

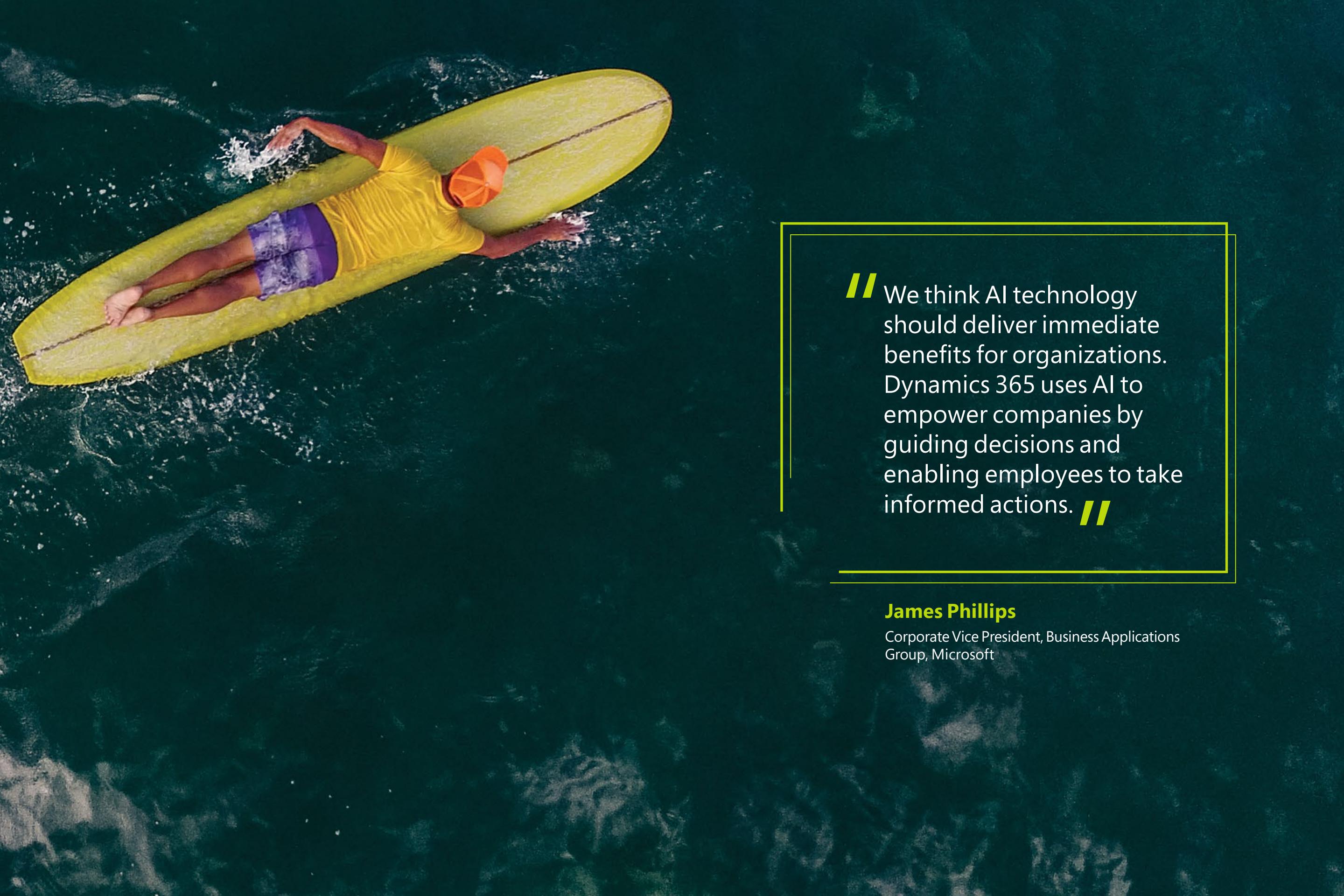


Leveling the playing field

Competing in the Digital Age with Dynamics 365



Microsoft Dynamics 365—
Unlock Next



“ We think AI technology should deliver immediate benefits for organizations. Dynamics 365 uses AI to empower companies by guiding decisions and enabling employees to take informed actions. ”

James Phillips

Corporate Vice President, Business Applications Group, Microsoft



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A full-court press

Technological breakthroughs have always made a profound impact on the business world. The steam engine enabled widespread goods distribution, electric power generation meant factories were no longer bound to riversides, and the telephone allowed instant communication across vast distances. We look back on these—and similar—events as rather quaint, but at the time they were truly earth-shattering, opening new opportunities for some, while closing the door on others.

Though ubiquitous now, prior to 1977 computers were exclusive to the large-scale enterprises that could afford them. The advent of the microcomputer—now called a desktop or PC—changed all that, making affordable access to computational power available to every business. Indeed, the titans of industry, with their gigantic mainframes, had lost a competitive edge against their smaller brethren.

In 1995, the world changed again, as the internet was opened to commercial traffic, giving customers and companies access to information on a global scale, drastically changing the value of previous business models. It was no longer enough to be the only game in town, with defined territories and expensive storefronts—every company had to compete on a global scale.



Today, we find ourselves again on the precipice of a momentous shift, where the combination of several technological breakthroughs promises to democratize an advantage that was once held by a few. The business world is on the cusp of a dramatic change, all brought about by the proliferation of digital.



Come out swinging

Modern business can be extremely complex and, at times, daunting. The world is moving quicker, customers are demanding more, and margins are shrinking. Concepts that were unimaginable a decade ago are now commonplace and disrupting entire industries. Tiny startups are leveraging technology to challenge the way we do business—reframing accepted orthodoxies and delivering customer delight with blazing speed and incredible efficiency. Who could have known that the hospitality or transportation industries would be upended by a couple user-friendly apps like Airbnb or Uber, both of which used technology to challenge the status quo?

The world is changing quickly—it always does—but the opportunity to grow has never been greater. Just like the Information Age before it, the Digital Age is creating a new economy, and there are new rules to the game.

“It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.”

Jackie Joyner-Kersee

Three-time Olympic gold medalist,
U.S. track and field



Getting on the front foot

Harnessing the power of the Digital Age, and driving ambitious growth, requires a new perspective on business applications and infrastructure.

As companies expand, the need for an anytime, anywhere cloud-based solution to seamlessly connect different processes is the linchpin of success. Digital technology helps businesses increase efficiency and maintain enterprise-grade security so that they can focus on what they do best: serving their customers and growing their businesses.



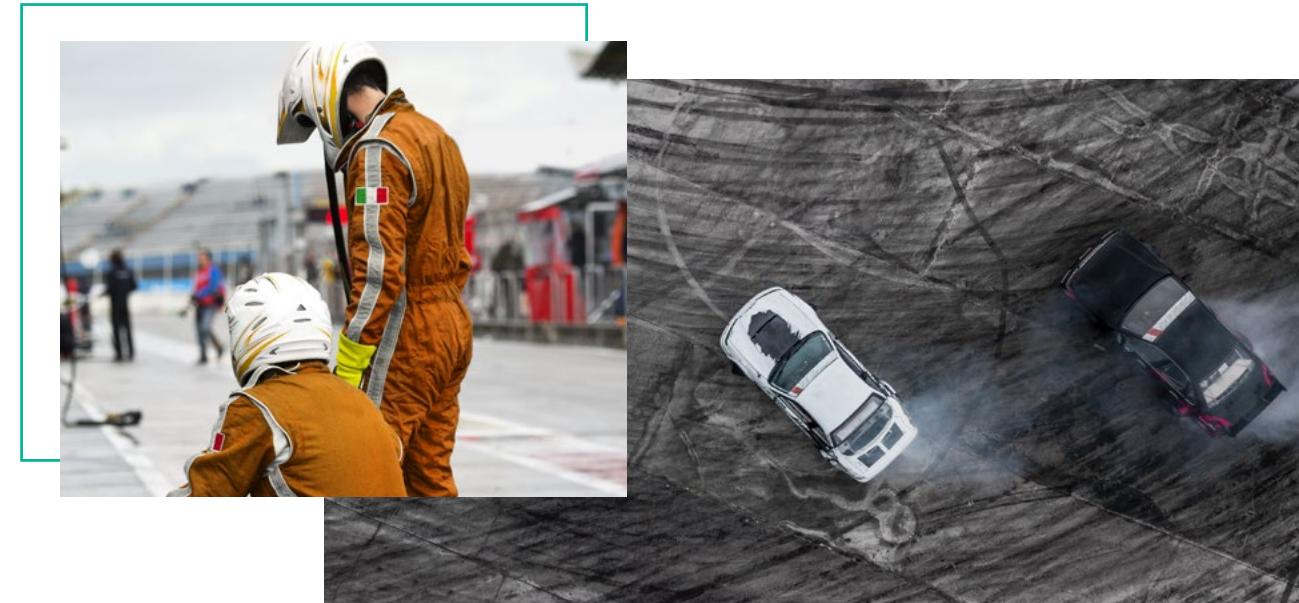
DATA POINT

Cricket Australia **consolidated nine disparate technology operations** to improve player data collection and coaching decisions, resulting in increased collaboration and significant IT savings.



DATA POINT

Hendrick Motorsports **uses flexible workspaces and collaboration tools** to enable car crews, engineers, and mechanics to build better racing strategies and win more races.



The key to victory is adopting a management solution that helps companies improve customer outcomes and make better decisions by connecting all workflows into an integrated solution with a familiar look and feel. As companies scale, they need a flexible solution that can offer an end-to-end view of their business that standalone systems simply can't provide. Imagine the benefits of bringing people, processes, and data together by fully connecting your business, employees, and customers to drive productivity while, at the same time, providing the flexibility required to compete in today's business world.

Moving the goalposts

What is it that really drives business? If we all have access to the same textbooks and strategies, why do some businesses flourish and others wither? There is a lot of collective wisdom about what it takes to be successful, but, in reality, the answer is more nuanced. The key to surviving and thriving in the modern business world is gaining a holistic understanding of your operations, employees, and customers—a feat that is nearly impossible when your data lives in different systems. But, when systems are connected and data is consolidated, unleashing the near-infinite computing power of the cloud can have incredible results.



DATA POINT

The NFL Players Association uses an **integrated platform and the scalability of the cloud** to quickly mine player data to find optimal licensing and marketing opportunities.

Employing business intelligence and analytics with the flexibility afforded by a scalable cloud solution can give any business the deep insights that were once the domain of giant multinational corporations.

Cultivating a better understanding of the ins and outs of a company allows for better decision making and creates opportunities for cost savings by reducing unneeded overhead and waste. Businesses that perform an empirical analysis of all the variables across functions—from accounting to logistics to consumer behavior—will have a better understanding of how the different players interact and how they can profitably serve their customers.



DATA POINT

The Seattle Seahawks can now **track and organize player performance in near real time**, identifying players at risk for injury and speeding the recovery process.





Get on the ball

Built upon the solid foundation of connectivity and an all-in-one business management solution, artificial intelligence (AI) truly allows even the tiniest business to play with economic powerhouses. And though AI may seem overly complex, futuristic, and abstract, it has become commonplace in many aspects of our lives and is becoming far more prevalent in business as well. As we progress further into the Digital Age, the need for—and importance of—AI grows exponentially.

The business end of AI

Artificial intelligence isn't just business jargon or about replacing workers with robots. Rather, it's a process for making incredibly complex challenges easier to understand so that companies can better serve customers while simultaneously increasing efficiency. When you ask your phone for directions, it gathers information from many different data sources and suggests an optimal solution. Why should managing your supply chain be any different? Functions that used to take days or weeks can now be completed in seconds and integrated seamlessly into your workflow, allowing you to focus on what matters: delivering value to your customer at every touchpoint.

AI creates opportunities that were previously unimaginable for companies of any size. Picture creating individualized content for all your customers—whether it's several thousand or several billion—

and providing a unique experience for each one. This may seem like science fiction, but it's already happening. And as customer experiences change and expectations rise, AI may soon prove to be the differentiator between those who succeed in the new digital economy and those who get consigned to history. In fact, smaller businesses have a distinct advantage over established goliaths: as they outgrow their previous systems they have an opportunity to choose a new path without worrying about huge sunk costs.

For growing companies, it's a game changer.



DATA POINT

Spain's La Liga soccer division uses artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to **deliver highly personalized content to more than 2.1 million fans** and 1.6 million social media followers.



In the same ballpark

In the Digital Age, the usefulness of AI cannot be understated: not only does it open doors to new efficiencies, it allows companies to adapt to a quickly changing world and create new lines of business and greater profitability for existing customers. For example, the combination of Internet of Things (IoT) devices and cognitive services gives businesses the ability to automatically track warehouse inventories, as drones with cloud-based computer vision capabilities can automatically aggregate both the count and the location of goods. Or, by leveraging the power of connected systems, artificial intelligence can help identify nascent customer patterns, allowing companies to quickly identify and capitalize on additional cross-selling opportunities to better service customer needs.

One of the most useful things that artificial intelligence enables is the ability to track, analyze, and compute customer lifetime value in real time so that businesses can cater to their most profitable customers. Not every customer creates the same amount of value for a business, yet with limited information, recognizing those customers that are a home run can prove incredibly difficult. Being able to quickly identify the valuable customers and partners that drive growth will not only help you offer differentiating levels of sales, marketing, and service, but also allow you to compete with businesses many times your size.

By adopting an integrated business management system and properly using artificial intelligence, any company can effectively compete in the big leagues.



Going the distance

At Microsoft, we understand the challenges that growing businesses face.

In a fast-moving world with so many options, it's important to pick a company you trust. From accounting to operations to artificial intelligence, we can help you understand your options and select a partner that meets your needs.

Technology empowers you to adapt and grow—it helps you engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations, and reinvent products and business models. Microsoft Dynamics 365 helps you accelerate your digital transformation to meet the changing needs of your customers and capture the new business opportunities of tomorrow.

The engine that drives innovation is simple: **Dream it. Do it.**

Let's get started

dynamics.microsoft.com





Credits

Many subject-matter experts contributed to the conceptualization and articulation of the story contained in this document.

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Do it.**

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