

Canadian National Railway achieves 6% savings after just one year



Business Needs

Unsustainable and unrepeatable manual IT financial management processes were not maintainable for CN Rail. Jean-Francois Boudreau, Senior Manager of IT Finance at CN Rail, struggled with numerous over allocations and found it difficult to quickly explain reasons and outcomes. Additionally, his team needed self-service reporting so users could access the information and drill-down to answer questions on their own, improving overall work management. After CN Rail gained some initial visibility to costs, the next challenge would be to determine the team's efficiency and optimization by developing unit cost metrics against the market, the industry and the different technologies used internally.

Solution

CN Rail selected Upland and its ComSci product because other "implementation-only vendors" would not have worked well in the long-run. The team wanted a partner throughout the entire journey, not just during implementation – and more importantly – they did not want to be nickel-and-dimed for additional requests after the implementation process was complete.

Manual processes sidetracked team

Unsustainable and unrepeatable manual IT financial management processes were starting to fail CN Railway. JF's team struggled with the drill downs needed to access their databases of decentralized information. The team was not equipped to explain specific results. The addition of unit cost metrics, foreseen as the next step, would have made the preexisting manual process even worse. JF wanted to switch from General Ledger view to an IT domain to unit cost trending and benchmarking – and then to a Bill of IT – all with the press of a button. JF's team searched for a better way.

"With ComSci, we could ask for best practice advice around not only the implementation but also the entire solution. We got a good gut feeling for both the technical and advisory aspect of the implementation before even signing on the dotted line. It sparked the beginning of a trusting and dependable partnership."

– Jean-Francois Boudreau, Senior Manager of IT Finance at CN Rail

The Canadian National Railway Company (CN Rail) is headquartered in Montreal, Quebec and is a leader in the North American transportation services industry with a focus on supply chain innovation and collaboration.

- **ComSci helped CN Rail to achieve a 6% cost savings after the first year**, and are on track to gain an additional projected savings of 10% over the second and third years by using the unit costs, benchmarking and application capabilities of the tool.
- **Through the ComSci application, the CN Rail technology team developed an automated transfer pricing chargeback model.** Previously, they did not properly chargeback all the users for the software consumed. A significant tax benefit resulted and the system now allows for traceable audits whenever necessary.
- **With Upland's ComSci, CN Rail gained much more than an implementation-only partner.** As JF shared, "this ITFM process is not a quick implementation but rather a lengthy yet rewarding journey."

All aboard with ComSci

After a thorough search, JF selected ComSci over other options for three key reasons: product strengths, availability of and transparency to ComSci team members and an all-inclusive pricing model.

ComSci's delivery model is an area that other vendors often overlook. This stood out when JF's team evaluated the product capabilities of each vendor. CN Rail would not only have a secure environment with ComSci, but also saw the opportunity for a real partnership. ComSci's delivery model included consuming, verifying, and processing the data and managing the exceptions. ComSci would take care of the heavy lifting. An implementation-only partner was not going to cut it in the long-run as JF shared, "we're embarking on a journey with our ComSci partner to bring CN Rail to its desired maturity level. It'll be a lengthy yet rewarding journey where the continuous development of the ITFM solution and the advisory services are both integral to our success."

CN Rail also selected Upland as it was the only vendor that introduced them to the product implementation, advisory and support teams. Other vendors only offered to introduce JF's team to the implementation technical lead. Other vendors could not introduce JF to all the teams as they normally subcontracted the product implementation to outside consulting firms – and only offered limited ongoing support. CN Rail met the entire ComSci product implementation, advisory and support teams before signing the contract.

"When you know the people you are going to work with," JF stressed, "there are no surprises. We were looking for a long-term partner, not just a supplier. With ComSci, we could ask for best practice advice around not only the implementation but

also the entire solution. We got a good gut feeling for both the technical and advisory aspect of the implementation before even signing on the dotted line. It sparked the beginning of a trusting and dependable partnership."

The third reason for selecting ComSci was because of the Business Process as a Service [BPaaS] model. Others offered a weaker Software as a Service [SaaS] model, which meant that anytime the team would have requested a new report or data cut change, an additional upsell charge would have resulted. With BPaaS, ComSci customers benefit from an all-inclusive price. "I understand why ComSci customers are happy. Had we selected another vendor, after the implementation period, we would have felt on our own and limited in what we could achieve in terms of continuous improvements," JF said.

On the right track

The CN Rail cost transparency train has left the station and is well on the way to its final destination. JF's team can easily go from General Ledger to IT domain with actuals, budgets and forecasts. They automated the monthly financial close and dashboard. They also achieved a 6% savings in total costs after the first year and project additional savings of 10% over the second and third year. CN Rail gained visibility to transfer pricing from the ComSci chargeback model. Previously, they did not properly chargeback all the users for the software consumed. The system now allows traceable audits whenever necessary. JF continues to be thankful he picked the right choice, "we have a flexible and dependable partner to help us achieve our goals."

For more information on ComSci, visit: uplandsoftware.com/comsci



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