

3 Ways to Drive Cloud Technology Adoption in Food Manufacturing

How West Liberty Foods Planned for Success and the Results

 suitebriar

WLF *West Liberty Foods.*

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Overview

In 1996, a group of 47 turkey farmers known as the Iowa Turkey Growers Cooperative (ITGC) purchased an Oscar Mayer's turkey processing plant in West Liberty, Iowa. At that time, the ITGC was focused on maintaining demand for the local farmers' superior-quality turkeys and supporting the state's rich farming tradition. Today, West Liberty Foods maintains its commitment to animal health and welfare as one of the country's largest turkey processors while operating four facilities in three states, which collectively produce 650 million pounds of sliced, Individually Quick Frozen (IQF), and specialty protein products annually. The continued success of West Liberty Foods is due to the dedication, enthusiasm, and support of its growers/owners.

To support the organization's continued growth, West Liberty Foods uses a mix of loosely connected applications, a practice commonly applied across the food manufacturing industry. West Liberty's multi-software solution includes Google Workspace, two Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tools, a customer relationship management (CRM) software, an inventory management system, a lean-manufacturing software, Microsoft Excel, a reporting platform, as well as a time and attendance system, to name a few. These applications are used by the organization's 3,000 employees in widely different capacities at each location and even in various capacities within the same department, depending on the production line at the location.

Understanding the value of transitioning business processes to Cloud technology, West Liberty began Phase I of its Google Cloud adoption in 2016 by migrating from Microsoft Exchange to Google Workspace. This phase was focused specifically on moving users to Gmail and Calendar and was facilitated by Suitebriar, a Google Cloud Premier Partner. "Our first-year savings for our Office licensing was well over \$100,000, if not \$150,000," shares Joshua Wold, the Director of IT at West Liberty Foods. "Right off the bat, we were able to save that money."

West Liberty also recognized the impact that real-time collaboration in Google Drive would have on their data-driven processes and started to plan for Phase II soon after the completion of Phase I. Phase II would focus on migrating West Liberty's file server to Drive and would require an in-depth assessment of not only the current business processes with dependencies, but also an assessment of the software used to accomplish them. Additionally, Phase II would also require a comprehensive Change Management strategy to maximize the adoption of Google Cloud technology across the organization. Not a small task, to say the least.



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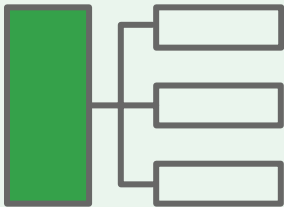
1 | Develop a Cloud Adoption Strategy

To meet the requirements outlined in Phase II, West Liberty again engaged Suitebriar. As a seasoned Google Cloud partner, Suitebriar is skilled at developing Google Cloud adoption strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of each business. Suitebriar uses a structured, measurable, incremental approach to shift business processes to the Cloud called Business Innovation Services (BIS). To Suitebriar, BIS is a critical component of any successful Cloud migration project, as the result of engaging BIS is a tailored Change Management strategy centered specifically on an organization’s unique business processes and how they can be completed. BIS utilizes Google tools to simplify those processes to increase productivity dramatically. “As part of the BIS process, Suitebriar spent a good amount of time speaking with each one of our teams, getting down to the root-level detail of our business processes and documented everything,” Wold states. “It was absolutely amazing.”

For West Liberty, the result of the BIS process is a dramatic increase in productivity. For example, prior to the BIS process, the West Liberty Foods accounting department spent many hours reconciling and preparing production data reports specific to each facility. The department struggled to collect the necessary information from multiple locations and systems. Once produced, the report then needed to be disseminated to the appropriate teams at each location. The entire process was time-intensive. Utilizing the Change Management strategy recommended through BIS, Suitebriar worked with the accounting department to map out the production data report process using Google Workspace tools. By applying the real-time data available through a collection of Google Sheets that automatically update each report, the department now saves 20 hours a month, and the onsite teams get data faster, allowing them to make more informed decisions.

Business Innovation Services (BIS)

Business Innovation Services is a structured, measurable, incremental approach to shifting business processes to the Cloud. It is a critical component of any successful Cloud migration project.



Step 1:

Baselining

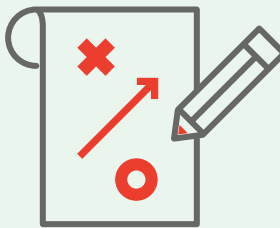
Understanding the current IT infrastructure



Step 2:

Business Discovery

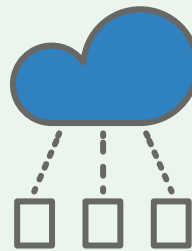
The largest portion of the process consists of interviews across an organization, to document business processes and their cross-functional interaction.



Step 3:

Analysis, Documentation & Planning

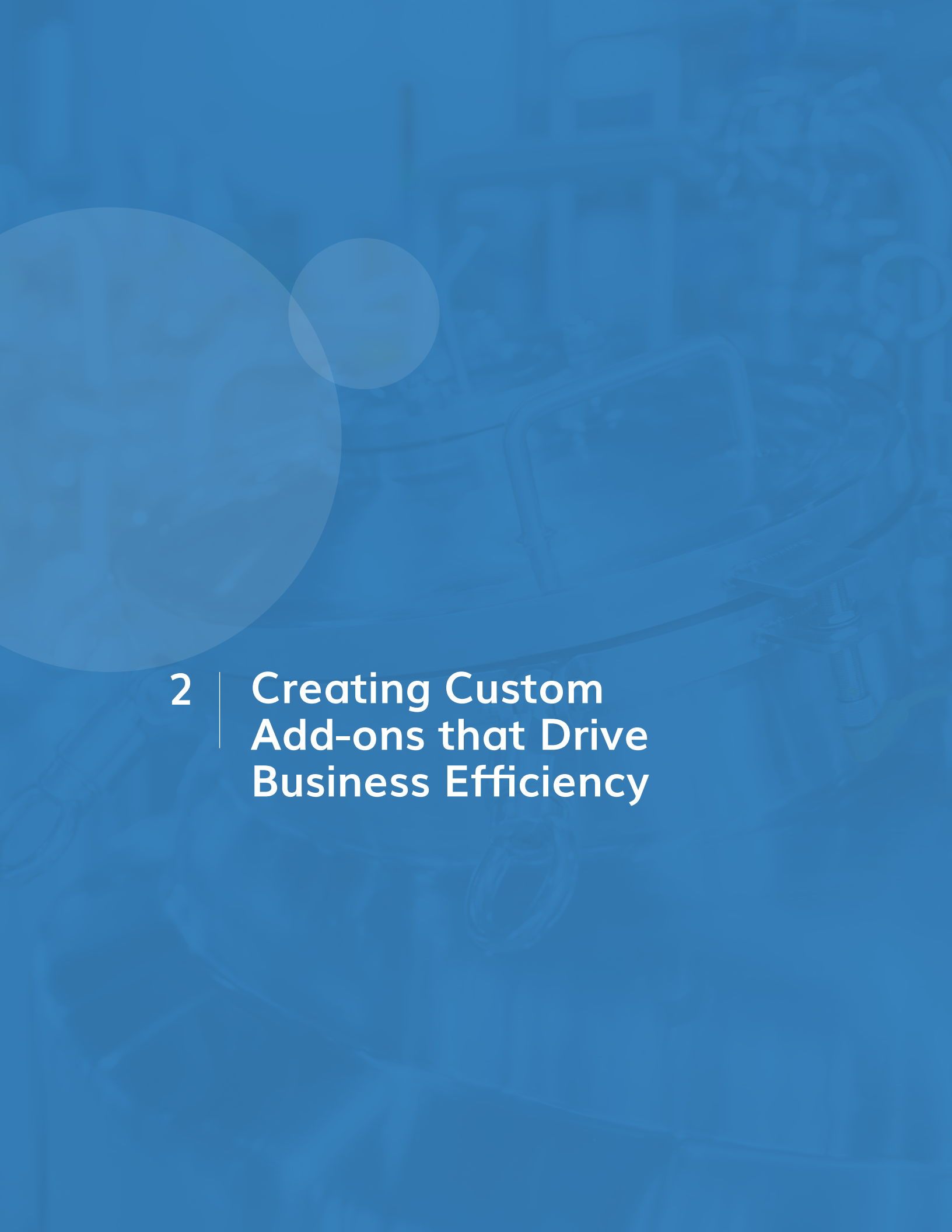
Identify opportunities to improve business through more streamlined processes.



Step 4:

Change Management & Execution

Execute based on an organizational change strategy customized for each business.



2 | **Creating Custom Add-ons that Drive Business Efficiency**

Along with identifying business processes that can be standardized across an organization, BIS also identifies any roadblocks that may limit or derail completely the adoption of Google Cloud technologies. One such large roadblock for West Liberty was the use of a custom tool built into QAD, a popular ERP system used to manage the manufacturing process, called CIM. CIM was a business-critical process that uploaded inventory data from machines on the floor via Excel and formatted them properly so that they could be added to the data stored in QAD. Without CIM, the whole manufacturing process at West Liberty would have come to a screeching halt.



After identifying the issue, Suitebriar's team was able to work with teams throughout West Liberty to develop a custom add-on specific to West Liberty that not only replicated the CIM process but made it more efficient. "Suitebriar understands our business and took the time to not just wedge in a new product and get us moved over. They cared enough to look through our processes and say 'okay, these are your business processes. When we move this, this is what is going to be affected and this is how we can resolve those with technology or training,'" said Wold. By leveraging the real-time data available using Google Sheets, any user that previously used CIM now saves an hour a day executing the same task using Google Workspace. An additional benefit is that shared Sheets eliminated the circulation of outdated information via email. "Once we showed employees what they can do with Google Workspace, they began thinking about using it in new ways," according to West Liberty's Director of IT. "We have people asking for more, wanting to write add-ons or do Google App Maker to build out business processes. There are users coming to us saying 'Hey, what else can I do with this?' and that's been great for us."

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**3 | Optimize Business Processes
by Developing a
Multi-Software IT Solution
Using Google App Engine**

Among the 150 process improvements that were identified in the BIS report, one was for the process that tracked the transportation of meat racks throughout West Liberty's four facilities. It was discovered that rack location data were not surfacing properly from the ERM to the scheduling team, resulting in costly slowdowns in production. Rack slowdowns can cost a facility \$8,000-\$30,000 a month in lost production. To optimize this process, Suitebriar developed an IT solution using a combination of QAD exports, Google Sheets, and the Google App Engine to remap how the rack data is presented. West Liberty is in the process of implementing this process improvement now to increase attainment, yield, and production.

“ SINCE THIS EXPERIENCE, WE’VE STARTED A CLOUD FIRST MENTALITY.”

-Joshua Wold, Director of IT,
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According to Wold, “Since this experience, we’ve started a Cloud-first mentality. We’re not going to have platforms on-prem. We’re not going to spin up new projects in-house, in our data center. We’re going to spin up projects in Google Workspace or in Google Compute Engine.” BIS creates a roadmap that provides technology change plans which an organization can use for months and years to come. West Liberty has already begun to implement a number of the recommendations outlined in the BIS report and will continue to work through their now prioritized list in the months to come.



Conclusion: Cloud ROI

West Liberty Foods Google Cloud Results



Increased production line efficiency, yield, and, ultimately, profits by \$20,000+ per month



Standardized business processes across the organization to save time



Significant cost savings in IT process infrastructure



Custom IT solutions to streamline workloads



Shifted company culture to proactively building cloud-supported innovations



150 process improvements identified



Technology change plan prioritizing future process innovations to further increase ROI

Get the most from the Cloud.

Boost collaboration, savings, and security across the enterprise with Google Cloud solutions and dedicated support from Suitebriar. As a Google Cloud Premier Partner, we have the strategic mindset, technical expertise, and white-glove service to deliver and maintain a successful transition from legacy infrastructure to the Cloud. From migration and deployment to integration and customization, Suitebriar can help you get the most from the cloud. Contact us today!