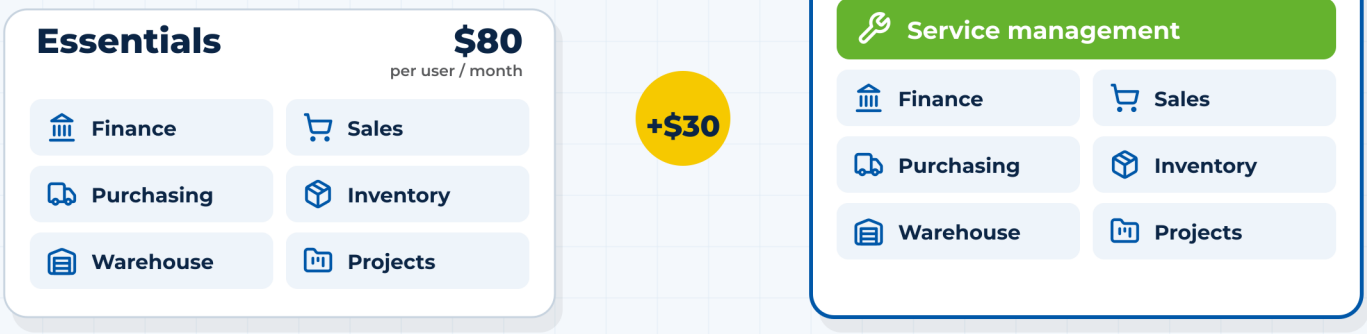
Choosing the right edition of

Business Central

Essentials vs Premium

What each edition includes, what it costs after Microsoft's November 2025 price update, and the licensing rules that should shape your decision.





Same foundation, two extra areas

Premium includes everything in Essentials, plus manufacturing and service management.

A choice made company by company

The edition is set per company, and it decides who can sign in and which features everyone sees.

Pricing | Capabilities | Licensing Rules | Decision Guide

BUSINESS CENTRAL LIST PRICES, PER USER PER MONTH, PAID YEARLY

$80	$110	$8	Nov 2025
Essentials	Premium	Team Members	New prices took effect on 1 November

Premium is Essentials plus two things: manufacturing and service management. Choose by how you operate, not by how big you are.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central comes in two full-user editions. Both share the same finance, sales, purchasing, inventory, warehousing, project and planning capabilities, with Microsoft Copilot included. Premium adds manufacturing and service management, for $30 more per user per month at US list price.

The edition isn't just a price point. It's set company by company through the Experience setting, which decides which features everyone in that company sees and which license holders can sign in. Getting it right early avoids paying for capability you won't use, or discovering a gap after go-live.

THREE DECISIONS THIS PAPER HELPS YOU MAKE

Choose the edition

Company by company: Essentials or Premium

Match licenses to roles

Full users, Team Members or Microsoft 365 access

Plan capacity

Storage, environments and add-ons

Key takeaways

One shared foundation

Finance, sales, purchasing, inventory, warehouse, projects and planning are in both editions.

Two Premium-only areas

Manufacturing and service management appear only in a company set to Premium.

A company-level switch

Essentials users can't sign in to a Premium company; Premium users can use Essentials companies.

Right-size every role

Team Members at $8 and read-only access through Microsoft 365 cover lighter users.

Who this paper is for

Finance, operations and IT leaders choosing, renewing or right-sizing Business Central subscriptions, and anyone planning a move from on-premises Dynamics NAV or Business Central.

What you get in both editions

Microsoft's own comparison lists the same core capabilities for Essentials and Premium. For many distributors, retailers, project-based and services businesses, this foundation is the whole system.

- Finance management
- Sales and marketing
- Fulfillment and delivery
- Purchasing and payables
- Inventory
- Supply chain planning
- Project management
- Warehouse management
- Multiple companies
- Multiple environments
- Customization and extensibility
- Unlimited users

AI in both editions

Copilot included

Microsoft describes Essentials as business management "with Microsoft Copilot included", and Premium includes everything in Essentials.

Agents run on Copilot Credits

The Sales Order Agent and Payables Agent are listed for both editions, with Copilot Credits sold separately and an Azure subscription required.

Assembly isn't a Premium feature

Microsoft lists only manufacturing and service management as Premium. Assembly management, which combines components into items assembled to order or to stock, is described as working "without using manufacturing features", so light kitting doesn't need Premium on its own.

What Microsoft 365 users get

People with a qualifying Microsoft 365 license can read Business Central data in Microsoft Teams without a Business Central license, in either edition. They can't edit, create or delete records, and the web client isn't included.

Sources: Microsoft Business Central pricing page; Microsoft Learn: Enable Premium features, Assembly management, Access with Microsoft 365 licenses; accessed 12 November 2026.

Two areas, both switched on by the Premium experience

Microsoft's documentation marks both areas the same way: their features are "available only if you have the Premium experience". Here is what each one covers.

Manufacturing

Plan, run and cost production in Business Central

- Production BOMs to define components
- Routings to define operations
- Work and machine centers to model capacity and costs
- Production orders from planned demand through completion
- Production journals for consumption, output, scrap and time
- Capacity journal and shop-floor load
- Subcontracting of all or selected operations
- Production costing, plus links to planning, warehouse, quality management and Power BI analytics

You likely need it if: you make products through multi-step operations and need to plan capacity and cost production.

Service management

Run repair, maintenance and field service

- Schedule service calls
- Manage service orders
- Track repair parts and supplies
- Assign service personnel by skill and availability
- Service estimates and service invoices
- Service contracts with customers
- Service pricing and discounting policy
- Fault codes, templates and route maps for service employees

You likely need it if: you repair, maintain or install equipment for customers, or sell service contracts.

At a glance

CAPABILITY	ESSENTIALS	PREMIUM
Finance, sales and purchasing	✓	✓
Inventory, warehouse and supply chain planning	✓	✓
Projects	✓	✓
Assembly management	✓	✓
Manufacturing	—	✓
Service management	—	✓

Sources: Microsoft Learn: Manufacturing overview and Service management (both updated July 2026); Business Central pricing page comparison; accessed 12 November 2026. Assembly isn't listed as Premium-only.

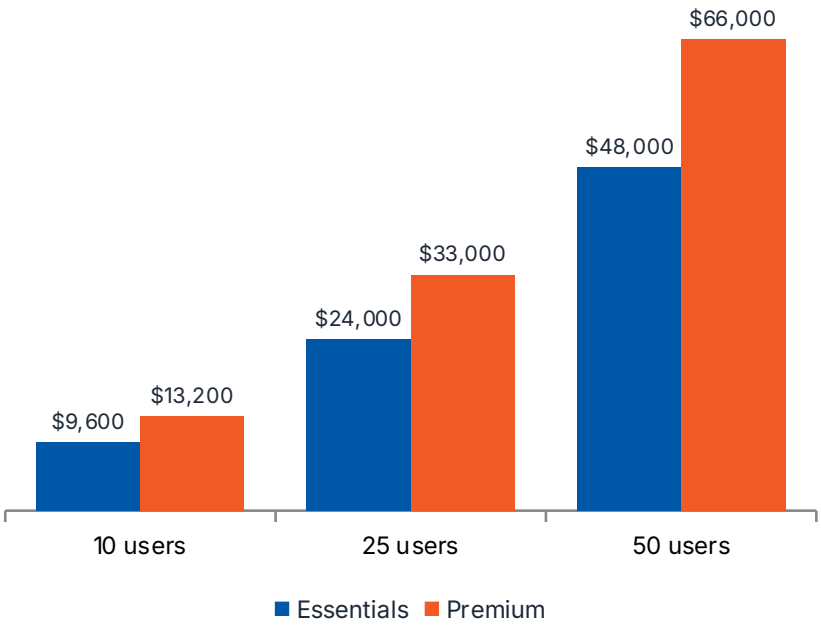
What changed on 1 November 2025

Microsoft's first Business Central price increase in more than five years came with more storage per license. New prices apply to new subscriptions, and to existing subscriptions at their first renewal.

LICENSE	PRICE BEFORE	STORAGE BEFORE	PRICE NOW	STORAGE NOW
Essentials	$70	2 GB	**$80**	**3 GB**
Premium	$100	3 GB	**$110**	**5 GB**
Device	$40	1 GB	**$45**	**1.5 GB**
Team Members	—	—	**$8**	**—**

US list prices per user (Device: per device) per month, paid yearly. Team Members price from Microsoft's current pricing page; the announcement didn't list it.

Annual list cost by number of full users



+$360

per user per year: the Premium uplift at list price ($30 a month)

+2 GB

more database storage per Premium license than per Essentials license

Price the capability, not the license

For a 25-user company, Premium costs $9,000 more a year at list price. That's the number to weigh against what manufacturing or service management would replace: separate production or field-service tools, spreadsheets, and the integrations between them.

Sources: Microsoft, "New Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central pricing effective November 2025" (6 May 2025); Business Central pricing page, accessed 12 November 2026. Prices vary by currency and region; licenses are sold through CSP partners.

The Experience setting works company by company

Each company's Experience field (on the Company Information page) controls which features are available to all its users. Only a user with a Premium or evaluation license can switch a company to Premium, and switching doesn't assign Premium licenses.

	Company set to Essentials	Company set to Premium
Essentials user	Full access	Can't sign in
Premium user	Signs in; Premium features unavailable	Full access, incl. manufacturing and service

Premium users have been able to sign in to Essentials companies since 2024 release wave 1 (April 2024).

Licenses for lighter users



Team Members, $8

"Limited access to read data, approve workflows, and create or update select information." Permissions follow Team Member entitlements, even if an admin assigns broader permission sets.



Microsoft 365 users, no extra cost

Read-only access to Business Central data inside Microsoft Teams. No web client, no editing; the organization needs at least one other user with a Business Central license.



Device license, $45

Lets multiple users simultaneously use a device covered by the license; device users can also run scheduled job queue tasks.



Buying and reassigning

Business Central licenses are bought through Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) partners. A license can be reassigned short-term, within 90 days, to cover an absence.



Design companies around who needs what

Essentials users can't enter a Premium company, so every full user of a Premium company needs a Premium license. Microsoft's release notes also describe a requirement not to mix Essentials and Premium licenses in the same environment, so plan environments, not just companies, and confirm the mix with your partner.

Sources: Microsoft Learn: Enable Premium features; Create users according to licenses; Licensing in Business Central; Access with Microsoft 365 licenses; 2024 release wave 1 plan; accessed 12 November 2026.

What your subscription includes

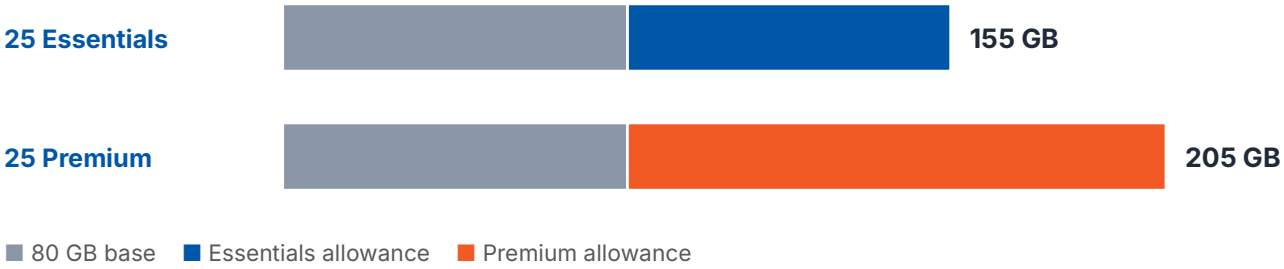
Database storage is shared across every environment in your tenant, so the license mix also sets how much data you can hold before buying add-ons.

80 GB
base storage per tenant

+3 / +5 GB
per Essentials / Premium license

1 + 3
production and sandbox environments

Worked example: 25 full users



Growing beyond the defaults

Database Capacity add-ons

Buy storage in 1 GB or 100 GB blocks. A lower-priced 1 GB overage add-on is available once you hold a 100 GB add-on.

Additional Environment add-on

Each extra production environment brings three more sandboxes and adds 4 GB to shared storage.

If you go over

Transactions keep running, but you can't create or copy environments until you reduce storage or buy more.

Device licenses

Each Device license also adds storage: 1.5 GB under the November 2025 terms.

Check the figures for your tenant

Per-license allowances are from Microsoft's November 2025 announcement. Microsoft's capacity documentation still shows the earlier 2 GB, 3 GB and 1 GB figures, so confirm current entitlements in the admin center.

Sources: Microsoft Learn: Managing capacity; Microsoft pricing announcement, May 2025; accessed 12 November 2026.

Three questions settle most decisions

1. **Do you produce goods through production orders, routings or work centers?** → Yes → **Premium**
2. **Do you run service orders, service contracts or technician scheduling?** → Yes → **Premium**
3. **Do you only assemble or kit items from components?** → Yes → **Essentials covers assembly**

No to all three? Essentials is very likely the right edition.

Typical fit by type of business

ORGANIZATION	WHAT DRIVES THE CHOICE	TYPICAL EDITION
Distributor or wholesaler	Purchasing, inventory, warehouse, sales	**Essentials**
Professional services or project firm	Projects, resources, finance	**Essentials**
Retailer or e-commerce with light kitting	Inventory, assembly, fulfillment	**Essentials**
Discrete or process manufacturer	Production orders, routings, capacity	**Premium**
Equipment service or maintenance company	Service orders, contracts, technicians	**Premium**
Group with one manufacturing entity	Premium where needed; check environment rules	**Premium, or split by environment**

Before you sign

- Map every role to Essentials, Premium, Team Members or Microsoft 365 access
- Decide which companies and environments need Premium
- Budget Copilot Credits if you plan to use agents
- Estimate storage against your license mix
- Check prices in your currency with a CSP partner

Typical fits are general guidance from the capability split above, not Microsoft recommendations.

Illustration: a 40-person company

25 people work in Business Central every day. Another 15 mostly look things up and approve purchases and expenses. Here's how the edition and the license mix change the annual bill at US list prices.

OPTION A

Essentials

25 Essentials × $80
15 Team Members × $8

$25,440

per year ($2,120 a month)

OPTION B

Premium

25 Premium × $110
15 Team Members × $8

$34,440

per year ($2,870 a month)

OPTION C

Essentials, no Team Members

40 Essentials × $80

$38,400

per year ($3,200 a month)



Premium adds $9,000 a year

Option B vs A. Worth it when manufacturing or service management replaces other tools or manual work.



Team Members save $12,960 a year

Option A vs C. Giving the 15 lighter users Team Members licenses instead of full Essentials licenses.

Ways to keep the license mix lean



Read-only in Teams

Users who only look up data can use their Microsoft 365 license in Teams.



Approvers on Team Members

Workflow approvals don't need a full license.



Premium only where needed

Keep Premium for the environments that run manufacturing or service.



Shared devices

Device licenses for shared terminals instead of one license per person.

Illustration only, at US list prices from Microsoft's pricing page (accessed 12 November 2026); excludes taxes, partner services, add-ons and Copilot Credits. Check whether each role's tasks fit Team Member rights before relying on Option A's savings.

How Brightpoint can help



1. Licensing review

We map your roles and companies to the right mix of Premium, Essentials, Team Members and Microsoft 365 access.



2. Licenses through CSP

As a Microsoft Solutions Partner, we supply Business Central licenses through the Cloud Solution Provider program.



3. Implement and grow

Go live on the edition you need today, and switch a company to Premium when manufacturing or service arrives.

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Premium users in Essentials companies

All sources accessed 12 November 2026. Prices are US list prices, shown for information; they vary by currency and region and may change. Microsoft, Dynamics 365, Business Central, Copilot and Teams are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies.

Pay for the edition you need, not the one you might

Brightpoint Infotech is a Microsoft Solutions Partner with offices in the USA, Canada, the UAE, Kenya and India. We help businesses choose, license and implement Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Edition assessment

Essentials or Premium, company by company.

License right-sizing

Team Members and Microsoft 365 access.

CSP licensing

Business Central subscriptions supplied.

Implementation

Finance, supply chain and projects.

Manufacturing & service

When you're ready for Premium.

Ongoing support

Upgrades, capacity and growth.



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Book a Licensing Review

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