

Valcredo gets more out of Microsoft Dynamics thanks to tailored solutions

Valcredo helps SMEs to digitize successfully. To bring together information from different business units, the company provides 'Enterprise Resource Planning' (ERP), based on Microsoft Dynamics Business Central software. These ERP solutions are increasingly being hosted in the cloud - and that's where Combell appears in the story!

Microsoft Dynamics: ERP software for automating business processes

In order to stay ahead of the competition and to work more efficiently, more and more companies decide to embrace digital transformation. Automating as many business processes as possible not only helps save time and manpower, but it also gives the company more insight into its operations. **Enterprise Resource Planning** (or ERP) software aims to bring together the complex internal operations of a company (such as finance, stock management, sales, procurement, production and warehouse management) in one system, so that all business pro-



cesses can be streamlined and the company can operate more efficiently and be tracked more closely. Via the specific Power BI Dashboards, the company can instantly get a real-time overview of the current situation.

Microsoft Dynamics Business Central is one of the most widely used ERP packages for automating processes. However, it is a generic package, which is why many service providers have emerged to guide companies in the adoption of an ERP

system – often by devising a special version of the ERP solution tailored to a particular sector. And that is precisely what the Belgian company [Valcredo](#) does: as a Microsoft Dynamics partner, it implements ERP systems for SMEs..

Valcredo: an outsider in the ERP landscape

Valcredo, which has offices in both Sint-Martens-Latem and Wommelgem, considers itself an outsider. After all, it does handle the implementation of ERP packages in a rather unique way. "Our way of working is both unconventional and innovative".

Valcredo assessed various **competitors in their field and identified these points for improvement:**

- ✗ Large vertical sector-specific solutions offering too many features that are never or rarely used
- ✗ Complex procedures for using the software
- ✗ Inefficient business or work processes that do not adapt as the business changes

Companies that implement ERP systems for SMEs usually specialise in specific business sectors, such as food, for instance. They will develop a comprehensive solution based on Microsoft Dynamics for all the different variants within a given sector, and will then offer this to all kinds of companies in the food industry. But that is a version that works very broadly and features many options – someone who sells fruit and vegetables, for example, needs a very different set of functionalities than a butcher or a company that produces ready meals. This means that the SME has a solution of which **it uses only 50 - 60%, but has to pay 100%**", explains Arne Notebaert, who is also the Managing Director of Valcredo.

There is another reason why Valcredo does not believe in the standard way of implementing an ERP solution. "The customer's business processes are usually transformed into the processes that are run in that system. However, there is a risk that you will create IT processes that will not run optimally for the company. People tend to forget what the point is. Why does a company want to implement an ERP system? To ultimately ensure that a large number of processes that should run automatically are automated, so that people have more time to focus on key priorities (improving quality, checking products, etc.). Very often, however, the business processes are structured in such a cumbersome way in the software that people end up having to do more work to enter the data and to retrieve it along the way. In that case, **the ERP solution actually becomes more of a burden than an asset**. And that destroys the efficiency of an ERP implementation", says Arne.

The Managing Director adds another observation that has prompted Valcredo to develop its own way of working: "A company does not always stay the same: it grows, changes, takes a new direction and yes, sometimes it can also downsize. This means you want the solution to adapt accordingly. But **with such large solutions, you will end up outgrowing the solution at a certain point**. You can then either switch to another package or opt for a tailored solution – which can be very expensive."

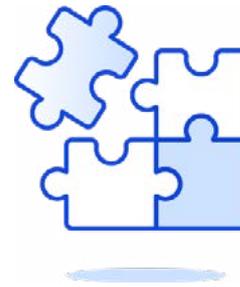
Valcredo's personal and modular approach

Valcredo has therefore developed its **own approach, based on the following 3 pillars**:

- ✓ Striving for the most efficient business processes, including existing processes, even if they are not IT-related
- ✓ Adding features tailored to each company's needs
- ✓ Involving the workers in the changes

"With the help of the company, we first analyse the existing business processes and then outline the most efficient business process we want to achieve. This can sometimes have an impact on internal business operations, and occasionally issues may surface that are not IT-related. But the aim is always to optimise **the business process as a whole**.

We always start from a standard Business Central package. In order to achieve the optimal process, we complement that standard package with **Powerblox** – small blocks, features designed by a sister company. Depending on what the customer needs at that particular moment, we add blocks and put the puzzle together. And if new blocks are required in two or three years' time, you can add them without any problem. The reverse is also possible: if a company downsizes and no longer needs certain blocks, these can simply be unplugged. This gives the company



a very organic structure, in which the software application grows with the company. The Powerblox allows us to provide a solution that is as close as possible to an optimal business process", says Arne.

This way, Valcredo has managed to tackle the problems encountered in the traditional implementation of an ERP solution. But there is more. "We also make sure that all **workers** are involved. For this purpose, we implement a **change management process** very early in the process. Because the key success factor for an ERP implementation depends on whether you can get the people on board.

This overall approach makes us an outsider in the market for ERP implementations. We do not force anything, but succeed in achieving the ultimate goal – automating and optimising the company – while carefully respecting the company. And that is what we are all about", concludes Arne Notebaert.

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Each customer its own high-performance cloud server that is always available

Valcredo's customers are mainly to be found in certain sectors – those that are linked with logistics and production. Companies for which availability and fast operation of the ERP solution are of paramount importance. Valcredo's SME customers are mainly based in Belgium (80%) and in other European countries.

Depending on the size and specific requirements of the company,

the solution is hosted 'on premise' (on the company's own servers), on Microsoft hosting, or in the cloud. In this last case,



Valcredo prefers to use [managed cloud hosting](#) provided by Combella.

Valcredo is increasingly opting for cloud servers to host its customers' ERP solutions. Arne's opinion is clear: "In business-critical environments such as a production company or a logistics company, where the system can bring the whole company down if it does not work or if it works too slowly, the server must perform well".



In this context, the customer rents a server from Combella, on which Valcredo sets up the Business Central solution and the environment for the customer. Valcredo founder Arne Notebaert believes that **hosting on Combella's [managed public cloud](#) brings great benefits: performance and availability**. After all, an ERP solution is the heart of a company's operations – you really cannot afford to have a system that works too slowly or is unavailable. Because the company would then come to a standstill. **High-quality cloud hosting is therefore a must.**

"The server's specifications depend on what we put on it – **in addition to Business Central, the customer can also put other things on his cloud server**. In that case, Combella helps us determine what is required on a case-by-case basis, and drafts a proposal for the hosting services. In this process, we get advice from Combella. The contract is also concluded directly between

Combella and the customer, so that the latter can still take control, if he so wishes."

Combella: cloud hosting with guarantees and service

Arne is very pleased with the collaboration with Combella, which started in 2018. Valcredo had also worked with cloud hosting before, but after a while, they noticed that cloud hosting does not mean the same thing everywhere. And they understood that the choice of partner is key is you want **better performance and better service**. Their cloud hosting was unstable, and sometimes the customer could not work at all because the system was really too slow. Moreover, they did not get any support, and problems were not solved promptly. That is why Valcredo went looking for another provider and came knocking at Combella's door: "We immediately had a good feeling about the first people we talked to. We explained the problem we were struggling with, and they came up with a proposal. The onboarding experience was very smooth and very professional, which was a real breath of fresh air."

Especially the fact that Combella has a **dedicated team** for each project, with an account manager, immediately appealed to Arne. "This way, you can always talk to the same person. If you have a problem, you are not put through to inexperienced people, but to someone who knows your project well. And that is a great bonus."

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Arne believes that this **personal approach** makes Combella's support much more efficient. When he compares it to the support that his customers get when they choose Microsoft hosting, there is clearly a world of difference: "With Combella, you are assisted by people who know your project inside out. With Microsoft, you just log a ticket and hope for a quick response."

Valcredo also has an IT employee who manages the servers, who knows which software must be installed on them, etc. And that too has its advantages. "If there is a problem on our side, our colleague can immediately talk to Combella's technical experts."

They **speak the same language**, which makes it easier to solve the problem. Because there are always problems – after all, computers will be computers. But they are solved quickly."

Besides, the IT employee can fully focus on serving the customers. Because Combell takes care of the maintenance of the servers (management, backups, installing patches...). Meanwhile, Valcredo maintains all aspects of the ERP software itself. In short, what you get is **worry-free managed cloud hosting that allows you to remain in control whenever you want.**

Arne Notebaert also likes the transparency of the administration. "Combell is a very professional company. The way the administrative process works is very transparent. The control panel offers a clear overview, which you can access whenever and wherever you want. We experience Combell's guaranteed performance and the administrative and technical support behind it as very positive.

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Valcredo also considers smaller SMEs

For the future, Valcredo wants to further expand its customer base. Larger SMEs that can afford their own implementation will remain important. But **now Valcredo also wants to target smaller SMEs, with 1 to 10 or 15 employees.** In other words, start-ups, scale-ups, small companies that often have the same problems but do not have large budgets.

"In cooperation with our sister company [365myway](#), we have developed a platform that no longer requires a complex ERP implementation. A suitable tailored sector-specific solution is recommended based on the answers to a series of questions.



Once an order is placed, the environment is **set up fully automatically** and configured according to industry standards. After about 5 minutes, the customer's environment is ready for use. For this, the customer has a lot of resources available that are provided via our 365MyWay Academy. If the customer requires specific assistance, we are always there to help him. The system works very quickly. Several customers who use the system have had their first booking made within 15 minutes."



A new line of business for Valcredo. "This also allows **smaller growth companies to enjoy the benefits of working with a robust ERP system from the outset.** This way, they can continue to grow without having to switch ERP systems in the future. We have already developed applications for six sectors, with different features for each of them, and are in the process of bringing them to market."

Would you like to learn more about Combell's managed cloud hosting, so that Combell can help you with all your technical issues? Do not hesitate to contact us!

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