

ACHIEVING SUCCESSFUL  
**MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365**  
**DEPLOYMENTS WHILE**  
**SAVING TIME AND MONEY**

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
**HEADSTART** FROM SIKICH



**HEADSTART**



**SIKICH**

## INTRODUCTION

When companies decide to deploy a modern, cloud ERP or CRM solution like Microsoft Dynamics 365, they want to reap the transformational benefits of the technology as soon as possible. At the same time, they hope to avoid the disruption, budget and schedule overruns, risk, and uncertainty of poorly planned deployment projects. To streamline Dynamics 365 deployments and ensure the right outcomes, Sikich has developed the **HEADSTART** approach. We use **HEADSTART** in nearly every project to our clients' benefit, and continue refining the methodology as Dynamics 365 evolves along with organizations and industries. No matter if you're a business leader looking to modernize your technology or a Professional Advisor helping clients find the best partner, **HEADSTART** could give you a critical edge.



## A SIMPLE APPROACH TO DEPLOYING MODERN ERP & CRM

To streamline business application deployments and shorten clients' time-to-benefit, Sikich has combined its industry and technology expertise with the new vision of modular, agile solutions in a comprehensive deployment approach called **HEADSTART**. The following principles guided the development of **HEADSTART**.

- Projects that are based on agile principles and are adapted to work with pre-built software applications can reduce the risk and cost of deployments. The old way of implementing packaged software, based on a waterfall approach to project management, takes too long and does not consistently result in successful projects.
- Starting implementation projects from a blank slate, beginning with lengthy requirements discovery and documentation, is a well-intended process that nonetheless cannot guarantee the best possible project outcomes. Such efforts result in too much focus on past practices and not nearly enough attention to how the business should operate in the future.
- Implementation partners and system integrators must increase the speed at which they deploy systems so that clients can realize value faster. At the same time, technology partners and their clients have to expand project scopes to incorporate data analytics and insight solutions as part of the initial deliverable.
- Clients rightly expect that the quality of the delivery services they receive should reflect their partner's cumulative, vertical expertise and will not vary greatly with the experience of the individuals on their project team. Every client deserves the vendor's A team, every time. Clients' project success should not be at risk because a trusted vendor includes junior professionals in the team.

## WHAT IS HEADSTART?

**HEADSTART** is the Sikich approach to accelerating the delivery of high-value industry business solutions.



METHODOLOGY



PRECONFIGURED SYSTEM



DOCUMENTED BUSINESS PROCESSES



INDUSTRY POWERPACK



CORE ISV INTEGRATIONS



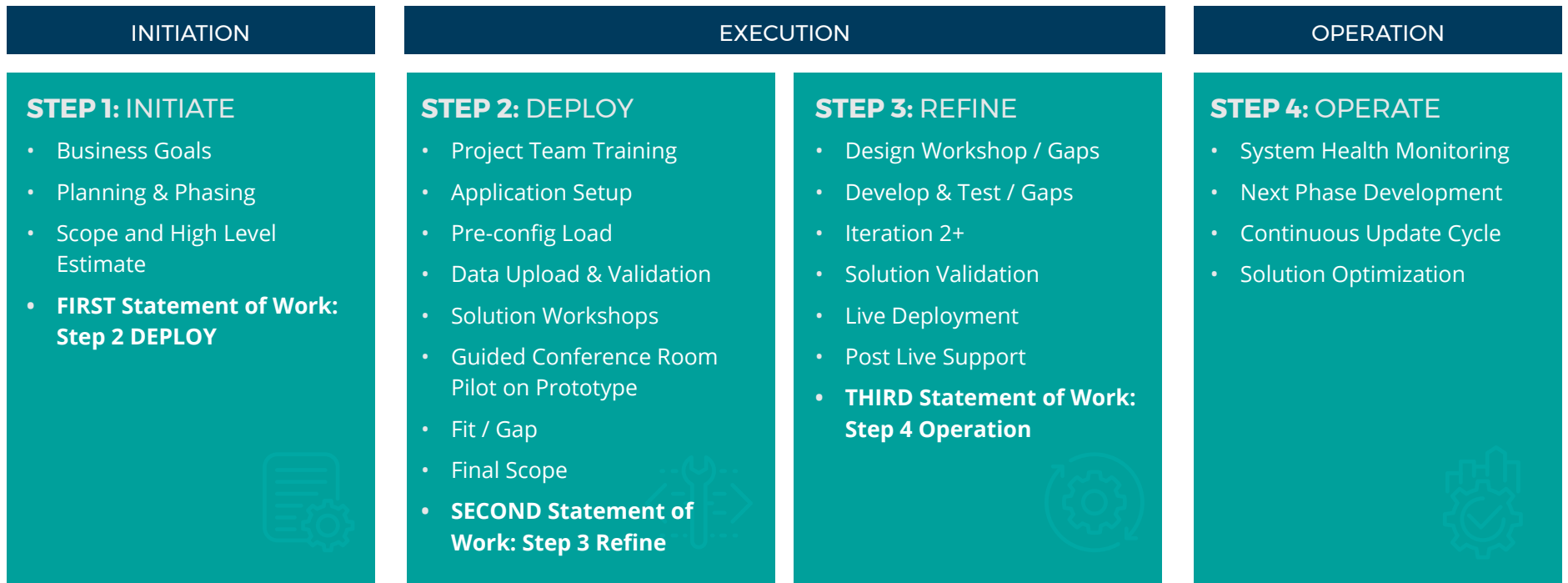
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE



**HEADSTART**



# HEADSTART ENGAGEMENT OUTLINE



## HOW THE HEADSTART METHODOLOGY WORKS

The Sikich **HEADSTART** methodology is simple. It's designed so that our clients can achieve a successful project of clearly defined scope, generating a high value in the shortest time possible.

Our partnership begins before we sign a statement of work (SOW). Before you, the client, decide to sign a SOW, we will jointly define and agree to a high-level scope for the project along with a basic estimate of services to complete delivery.

The ensuing project execution comprises two steps. First, we deploy the preconfigured application and the full suite of **HEADSTART** management and system maintenance tools. We populate the application with a comprehensive set of sample data and facilitate workshops to prepare and execute a virtual conference room pilot (CRP). A CRP involves hands-on, guided training and testing that allow team members to explore in-scope business processes in the configured system, working with data they know. This first iteration of the application is as much a training session as a testing activity. Once the CRP is complete, the project team

identifies any perceived gaps between the business process outcomes they need to achieve and what the system offers.

Consultants and client stakeholders review the resulting gap/fit report. The team determines which business processes could be changed to fit the software, what alternatives could help achieve the desired results, and if it is necessary to develop a business case to justify any desired system modifications or the introduction of third party products. Following this step, we refine project estimates to reflect the agreed scope of work as we complete the deployment.

In the refine step, we address functional gaps in the way we and our clients agreed, which could involve re-engineered business processes, alternate processes, ISV solutions, or system modifications. We perform CRPs to close all gaps. Once the project team signs off, the system can go into production. This method prioritizes strategic enhancements, puts them into practice, and builds on them by means of continuous testing.

As these iterations progress, the team also works on data migrations and prepares for live operation by scheduling final user acceptance testing (UAT), performance load tests, and end user training.



“With 10 years of experience in Microsoft Dynamics 365 and AX, I’ve never seen a solution that offers such an incredible combination of process improvements, functionality, extensibility, and use of the Power Platform together with a proven implementation methodology. **HEADSTART** results in faster deployments and better project collaboration, and allows employees to focus more on value-adding activities.”

– JEREMY CENTNER  
DYNAMICS 365 ENTERPRISE PRESALES ARCHITECT, SIKICH

