The IT & Business Leader’s Guide to Oracle Cloud Applications

6 Principles for Building a Better Business with the Oracle Platform
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Building the future of business with Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications

Your business applications are like a house. Just as your plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems need to work together to keep everything running smoothly, your business has various software and technology systems that must work together so you can respond to your customers in a timely manner, manage your employees, keep up with the competition, and turn a profit.

These applications need to process, share, and analyze information; protect your data; and help you extend beyond your legacy systems. With technologies such as AI and generative AI at their disposal, your employees can make better business decisions faster and be more productive. AI can recognize patterns within data sets and make recommendations. Generative AI takes this one step further by analyzing complex, multidimensional sets of data and generating its own text, images, suggestions, and summaries of that data. It’s similar to the way intelligent devices such as smart thermostats, lighting, and camera systems help you maintain your home more comfortably, efficiently, and even more cost-effectively.

Building a house from scratch is not an easy process—and remodeling a house can be even more painful. The same is true for building or updating your technology systems, especially if you don’t have the right tools or partner. During this process, businesses often struggle with responding quickly to customer demands and changing business requirements, ensuring data security and system performance, sourcing and retaining talent, and integrating new applications or systems with legacy systems. But system performance, reliability, and scalability are all required to deliver a high-quality, timely product.

As an IT leader, your job is to keep your company’s systems running smoothly to support business operations today while laying the foundation to address tomorrow’s unprecedented challenges.

Many of the challenges that homeowners face have also evolved. For example, natural disasters and extreme weather weren’t as much of an issue 20 years ago as they are today. Similarly, the world of information technology has evolved rapidly during its brief history: mainframe, mid-range, PC, and now the cloud. Why is the shift to the cloud so different? Rather than just improving existing business practices, the cloud upends how business is done—in other words, it lays a better foundation to address challenges in a rapidly evolving world. As an IT leader, your job is to keep your company’s systems running smoothly to support business operations today, while also laying the foundation to address tomorrow’s challenges.

To help you strike this balance, we built Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications and their underpinning technology around six principles: unified data, a full technology stack, in-depth security, pervasive analytics, business integration, and right-time innovation. This ebook will walk you through each of these principles to demonstrate how the right applications and technology can help you build the best possible home for your business.
1: Unleash the power of data with the suite approach

At their core, businesses are all about data. We've all learned to store vast amounts of data in the most cost-efficient manner, but is your business using data to make timely decisions, uncover new market opportunities, serve your customers, or find and retain top talent? Unifying your data ensures that it’s more accurate. With the suite approach, your entire organization can operate from a single source of truth—helping you bring teams together and make better decisions faster.

Getting ahead with composable business technologies

In today’s digital world, many companies are turning disruption into opportunity by adopting composable thinking and business technologies. Composable organizations recognize that business conditions—customer trends, financial models, etc.—often change, so they empower their employees to respond and adapt to those new conditions.

We know that companies like yours have heterogeneous environments—a mix of hardware and software from a variety of vendors accumulated over the entire lifespan of your organization. It wouldn’t be realistic or empathetic to assume that any company could simply switch over to a brand-new platform with all new applications overnight.

That’s why you need a partner that not only offers a complete cloud solution to cover all the functions you might need, but also one that’s modular so it can work with the software you already have. This allows you to adopt exactly what you need when you need it.

Fusion Applications is the world’s most complete and innovative suite of applications.

With Fusion Applications, we offer applications spanning all business functions—finance, supply chain and manufacturing, HR, marketing, sales, and service—as well as industry-specific needs. You can adopt as many or as few of these applications as you want; the advantage to having more applications is unified data.

Unified data, a common workflow engine, and a consistent user interface can ensure that data isn’t trapped in silos. Instead of using an application layer to synchronize different databases in different apps, all Fusion Applications access the same database instance. Users in different lines of business make decisions based on real-time reporting drawn from the same data, even though they might be using different apps. Also, security measures implemented at the database layer apply to all Fusion Applications, reducing risk and administration costs.

Just as you need an architect to convert your needs and vision into a cohesive design for your house, a suite approach with unified data can play a fundamental role in incorporating the latest technology to address your business challenges. By implementing innovative software that is composable by design, you can be prepared to weather difficult conditions and establish a strong foundation to thrive in an uncertain future.
 Develop, deploy, and manage robust enterprise applications with a full-stack technology platform

Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) is our next-generation cloud designed for Fusion Applications. Our applications run on brand-new networking, hardware, security, database, and operating system technologies in state-of-the-art data centers.

Oracle is the only cloud provider that runs its applications on its own cloud. Our infrastructure delivers not only the performance, security, and reliability you need for critical business operations, but also the tools and technology powering the innovations in Fusion Applications. We rely on OCI to realize strategic directions in security, intelligence, integration, and technology adoption.

Performance and reliability

When we switched over to OCI, Fusion Applications experienced 30% better performance and increased reliability. We raised our SaaS Service Level Availability commitment to customers from 99.7% to an industry-leading 99.9%. As a result, our customers have less downtime and higher productivity.

With more than 40 public and government cloud regions worldwide and more planned, Oracle Cloud is available where and when you need it. Our fast-growing networks of cloud regions support data residency requirements and regional compliance. Our data centers have component and power redundancy with backup generators in place, and Oracle may incorporate redundancy in one or more layers, including network infrastructure, program servers, database servers, and/or storage.

For customers that require strict data residency, data privacy, and security low-latency connectivity and data-intensive processing, we can run Fusion Applications within their data centers. OCI Dedicated Region is certified to run Oracle SaaS products such as Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP, HCM, and SCM—offering a completely integrated cloud experience while all data, including API operations and metadata, remains local to the region.

Monitoring and management

Oracle Cloud Console for Fusion Applications provides a “single pane of glass” visibility and management capability for your Fusion Applications environment and OCI services. To access your business critical at a glance, you can configure dashboards to monitor application performance, check availability metrics, review billing and usage, and more. From the console, your Fusion Cloud Administrator can manage the end-to-end lifecycle of the Fusion Applications Environment, including provisioning of a new test, dev, and production environment. Additionally, you can easily access the wealth of compliance, learning, and support resources from the same centralized location.
The Oracle AI Advantage: The Best Data + The Best Technology

Oracle has always managed and protected the world’s most important data. Oracle has also developed purpose-built AI cloud infrastructure, databases, services, and sovereign solutions. With Fusion Applications, Oracle uses its own technology to embed AI features that deliver superior performance, security, privacy, and choice, applying its in-depth data expertise to help you leverage data from across your organization.

Cloud Applications with Embedded AI
Together, the most complete suite of cloud applications—featuring the best data and the best technology—and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure help our customers take advantage of the best AI. These out-of-the-box features are delivered at no additional cost, accelerating adoption and removing complexity.

The beauty of having Oracle AI embedded in Fusion Cloud Applications is that users can instantly access AI suggestions without ever leaving the applications. Generative AI can help recognize complex, multidimensional patterns from large language models (LLMs) and generate something new using the patterns found in those data sets. This can help your workforce be more productive and make faster, better decisions.

As a customer, you can also opt into new AI features, which means you decide which features to implement and when. Oracle AI is designed to make suggestions, but ultimately the final decision is in your hands. Built-in guardrails and engineered prompts help ensure accuracy while human oversight keeps you in control.

Finally, as with all Oracle Cloud Services, security is a top priority. With OCI Generative AI Service, your data is not shared with LLM providers or seen by other customers. Custom models trained on your data can only be used by you.

Digital Assistants (Chatbots)
Conversational AI is also embedded within Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications via Oracle Digital Assistant. Oracle Digital Assistant chatbots can offer the following benefits:

• Delivering a personalized employee experience
• Supporting employee life events such as getting married, having a child, or undergoing a medical procedure
• Assisting with employee actions such as requesting time off, approving expenses, and performing other regular activities
• Proactively providing quick answers for employees by leveraging extensive corporate knowledgebases
• Creating expense reports faster using receipt photos and chat text, then automatically submitting those expense reports for faster reimbursement
• Capturing project time faster with suggestions based on history and planned tasks
• Managing the status of project deliverables and issuing action items

Discover the latest list of Digital Assistant AI capabilities by application and function, including Customer Experience (CX), Human Capital Management (HCM), and Enterprise Resource Management (ERP)/Supply Chain (SCM).

Oracle delivers new AI capabilities each quarter. See Oracle AI for Fusion Applications for the latest AI innovations.
Powering your innovation

No matter how fast we innovate, we recognize that some customers will want to add their own features or industry-specific capabilities. With our new Oracle Applications Platform, you can use the same design system and tools that our developers use to extend and personalize our applications without breaking any updates. You can leverage Oracle Applications Platform to extend Fusion Applications or build your own.

Our Redwood Design System comes with prebuilt templates and components to help you create the same user experience that our applications provide, including conversational experiences, search, data visualizations, and intelligent recommendations. These components offer the most engaging and productive user experiences by fully leveraging the cloud services we own to tailor recommendations and search results down to the individual user level.

Because we own the entire platform including applications and infrastructure, our customers can benefit from enhanced security, resiliency, stability, and availability, all of which are foundational to deriving business value. Since we continuously fortify OCI with the latest technology, this is like building a house on a solid foundation that will never deteriorate. Fusion Applications will continue to draw on the power of OCI to provide even greater benefits to your business.

For more information:

- Oracle cloud regions
- OCI dedicated regions
- Oracle AI strategy
- Redwood Design System
3: Safeguard data with layers of built-in security

The security landscape is changing fast. With increasing amounts of data, changing government and industry compliance and regulations, and changing business requirements, keeping your business-critical data secure is more challenging than ever before.

More and more critical business functions and infrastructure (water, power, etc.) are connected to the internet and therefore face increasing security risks. These threats are evolving as quickly as emerging technologies including AI. Even connected devices such as IoT sensors can potentially serve as an entry point for a security threat or breach, let alone ransomware that could completely disrupt business operations. The combination of connectivity and AI creates even more potential for new types of security breaches to occur.

Cloud computing is fundamentally different from traditional on-premises computing when it comes to security. In the traditional model, organizations typically have to fend off security threats on their own. In the cloud, organizations can leverage the resources and practices of the cloud service provider while still retaining control over the security measures of their IT solution. Managing security and privacy in the cloud is a joint responsibility between the cloud customer and the cloud service provider.

Oracle takes a holistic approach to information security, implementing a multi-layered defense security strategy where network, operating system, database, and software security practices and procedures complement one another with comprehensive internal controls, governance, and oversight. We don't have to rely on a different cloud service provider or technology vendor because we architected Oracle Cloud Infrastructure with security in mind from its initial design. OCI was designed to enable continuous and seamless protection from infrastructure to applications. Here's how we approach security at every layer:

**Physical security:** Oracle's layered approach to the physical security of data centers starts with the buildings themselves. We build and work with partners to build data center facilities using durable materials designed to withstand impact from light vehicle strikes. The buildings use perimeter barriers, security checkpoints, and cameras to monitor vehicle and personnel access. Every person who enters a data center must have a site-specific security badge or present government-issued identification with approved access requests.

**Network security:** We designed OCI architecture to reinforce platform security through isolated network virtualization, highly secure firmware installation, a controlled physical network, and network segmentation. Our physical network architecture isolates customers' racks, routers, and switches from each other to limit the risk of threat proliferation. To safeguard network access for both physical devices and software-based systems, we maintain strict security policies, including authentication and authorization requirements, deactivation of unused network ports, and regular review of personnel access assignments. Oracle staff must use approved devices equipped with a secure virtual private network (VPN) to connect to Fusion Applications. Of course, data transmitted over our network is always encrypted using a variety of standards-based, secure protocols such as TLS 1.2 or greater and IPsec.

**Business continuity:** Oracle maintains a comprehensive Risk Management Resiliency Program to establish a framework for efficient responses to business interruption events. Our business continuity policy, standards, and practices are generally aligned with International Standards Organization (ISO) 22301.
Organization security: Organizational and operational security focuses on people, processes, and procedures. Oracle aligns system and physical access with work responsibilities using the principles of need to know, least privilege, and separation of duties. We maintain a large in-house workforce of professionals dedicated to the security of Oracle Cloud infrastructure and SaaS Security. Additional compliance teams focus on alignment with regulations and certification programs such as ISO/IEC 27002 Code of Practice and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) 800-53 and 800-171.

Data security: Within Fusion Applications, data access is secured with job roles and security profiles. Users are denied access by default and can only access the data granted through their professional duties. To secure data against access outside of Fusion Applications, such as database admin, we use Oracle Database security solutions that include encryption, key management, privileged user access requirements, activity monitoring, system auditing, and more. The application data is encrypted at rest using Oracle Transparent Data Encryption (TDE). For additional security, customers can use Database Vault and Break Glass to manage their TDE master encryption keys and control Oracle's admin access to their Fusion Applications environment with an authorization workflow.

Development security: Oracle employs formal Secure Coding Standards to help ensure that we develop our products with consistently high security assurance, and to help developers avoid common coding mistakes.

Application security: Within Fusion Applications, Risk Management Cloud helps customers control user access to their Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP financial data, monitor user activity, and meet their regulation and compliance obligations through automation. To protect Fusion Applications from broader malicious threats, we leverage OCI’s built-in security architecture, including Oracle Web Application Firewall and OCI Identity and Access Management. OCI’s identity management offering enables first-time users to immediately benefit from flexible access policies that allow access to the right people at the right time via adaptive authentication techniques and identify lifecycle management capabilities.

Oracle continues to innovate with the security architected into Fusion Applications and our cloud infrastructure; it’s not bolted on as an afterthought. Just as homeowners should take a proactive and multilayered approach to home security (building a fence, installing cameras, etc.), Oracle has built security into every layer of our solutions for continuous and seamless protection—and our customers’ peace of mind.
4: Make better decisions faster with accurate analytics at the ready

To survive and thrive in this increasingly volatile, uncertain, and complex world, businesses must make decisions quickly and maintain a constant pulse on performance. While organizations look to benefit from improved customer acquisition and retention, engaged employees, and operational efficiency, many are struggling to build a culture that values and practices data-driven decision-making.

This is partly because decision-makers often struggle to quickly gain access to the numbers they need to monitor performance across the business. When every department uses different tools that yield different results and conclusions, decision-makers are forced to spend a lot of unnecessary time extracting the figures from multiple sources. Manually connecting siloed data is not only time- and resource-intensive, but also prone to error.

Our analytics strategy is to help customers get timely access to critical insights, regardless of department, with consistent, accurate KPIs and metrics. We provide real-time reports and KPIs to support day-to-day operations and decision-making within Fusion Applications. For advanced features such as in-depth trend analysis, actionable AI-powered capabilities, and predictive analytics, Oracle Fusion Data Intelligence provides ready-to-use, cross-departmental insights.

Unified analytics across the entire business with prebuilt solutions

Oracle Fusion Data Intelligence offers a comprehensive family of prebuilt, cloud native analytic capabilities for Oracle Cloud Applications (ERP, HCM, CX, and SCM), providing line-of-business users with ready-to-use insights into every part of the business for fast decision-making.

Organizations today are grappling with the emergence of AI—how do they leverage it and how can they do so effectively for their unique business needs? Fusion Data Intelligence empowers users with AI-powered capabilities around not just analysis, preparation, visualization, and natural-language processing but also recommendations to facilitate quicker actions. Oracle provides AI with a business process context, including generative AI data interactions, machine learning contextual insights, and AI-powered document understanding.

For most businesses, transactional applications (ERP, EPM, SCM, HCM, CX) manage all the transactional data. With Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications, you can analyze this data in real time and in memory. Oracle’s cloud applications aren’t isolated islands, either; with Fusion Data Intelligence, customers can analyze data across these transactional applications as well as non-Oracle data sources to establish the single source of the truth for a company.

Oracle’s unique breadth and depth of combined analytics and application capabilities enable organizations to unify analytics with a single, common view of performance across departments. Oracle Fusion Data Intelligence offers a set of packaged business application analytics that works against a single, cross-functional data model. Decision-makers can go to one place to get a comprehensive view of important numbers, aligning teams and departments with a standard definition of business performance for better collaboration.

These solutions eliminate time-consuming design, development, and integration tasks by offering prebuilt components for the entire analytics workflow:

- Ready-to-use best practice key performance indicators (KPIs) and dashboards
- Prebuilt native data pipelines for Oracle Cloud Applications
- Prebuilt single analytical data model and business views to Oracle Cloud Applications data
- Prebuilt AI data interactions for faster time to insights
Enhance business decision-making with AI/ML powered by trusted data

Oracle Fusion Analytics is powered by unrestricted editions of the robust platform services Oracle Analytics Cloud (OAC) and Oracle Autonomous Data Warehouse (ADW). It empowers all roles—business users, analysts, data engineers, and data scientists—to enrich their analytics workflow, from connecting and preparing data to consuming and sharing insights. Using native connectors, extend Fusion data sets to additional on-premises and cloud data sources such as EBS, JD Edwards, Google BigQuery, Salesforce, and Snowflake.

Help business users and leaders make better data-driven decisions through more accessible AI/ML. OAC embeds AI/ML capabilities throughout, democratizing access for all users without specialized training. This pervasive AI/ML boosts adoption, fostering a data-driven culture. With one click, add forecasts, clustering, and trends, or build no-code custom ML models for accurate, use case–specific results.

Boost analysts’ productivity with embedded AI/ML capabilities that accelerate the analytics workflow from data to decision. Generative AI assists analysts in building or modifying data stories through natural language. AI/ML-assisted data profiling and enrichment correct and expand data sets securely. Deliver insights to stakeholders through consumable formats such as hands-free podcasts or AI Avatar–generated newscasts.

Enable architects and data engineers to establish data governance, helping ensure trusted data with a consistent view of the entire data estate without compromising data access. OAC provides trusted data to power AI/ML via a governed, secure enterprise data model. This centrally managed model offers consistent metrics for business users while abstracting them from the complexity of the enterprise data estate.

For more information:

Oracle Fusion Data Intelligence
Oracle Fusion HCM Analytics
Oracle Fusion ERP Analytics
Oracle Fusion SCM Analytics
Oracle Fusion CX Analytics
Oracle Analytics
Oracle Analytics Platform
Oracle Fusion ERP Analytics
Oracle Fusion SCM Analytics
Oracle Fusion CX Analytics
Oracle Analytics
Oracle Analytics Platform
5: Connect your entire business ecosystem with powerful integrations

Your business doesn’t operate in isolation. Integration is a fact of life. While unified data and a common workflow engine can provide a single point of truth among Fusion Applications, chances are you’ll need to connect with an external business service or application as well.

Fusion Applications provide out-of-box integrations with service providers or organizations that have established strict standards and protocols—for example, integrating with tax partners for sales tax calculation or enabling payment file transmission to financial institutions for electronic payments.

For fast integration with other applications, Fusion Applications leverage prebuilt adapters in Oracle Integration and OCI Process Automation to meet different business needs.

Discover web services (Simple Object Access Protocol or SOAP), business objects, and REST API and generate automatic mapping to simplify the technical complexity when dealing with low-level APIs. These APIs offer near real-time access to data records in Fusion Applications.

Securely upload bulk data files to refresh data in Fusion Applications business tables. These are large data volumes processed in batch jobs, such as refreshing the personnel data of contingent workers from multiple agencies.

Automate business processes based on events such as generating customer invoices after receiving delivery confirmations from freight carriers.

Leverage well-defined security roles and privileges to implement new protocols, such as facility access badges for new employees and work certificate verification.

In fact, Oracle even relies on this integration for our on-premises and other cloud applications to support our customers’ digital transformation. We understand that our customers need to synchronize data with their existing systems while rolling out Fusion Applications, maintain existing business processes with other apps (on-premises or in the cloud), or orchestrate new processes involving Fusion Applications, third-party systems, and human activities.

With Oracle Integration, our customers can quickly build connections with other ERP, HCM, or CX applications using our extensive collection of prebuilt adapters; automate business processes with drag-and-drop design; and get ML-powered recommendations for their data mapping exercises. When in production, Oracle Integration provides customers with a centralized dashboard to manage and monitor data flow/traffic and gain insights into their business processes across multiple applications with near–real-time analytics.

Oracle understands that your business must be connected to the rest of the digital economy, just like your home utilities need to connect with service providers. We’re adding more APIs and out-of-the-box integration to Fusion Applications and more prebuilt adapters to Oracle Integration so customers can devote time to growing their business with trading partners—rather than figuring out how to connect with them.
6: Innovate at your own speed with the latest enhancements and tools

Continuous change requires continuous innovation. Oracle provides the latest functionality and technology to help customers stay competitive and address evolving market conditions.

Rated as cloud applications leaders by various analysts, Fusion Applications are updated quarterly with new capabilities and features, delivered alongside the latest enhancements and patches for the database, operating system, and security measures for our infrastructure services. This greatly reduces the risk of applications falling out of sync with the underlying platform environment. It also gives customers access to next-generation capabilities such as ML, AI, and natural-language processing to power better business insights, drive real business value, and turn change into opportunity.

While customers can’t opt out of quarterly updates, enhancements impacting user experience are turned off by default. After an update, the system is designed to work exactly as it did the day before—customers can decide whether to opt in to a new feature.

Create your own enhancements

Customers with unique needs can extend the existing features of Fusion Applications or create their own applications using the tools and technology in the Oracle Applications Platform.

Redwood UX Building Blocks: This software development toolkit provides UX resources to help you efficiently create consumer-grade applications, including the Redwood reference application, page templates, component repository, reference architecture, and design guides.

Telemetry: With telemetry components embedded within the UX components and integrated with DevSecOps tools, you gain detailed out-of-the-box analytics on real-world usage behavior and quality of service.

Search: With AI and machine learning–enabled suggestions and typo-tolerant text search, you can embed fast, scalable search capabilities across devices.

Conversational experiences: Embedded Oracle Digital Assistant components can help you quickly and easily build apps that are simple to use and can promote desired user behaviors.

Business logic: With the ability to serve up the most likely data input or next action based on user behavior history, you can create predictive and productive user experiences without any additional coding.

Low-code development: The Oracle Visual Builder Studio helps you extend your Fusion Applications or build new ones without the need for complex software development skills.

Data visualization: Redwood analytics components from Oracle Analytics Cloud can help you embed data visualizations within your Redwood apps to provide data insights where needed.

Just as we sometimes need to renovate or add extensions to our homes, businesses may need to implement new features to address their unique needs. Our continuous innovation delivery helps eliminate technology debt, providing your business with all the latest tools and products when you need them. With Oracle Applications Platform and Redwood Design System, you can truly make Fusion Applications your own.

For more information:

Fusion Cloud Applications
Quarterly Update
Oracle Applications Platform
Oracle Cloud Applications Leadership
Redwood Design System
Start your cloud journey today

When building a house, the ultimate goal is to craft a shelter that will last well into the future. Similarly, the IT decisions you make today can greatly impact the future of your business. You need an experienced partner that will be there for the long run, helping you overcome changing business conditions along the way.

With a decades-long history in secure data management and more than 430,000 customers in over 175 countries worldwide, Oracle is the partner you can trust. We have empowered countless organizations with technological innovations to overcome economic and industry disrupters that have come their way.

At Oracle, we’ve built resilience into our own company by modernizing our business processes in the cloud. What we learned from that experience helps us advise our customers on how to leverage the benefits of the cloud and successfully phase in an enterprise-wide digital transformation.

Every aspect of Oracle’s business worldwide now runs in the cloud, and we’ve invested more than $64B in R&D over the past decade to bring the best technology to our customers. Whether you want to improve an existing or new business process, innovate in one key area, or reduce data silos with a unified suite of applications, we’re here to support your journey every step of the way.

“Only Oracle has the deepest, most complete set of SaaS applications for every aspect of business, with the most advanced global cloud infrastructure available in the market today.”

Larry Ellison, Executive Chairman and Chief Technology Officer, Oracle