

## Top 3 themes from Extreme365 that you need to know

Review by [Elena Baeva](#), IAMCP UK Board Member.

There were 2 big events focussing on Microsoft Dynamics 365 during w/c 19<sup>th</sup> March: [Business Forward in Amsterdam, Netherlands](#), and [eXtreme365 in Dubrovnik, Croatia](#). In a bit of a tech master stroke, you could attend the key parts of both at the same time as more than 700 attendees of eXtreme365 had a live stream of the Business Forward keynotes as well as all the sessions eXtreme365 had to offer.



If you haven't attended eXtreme365 before, you should make sure you go next time – either to the US conference in November 2018, or in Europe next March 2019. It is organised by a team of ex-Microsoft Dynamics staffers, and delivers key information for Microsoft Dynamics 365 partners and end-users in two separate agendas. The agenda for [partners](#) is packed full of useful sessions organised into tracks for Sales, Presales, Marketing, Operations and Technical. There is also the parallel Executive Exchange (for CEOs/MDs of partners) which looked at a number of strategic and tactical management issues – see below for more info.

The networking opportunities were superb within sessions and over drinks and food, not just between partners but many of the Microsoft execs were freely available and willing to meet and share their latest strategies, organisational changes and plans.

### Digital Transformation

The theme of the event was **enabling Digital Transformation** - helping our customers differentiate themselves from their competitors and evolve their businesses into more highly profitable lines of services. Microsoft is moving away from selling products, towards driving a new level of engagement where we, the partners, help our customers embark on this new strategic journey.

Some well-known thought leaders in this space led the conversations:

[Cecilia Flombaum](#) (Microsoft's Worldwide Lead, Business Application Partners), was the keynote speaker and shared the **4 key pillars of this new direction**:

- Optimise Operations – help your customers cut costs
- Empower Employees – increase productivity and increase your customers' margins
- Engage Customers – increase your customers' revenues
- Transform Products – drive new revenue streams.

[Mike Ehrenberg](#), (Technical Fellow & CTO - Business Solutions, Microsoft) covered what Dynamics 365 means to the market at a strategic level and how Microsoft is changing the game in business applications. He focussed on the impact of “Intelligent customer engagement”. As Mike explained, people don’t buy Dynamics 365 so they can put data in; they buy it so they can get insight out.

[Steven Malmé](#) (CEO at Transformative) ran a couple of very helpful sessions for partners and end-users explaining exactly what Digital Transformation is, why and how it creates more revenue, higher profit, and increased market cap, demonstrated some best practice in what your firm needs to do to evolve into this space, and gave practical examples of how partners have successfully enabled transformation.

Cecilia advised all partners to take the 4 pillars she covered, embed and adjust them to fit with our own solutions in order to differentiate ourselves, and incorporate them into all customer pitches to provide unique propositions. With over 7000 partners now in the Dynamics space, effectively dealing with Capability and Capacity is a big part of that uniqueness.

### Capacity and Capability

[Peter Jensen](#), (Director, Partner Strategy and Business Development, Microsoft) opened the Executive Exchange with the message that Microsoft is still very much a partner-led organisation and that their commitment to the partner community is stronger than ever. With the massive growth in Microsoft Dynamics 365, he urged the partners to **invest in focussed Capability (training) and Capacity (people) in order to differentiate better from each other.**

[Steve Sydee](#) (CEO, Interim CRM and COO, 365 Talent Portal) led a session focussed on **helping partners build an effective and profitable Microsoft Dynamics 365 practice.** He shared his experience of what works well, what the common pitfalls are, and how to avoid them. This was particularly relevant for Microsoft ‘Classic’ partners who are new to the Microsoft Dynamics space and are currently investing in building their teams.

One of the key challenges in the Microsoft Dynamics 365 space is lack of resources. The Executive Exchange track ran a workshop on **Growing the Dynamics365 Talent Pool** globally. [Elena Baeva](#) (IAMCP UK Board Member and CEO, 365 Talent Portal) shared **best practices of finding, hiring, training and retaining top talent** followed by a great case study from eBECS’ [Stephen Wilson](#), [Lyndsey Coupe](#) and [Andy Brooks](#).

eXtreme365 also had a surprise visit of 50 students from the Marketing department of the University of Zagreb. They are part of the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance and are currently using Microsoft Dynamics CRM as part of their studies. What a wonderful idea to inspire young students enter the Microsoft Dynamics space.

### Women in Technology

The event was excellent for meeting hundreds of women in our sector. It was inspirational to see so many working as Microsoft, partner or end-user execs. Most of the students from University of Zagreb were also young ladies. This can only be hugely positive for the Dynamics ecosystem.

There was a breakout lunch attended by around 40 Women in Technology – of course, men were invited and welcome too 😊. The panel was led by [Chris Clark](#) who put questions to the panel of highly successful women: [Cecilia Flombaum](#), [Marianne Roling](#), [Boglárka Blahut](#), [Linda Rose](#), and [Maria Fonsell](#).

They all shared their experience of being effectively mentored, breaking through any glass ceilings, learning how to overcome any mental boundaries that some women impose on themselves, practices

they developed to be braver and more confident, and talked about going for roles that women sometimes shy out of applying for. In fact, a lot of this was great self-help information for men as well.

### Summary

Overall, it was a fantastic week; in keeping with the event, the weather was also unseasonably extreme, and the resulting transport challenges (diverted or cancelled flights) bonded the attendees even closer. The event app was full of various pictures of fun celebrations and heroic but difficult departures. The organisers of eXtreme365, [Christy Spokely](#) and [Joe Corigliano](#), and their team were amazing as usual, and made sure that the event was an enormous success and that everyone had great value from it.

If you want to find out more details about this event, please look at more [details in this report](#).