



**Goal:**

Help drive the success of Alliant Energy's Six Sigma projects by providing more efficient billing systems and reduced cycle times.

Create a new product configurator and quote management system.

**Challenge:**

- Eliminate complex multiple billing systems
- Easily create configurations for new product lines
- Automatically produce proposals, contracts, and documents
- Implement an integrated solution that would be easily scalable with existing systems
- Accurately calculate and report energy conservation information to stakeholders

**Solution:**

Cincom Acquire™

- Guided Selling and Product Configurator
- Quotation and Proposal Management

**Key results:**

- Reduced a 30-day billing cycle to 3 days, resulting in an annual savings of \$200,000
- Created new, custom products with rapid delivery to the field
- Streamlined and simplified fleet management business into an unexpected source of revenue

Profile in Success: **Alliant Energy**

# Alliant Energy reduces a 30-day billing cycle to just 3 days!



**Situation**

Alliant Energy is an energy-services provider, headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, that serves more than 1.3 million customers worldwide. Providing its regulated customers in the Midwest with electricity and natural gas service remains the company's primary focus. Other key business platforms include the international energy market and non-regulated domestic generation. Alliant Energy is a Fortune 1000 company traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol LNT.

## Objectives: Accurate, Scalable, Integrated Solution

A primary goal was to drive business by easily and accurately showing customers the cost benefits of Alliant Energy's energy-saving solutions.



One of the first applications to be developed using Cincom's Solution focused on the area of secondary or back-up generation for large commercial and industrial customers such as hospitals, factories and schools. These large-scale, non-commodity projects require turnkey, customized solutions to include financing, contractor pricing, internal loading, tax implications and equipment installation for rapid activation. The Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator generates product proposals, contracts, documentation and financing models, automatically exporting information directly into the Saratoga Sales Automation system for management, analysis and sales-funnel tracking.

*"There were high expectations for the Cincom Solution to deliver, and it did."*

– Chuck Miller, Lead Sales Systems Administrator, Alliant Energy

## Striving for Six Sigma

Improving internal processes was key to Alliant's Six Sigma initiative, and the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator delivered in an area where expectations were high. Alliant Energy was looking for a way to shorten the typical 30-day billing cycle for delivered projects. The problem was, "We were actually floating money out there for 30 days," says Chuck Miller, ISA, Information Systems, Alliant Energy. "The customer had the equipment, they were using the equipment, but we had not even generated the invoice."

Now, the account manager goes into the Sales and Product Configurator and selects "Create invoice—ready to bill," and pretty much automatically the invoice is generated. The Cincom Solution has enabled Alliant Energy to reduce a 30-day billing cycle down to three! More complex progress billing is also easily handled by the solution. "This single improved process, we estimate, has saved Alliant Energy \$200,000 annually," says Shelly Zaugg, Sales Systems Administrator.

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– Shelly Zaugg, Sales Systems Administrator, Alliant

Alliant Energy has also applied the power of the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator to the agricultural side of its business. At issue was stray voltage in dairy barns with older wiring systems. Stray voltage often generates an electrical shock to the cow during milking and can prevent or reduce the cow's milk production. Using combinations of grants and financing loans, Alliant Energy can now easily show farmers how an upgrade in wiring to their barns can actually produce a cost savings.

## Creating, Supporting, and Selling New Products

Alliant Energy is always looking for new, customer-focused products to take to market, and often these products are finance-driven. For example, with Alliant Energy's conservation financing program called "Shared Savings," the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator has helped Alliant Energy representatives easily depict and calculate the energy efficiency and cost savings associated with more efficient energy options. The Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator again has created notable efficiencies, streamlining the development and delivery of new products to the field.

## Maximizing Capabilities and Uncovering New Revenue Streams

"We are really using the expert system capability of the Enterprise Business Rules Environment well beyond what we ever initially imagined," says Zaugg. "For example, we have introduced a billing and reminder system in another area of our business—Fleet Management. Now, not only do we maintain our internal fleet, but we service other companies' fleets," says Zaugg. We desperately needed to simplify our billing process in this part of the business, and reduce cycle times. Alliant Energy was able to piggyback off the original billing system, and build a section in the configurator for the fleet business. Now Alliant Energy can configure for each vehicle the date of service, what work was performed, labor costs, etc.

Prior to building this application, Alliant Energy had difficulty in tracking costs and billing in a timely manner. Profits can now be recognized, calculated and realized automatically. "We are in the process of expanding the application to include automated maintenance-check alerts for our fleet customers," according to Zaugg. "This will allow us to project revenue coming into the business."

## Clear Benefits Drive Increasing Internal Demand

"Cincom has been so well received that management has had to say, 'slow down' to enhancement requests," says Miller. "Since we have had the system, we have always had at least one other project in the queue."

Clearly the soft savings and labor-saving aspects relating to projects rolled out are enormous, plus the system pretty much takes care of itself. "When we do call Cincom for help, which is not very often, we get a quick response, it is taken care of fast," according to Zaugg.

*"With the deployment of our Six Sigma initiative at Alliant Energy, we identified an opportunity to leverage some of our IT tools to improve accuracy and timeliness of our Value Added Products and Services billing processes. The Cincom Solutions we developed and deployed were a major contributor to the success of our Sales Six Sigma efforts."*

– Pat Keenan, Director – Sales & Strategic Accounts



## About Cincom

For nearly 40 years, Cincom's software and services have helped thousands of clients worldwide simplify the management of complex business processes. Cincom specializes in the areas of business where simplification brings the greatest value to managers who want to grow revenue, control costs, minimize risk and achieve rapid ROI better than their competitors. Cincom serves thousands of clients on six continents including BMW, Citibank, Boeing, Northwestern Mutual, Federal Express, Ericsson, Penn State University, Milacron, Siemens, Rockwell Automation and Trane.

For more information and additional resources, contact Cincom at 1-800-2CINCOM (USA only) send an e-mail to [acquire@cincom.com](mailto:acquire@cincom.com), or visit the company's website at [www.cincom.com/acquire](http://www.cincom.com/acquire).

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