

Williams Companies Reduced Costs and Improved Financial and Operational Efficiency With Oracle ERP Cloud

The Williams Companies Inc. (Williams) is one of the largest energy infrastructure companies in the United States, handling over 30% of the country's natural gas supply with more than 31,000 miles of pipelines. With a focus on redesigning business processes and utilizing industry best practices to acquire, construct and manage assets, Williams transformed its organizational efficiency with the largest Oracle Cloud implementation to date in the energy and utility industry. Boosting its [organizational resilience](#) by standardizing processes across various business units, Williams retired 13 legacy applications and saved millions of dollars annually.

Challenge

Energy organizations are under more pressure than ever. Regardless of where an organization is on the value chain (upstream, midstream or downstream), reducing the cost and complexity of compliance, operational efficiencies and customer and supplier data insights while managing risk are top concerns for many energy and utility organizations.

By setting a near-term goal of a 56% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 as part of its climate commitment, Williams is well in line with the country's recently announced nationally determined contribution target of a [50%-52% emissions reduction by 2030](#). Williams plans to leverage its natural gas-focused strategy and technology available today to focus on immediate opportunities to reduce emissions, scale renewables and build a clean energy economy — while looking forward and anticipating future innovations and technologies. Williams knew it needed to improve financial and operational efficiency to meet these goals. Still, its existing solutions were outdated and inconsistently applied to business processes, with employees frequently using workarounds to perform critical business functions. In addition, modifications to the software required costly, time-consuming engagements.

Williams needed a solution that would allow it to ensure transparency, reduce information technology (IT) costs, provide more automated and effective controls, reduce regulatory compliance costs and provide timely and actionable data insights. Williams embarked on a journey with Huron to build a cloud-first, modern solution that would reduce support costs, provide a seamless digital experience and evolve with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) legislative changes. With Huron's guidance, Williams chose [Oracle Cloud ERP](#) as the right digital cloud platform to achieve these goals.

Approach

Building the Case for Change

Beginning in 2018, Huron first helped Williams build an application assessment and enterprise road map — developing its business case for change, evaluating its cloud platform options and establishing a multiyear deployment strategy. One key objective of the implementation was to reduce overall software licensing costs by eliminating secondary financial systems. Williams also required better visibility and control of the entire project life cycle, from project investment approval to project budgeting, execution and reporting.

Transformation Delivered

Williams' transformation progressed in a phased approach, starting with global design for the overall holistic solution across enterprise performance management (EPM), enterprise resource planning (ERP) and business intelligence (BI). The implementation team utilized Huron's CLEAR methodology (collaborate, listen, engage, assess, review), which focused on a business process-centric solution design, assurance validated through multiple testing cycles and client enablement.

Huron leveraged an Oracle Cloud migration toolkit during the implementation to mitigate many common cloud migration risks of data conversion, integration and unique client customizations. Solution design documents and test scenarios were designed and used to create training documents for Williams, helping ensure continued long-term success.

The migration to Oracle Cloud ERP enabled Williams to:

- **Standardize business processes:**

A multiphase program consisting of advisory, common design, incremental application and process deployments allowed Williams to standardize its processes across various accounting, financial and supply chain end-to-end functions, which helped improve Williams' operations and business performance.

- **Streamline legacy accounting systems, reduce IT costs and centrally monitor projects:**

Huron worked with Williams to develop a new software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution that enabled Williams to retire its legacy plant accounting system (PowerPlan). Built on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI), the Huron energy application toolkit (HEAT) solution can be quickly scaled up or down to meet Williams' ongoing and changing business operations demands and storage needs. Implementing HEAT alongside Oracle Cloud ERP has given Williams' IT team direct access to automatic updates to add new functionality and stay current with legislative requirements. Williams leveraged the Oracle

RESULTS

Improved financial and operational efficiency by **20%** while ensuring process transparency, effective controls and more timely access to information

Retired **13** legacy systems, including PowerPlan, EcoSys, Unifier and Concur, saving Williams millions annually

92% reduction in monthly resource hours for end-to-end allocations processing

The first client live on [Oracle Joint Venture Management](#)

Reduced list of suppliers from **80K+** to **25K**, resulting in significant savings

Created a standardized process for on-hand inventory management across the company

Improved capabilities for and reallocated effort to analytics and business decision support

Delivered a better user experience for business partners and employees

Reduced application costs and complexity, increasing business agility

Extended and harmonized business processes and solutions to enable responsiveness to change, market conditions and M&A activities

Cloud Innovation Management module to enable an authorization for expenditures (AFE) process. This solution allows Williams' management teams to centrally view all proposed projects, report and compare the potential projects and streamline the project creation process.

**WILLIAMS COMPANIES REDUCED COSTS AND
IMPROVED FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL
EFFICIENCY WITH ORACLE ERP CLOUD**

- **Clean up customer and supplier data:** Leveraging Oracle Customer Data Management, Williams supported data cleanup and facilitated the process of aligning the legacy customer and supplier data structure that helps Williams to collaborate rapidly to deliver the best solutions.
- **Optimize allocations process management:** Huron worked with the Williams' allocation and IT teams to create an allocation hub solution that is integrated, optimized and less reliant on resources outside the allocations team. This has led to a 96% reduction in the time spent creating allocations. Together, the teams:
 - Designed models to maximize traceability, enabling effective audit and regulatory reporting and analytics.
 - Centralized processing, knowledge and administration for a more efficient month-end close.
 - Created interfaces with both systematic sources and manual inputs in a consistent, yet flexible, format.
- **Establish a digital platform for acquisition integration:** As more mergers and acquisitions within the industry are anticipated, delivering a cloud-based digital platform will help expedite onboarding, business process capabilities and the retirement of legacy applications.

Williams handles 30% of the natural gas in the United States used every day to heat homes, cook food and generate electricity. With interstate natural gas pipelines and gathering and processing operations throughout the country, Williams reliably delivers value to its employees, investors, customers and communities by running its business with authenticity and a safety-driven culture, leading the industry into the future. With nearly \$10 billion in annual revenue, Williams is committed to being the leader in providing infrastructure that safely delivers natural gas products to reliably fuel the clean energy economy.

Society faces an unprecedented challenge: meeting the world's growing energy demand while simultaneously addressing the risks of climate change with practical solutions we can execute right now. As one of the largest energy infrastructure companies in the United States, Williams sees firsthand the critical role natural gas plays today in a viable and sustainable low-carbon future.

Williams' path to "net zero" by 2050 involves a combination of immediate and long-term solutions, including investments in renewables, technology and the best and brightest talent who are committed to doing what is right.



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