



## Case study

# Fruit company learns the importance of servicing the solution

An agricultural business that grows fruit implemented Dynamics 365 Finance and Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management as soon as the cloud version of Dynamics 365 became available. The company has been a global leader distributing fruit across different regions, and warehouse operations and transportation are part of the company's core business.

Before implementing the Finance and Supply Chain Management apps, the fruit company was using Dynamics AX 2012, and was familiar with the ALM of that on-premises enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution—but moving to the cloud required a mindset change.

Dynamics 365 has been evolving since its initial release, when the application and the platform were released as separate components. By the time continuous updates and a single, unified version became the norm for Dynamics 365, the fruit producer's operations in the cloud were mature in taking updates under this modality. The company was ready to adopt the modernized update pattern and take advantage of the continuous innovations from Microsoft. They also wanted to fulfill one of their expected returns

on investment (ROIs) by entrusting Microsoft to bring new functionality, instead of developing it on their own.

The fruit company's solution involved standard Dynamics 365 apps, some extensions, and an ISV. As the direct implementer of the entire solution, the ISV created a strategic partnership with the company and provided IT outsourcing services.

In the beginning, the incentive for the company to update Dynamics 365 with new releases was the continued support from Microsoft per the software update policy. The app functioned properly and applying the releases was manageable, so the company didn't have hard requirements to stay up to date with the release cadence.

But the company noticed that while the ISV kept the solution up to date with the Dynamics 365 releases, the ISV always provided an update of their solution using Microsoft's last update ring—or missed it entirely. Because of this, the company had to apply Microsoft's updates late in the release cycle or, in some cases, not at all.

To grow and distribute fruit effectively, the company relies heavily on time-sensitive warehouse operations where every hour matters as fruit is moved from the fields to climate-controlled warehouses to shipping containers that are sent worldwide as quickly as possible to avoid spoilage. They also were expanding into distribution of seasonal fruits in new markets, which made management of warehouse operations even more critical.

Then Microsoft notified the fruit company about new functionality for advanced warehouse operations in an upcoming release of the Supply Chain Management app. Because of the expansion of the company's operations and the complexity of their warehouse management, these new features were crucial to increasing productivity and saving time and resources while managing the expansion.

To adopt this new functionality, the company had to test the features in advance to align their processes. They realized that being late on updating standard features wasn't workable, and they wanted to

optimize their ALM and validate their solution in early update rings. To be ready for their peak season, completion of testing was time-sensitive, and the company would only have enough time to adopt new functionality and do proper regression testing if all solution components were in place and ready. So, they asked their ISV to provide software earlier than the general availability of their new version.

The challenge came when the ISV wasn't aligned to that timeline. The ISV's usual practice of adopting Dynamics 365 releases when they became generally available—in the last ring—meant the fruit company frequently was one version behind on Finance and Supply Chain Management releases.

The ISV wanted to honor their partnership and be flexible in meeting the timing requirements for updates, but due to dependencies on their internal roadmap and ALM strategy, the ISV couldn't make the software available to meet the company's timeline. As a result, the fruit company couldn't take advantage of the Supply Chain Management app's advanced warehouse operation functionality in time for their expansion.

Even though the company's ALM strategy could adapt to Dynamics 365's continuous update delivery model, reliance on the ISV's software prevented them from using the latest version of Dynamics 365.

After conversations with the fruit company, the ISV agreed to align with Microsoft's update rings and give the company—and their other customers—an opportunity to test their entire solution when the standard release was available.

Servicing the solution involves more than just Microsoft providing continuous updates. Microsoft customers must synchronize updates to their own extensions and any ISV solutions they're using, so they can benefit from the latest Microsoft innovations as soon as new features are available.