



# Microsoft Convergence 2012: A Space Odyssey

Adventures in Accounting with Microsoft Dynamics GP

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This is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead is merely coincidental.

This work uses a fictional situation to illustrate the features and benefits of Microsoft's Convergence conference. While every attempt has been made to accurately describe the conference in this work, the descriptions may be inaccurate and should not be relied upon for purchase, implementation or attendance decisions.

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I am not aware of any space aliens that actually attend Microsoft's annual Convergence conference but there are a few folks that I wonder about.

Characterizing the alien as being from France is not meant as insult to the French. It's a takeoff from the Saturday Night Live sketch and movie, *The Coneheads*, in which American's know so little about the French that they can't tell the difference between a Frenchman and an alien.

## Credits

Thank you to everyone who reviewed this work and provided suggestions and edits. All the errors are mine.

## The Mission

The star cruiser hung ominously in space. Hidden behind Earth's moon, its sharp, menacing angles were at ease with the dark void of space. On board, Lieutenant Ajjdvnzt stood at rigid attention while Supreme Commander Ga' addressed the ship's officers.

"As you know," Supreme Commander Ga' began, "we have conquered most of the known galaxy. We have mastered space travel and artificial gravity. Our army is second to none. Now we are here to lay the groundwork for the conquest of earth. We want their resources and their people as slaves. We want the one thing that we have not mastered as a people". He paused for effect. "We want their advanced accounting knowledge! Our supreme leaders are concerned that the earthlings could use their advanced accounting techniques and software to mobilize supplies for their armies, disrupt our supply lines and eventually defeat us. We are here on a reconnaissance mission to make sure that doesn't happen."

In a private briefing later that day, Supreme Commander Ga' met with Lieutenant Ajjdvnzt. "Lieutenant, you have been selected to infiltrate the humans. With your speech impediment, you are the only one among us who can make the noises of Earth languages. We are sending you to Microsoft's Convergence conference for accounting software to understand how advanced the humans really are. You are to bring back information that will help us overcome Earth's accounting prowess. Have you been studying?"

"Yes, Supreme Commander," the lieutenant replied. "I have been studying the Earthling's great information repository known as 'Bing'. I have learned several of their languages including English, Spanish and Pig Latin. I also believe that I finally understand the difference between debits and credits."

"Aggh!" said Ga'. "I can barely understand you. I hope that the humans can. We will provide you with one of the advanced communication devices from the Humans, a Windows Mobile 7 Phone. We are more than capable of monitoring Earth's communications but since I can barely understand you with that speech impediment, you will type and send your dispatches. Is that clear?"

"Yes Sir!" replied the Lieutenant.

"Excellent. Our best linguists have studied the humans to develop a persona for you. We have picked a simple name which will not arouse suspicion. On Earth you will be known as ... Moe Ron." Ga' beamed as he successfully pronounced "Moe Ron" in English. He had been studying too.

## The Arrival

Lieutenant Ajjdvnzt, now “Moe Ron” walked wide-eyed through the huge convention center. He was overwhelmed by the alien sights, sounds and smells. His eyes found the word ‘Registration’. That word was part of his briefing so he moved toward the sign. At registration, Moe Ron lined up with other attendees. Approaching the registration desk he said, “I am Moe Ron and I wish to register to Converge”. That earned him an upturned eyebrow from the petite woman behind the desk but, ever the professional, she processed his registration. As she got up to get his bag, the person behind Moe in line interrupted him. “Excuse me,” Moe heard. “You’re not from around here, are you?” Moe turned to see a tall man in a cowboy hat. “No sir, I am from France and I am here to learn about the GP,” Moe replied. “I’m Tex and we’re glad to have you here. Stick around after registration and I’ll show you around.”

Tex met Moe at the back of the line. “I’m sure you’ve got a great name where you come from but here in Texas you should just introduce yourself as Moe,” said Tex. “Hi Tex, I am Moe,” Moe said, trying out his new name. Tex laughed a big hearty laugh. “I like you Moe and that’s good. Here in Texas most everyone is armed so it’s good when people like you. This isn’t like New York City where you can mouth off and get away with it.”

Tex led Moe to a table near registration with ribbons and buttons in small boxes. Tex said, “This here is watcha call ‘Flair’. It’s used to brighten up your name badge. Since you’ll be wearing your name badge everywhere, Flair is important to make you look good. It’s a lot like wearing a bigger hat here in Texas.” Tex added a Microsoft Dynamics GP button, one for Distribution and several ribbons. Moe went overboard, festooning his badge with every ribbon possible. “Now you look like you fit in,” Moe commented.

“So Moe, what are you here to learn about?” asked Tex. Moe replied, “I am here to learn about the Dynamics GP. I don’t know very much.” “Well you are welcome to follow me around,” Tex said. “Today is DayONE presented by GPUG.”

“Oh GPUG, like the alien dog in the movie ‘Men in Black’,” Moe said. Tex chuckled. “No, GPUG is the GP User Group. They kick things off with a day of user-to-user learning to really get things going. Then we move into the rest of the conference. C’mon, let’s go find the first session.”

## Dispatch...Day One...Anticipation

Supreme Commander Ga’ read the dispatch from Moe Ron. “Greetings great and mighty Supreme Commander Ga’,” the message began. “I have infiltrated the Earthling’s conference and befriended them. I have focused on what is clearly the superior product. It is known as Microsoft Dynamics GP. The situation is worse than we thought. Today I saw a presentation on 50 Ways to Improve the Month End Close with Dynamics GP. I was astounded that there were still 50 ways to improve the Earthlings already fast monthly close. Another presentation covered The Worst Mistakes You Can Make with Microsoft Dynamics GP. The Earthlings recognize and learn from their mistakes. This is an area in which we have

much progress to make. Tonight I will be attending a party to better ingratiate myself with the humans. Apparently everyone in Texas is armed so it's good to make friends. "

Ga' was not happy with the first day's results but at least the Windows Phone 7 device was working correctly.

## **The Next Day**

Moe Ron sat in a keynote with a blank stare. He thought that he had made friends with the humans until they tried to poison him with something called 'beer'. Clearly there was nothing friendly about the headache he had this morning. A great human was speaking but Moe had trouble concentrating on the words. They were like a mantra, "Cloud, cloud, cloud", he kept hearing. What was this mystical cloud that everyone was talking about? He resolved to find out.

Later that day he sat stunned, watching a presentation on upcoming advancements in Dynamics GP. The talented engineers at Microsoft had added more functionality to Fixed Assets. They had addressed core items around printing and banking. They added tolerances for P.O.'s and worst of all; they had enabled worldwide access via web forms and "the Cloud".

At lunch Moe attended a "Birds of a Feather" networking session. He joined a group for new users and was astonished at how openly they shared what they knew, what they had learned and suggestions for improvements. His culture had nothing like this. Despite being an obvious outsider, everyone was friendly and patient with his questions.

In the afternoon Moe stopped by the Expo to experience the spectacle of vendors with solutions purporting to improve already astounding products. He was quickly overwhelmed. Companies of all types showed him demo after demo, each solution better than the next. He was barely a quarter of the way through when time ran out for the day.

Tex talked him into another night on the town. When Moe eyed the beer suspiciously, Tex suggested whiskey instead.

## **Dispatch...Day Two...Rock and Roll**

Supreme Commander Ga' read the dispatch with disbelief. "You translated it wrong. Do it again!" he yelled at his staff while scanning the initial translation. It read "Dear Ga'. We are in deep poo poo. The Earthy peoples are building a fantastic new version of their Dynamicly GP. They will be able to seamlessly access accounting information from around the world using their magic cloud. We must find and kill the magic cloud. Also their rock and roll music from the band Daughtry is very loud. Our troops should wear earplugs to avoid breaking out into dancing."

The translators informed him that the Windows Phone 7 device was working perfectly and the translation was correct. Ga' shook his head. There was no way he was going to tell high command that the Earthlings had a magical cloud.

## Day Three

The pounding behind his eyes would not stop. Clearly the humans were poisoning him slowly. Moe sat in a session next to Tex. Everyone was laughing as two funny guys up front talked about a ‘Support Debugging Tool’. Clearly they were intelligent as well as funny. It was also perfectly clear that the technology they were describing had been created by the Zathurians, his sworn enemies. Surely no human could have devised a solution to simplify the seventeen steps of creating a troubleshooting log down to the push of a button and then go further by automating the process. If the humans had come up with this they would charge thousands of their dollars for it. But this was being given away for free. Clearly this was a Zathurian plot to get Earth first.

Troubled by this new development, he wandered into the Hands-On Lab area. There in front of him were rows of computers with learning scenarios and examples for Dynamics GP. He was in love. Moe sat down and worked through basic journal entries, copying entries and correcting entries. For the first time he really felt as though he understood debits and credits. He could spend a lifetime here and not know it all. Finally Moe pulled himself away to attend another session.

The session Moe had selected came highly recommended. It was The Best of 50 Tips in 50 Minutes for Microsoft Dynamics GP. If he had not seen the same presenter deliver 50 Tips on Closing the Month Faster, he would not have believed it possible. Fifty useful tips in 50 minutes and these were the best! Moe sat mesmerized. He wrote down the number of every tip. He laughed at every joke and before he left the auditorium, he used his Windows Phone 7 device to download the presentation with links to details on every tip.

Moe wanted more tips so he raced to the bookstore to buy the presenter’s book, the [Microsoft Dynamics GP 2010 Cookbook](#). They hadn’t ordered enough books and there was a mini-riot going on over the last few books. With a primal scream Moe launched himself into the fray and emerged from the center of the pile, bruised but clutching a Cookbook over his head.

## Party ‘til You Drop

Moe was reluctant to go out with Tex again but the euphoria of getting a book overcame his concern. They were trying to decide between two Convergence party institutions, the Rock – n – Rave or The Spot. In the end, they went to both. Moe wisely avoided whiskey and Tex told him that was fine, tequila was probably more his speed anyway. The ice finally broke and Moe made friends with half of the Convergence attendees that night.

## Dispatch...Day Three...No Respect

“Yo Ga’ baby, what’s shakin’? We are like totally toast you know what I mean? The Zathurians are already here enhancing Dynamics GP for free. Plus the Earthlings have a giant free learning center where anyone can improve their Dynamics GP skills. I mean like I could live there and never learn it all. And the tips! Dude! These Microsoft MVP peeps know more about accounting software than our whole planet.”

Supreme Commander Ga's aides had never seen him turn so red. "Ga' baby!" he yelled. "Where is the 'Supreme Commander'? Where is the respect? What secret powers do these humans have to pollute the mind of our operative?"

## **The Last Day**

By the end of Convergence, Moe had business cards from everyone. He'd met all of the MVP's, tried to kiss all of the Microsoft employees and publicly pledged his love of Dynamics GP, loudly, multiple times. But he had one last quest. Moe went to the support area full of Microsoft Dynamics GP support staff and engineers. He pulled out his questions and tried to stump them. Kelly Youells answered all of his trick upgrade questions. Terry Heley answered payroll questions he didn't even know to ask. Jared Hall went deep into Dynamics GP, through Microsoft Excel and back into GP in a trip that made Moe's head swim. He couldn't stump them. Finally he had made up his mind.

## **Dispatch...Day Four...Detachment**

"So Supreme Commander Ga', first let me apologize for my previous dispatches. I have completed my mission here and unfortunately, we cannot conquer the humans. They would use their advanced accounting knowledge to optimize material and personnel placement against us. Any that we took as slaves would brilliantly foul our supply chain even as we thought they were helping. Their accounting technology and knowledge is too advanced for us.

I have made the decision to sacrifice myself and remain here on Earth to better study the humans. I will become a Dynamics GP consultant to infiltrate their ranks. Perhaps I can even become an MVP one day."

Ga' carefully studied the dispatch. "He has gone over to the humans," Ga said. His voice rose in announcement. "The lieutenant has been corrupted by the humans. We are no match for them with their debits and their credits. Destroy the planet!"

No one moved. Supreme Commander Ga' eyed his aides. "Why are you not destroying the planet?" Ga' screamed. His eyes bulged. His nostril's flared. All the while his aides stared diligently at the floor. Finally, his second in command spoke up. "Supreme Commander Ga', we have discovered that we made an error in our last cycle count. The Ensign in charge switched the debit and credits by mistake. We do not actually have enough bombs and missiles to destroy the planet."

## Epilogue

Moe Ron stayed on Earth and eventually got a job working with Dynamics GP. He is still trying to become an MVP. He now understands debits and credits but accruals continue to elude him.

Supreme Commander Ga' attempted to return to his home planet to collect enough missiles to destroy the Earth. Unfortunately the [ship's purser](#), traditionally an accounting role, miscalculated the amount of food they would need. By last account the ship was stranded on a remote planet slightly more than halfway home.

This is the true and complete story of how [Microsoft Convergence](#) and [Microsoft Dynamics GP](#) saved the world. What, you don't believe me? All you have to do is come to Convergence 2012 in Houston, March 18 through March 21 and you can see for yourself. Make sure to come early on the 18<sup>th</sup> for [DayONE](#), and say 'Hi' to Moe if you see him.

## About the Author

Mark Polino is a CPA, CITP and CFF. He is a Microsoft MVP for Microsoft Dynamics GP and a Microsoft Certified IT Professional – Dynamics who has worked with Dynamics GP for more than 10 years. Mark is the author of the Microsoft Dynamics GP 2010 Cookbook and the Microsoft Dynamics GP 2010 Lite Cookbook.

He runs the popular Dynamics GP website at [www.DynamicAccounting.net](http://www.DynamicAccounting.net) and works as a Principal Consultant for I.B.I.S., Inc. This is a personal project.

Both the Microsoft Dynamics GP 2010 Cookbook and the Lite edition are available from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and other major book retailers.

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***A Space Alien's Guide to Microsoft Convergence***

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