
Should I Use Dynamics AX Resources or a Dynamics AX Partner?

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Should I use a Microsoft Dynamics AX Partner or staff augmentation for my Dynamics AX project? The pros and cons of “project” versus “staff augmentation”.

Some companies like to use a Dynamics AX Partner to help manage their project. Others prefer to use outside resources in specific roles to augment their team. Some like the diverse experience and expertise a Dynamics AX Partner can provide. Others like to “run the show” internally and augment the project with specific resources. Clearly, implementing Dynamics AX requires significant internal time and resources in addition to those required of the IT department. How does an organization make this “project” versus “staff augmentation” decision? We believe some of these questions can help determine which path makes the most sense for your organization.

- Do you currently have or want a large IT department?
- Does your IT department have the capacity to take on the kind of resource spike needs demanded by a Dynamics AX implementation?
- If you have the internal IT resources and expertise to handle a Dynamics AX implementation, do you also have subsequent projects to keep these people busy going forward?
- Does your IT department have a methodology for implementing ERP projects?
- Does your IT department have the tools to implement an ERP project?
- What kinds of templates and past experiences can your IT department lean on to reduce risk and help ensure project success?
- Does your IT team have experience working within an ERP implementation methodology?
- Has your IT organization implemented Dynamics AX at other sites?
- Does your IT organization have a quality assurance program in place?
- Does your organization either have or wish to invest in the internal infrastructure of methodology, best practices and tools to help ensure the success of your Dynamics AX project?

Does your company want to own and tightly manage the Dynamics AX project, using external resources to augment the project? Or, are you the kind of company that would prefer to have a Dynamics AX Partner co-manage the project and drive it based on business process requirements? Does your project only require resources who know the software configuration, a common 1099 skillset, or do you require business process expertise AND software expertise, which is a rarity in the 1099 world? Clearly there are various flavors, but the point is clear. Finally, and this is an important point, what kind of a process does the Dynamics AX Partner use to ensure its people, whether 1099 or W-2, have the best possible aptitude, attitude, skills and experience to provide your company with the level of service you deserve? This is where 1099 versus W-2 comes into play in the real world – the real Dynamics AX services market.

Full disclosure, our firm has made the strategic decision to focus on providing high quality people to serve the Microsoft Dynamics AX market, and that these resources not only know the software cold, but also bring business process and process design expertise. However, we still think the topic deserves attention. The problem with “body shopping” is that in many cases the people performing the services do not come from a solid, common foundation based on proven tools and methodology. Furthermore, there is little in terms of quality assurance and even less in terms of operating within a proven Dynamics AX project delivery construct.

Does this matter? Perhaps not if your company is owning and driving the project at a detailed level and can manage this kind of resource. However, if you are relying on your Dynamics AX Partner’s experience and expertise to help guide the project, you may find yourself wanting. And even if you are running/owning/managing the project(s), isn’t it better to work with people who are trained and coached in best practices and understand how to work in this kind of professional environment? We believe that the answer to this question is a definitive “yes”.

Most if not all Dynamics AX firms use 1099 resources from time to time, including our firm. We specifically use them to augment our strong W-2 staff where niche areas of expertise are required and we have strong processes in place to vet these resources and ensure they deliver using our proven tools and methods. We believe the challenge for the Dynamics AX customer is in really qualifying the process by which the firm selects its talent, drives its methodology, uses common tools and ensures project quality and customer satisfaction.