ORACLE FUSION CLOUD ERP FOR GROWING BUSINESSES

Running Projects and Professional Services on Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP

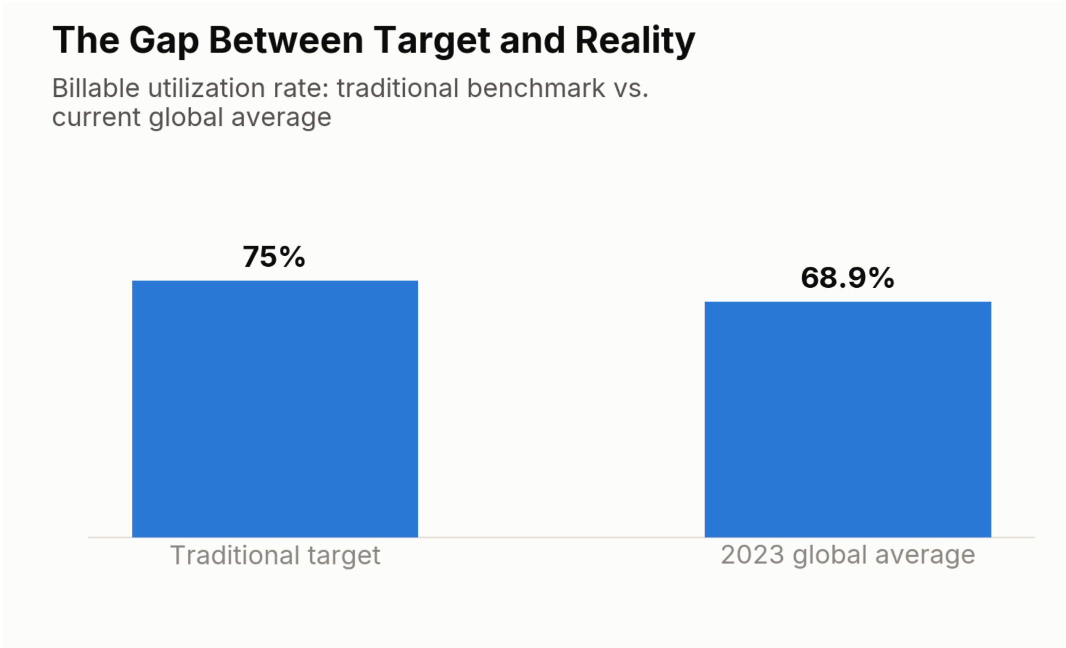
Being busy and being profitable are not the same thing

Every services-driven business — a consultancy, an engineering firm, an agency, or a manufacturer with a large project-installation arm — eventually runs into the same uncomfortable realization. The team looks slammed. Everyone's calendar is full. And yet, when the numbers finally get reconciled at quarter-end, the actual profitability on client work is thinner than anyone expected, or in some cases barely there at all. Busy and profitable turn out to be two different things, and the gap between them is usually invisible until someone goes looking for it.

The most common reason for that gap is unglamorous: time isn't being tracked accurately, project costs aren't being captured in real time, and by the time anyone reconciles actual hours against the original project budget, the project is over and there's nothing left to do but note the lesson for next time.

The utilization number that keeps slipping

Billable utilization — the share of a person's available time that's actually billed to client work — has long had a rough industry benchmark of around 75%, sometimes described as the "Goldilocks zone" where a firm is profitable without burning people out. The uncomfortable part is what's actually happening: the global average utilization rate has slipped to roughly 68.9%, a real decline, and one most firms don't have a precise, current number for internally because their tracking isn't good enough to produce one.



The gap between the traditional utilization benchmark and what firms are actually achieving has widened. Source: Mosaic, 2026.

That gap matters more than a few percentage points might suggest. Utilization targets vary meaningfully by role — client-facing staff are typically expected to hit 75-80%, while managers and senior staff, who split time between billable work and running the business, are more realistically targeted at 35-50% — and without accurate, role-specific tracking, it's nearly impossible to tell whether a shortfall is a staffing problem, a scoping problem, or simply an unrealistic target that was never achievable in the first place.

> **68.9%**
>
> global average billable utilization rate as of 2023, down from a traditional benchmark closer to 75% — a gap that represents real, uncaptured margin for a lot of project-based businesses.
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> *Source: Mosaic, 2026*

Where project management inside an ERP earns its keep

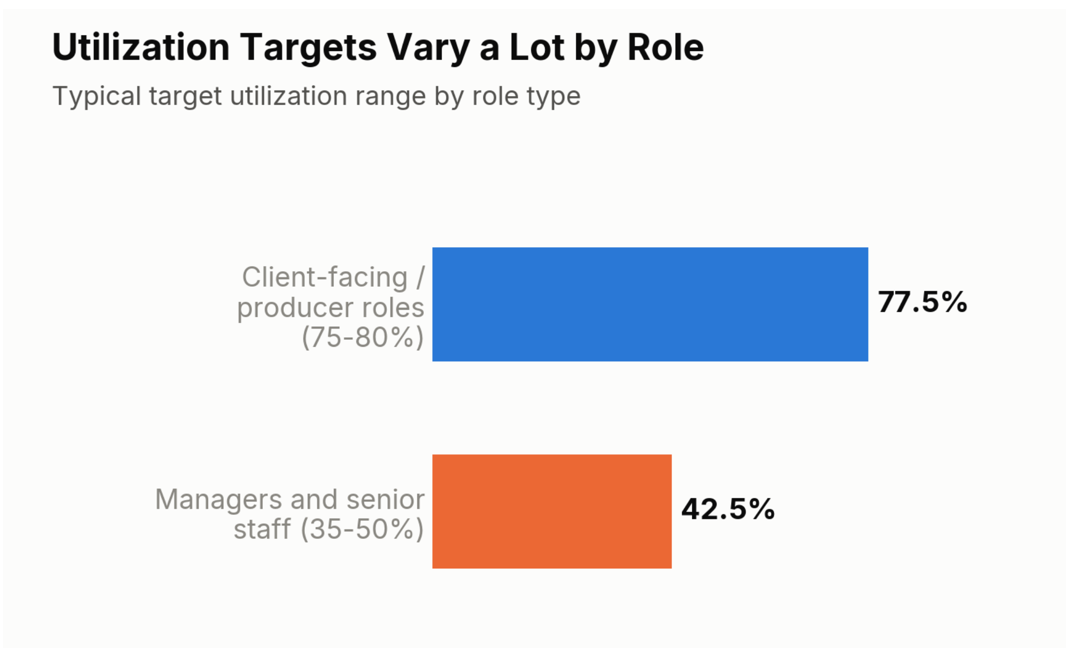
Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP's project management and project accounting capabilities exist specifically to close this gap, by tying time entry, resource allocation, project budgets, and billing into a single system rather than leaving them scattered across a separate project management tool, a separate time-tracking app, and the general ledger. When a consultant logs hours against a specific project task, that entry doesn't just sit in a timesheet — it flows into project costing in real time, which means a project manager can see burn rate against budget while there's still time to do something about it, rather than discovering an overrun in a post-mortem.

The billing side benefits just as directly. Time and expenses captured accurately and in real time make it possible to invoice clients faster and with fewer disputes, because the backup documentation is already there rather than reconstructed from memory at month-end. For fixed-fee or milestone-based engagements, having actual costs tracked against the plan in real time gives a project lead an early warning when scope creep is quietly eating the margin, instead of finding out only when the project closes.

The forecasting benefit people underrate

One of the less obvious advantages of running projects inside the same system as financials and HR is resource forecasting. A services firm that can see, across every active and pipeline project, exactly how much of each team member's capacity is already committed can make much better decisions about hiring, about which new opportunities to pursue, and about when to say no to a deal that would overextend the team. Without that visibility, resourcing decisions tend to get made reactively — someone says yes to a new project and then scrambles to figure out who has time, often discovering the answer is nobody.

This is also where the utilization-by-role distinction becomes genuinely actionable rather than theoretical. A system that tracks actual hours against role-specific targets can flag, in close to real time, whether a specific team or practice area is running under target — giving leadership the chance to address a staffing or pipeline issue while there's still a quarter left to fix it, rather than after the annual numbers are already locked in.



Realistic utilization targets differ sharply by role — a single company-wide benchmark tends to mislead more than it helps. Source: Mosaic, 2026.

What's genuinely hard about this

Project accounting is one of the more configuration-intensive parts of an ERP implementation, because every firm's billing arrangements, cost structures, and margin targets tend to be at least a little different, and a generic setup rarely fits well without real tailoring. Firms that rush this part of implementation — reusing a template built for a different kind of business, or under-investing in getting project templates and billing rules right — often end up with a system that technically works but doesn't produce numbers anyone trusts enough to actually manage against, which defeats much of the purpose.

It's also worth acknowledging that software alone doesn't fix a utilization problem rooted in sales overpromising delivery timelines, or in chronic understaffing relative to the pipeline. What it does is make the problem visible fast enough to act on, which is a meaningfully different — and more valuable — thing than most companies currently have.

What's next

Professional services firms aren't the only ones wrestling with the gap between planned and actual performance. Manufacturers face a strikingly similar problem on the shop floor, measured differently but rooted in the same issue: not knowing, in real time, how efficiently resources are actually being used. That's the subject of the next article in this series.

Sources

1. Billable Utilization Rate Statistics in Professional Services Firms, Mosaic — https://www.mosaicapp.com/post/billable-utilization-rate-statistics-in-professional-services-firms