



## Merger Mania For MBS, Classic Microsoft Partners

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By [Paula Rooney](#),

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Microsoft Business Solutions partners are merging with Microsoft Classic partners to deliver end-to-end solutions for vertical industries.

Just last week, MBS partner Vis.align, West Chester, Pa., merged with Microsoft partner Econium, Totowa, N.J.; and large Microsoft systems integrator Avanade, Seattle, acquired MBS-Axapta specialist en'tegrate, Chicago.

Observers point to increasing merger activity and cross-pollination among the 6,000 MBS partners that are focused on Great Plains, Navision and Axapta applications with Microsoft's stable of 30,000 Classic partners that are well-versed in Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft's infrastructure and .Net software.

Econium Managing Executive Ken Winell, who will serve as an executive vice president at Vis.align, said MBS partners and Classic partners are merging and forming alliances to ensure full vertical services delivery for customers and ensure financial viability as larger systems integrators increasingly push vertical solutions downmarket.

"Classic partners want MBS business, and companies with MBS practices want to expand collaboration practices," Winell said.

This week at Microsoft's Convergence 2005 in San Diego, Resolute plans to announce it is acquiring Hunt Interactive, a Bellevue, Wash.-based .Net solution provider with expertise in collaboration.

Resolute, a solution provider founded by CRM specialist Matt Duncan and Avanade/Microsoft Consulting Services executive and Resolute CEO John Fallou, was formed by the merger of Pacific Solutions Group, a classic .Net firm, and Resolute Business Solutions, CRM partner.

Since then, Bellevue-based Resolute has acquired ERP specialists The KIS Group and smaller entities to become a full consulting and services shop for midsize businesses. "You need to be a hybrid of both," said Duncan, Resolute's chief business officer. "It's a new breed of partners helping to accelerate what Microsoft is trying to do on the MBS side."

That's just the tip of the iceberg. In late 2002, MBS solution provider Tectura purchased the Seattle office of Born, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, to be able to offer full end-to-end infrastructure and vertical application services. And last year, Microsoft Gold Certified partner Trinity Expert Systems, Coventry, England, acquired The Computing Practice Limited, a Microsoft ERP solution provider focused on Navision, and its subsidiary Oryx Computer Systems, which provides SAP Business One solutions.

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