finout | AppsFlyer

Customer story

How AppsFlyer Made AI Spend as Governed as Cloud Spend

40%
growth in monthly active Finout users, as AI adoption went company-wide

Same day
AI spend flagged, manager alerted same day

1 system
of record for cloud and AI spend, from R&D to cross-org

INDUSTRY	COMPANY SIZE	HEADQUARTERS	FINOUT FEATURES
Mobile measurement & marketing analytics	1,300+ employees	San Francisco	Virtual Tags, Dictionary, Anomaly alerts, MCP

AppsFlyer's FinOps team took its existing AI usage and modeled, retroactively, what it would have cost under full usage based pricing. The numbers were alarming enough that the head of AI engineering brought the problem straight to the FinOps team. That single modeling exercise turned FinOps for AI from a side project into a company priority overnight.

Key results

- **40% more active users**
  In two months, spreading from FinOps to managers company-wide
- **3 self-built agents**
  Budget owners built scheduled agents on the Finout MCP, unprompted
- **Same-day alerts**
  Unusual AI spend routed to the right manager, weekends included
- **1 system of record**
  All providers, one filter across cloud and AI

About AppsFlyer

AppsFlyer is a mobile measurement and marketing analytics platform used by app businesses around the world to attribute installs, engagement, and revenue across channels. Its engineering organization has run on cloud resources for years, with Finout as the single source of truth for cloud cost well before AI entered the picture: shared costs broken down and routed to the right teams, visibility tailored per group, and governance built around alerts teams configure themselves.

The Challenge: From a Cloud Habit to a Company-Wide Bill, in One System

At first, AI inside AppsFlyer looked like any other product feature built on the cloud. Then adoption spread fast. Usage climbed as teams across the company picked up many tools, and flat monthly subscriptions gave way to consumption based pricing. Every prompt and every model call now carried real, variable cost, and the people spending it were no longer only engineers.

- **Budget lost its anchor.** A fixed monthly line item became a moving target that could double or triple without warning.
- **Ownership got murky.** Cost is owned company-wide, not only by AI engineering and finance, and there was no visibility on the actual owner.

- **Access outran governance.** Sales, legal, procurement, and other business teams got the same open access to AI tools that engineers had, with none of the tagging or ownership structure cloud spend already had.

That growth was never just an R&D problem. As AI usage climbed across every department, the need stopped being visibility for FinOps alone. It became usability for non-R&D teams that had never opened a cost platform before and needed answers on their own.

> “The moment usage based billing hit, every prompt and every model call suddenly had real cost behind it. That is when it stopped being a monthly subscription problem and became a FinOps problem.”

Shiran Cohen
R&D Analytics & FinOps TL

Why Finout?

01

Every AI source lands next to cloud. Before Finout, AI spend showed up untagged, unowned, and billed across a dozen different places. Now AI tools connect into Finout the same way clouds already do, so nothing new has to be learned to see it.

02

Deep familiarity with the organization, not just the infrastructure. Finout maps spend to a person, not only a resource, using Virtual Tags built on its Dictionary integration, and that mapping stays current by team, job title, and manager as people change roles.

03

One filter, one language, across cloud and AI. A VP can pick a unit and see cloud and AI spend side by side, under the same ownership model.

04

The Finout MCP meets the team where they already work. Cost answers can be pulled straight into a spreadsheet or a report without opening a new tool or learning a new interface.

The Solution: One Model for Cloud and AI Ownership

Mapping cost to people, not just resources

Cloud cost allocation is built around resources: a service, a project, a tag. AI cost allocation had to be built around people instead: a team, a job title, a manager, and it had to stay accurate as employees moved around the company. AppsFlyer used Finout's organizational catalog integration to bring that structure in, so cost attribution follows a person even as their role changes.

> "We had to bring the organizational structure of every employee into our cost platform, because people move constantly. That is what let us build one real flow across cloud and AI."

Shiran Cohen
R&D Analytics & FinOps TL

Impact and Results

01 **Finout adoption grew 40% month over month.** As AI usage climbed across departments that had never touched a cost platform before, the need shifted from FinOps visibility to company-wide usability. Visibility spread from a defined FinOps population to managers and teams across the company, all inside one system of record.

02 **Unusual usage gets caught before it compounds.** AppsFlyer caught a spending spike and had the responsible manager looped in before the day was over. That gives the team confidence it won't end up like companies that burned through a year of contract value in a couple of months because no one was watching closely enough.

03 **Visibility changed behavior, not just reporting.** Once employees could see their own AI spend next to their own budget, usage patterns started shifting on their own, without a mandate from finance or a policing effort from FinOps.

> “I will admit it changed me too. I am constantly checking the cost of any new AI process I build, to understand the impact and the ability to meet my own team's AI budget. Once people can see the cost next to their own budget, behavior changes on its own.”

Shiran Cohen
R&D Analytics & FinOps TL

The Finout MCP for On-Demand Cost Answers

For AppsFlyer, the Finout MCP means pulling a live cost answer straight into whatever they are already working in, a spreadsheet, a report, an agent, without a detour through a separate dashboard.

> “The MCP is the best solution because it keeps the user in the same world. They do not need to open the system, they feel like they are in Finout even though technically they are outside it, and that is a good experience.”

Shiran Cohen
R&D Analytics & FinOps TL

Budget owners are building on it, unprompted

That same pattern is now showing up beyond analysts. In the most recent 90 day window, three budget owners, independently built their own scheduled agents on top of the Finout MCP to track their team's AI spend, without FinOps asking any of them to. Liaz Kamper, one of those budget owners, built a scheduled agent that pulls his and his team's usage through the Finout MCP, predicts the month's spend, and posts a daily report straight to Slack. A second budget owner built a close variant of the same flow, checking spend against each team member's limit and turning the result into a daily report. It is FinOps shifting left in practice, cost ownership moving out of a central dashboard and into the hands of the people generating the spend, as it happens, not after the invoice arrives.

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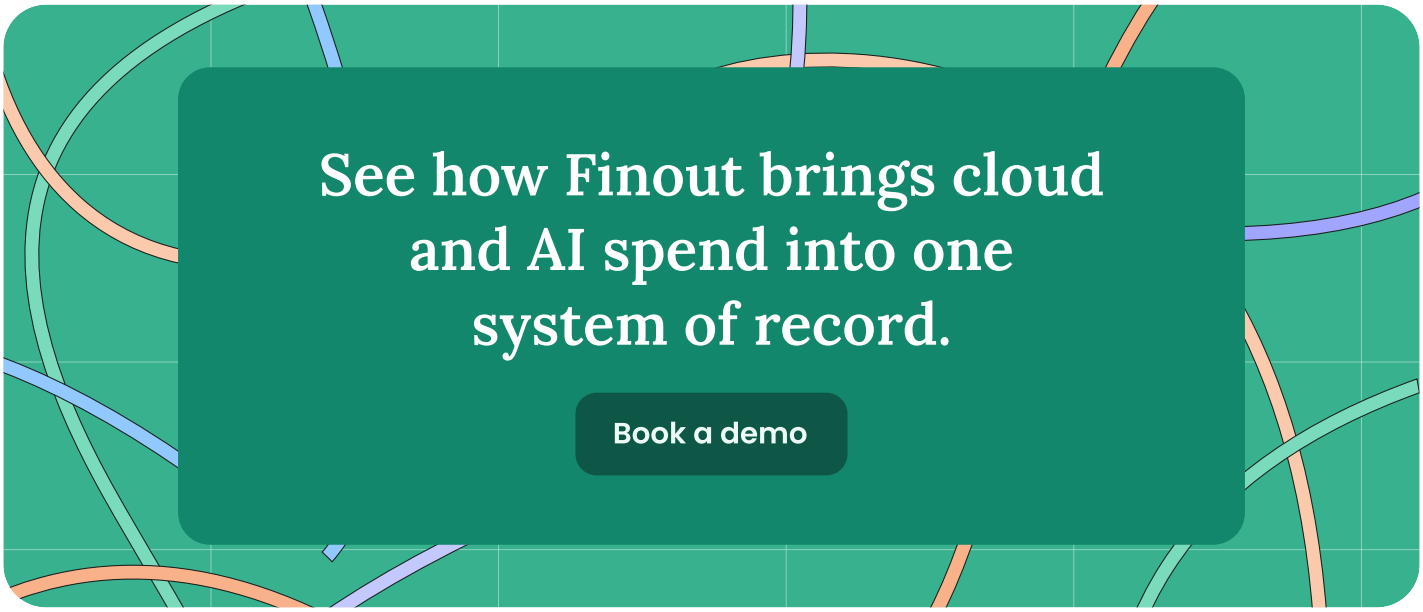
> “I created a scheduled agent in Claude Cowork and asked it to use the Finout MCP. The agent analyzes our daily use and predicts our estimated monthly usage. Once the agent runs successfully, it sends a Slack message to all team members with useful insights. It takes minutes to build, and if I don't like the report, I tell it what I didn't like and the agent fixes and corrects itself.”

Liaz Kamper
R&D Analytics & FinOps TL

Looking Ahead

- **Unify budget and hard caps into one flow.** Today a monthly cap blocks overspend and a separate budget process tracks the plan. AppsFlyer wants those to work as a single system.
- **Scale permissions and governance as usage grows.** Access rules, alert thresholds, and the personal prompts teams build on the MCP are still largely configured by hand, and need to hold up as the AI footprint multiplies.
- **Turn AI cost into an ROI picture, not just a bill.** Correlate engineering KPI trends with AI spend so FinOps can show what the investment returns, not only what it costs.
- **Turn visibility into optimization.** Guide which model or tool fits a given task, extending the ownership model to how AI gets used, not only what it costs.