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The Standard-First ERP Blueprint

Cutting Dynamics 365 program cost by 30% by designing for standard capability before customisation.

30%	22 wks	<8%	240+
Lower program cost	Median first go-live	Custom code ratio	D365 implementations

Executive summary

Most Dynamics 365 overruns are not technical failures. They are design failures that begin in week three, when a workshop converts a legacy habit into a build item. Across 240+ implementations we find that programs holding custom code below eight percent of total effort go live a median of nine weeks earlier and run 30% cheaper over three years.

The standard-first blueprint is a decision discipline, not a slogan. Every gap is routed through a fixed sequence — configure, extend with low-code, extend with code, and only then change the process — with a named owner and a documented cost of deviation.

Why customisation compounds

- Each custom object adds regression surface to two Microsoft release waves per year.
- Bespoke logic fragments reporting, pushing analytics into shadow spreadsheets.
- Hyper-tailored processes raise onboarding cost for every future finance or service hire.
- Upgrade debt is paid in run budget, where it is least visible to the steering committee.

> “We stopped asking 'can we build it?' and started asking 'what does standard cost us to accept?' That single question removed 41 build items from our backlog.”

The four-gate gap process

Gate	Question	Owner	Typical outcome
1 · Configure	Does standard capability cover this with setup only?	Functional lead	62% of gaps close here
2 · Low-code	Can Power Platform close it without ALM risk?	Solution architect	21% close here

Gate	Question	Owner	Typical outcome
3 · Code	Is the differentiation worth lifetime upgrade cost?	Design authority	9% approved
4 · Process	Should the business process change instead?	Process owner	8% resolved by change

Cost of deviation register

Every approved extension carries a three-year cost line: build, test automation, release regression, and documentation. Publishing that number at the steering committee changes behaviour faster than any governance policy.

Reference program shape

Phase	Duration	Exit criteria
Mobilise	2 weeks	Charter, design authority, environment strategy
Fit-to-standard	5 weeks	Gap register scored through four gates
Build & configure	8 weeks	Automated regression pack green
Data & integration	Parallel	Two full-volume migration rehearsals
UAT	3 weeks	Business sign-off by process, not by module
Cutover	1 week	Runbook rehearsed twice, go/no-go gates passed
Hypercare	6 weeks	Ticket burn-down curve and knowledge transfer

Adoption metrics that predict payback

- Percentage of transactions completed without spreadsheet intervention.
- Days to close, measured monthly from go-live, not quarterly.
- Custom code ratio trend across release waves.
- Self-serve report coverage versus IT-raised report requests.

Talk to a Dynamics architect about applying the standard-first blueprint to your roadmap — connect@myrmetics.com