



Think Big, Start Small

Rapid implementation methodology helps small firms deploy business management systems

Think big, start small. This was Srdjan Stošić's viewpoint regarding the big opportunity to help small businesses in Serbia with their technology needs. When Stošić was writing the business plan for his new technology consultancy, he took for granted the fact that most Serbian small businesses could benefit from business information technology (IT) but needed help to implement those systems. Stošić's new company, Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner **deployIT.ms**, built on his eight years of experience as a certified Microsoft consultant that specialized in business productivity infrastructure—Windows Server®, Microsoft Exchange Server and Microsoft SharePoint® Technologies. "So many small firms in our market understand the potential benefits of IT to improve their operations, but need a trusted advisor to guide them," he says.

But as the owner of a new small business, Stošić faced his own IT quandary. He needed a scalable business management solution with which to run his company, but had a limited budget. "Because of price, I was considering MySAP and some locally developed solutions, but what I really wanted was something that would integrate with our existing Microsoft technology infrastructure, provide the requisite functionality, and support our business as we expanded," says Stošić. Just a month before Stošić officially launched his company, Microsoft Serbia began promoting a locally customized version of Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV that was designed specially for small businesses and offered a rapid implementation methodology. The new Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express package supports up to 12 concurrent users, accommodates Serbian business regulations, and offers localized e-

banking, payroll, and minor-assets tracking functionality. And because of the rapid implementation methodology used, Microsoft partners can help customers reduce risk when implementing the new system.

"For us, this was the perfect solution. We had a system that would integrate seamlessly with our other Microsoft products, easily handle our accounting requirements, and I would be able to easily upgrade to a more comprehensive version of Microsoft Dynamics NAV when the time came," explains Stošić. "Best of all, Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express is a fixed-scope implementation that provides a predictable price and project timeline."

In most respects, small businesses in Serbia are like their counterparts in other countries. They are looking for a business management solution that will enable more efficient processes, boost employee productivity, and empower managers to react more quickly to changes in their business. However, a number of local business software solutions don't deliver on the full promise of business technology.

EUCOM, an international trading firm, wholesaler, and distributor, used one such local software solution. Although the initial cost of the software was low, it brought increasing problems as EUCOM's business grew. "On paper, the solution provided all the functionality they needed. But in reality, the system was difficult to use or did not perform adequately, causing EUCOM to create workarounds and revert to manual, paper-based processes," explains Mihailo Stefanović, CEO of Signet CS, a Microsoft Registered Partner that



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helps EUCOM with their IT needs.

“Although we had computer systems in place, they did not increase the efficiency of our processes because salespeople and other employees couldn’t use the system and still needed to fill out paper forms,” says Danijela Simonović, Finance Officer for EUCOM. “Instead, our accounting staff entered in that data—twice, once into the accounting system and then again in Excel because we were responsible for creating the daily Excel reports for management.” When EUCOM encountered technical problems with the software, the local software distributor was slow in responding—often taking days to fix the problem and not always to management’s satisfaction.

Simonović says, “The software was poorly developed. We felt that a more modern solution would ease our pain.”

For help identifying and implementing new business management software, EUCOM turned to Signet CS, who sold them on the new Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express solution. Besides the functional and technical merits of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, EUCOM appreciated the fixed scope and price of the Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express package. “EUCOM had concerns regarding price and implementation, and the Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express package helped address those issues,” says Stefanović of Signet CS.

EUCOM employees outside of accounting use the new business management software to enter transactions, track purchases and sales orders, and generate reports as needed. Because transactions are instantly reflected in the general ledger, the reports generated in Microsoft Dynamics NAV are always up-to-date, providing EUCOM management with the real-time status they need to make timely, informed business decisions. And because Microsoft Dynamics NAV works with and like the Microsoft Office system, EUCOM employees were able to quickly get up to speed. “Microsoft Dynamics NAV uses an interface

that looks just like Microsoft Office Outlook®, so our employees had little problems learning how to access and use the system,” explains Gorana Savović, Sales and Purchase Representative for EUCOM. “It’s a benefit for everyone involved. We no longer have to manually generate reports—the management can pull up standard reports themselves, or even make their own custom reports.”

Srdjan Stošić and his deployIT.ms consultants are even more savvy, using their Windows Mobile devices to access Microsoft Dynamics NAV and enter data and check account status from the field. This is possible because Microsoft Dynamics NAV works with Microsoft Project Server and Microsoft Windows® SharePoint® Services to provide account data through consultants’ Microsoft Mobile Outlook e-mail and calendaring application. Stošić also takes advantage of the customer relationship management features in Microsoft Dynamics NAV to specify certain customer accounts when delegating tasks to his employees or checking account activity before a customer meeting.

Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express was tailored for small to mid-size companies such as EUCOM and deployIT.ms. The general ledger is customized to only show the fields and functionality that are applicable to small businesses in Serbia, and local regulatory compliance is built into the system. The prepackaged offering helps companies get up and running much faster than they would with a customized solution.

“The big draw for Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express is the ability to predict implementation time and cost,” says Petar Stamenović, IT consultant for Extreme. Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Extreme resells Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express and was contracted by DeployIT.ms, which focuses on other Microsoft technology, to implement the business management software. “Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express provides clients with an assur-

“Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express provides clients with an assurance that their fixed investment will start returning benefits within 15 days.”

— Petar Stamenović, IT Consultant, Extreme

ance that their fixed investment will start returning benefits within 15 days, which is the target implementation time for this solution, including training,” says Stamenović.

When his business grows, Stošić of deployIT.ms sees no limitation with Microsoft Dynamics NAV. Upgrading from the Express version simply requires purchasing the license for the full version; all business data will remain unchanged. “Currently, we’re just a handful of employees and can’t justify the purchase of full ERP (enterprise resource planning) software. But I definitely see that for us in the future, and Microsoft Dynamics NAV will be there for us when we’re ready,” says Stošić. The full version of Microsoft Dynamics NAV includes manufacturing, service capabilities, and much more.

In the same way, deployIT.ms and EUCOM see Microsoft technology as a sort of insurance against technology obsolescence. EUCOM also benefited from the global resources that Microsoft invests in the Microsoft Dynamics NAV product, such as ISO 9001 specification rules that are built into the system. EUCOM, which is pursuing compliance with the standard, crafted its own processes around the rules in Microsoft Dynamics NAV.

Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express is a localized software package for the Serbian small business market. The offering supports up to 12 concurrent users, accommodates Serbian business regulations, and provides localized e-banking, payroll, and minor-assets tracking functionality.

Microsoft’s local partners around the globe fill in the other half of the value equation for small businesses. EUCOM staffs about 25 employees, and only one of those is an IT professional. By working with Signet CS for their IT needs, EUCOM was able to keep costs low and more effectively focus on its core business. Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express is already tailored for small businesses in Serbia, so less time is spent on routine configuration. This allowed Signet CS to focus on the unique needs of its client, such as modifying the import process of bank statements.

“The business opportunity for IT consulting in Serbia is tremendous, especially for Microsoft technology. Rapid implementation solutions like Microsoft Dynamics NAV Express help partners like ourselves pursue these opportunities and grow our own business. This way, when small businesses consider Microsoft solutions, they not only see the resources of a global company, but they also see the responsiveness and custom approach offered by the local solution provider. It’s really the best of both worlds,” says Stefanović of Signet CS.

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