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The Project Connected Workforce and Connected Company

Achieving it can bring your project- or services-based business to new heights

The pressure on service companies and project companies

Every business feels the pressure these days, but project-driven and services-based organizations face distinctive challenges, whatever industry they're in. Siloed data, legacy systems, disconnected staff —often still using green screens and spreadsheets—limit productivity, collaboration and innovation just when these enterprises or units need them more than ever. They create friction at each step of the organization's business processes, slowing the speed of business and ultimately degrading customer satisfaction.

When services professionals lack visibility into the pipeline, they can't respond with the agility that changing business needs now demand. When they spend too much time on administration, they can't spend enough on customer engagement. When they're locked into legacy business models, they can't adopt service-based innovations and "right pricing" that make them more competitive. And when their business runs on last-generation technology, they can't

compete effectively to attract and retain top talent. Once upon a time, businesses could achieve scalability by throwing bodies at the problem; but today, that fix is too slow, expensive and inefficient. Businesses need a new approach.

This is true in a broad range of service industries and diverse roles from CxOs to frontline staff.

resource managers

CFOs

human resource directors

CIOs

sales reps

finance staff

professional staff

advertising

purchasing buyers

project managers

industrial services

architecture

construction

marketing

consulting

event management

advertising

accounting

engineering

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Requirements for a new solution

Case study

The professionals throughout a project-based or services-based organization need a solution that not only maximizes their own effectiveness, but that maximizes the effectiveness of the entire organization for on-time, on-budget project delivery. More than doing today's job better, the solution needs to support innovation, to enable new business models and new service-delivery models that meet and exceed customer expectations. The drive today is to connect all the roles in the services organization through technology that seamlessly links each staff member across the business.

That's a tall order and, to meet it, organizations need a seamless, end-to-end project journey that begins with the first customer contact, and continues through quotes, project planning and execution, and project management and reporting.
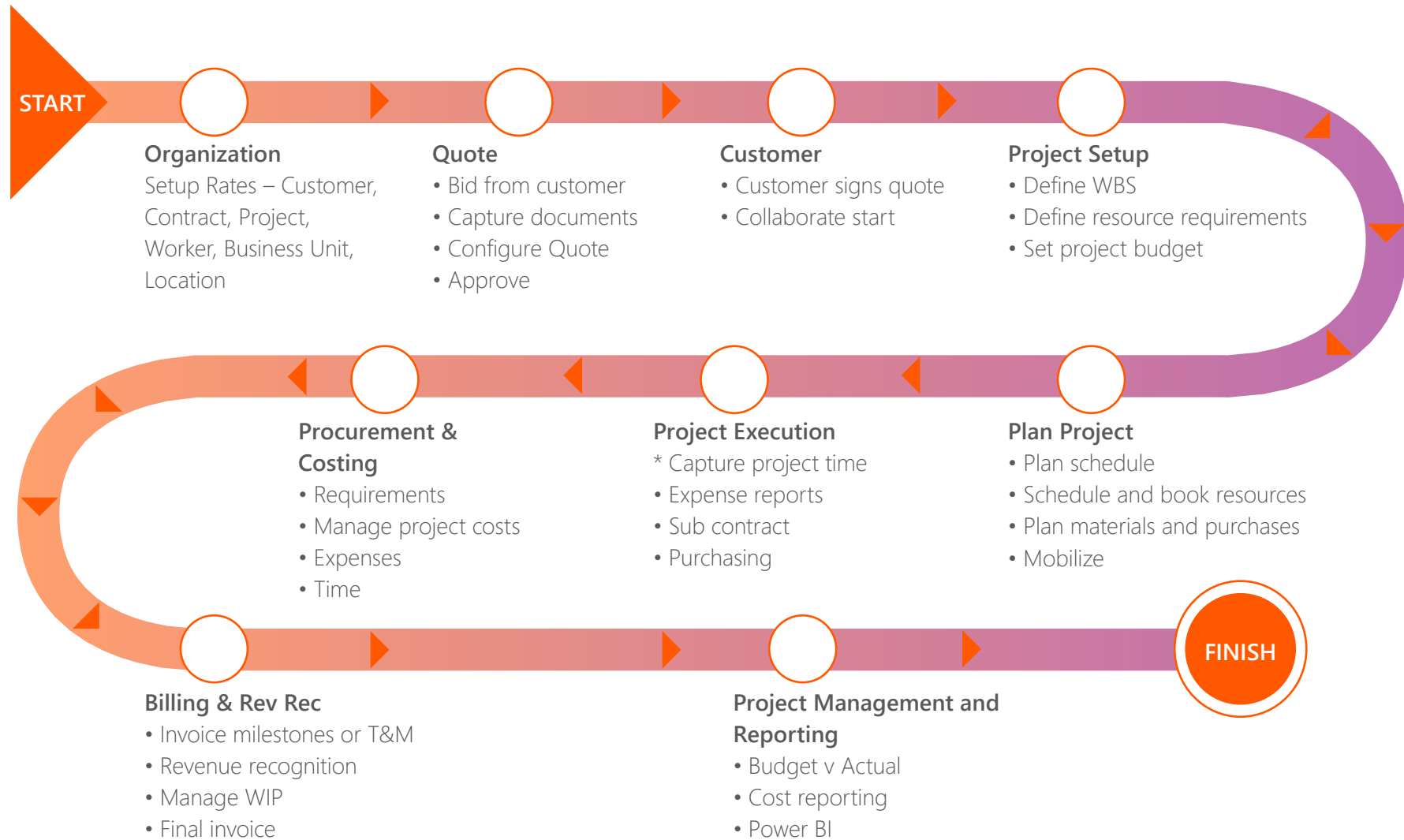
The elements of a seamless solution include:

- **Complete collaboration**, with sales reps, estimators, project managers and others sharing insights and information whenever and wherever needed to keep pre-sales and post-sales processes moving effectively.

- **Integrated systems** that replace data siloes and support a single version of the truth across pricing, project resource and material planning, inventory consumption, human resource requirements, staff scheduling, project and company financials and more.

- **Flexibility** to support new needs as they arise, so the solution not only addresses limitations of the past, but is prepared for opportunities in the future.

- **Actionable insights** based on speed to information and democratization of data that deliver precisely the information each worker needs for efficient projects and happy customers.

HNTB builds better sales and project management

Leading architecture, engineering, planning and program management company HNTB reengineered its sales and project management with Avanade. It used Microsoft Dynamics and related technologies to replace 55 disparate applications with an end-to-end IT platform. The result: Automation of HNTB's project lifecycle, including sales, contracting, project management and billing.

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3

Project journey

START

Organization
Setup Rates – Customer, Contract, Project, Worker, Business Unit, Location

Quote
• Bid from customer
• Capture documents
• Configure Quote
• Approve

Customer
• Customer signs quote
• Collaborate start

Project Setup
• Define WBS
• Define resource requirements
• Set project budget

Procurement & Costing
• Requirements
• Manage project costs
• Expenses
• Time

Project Execution
* Capture project time
• Expense reports
• Sub contract
• Purchasing

Plan Project
• Plan schedule
• Schedule and book resources
• Plan materials and purchases
• Mobilize

Billing & Rev Rec
• Invoice milestones or T&M
• Revenue recognition
• Manage WIP
• Final invoice

Project Management and Reporting
• Budget v Actual
• Cost reporting
• Power BI

FINISH

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The Project Connected Workforce and Connected Company

This seamless solution is the Project Management Connected Workforce and Connected Company. It works for each participant in the project- and services-based business, as well as for the organization overall.

First, it works by enabling and empowering the people who create and sustain value for the organization.

- Staff members complete client work on time, with less admin chores.

- Project managers always have the data they need to execute efficiently, on time and on budget.

- CIOs deliver just-in-time insights at the moment of truth that boost project quality and customer satisfaction.

- HR directors give workers the knowledge and tools they need to improve their skills—and can measure that improvement.

- CFOs gain proactive views of margins and other KPIs so they can intervene successfully.

- Business development executives can see and act on the entire customer relationship, and gain tools and insights to help them sell.

Second, it enables these people to collaborate more powerfully across the project journey. For example, during pre-sales, sales reps can work more quickly and effectively with architects and consultants to respond more smartly to RFPs and deliver better proposals; post-sales, those architects and consultants can work more effectively with the sales team to ensure that what was promised is what's delivered.

The handoffs from sales to project managers go more smoothly. Resource managers have greater insight into project plans so they can source qualified staff and resources earlier and more accurately. Finance and project teams can work together to ensure that invoicing is complete and expenses and revenues are captured fully and accurately. Staff members know what to do and when. Project managers communicate effectively with subcontractors and clients.

The platform to make it happen

The technology solution for your Project Management Connected Workforce and Connected Company must be as broad and deep as the challenges in your organization. Microsoft technology meets this crucial requirement, in part because it's based on Microsoft's deep expertise and rich history with tools for front office, back office, collaboration, productivity, and project management.

The platform to realize this model should include the following:

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Project Operations

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Project Operations is the core of the project-journey solution. It integrates CRM with ERP and connects sales, resourcing, project management and finance teams within a single application.

For many organizations Dynamics 365 Project Operations will be an evolutionary advance that integrates Dynamics 365 technologies they already use, including:

- Dynamics 365 CE Sales, CRM and Project Automation – with project-based sales capabilities including quotations, planning and resourcing

- Dynamics 365 Finance—with billing, revenue recognition, and procurement and accounting capabilities

- Microsoft Project for the Web—project management for projects of all sizes

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams delivers the comprehensive communication and collaboration offerings including chat, call, online meetings and collaboration in real time. It supports your connected workforce wherever they are located: in the office, on the road, at home, or at a customer site.

Power Platform

The Microsoft Power Platform is more than the sum of its parts, and each of those parts is powerful: **Power Apps** for low-code and no-code solutions, **Power Automate** to automate organizational processes, **Power Virtual Agents** for no-code chatbots to engage with employees and customers, and **Power BI** for informed, confident decisions based on data-driven insights

Microsoft Cloud

To help your people work smarter, you need software that is smarter. Meet the Microsoft Cloud, with Azure Services including Machine Learning and Cognitive Services, Office 365, and more.

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Requirements for a partner

You're in a project-based or services-based industry, or you're a vendor to companies that need project and service delivery capabilities. That makes you an expert on what you need to be successful—but not on what technology platform will enable that success.

That's why a large and growing share of companies that seek solutions for managing the project journey use an implementation partner. There are all types of implementation options out there. Consider the following criteria for your decision-making checklist:

Deep industry knowledge and business expertise—A one-size-fits-all solution won't cut it. The optimal solution will be the one that's tailored to your industry and your specific business needs. Look for a partner with the eagerness to listen to you before designing it—and the expertise to deliver it.

Broad technology knowledge and experience—Microsoft technology is the most cost-effective way to gain the full power and functionality you need today as well as the flexibility you need to support your future needs. Look for a partner with the most extensive experience in delivering Microsoft solutions to companies in your industry, with needs similar to yours.

A long-term partner—Relationships are the name of the game, now more than ever. You should look for a partner that's dedicated to giving you the tools and teaching you the skills to make you successful on your own. At the same time, your partner should be there for the long-term, ready to help you grow your solution as you grow your business.

Case study

Studio 100 speeds ERP processes

Global entertainment company Studio 100 turned to Avanade and Dynamics 365 for a cloud-based ERP solution that speeds business processes including production and labor cost submissions, and expense approvals and payouts. The solution is used across the company by finance, procurement, supply chain and sales teams. Creative teams on location can now easily access the system, helping to keep productions on schedule and on budget.

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Avanade: A better way to implement

For a solution that enables your project journey to work in more efficient, more effective and more innovative ways than ever before, the right technology is crucial—but it's not enough. You also need an implementation based on an unmatched understanding of that technology, keen insight into how it can enhance your business processes, tried-and-true best practices to enable you to achieve your business goals.

That's where the Avanade Delivery Framework comes in, including key components Envision and Avanade Intelligent Enterprise Solutions (AIES) for Service Industries.

The Envision engagement is our crucial first-step in enabling you to succeed with your Project Management Connected Workforce. It's our opportunity to thoroughly understand your business so we can design and build a solution that thoroughly meets your needs. Envision is a codified best practice

that has explicit roles and rules for both Avanade and client team members. And it's fast, delivering work product in about six weeks.

AIES for Service Industries is our business process modeling for project-driven and services-based organizations, designed to deliver more value, faster, with less risk and at lower cost. It's how you can focus your Dynamics 365 configurations on the innovations and differentiators that deliver the biggest competitive impacts in your industry.

AIES is a proven approach to bridge the gap between business and technology via best-practice business processes. AEIS is a streamlined solution delivery tool with predictable project delivery processes and best practices implementation.

Only Avanade can deliver AIES, because it's based on the combined strengths and experience of Avanade and its founding companies: Accenture and Microsoft.

The close collaboration among the three companies exploits Accenture's industry expertise and industry-leading processes and best practices, Microsoft's intelligent business cloud platform and Dynamics 365 business applications, and Avanade's unmatched experience in designing and delivering Microsoft-based technologies and solutions.

First step: Assess your project operations

To enhance your project journey and achieve a Project Management Connected Workforce and Connected Company, you first need to assess your current status—and how it stacks up against others in your industry. Avanade can compare your answers on thousands of industry measures and provide benchmarks on how well you're positioned today—and how you can get to your optimized state. Here's an abridged version of the assessment questions to get started:

1. **What's the structure of your company's project operations?** Manual and siloed? Systems but unintegrated? Highly structured and connected?

2. **How connected are your project management and accounting systems?** Siloed? Automated but not connected? End-to-end connected?

3. **What's your approach to staffing projects, from finding the right skills to responding to changing schedules?** Unstructured and user dependent? Based on spreadsheets? Robust and dynamic?

4. **How do you and your staff communicate project-based information?** Word of mouth? Email? Connected resource management tool? How satisfied are workers with this communication?

5. **What's your approach to project business process improvement and change management?** Reactive? Periodic? Proactive evaluation to avoid potential problems?

Case study

Willemen Groep gains faster, actionable business insight

Construction group Willemen Groep developed a unified ERP solution to tame the complexity of its acquisitions' disparate systems. Working with Avanade, the business used Avanade Intelligent Enterprise Solutions to create a unified ERP system based on Dynamics 365. Now, decision makers find financial and business insights in real time—not weeks. Power BI generates personalized reports from strategic data. And the company is reimagining everything from the construction site to back-office operations.

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What to do now?

To learn what your company stands to gain from becoming a Project Connected Workforce and Connected Company, visit our **service industries** page.

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Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. With 36,000 professionals in 25 countries, we are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com

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