



Based in Helsinki, Finland, Comptel is a software development company that provides operations support systems for telecommunications companies. In business for 26 years, Comptel has delivered its software to more than 200 customers in 85 countries, and expanded its operations to 19 offices worldwide.

Results

- Save €600,000 on deployment vs. SAP ECC
- Cut €150,000 a year in support costs vs. existing SAP system
- Gain global visibility
- Simplify acquisitions
- Boost efficiency in finance significantly

Industry

Software engineering

Country or Region

Finland

Customer Size

650 employees

Number of Users

650 employees

Connect with Comptel



Nineteen Offices, One ERP System: Hundreds of Thousands in Savings Over SAP

"For the same cost as our yearly support contract for SAP R3 across three offices, we make Microsoft Dynamics AX available as a service to our 19 offices worldwide."

Mikko Hytönen, Chief Financial Officer, Comptel

The software development company Comptel has a vision: to be the preferred operations support system (OSS) provider for the telecommunications industry. Mikko Hytönen, the company's Chief Financial Officer, embraced this vision when he joined the company in 2009. Originally the company's Head of Business Control, Hytönen became immediately familiar with Comptel's technology environment, and he found the existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) strategy a hindrance to a company that operated globally.

"We were running SAP R3 in three of our offices, including our headquarters, and home-grown systems in multiple other locations," Hytönen recalls. "As a result, we employed a time-consuming, error-prone process to consolidate our financial information in SAP. And we only did this once a month."

Hytönen goes on to reveal that some integration between the homegrown systems and SAP R3 did, in fact, exist, but the SAP system at company headquarters drew on financial data from only a portion of the remote offices and had access to limited operational data. Manual processes were unavoidable.

At the same time, Hytönen points out that SAP R3 had also simply reached its end of life. He says, "SAP R3 was technology from 2003, and it was running out of steam. We were at the point where we wouldn't have proper support going forward, which was putting us at too high a risk level."

The time for a new ERP system had arrived.

Mikko Hytönen

Chief Financial Officer, Comptel

Mikko Hytönen has worked in the finance and telecommunications space for over 14 years and has a long history of driving the implementations of ERP systems forward. That's why in 2009, when he joined Comptel as the Head of Business Control, it made perfect sense for him to begin to evaluate the company's existing ERP infrastructure. Since identifying disparate systems as a particular cause for concern, Hytönen has become the company's CFO and led a successful deployment of Microsoft Dynamics AX to the company's 19 offices, helping the company establish a single view into its global operations.

"For our company, deploying Microsoft Dynamics AX was the right decision," says Hytönen. "I would definitely recommend it."

Connect with Mikko Hytönen



A Global Solution in Action

In looking for a new ERP system, Comptel faced a unique requirement: it needed a system that was both simple and fit for a global operation. The company considered upgrading to SAP ECC and replacing the existing system with candidates including Oracle and Microsoft Dynamics AX.

Choosing Microsoft Dynamics AX

After evaluating the leading contenders, Comptel narrowed its choices to SAP ECC and Microsoft Dynamics AX. In the end, the company elected to deploy Microsoft Dynamics AX for its simplicity and low total cost of ownership, as well as the ability to rapidly configure processes in response to changing business needs.

"SAP ECC was really too heavy of a solution for a company of our size," explains Hytönen. "It had more modules and features than we really needed or wanted to pay for. And no vendor, except for our Microsoft partner, could really tell us how they would meet our needs in a simple and cost-effective manner."

Elaborating on this notion, Hytönen adds, "We really didn't think our business requirements were that unique. But when we looked at the scope of work in the other proposals we received, they all required significant customization. On the other hand, Microsoft Dynamics AX provided most of what we needed largely out of the box."

For business requirements that did require tailored functionality (for example, invoice automation), Comptel extended Microsoft Dynamics AX with certified add-on solutions available through its Microsoft partner. Hytönen notes that the need to extend the solution was not unexpected, adding "Even SAP ECC, which was a much larger solution, would have required add-ons. And with SAP, we would need one for both invoice automation and travel expense claims management."

Three other key factors played a considerable role in Comptel's decision to choose Microsoft Dynamics AX over SAP ECC:

- **Total cost of ownership.** Says Hytönen, "For the same cost as our yearly support contract for SAP across three offices, we can make Microsoft Dynamics AX available as a service for our 19 offices worldwide."
- **User experience.** Microsoft Dynamics AX offered a very similar user experience to other Microsoft applications, leading to higher adoption rates and lending itself to greater employee productivity.

- **Time to value.** By turning to a partner-hosted model, Comptel understood it would be able to get up and running on Microsoft Dynamics AX in a relatively short time, considering the scale of its operations. This timeframe was 10 months for 19 offices, versus a projected 13 to 16 months for SAP ECC, which would also require the purchase and deployment of new hardware.

“Because we were able to source Microsoft Dynamics AX as a service, we didn’t have to worry about the technical aspects of the project and could get started very fast.”

Mikko Hytönen, Chief
Financial Officer, Comptel

Deploying Microsoft Dynamics AX

By deploying the solution in a partner-hosted model, Comptel avoided the long implementation schedules that plague many large-scale ERP deployments.

“Because we were able to source Microsoft Dynamics AX as a service, we didn’t have to worry about the technical aspects of the project and could get started very fast,” says Hytönen. “We started in February of 2011, and by the first of October that same year we had our three offices that were previously on SAP R3 on Microsoft Dynamics AX. Two months later, before the end of the year, the whole company was in production.”

Adopting Microsoft Dynamics AX

Hytönen notes that because the company was able to get up and running on Microsoft Dynamics AX on time, it was also able to greatly streamline adoption. “Because the system was live, we were able to train people on the real system, not a prototype,” Hytönen says. “This is not always the case in ERP deployments.”

Hytönen adds that the familiar user experience of the Microsoft solution helped adoption considerably, saying, “When you first try out other ERP systems like those from SAP or Oracle, they are not something that you are at first familiar with. But if you look at the interface of Microsoft Dynamics AX, the experience is very similar to other Microsoft products, making the solution much easier to learn and use.”

Using Microsoft Dynamics AX

Currently, 100 Comptel employees use Microsoft Dynamics AX every day for project management and project accounting, and an additional 550 employees use the solution to periodically report their time. Hytönen says, “We have all our projects set up in Microsoft Dynamics AX. We can report on those projects, invoice for those projects, and do percent completion revenue recognition.”

Comptel's Results With Microsoft Dynamics AX	
Lower deployment costs	€600,000 savings versus deploying SAP ECC
Decrease support costs	€ 150,000 savings a year versus its existing system, SAP R3
Improve staff efficiency in finance	Significant

Comptel's Technology Environment	
ERP system	Microsoft Dynamics AX
Business database	Microsoft SQL Server 2012
Communications infrastructure	Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Lync
Desktop systems	Windows 7
Deployment strategy	Partner-hosted ERP model
IT organization	15 employees

Supporting Ongoing Growth

Shortly after going live with Microsoft Dynamics AX, Comptel bought an analytics company and found the capabilities of its new ERP solution to be particularly fitting to its growth strategy. Says Hytönen, "Getting our analytics company into Microsoft Dynamics AX was pretty straightforward. There are ready-made templates in the system for adding new companies. Beyond that, it's just a matter of tweaking some parameters and running a few tests—and then you are good to go."

Real Results with Microsoft Dynamics AX

By implementing Microsoft Dynamics AX, Comptel has successfully provided a single ERP system to its 19 offices worldwide, while saving considerable costs versus competing solutions like SAP. Now, with one solution in place, the company has found a marked improvement in business visibility and has been able to standardize processes companywide. In finance alone, this has equated to a significant gain in employee efficiency.

Save Hundreds of Thousands over SAP

Cost was certainly a major driving factor in choosing Microsoft Dynamics AX, and to that end, Comptel has seen significant savings versus SAP. These savings can be seen in two primary areas:

- **Initial deployment.** The deployment of SAP ECC would cost Comptel around €1,000,000 versus only €400,000 for Microsoft Dynamics AX.
- **Ongoing maintenance.** By choosing Microsoft Dynamics AX, Comptel eliminated the need for its SAP maintenance contract that cost €150,000 per year.

Gain Visibility

Having all staff working on a single system has helped Comptel achieve newfound levels of global visibility into both financial and operational data. Says Hytönen, "With global insight into both our financial and operational data, we can now identify issues on our projects and react very quickly since our data is now available in near-real time."

Hytönen adds, "For instance, if I see that the margins are particularly low on a project, I might also find that we had a lot of high-cost resources assigned to that project. With Microsoft Dynamics AX, I can then make the proper adjustments needed to help us maintain our profitability."

Drive Employee Productivity

Having a single ERP system has also meant that Comptel can now standardize its processes companywide, while supporting country-specific process variations where essential for operations or required by regulation.

This has led to improvements in productivity across many facets of the business, but most notably in finance, where employees no longer spend time on low-value tasks such as finding and consolidating information for global reporting.

“With Microsoft Dynamics AX, our overall efficiency in the finance organization has increased tremendously thanks to having our information in one place and in being able to standardize our processes,” Hytönen says.

This improvement in efficiency has also meant an improvement in work/life balance for employees—and less risk for the company. Now, when a person goes on vacation or leaves the company, another employee can easily support or backfill the open position, even from another office or country ensuring the ability to maintain process consistency across geographies.

Next Steps

- [Connect with Microsoft Dynamics](#)
- [Become a Dynamic Business](#)
- [Read about how technology helps other professional services firms practice “Agile Adaptation”](#)