in mind the seven aspects that were discussed in this whitepaper, because they can make or break your cloud success.

At SaaSplaza we are committed to understanding your Dynamics 365, Dynamics AX, Dynamics GP and Dynamics NAV business requirements to find the best solution. Feel free to contact us to talk about your needs.

SaaSplaza is the world's leading Cloud provider of Microsoft Dynamics and Azure Services. We consult, design, transform and manage enterprise grade cloud infrastructure for business critical applications on the Microsoft Cloud. Our portfolio focusses on Dynamics Cloud solutions, Azure Services and additional CSP services. We enable our partners and their customers to create competitive advantage, agility and new business models, by allowing them to focus on their core business. Our passionate technology experts and advanced SaaSplaza CloudCARE methodology has empowered over 270 partners and 1600 Business applications in private cloud and on Microsoft Azure. With 6 offices around the world and 11 Azure locations in the US, Europe and Asia, we are always there with 24/7 support.

We make Cloud technology work for you

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