



EVOLVE YOUR ERP

Your business has changed...but what about your technology?
It's time to enable corporate agility with Microsoft Dynamics 365





93% of business leaders believe in adopting flexible and integrated ERP systems...but only 39% feel confident in their current ERP system's flexibility and integration capabilities.¹

¹ Microsoft, Future of ERP: Empowering businesses and people with AI-guided productivity, 2023

TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNER

You're responsible for making sure your company runs effectively. Microsoft is responsible for the tools to help you do it and Sunrise is here to help pull it all together.

Microsoft has established itself as a leader in cloud ERP technology to keep your business operating at peak efficiency. The Dynamics 365 solution, a top product in its class, provides the kind of agility, functionality, and cost-effectiveness that you can only find in a cloud-based platform.

Most importantly, Sunrise offers the quality of partnership you need to make migration to the cloud possible. ERPs have fundamentally changed—and we're here to help you change for the better. Start evolving your business with Microsoft and Sunrise Technologies today.

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1

Cloud ERPs aren't emerging. They're already the standard.

If you're wondering whether your company's ERP solution has fallen behind the competitive curve, here's your answer: More than likely, yes.

Current market research shows that over half of companies' primary ERPs are at least 5 years old, a precariously long time for fast-moving markets. Even though the global ERP software market is growing 9 percent every year, many organizations still rely on legacy, on-premises solutions.²

But inevitably, many of these companies are recognizing the need to change. According to a survey of 500 business leaders, 94% deemed it essential to mitigate the complexities and time-consuming integrations that are inherent in legacy IT infrastructure.³

This surge of interest in cloud ERP solutions is hugely significant as companies respond to competitive pressure and other market forces.

Faced with an aging on-premises infrastructure, most companies with legacy ERP systems are turning to the cloud as the only viable option. Ready or not, cloud ERPs are the new normal.

It's a tipping point brought on by years of incremental innovations that have dramatically altered the business landscape. For more than a decade, Microsoft has been an agent for that change. Its developments in regulatory compliance, data security, and platform flexibility have earned the Dynamics 365 solution recognition as an industry leader and given it a place at the forefront of the way businesses view and use their ERPs.

² Gartner, Market Share Analysis: ERP Worldwide, 2019

³ Microsoft, Future of ERP: Empowering businesses and people with AI-guided productivity, 2023

Cloud ERPs are the new normal. Microsoft and Sunrise can keep you ahead of the curve.




94%

94% of leaders emphasize the importance of business model innovation...

...but only about 50% felt adequately prepared to embark on such transformative journeys

50%



84%



84% of survey responders preferred cloud-based ERP software over on-prem

Interest in on-premises models is in free-fall, dropping nearly 30% from 2009 to the present



30%



1964-1983

American manufacturer Black & Decker shakes up the market by digitizing a new approach to product scheduling known as MRP, or **materials requirement planning**. Designed to manage the relationship between a company's inventory and production, computerized MRP is boosted by Joseph Orlicky's 1975 book *Materials Requirement Planning* and takes hold at thousands of manufacturers across the United States.

1990-2000

With more and more capabilities being rolled into the MRP II umbrella, Gartner sees something altogether new coming to life—and coins it ERP (**enterprise resource planning**). Further broadening the scope of what an MRP II approach was built to oversee, ERP systems are designed to touch nearly every corner of a company's operation. Meant to both collect and analyze data from across a business, ERPs find their way into sectors besides production, like government, and become a baseline expectation at most major companies across the country.

1983-1990

After decades of relying on traditional inventory management systems, the manufacturing industry undergoes a seismic change with the development of **manufacturing resource planning**, or MRP II. Whereas earlier methodologies were designed to manage a company's inventory and production, MRP II tapped computing power to incorporate other aspects of the business, like finance and materials. These new computing platforms are expensive and at times inefficient, but their development soon ushers in a new era: Production management systems that reach beyond just production.

2000-PRESENT

Assessing the latest market changes, Gartner uses "ERP II" to describe another key shift in the industry: Real-time, web-based access to company data. A precursor to modern cloud-based solutions, ERP II helped transform what planning platforms could do for the world's largest companies and industries. The end goal: data-driven insights into a company's overall health, processes, and business performance.

This is also where Microsoft's story begins. Through nearly 20 years of industry-leading innovations, Microsoft delivers an integrated set of ERP solutions that unlocks the kind of unified data that leads companies through a true digital transformation.

The evolution of ERP

It's taken businesses more than 100 years of development to get to the present-day ERP. Older production management models like EOQ (economic order quantity) and MRP (materials requirement planning) served as precursors to MRP II (manufacturing resource planning) methodologies, which in turn were the foundation to the modern ERP—a suite of solutions meant to manage every aspect of the business.

But Microsoft had an even more evolved vision. Building from what Gartner would eventually call “ERP II” (an ERP solution with real-time, web-based data access abilities), the organization worked to build the most functional, encompassing cloud-based solution on the market, all founded on a specific point of view. Simply put, ERPs need to integrate innovative technology—like AI and the Internet of Things—into a powerful, cloud-based suite of familiar tools and apps to provide a truly transformative experience.

That mission is based on market data. The reality is that companies still operating on-premises ERP solutions are starting to feel the effects. They are less likely to meet internal deadlines or find the data they need to make timely decisions, and, ultimately, are less profitable. Such outcomes are not acceptable in today's fast-moving market.

Companies simply have to be faster, smarter, and more streamlined...and cloud-based ERP solutions, especially when integrated with other potent productivity tools, are built for that outcome.

This is something Microsoft, with its vast array of capabilities, is uniquely prepared to provide. Built on and for the Microsoft Azure cloud, Dynamics 365 unifies business operations across finance, manufacturing, inventory, and transportation management with an intuitive user interface for running game-changing, modern global enterprises.

That's why there is a new paradigm in the ERP industry. It's no longer about just moving to the cloud. [It's about harnessing the power of a fully cloud-based set of business solutions to turn today's most advanced tools into practical applications that drive the performance companies need.](#)

The realities of living in the cloud

ERPs are some of the most crucial systems in a company's solutions arsenal. Cloud-based ERP systems provide the following distinct advantages over legacy on-premises solutions:

Ease of Updating

Like most modern software categories, ERPs frequently require updates for best practice information or security purposes. Cloud-based solutions provide a dramatically simpler solution to this foundational need.

Reduce IT dependence and cost of ownership

Moving to the cloud means a closer partnership with the software vendor itself, shifting many recurring maintenance responsibilities away from internal resources and onto dedicated external specialists.

Functionality and corporate agility

On-premises systems are designed for the needs of on-premises users. But cloud-based structures link global offices, users, and devices in a way that dramatically enhances a company's ability to communicate within itself. As an ERP industry-leader, Microsoft understands the benefits of moving to the cloud—but more importantly, it sees the common obstacles that prevent companies from doing so. The roadmap to clearing those obstacles is laid out for you here.



4

Ease of updating

Software versioning is like fashion. Change is inevitable, and those who don't make a conscious effort to stay current are frequently stuck with a wardrobe that's well behind the times.

An outdated ERP is far riskier than a fashion faux pas, but many businesses are still rolling the dice. In a recent survey, nearly 50% of leaders said they're planning to upgrade their ERP systems...and many have already begun.⁴

Despite such advantages, the time and effort involved in updating on-premises solutions are primary reasons why many businesses are still lagging.

SaaS models like Dynamics 365 drastically reduce the legwork needed for platform upgrades. Once they are set for deployment, updates can simply be pushed out digitally by the vendor to all licenses. These are almost immediately ready for use, as opposed to being installed one machine at a time by IT specialists. The problems of time and effort are almost completely neutralized.

The aggregate savings are significant, especially in an age where software updating is such a frequent requirement. The business world moves faster now than it ever has before, and per-industry best practices, available technologies, and even compliance regulations are in an almost constant state of flux. Operating on a cloud model provides an efficient and reliable relationship between company and provider, where the latter primarily carries the burden of keeping systems up-to-date.

But since ERPs maintain so many critical business functions, a common worry for on-premises users is that a single platform update could jeopardize key data, processes, or customizations. Microsoft built Dynamics 365 to eliminate that problem—a business simply has to be able to customize the functionality of an off-the-shelf product to meet its needs.

⁴ TEC, ERP Stats and Facts: ERP Success and Failure Rate, 2023

Companies using their ERP's latest version are almost

2X

as likely to have integrated eCommerce and mobile device capabilities

Those same businesses are nearly

50%

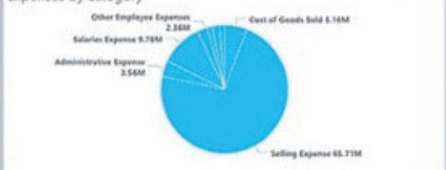
more likely to have business analytics and intelligence



Revenue by region



Expenses by category



Revenue and expenses



Expenses by region



ERP platform upgrades are an inevitability; a cloud solution just gives companies more flexibility in how they account for them.

Microsoft supports this agility by “sealing the application.” When a client customizes their platform, their new code is an extension to the core code, as opposed to overlaying the core code. With this approach, customizations are preserved after updates to the core, with end API connections ensuring the unique elements still work automatically. Combine that capability with considerable no-code customization options using Power Platform applications, and you’ve made platform updates a problem of the past.

In addition, Dynamics 365 as well as other complementary Microsoft systems allow for approved updates, meaning many upgrades can still be tested by a company before they are pushed out to the core. Now, internal stakeholders can work in a controlled upgrade environment to evaluate foundational updates and protect against any damaging ripple effects. [Control over updates remain with the customer, but the effort rolls to the vendor.](#)

Even if upgrades can be more complicated for companies leaning heavily into platform customizations, this is not an issue isolated to cloud-based systems. An on-premises solution would be equally susceptible to such problems. A SaaS tool’s client-managed update testing, however, can provide an earlier warning of potential misalignments.

On-premises or otherwise, ERP platform upgrades are an inevitability, but a cloud solution gives companies more flexibility in how they account for them.

Remember that complication-causing updates are not without purpose. If an upgrade conflicts with existing internal processes, it’s possible that those processes no longer align to industry best practices and should be assessed. Foundational updates should be viewed as opportunities to evaluate your company’s methodology against the competition. After all, Dynamics 365 is more than just an ERP—it’s a continually optimized set of per-industry benchmarks that gives companies the tools to make smarter decisions.

That directly translates to a safer and smoother client-side system, especially when accounting for significant changes in global regulations like GDPR.

Avoiding platform updates keeps those benefits at arm’s length. [But migrating to a cloud-based solution makes solving the update problem a whole lot easier.](#)

Reduce IT dependence and total cost of ownership

An obvious benefit of the cloud model is the boost in business performance gained through more efficient platform updates. The cloud brings improved best practices for data, innovative technological capabilities, and a more secure system. But using a SaaS tool can have a major impact on a company's bottom line as well, and those savings are usually seen within IT.

Simply put, running an ERP in the cloud usually takes less time. With so many technical responsibilities now resting with the vendor as opposed to the customer, internal IT teams have far fewer tasks to worry about when it comes to maintaining the system. Managing the platform update process is just one piece of the pie; tasks like hardware upkeep and product support represent critical time drains on even well-performing IT structures.

At many companies, resistance to IT change is caused by the relationship between cost and capital. For businesses that have invested heavily in on-premises servers and the teams to manage them, for example, a sudden pivot to a cloud-based structure can be daunting, deflating, and financially complicated. This may explain why small businesses see an uptick in cloud migration rates as opposed to staying on-premises—they're still agile enough to navigate key structural changes.

But the divestment of certain on-premises resources don't necessarily have to happen immediately. A phased approach can provide a smoother transition and ease cost burdens; it just requires smart planning and a clear set of end objectives. While expenses may spike during a phased analysis, the end savings and ROI of choosing a cloud ERP implementation should be crucial long-term considerations.



..Using a SaaS tool can have a major impact on a company's bottom line as well, and those savings are usually seen within IT.

Cloud solutions don't have to be an all or nothing proposition. Microsoft's broad offering divides into three camps—software as a service (SaaS), platform as a service (PaaS), and infrastructure as a service (IaaS). [Dynamics 365 is a true SaaS solution, operating as a browser-based ERP](#). The Power Platform (comprised of solutions like Power BI, Power Automate, and Power Apps) functions as a PaaS tool. And Microsoft's cloud solution, Azure, is the IaaS.

In tandem, these three categories provide a full-stack cloud ERP model for companies ready to embrace digital transformation. They just don't have to be tackled all at once, allowing businesses to implement phased solutions if needed.

This is critical, because for most companies, an impending ERP implementation isn't just a possibility—it's a certainty. According to Panorama Consulting's 2024 Clash of the Titans ERP report, 84% of survey respondents reported that they preferred cloud-based ERP software over on-premises solutions.⁵

The reduced dependence on internal IT teams, then, is more of a transition to a relationship based model between vendor and customer – freeing up multiple internal departments to focus on business results.

And with so many technological tools available in our cloud ERP, those business results have never been closer at hand.

5 Panorama Consulting, 2024 ERP Clash of the Titans, 2023

Functionality and corporate agility

Decision factors like cost, upkeep, and internal IT demands are rightfully crucial when selecting an ERP. But at the end of the day, one of the most crucial elements of any SaaS solution is how well the platform works, both broadly and for your company's specific needs. In today's business environment, that usually means universal data accessibility.

Companies are becoming increasingly decentralized every day. Remote employees, global offices, and device diversification are stretching the limits of what many businesses can keep connected. Remote employees, global offices, and device diversification are stretching the limits of traditional business connectivity. According to MIT's Sloan School of Management, 50% of surveyed workers work from home at least once a week.⁶

Such requirements are becoming increasingly fundamental to companies of all sizes. That need is something best resolved with a combination of SaaS tools and the cloud.

Aberdeen research says only 35% of companies feel satisfied with their ability to use data to make effective decisions.⁷ Meanwhile, 91% of leaders stress the importance of data literacy among their employees.⁸

Such flexibility and scalability are at the core of Microsoft's cloud ERP solution set. The browser-based interface in Dynamics 365 allows for real-time connectivity from anywhere in the world—and from almost any device. And compounding that capability with the full power of the Microsoft application family provides even more value. Incorporating business intelligence tools from Power BI, for example, can help turn data-heavy financial ledgers into easily shared dashboards. Integration with Office 365 seamlessly ties the ERP to your primary business applications.

6 MIT, How Many Americans are Really Working Remotely, 2023

7 Aberdeen Strategy & Research, 6 Ways Legacy Technology is Wreaking Havoc on Your Business, 2023

8 Microsoft, Future of ERP: Empowering businesses and people with AI-guided productivity, 2023

More than a quarter of businesses looking to move to a cloud ERP cite functionality and agility as their main reason why; another 10% are looking for easier access to data for remote employees or global offices.



1

Always have the option to manage truly mission-critical data on-premises.

2

A vendor's datacenter network should easily meet your company's specific data residency requirements.

3

Providers should be able to provide expert guidance and technical compliance with new regulations.

4

Are you evaluating a vendor that no one else seems to trust, or will you be in good company?

Company leaders say that a cloud-based ERP's ability to safeguard a company's internal information is one of its most crucial features, according to research.

This is all accomplished with a standardized user interface that's both powerful and usable—an increasingly important objective as companies evolve from cloud novices to cloud experts. Keystone research shows that 50% of companies switching cloud providers do so because the incumbent solution was too limited in functionality.

For any company, what's critical is that such adaptability and accessibility don't come at the expense of data security. Cloud-based systems, and the misconceptions that surround them, remain a persistent worry for many business leaders. Company executives say that a cloud-based ERP's ability to safeguard a company's internal information is one of its most crucial features, according to Keystone research.⁹

Consider the following checkpoints when evaluating whether a cloud-based ERP provider has the right safety network in place:

1. Using a cloud-based ERP doesn't mean every data point has to live in the cloud. You should always have the option to leave mission-critical data on-premises if the consequences of not being able to access that data would be catastrophic.

2. Data residency regulations should be easily met through the vendor's vast network of data centers – even in unique markets. That's why Microsoft has more datacenters than any other provider in the world.

3. Privacy laws are changing rapidly. Your provider should be able to provide expert guidance and technical compliance to regulations like GDPR in both your platform and cloud infrastructure.

4. What other companies are using this cloud solution? Will you be among the world's most respected and secure companies as clients? Or are you evaluating an option that no one else seems to trust?

Your company's security and your customers' security should always be paramount when considering any major platform change. The right vendor should specifically detail how its ERP solution accounts for key issues and updates, as well as exactly how data is accessed and encrypted. Part of the data puzzle, however, is how that ERP is implemented from the get-go. Outlining and then implementing a clear set of business objectives is the first step to migrating to a cloud-based model. Here's how you can get started.

7

A smarter path to implementation

Once you've selected a new platform for your company, ERP implementations shouldn't be taken lightly—platforms that touch every corner of a business demand a requisite amount of planning. Regardless of whether you're choosing your company's first cloud ERP or just switching to a new primary solution, both processes should start with the same step: [clearly defining what you want your ERP to accomplish](#).

For many CTOs and IT leaders, this can be the most difficult stage. For starters, reaching consensus across departments on an ERP's desired functionality takes immense (and sometimes even tense) communication and planning. Mapping out exactly how that functionality comes to life is critical. This may require a specialist, in conjunction with your IT team, to properly connect all the various pieces of your ERP to the secondary platforms, or other pieces of technology that you currently use.

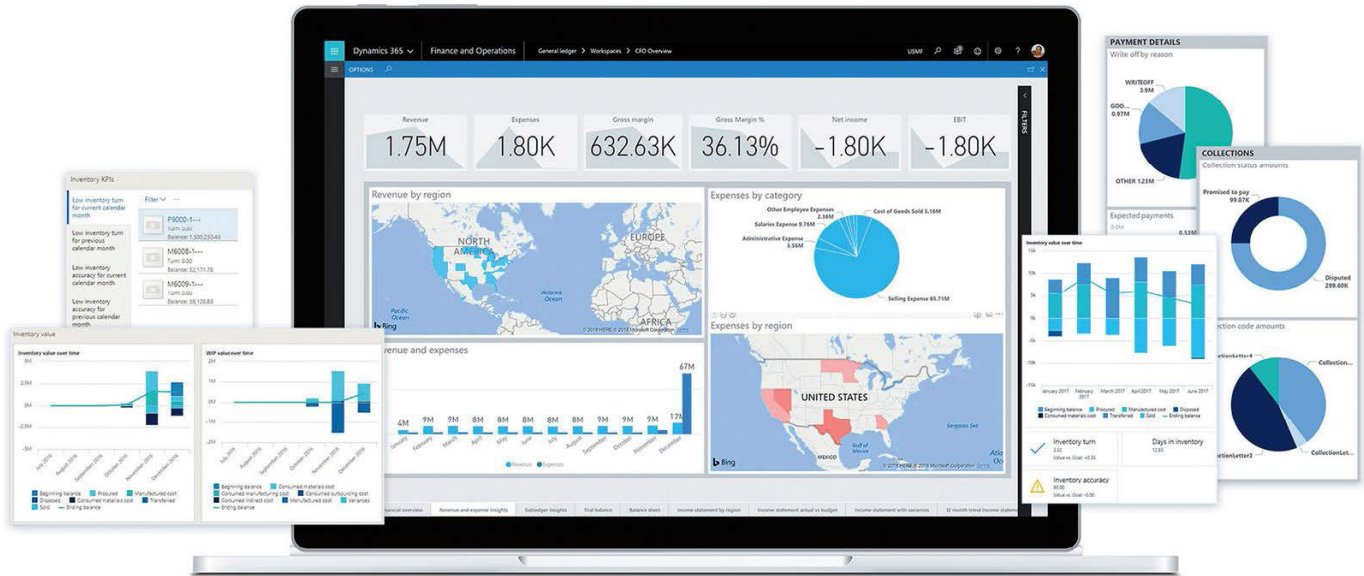
To help solve these problems, focus on the largest gaps between the functionality of your new system and the surrounding technologies you currently use. Then decide whether they need to be addressed with platform customizations, internal process changes, or additional technology.

These decisions are crucial. Selecting platform customizations for specific teams—and weighing them against the advantages of aligning to industry best practices—can have long-term functionality implications.

It can be tempting to solve every issue with a customization. But doing so can make your platform more difficult to update and maintain. While they may be necessary in the end, customizations should only be adopted after determining that your ERP's per-industry best practices simply can't apply to your business—and only after a firm understanding of their potential consequences.

But knowing your end goals and achieving them are two different things. Having a well-defined and written scope of work can mean the difference between a failed project with disastrous results, and a highly successful project with huge benefits.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sunrise, 7 Steps to a Successful ERP Implementation



Implementations take time, and maintaining a consistent north star across the process can keep teams on the same page. It's also essential to include the right project managers to keep sprints on deadline.

With today's ERPs built for nearly every aspect of modern business, implementation teams should span all key disciplines and departments including finance, IT, and human resources.

Having a dedicated group of stakeholders offers not just a mixture of knowledge, but also a sense of ownership over the project itself. And bringing in external specialists can provide critical expertise in implementing your new ERP platform.

With the right project map and collection of talents in place, it's time to kick off.

But such a business-critical decision begs for a commitment to continual testing and optimization. A cloud migration is an opportunity to move away from a monolithic, on-premises approach and toward a constantly evolving system. [Exercising a SaaS model's inherent flexibility and refining its immense capabilities to your unique business needs is critical to recognizing the platform's full impact on your business.](#)

It's time to make a change

ERPs are the lifeblood of most major businesses. Good platforms track everything from inventory to monthly close, which is why replacing or upgrading them should be approached with the appropriate amount of respect. When the stakes are high, being cautious is the smart approach.

But the data is clear—cloud-based ERPs are already the new normal, and with so many businesses running outdated systems, the next five years are likely to bring dramatic market change. Not only are SaaS solutions more capable and efficient than on-premises ones, but their level of built-in vendor support and security protections provide a safer, more scalable environment for your company to grow into.

Now is the time to consider what the cloud can offer to your bottom line. Microsoft's Dynamics 365 platform provides the integrated tools and support essential to helping secure overall business viability into the future. And Sunrise is there to offer the industry expertise and enhancements to make sure your implementation goes as smoothly as possible. [Regardless of where you are in your journey to the cloud, our experts can help build a migration strategy that aligns to your specific business challenges.](#)



There's more than one way to the cloud

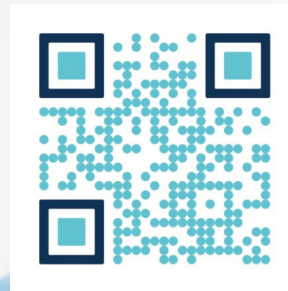
The thought of moving to the cloud can be overwhelming. *Even when you know it's best for the business, it can still be hard to reconcile feeling like you're losing control with the multitude of benefits that the cloud will bring.* In fact, Sunrise's own CTO had reservations as our organization moved to the cloud, "There was definitely a feeling that we didn't control our own destiny anymore. We didn't know if it would ultimately be cost-effective or stable, but it has turned out to be both!"¹¹

That's the beauty of the Azure cloud. While in many cases we would recommend starting fresh with a Dynamics 365 deployment, if that isn't in the cards for you right now, that's ok! You can start by migrating your data to Azure, or surfacing insights with Power BI. Thanks to the breadth and width of Microsoft's offerings, you can start with a project that fits your comfort level, timing, and budget.

Your role is to help your company thrive, making sure it is equipped to handle anything the future may throw at it. Ours is to help you figure out the best way to make that happen. *Whether you're ready to dive into the cloud head first or just want to dip your toe in, we can help.*

¹¹ Sunrise, Leading the Way to the Cloud, 2017

Get started with an assessment from Sunrise



Use your camera to scan this code or visit sunrise.co/evolve to learn more about our assessment.



Sunrise's disciplined process towards ERP implementations was absolutely critical in our successful outcome. The company's culture leads to a large team of folks who are invested in supporting your success. It's rare in software to find folks who really want to dig in and work to solve your technology challenges like Sunrise does.

Chris Odegard
Chief Merchandising Officer
Murdoch's Ranch & Home





See what Dynamics 365 and Sunrise can do for your business.

Whether you're responsible for the finances and operations of a global enterprise or a regional midsize business, Microsoft Dynamics 365 has the right solution for your ERP needs. As an industry leader in cloud-based ERP platform technology, Microsoft can provide the peace of mind that only long-term support and viability can offer. [Don't let the market – and the competition – pass you by. Find your new home in the cloud with Dynamics 365.](#)

Since 1994, companies around the world have trusted Sunrise Technologies with some of their most challenging IT projects. As an award-winning Microsoft Cloud Partner, Sunrise offers global expertise in Dynamics 365, Azure, and Power BI for apparel, footwear, home furnishings, consumer products, manufacturing, and retail companies.

We deliver game-changing, global, omni-channel, Tier 1 supply chain solutions, powered by the Microsoft Cloud, without all the cost and complexity. As a global systems integrator operating in North America, Europe, and Asia, we are everywhere you do business.

Let's cut to the chase, shall we?

Inside this booklet, you'll find lots of great information about how the cloud is the new standard for business applications, how it can help make a positive impact on your business, and the ways that Sunrise Technologies and Microsoft can get you there.

(Really, you should read the whole thing...it's pretty interesting and informative!)

If your interest is already piqued and you want to find out more, let's chat. You can find us at the QR code below or at sunrise.co/evolve.

Cheers,



Ready to cut to the chase with a cloud assessment from Sunrise? Sign up here.

