

# Transforming the Floorplan System: Transitioning from AS400 to Oracle Applications

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## **Abstract**

The floorplan financing system is a critical component in automotive auction centers, enabling dealers to secure short-term loans for purchasing inventory. At Cox Automotive, transitioning this system from a legacy AS400 environment to Oracle applications presented unique opportunities and challenges. This article explores my role in the transformation, the comprehensive strategies employed, and the obstacles faced during the transition. With a focus on system modernization, data accuracy, and operational efficiency, this case study delves into the lessons learned and the outcomes achieved.

**Keywords:** Floorplan, Payment Process, FTP, Legacy AS400 System, Oracle Workflow Integration, Operational Efficiency, QA Strategy, Automation, Delivery Methods, Data Migration

## **Introduction:**

Floorplan financing is a cornerstone of dealership operations, facilitating smooth transactions in the fast-paced automotive auction environment. At Cox Automotive, the legacy AS400 system was the backbone of the floorplan system for decades, managing loan applications, approvals, payments, and tracking inventory. However, as business needs evolved, the AS400 system's limitations became apparent, prompting the need for a transition to a more robust and scalable Oracle platform.

This article chronicles the transition process, highlighting the technical and operational challenges encountered and the innovative solutions implemented to overcome them. My experience as a QA lead during this transformation provides insights into the complexities of integrating legacy systems with modern platforms.

## **Challenges in Transitioning from AS400 to Oracle Applications:**

### **1. Data Migration:**

**Challenge:** Migrating decades of transactional data from AS400 to Oracle while ensuring data integrity was one of the most significant hurdles.

**Approach:** A phased migration strategy was adopted, involving comprehensive data profiling, cleansing, and validation. Multiple rounds of reconciliation and parallel runs ensured the accuracy and consistency of migrated data.

## **2. System Integration:**

Challenge: Integrating the Oracle platform with other systems such as SOA middleware, payment gateways, and Salesforce was complex due to varied protocols and legacy dependencies.

Approach: Middleware solutions were customized to facilitate seamless communication between systems. Rigorous end-to-end testing validated the integration points.

## **3. Custom Functionality Requirements:**

Challenge: The floorplan system required customization to address unique business processes and regulatory compliance.

Approach: Collaborated closely with business analysts and stakeholders to gather requirements and align the system's functionality with business objectives.

## **4. Stakeholder Buy-In:**

Challenge: Securing buy-in from stakeholders who were accustomed to the AS400 system posed resistance to change.

Approach: Conducted workshops and demonstrations to showcase the Oracle platform's capabilities, emphasizing its benefits in terms of scalability and efficiency.

## **5. Training and Adoption:**

Challenge: Transitioning users from a familiar legacy interface to a modern Oracle-based system required significant training.

Approach: Developed comprehensive training materials and conducted hands-on sessions for end-users. Provided post-implementation support to address initial adoption challenges.

## **Strategies for Testing and Quality Assurance:**

### **1. Test Planning:**

- Designed a detailed test strategy document outlining the scope, objectives, and entry and exit criteria for each phase of testing.

### **2. Integration Testing:**

- Conducted extensive integration testing to ensure smooth data flow and system interoperability.

### **3. User Acceptance Testing (UAT):**

- Partnered with business teams to validate the system's functionality against real-world scenarios.

### **4. Automation Framework:**

- Developed an automation framework using Python and TestComplete, automating regression test cases for the floorplan system's critical functionalities. This reduced manual efforts and increased test efficiency.



## **Outcomes and Benefits:**

### **1. Operational Efficiency:**

- The Oracle system streamlined processes, reducing transaction times and manual errors.

### **2. Data Transparency:**

- Improved data visibility enabled better decision-making and compliance tracking.

### **3. Scalability:**

- The new platform accommodated increased transaction volumes and supported future growth.

### **4. Enhanced User Experience:**

- A modern, intuitive interface improved user satisfaction and productivity.

## **Lessons Learned:**

### **1. Comprehensive Planning:**

- A well-defined roadmap is essential to navigate the complexities of transitioning from legacy systems.

### **2. Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Early and consistent communication with stakeholders minimizes resistance and aligns expectations.

### **3. Iterative Testing:**

- Frequent testing cycles ensure issues are identified and addressed promptly, reducing post-implementation risks.

### **4. Post-Implementation Support:**

- Adequate support mechanisms are critical for smoothing the transition and ensuring user confidence in the new system.

## **Conclusion:**

The transition of the floorplan system from AS400 to Oracle applications at Cox Automotive was a landmark initiative, demonstrating the potential of modern platforms to revolutionize legacy processes. Despite the challenges encountered, the project's success underscored the importance of strategic planning, robust testing, and collaborative efforts. This experience serves as a blueprint for similar transformations, highlighting the critical role of quality assurance in achieving project milestones.

## **Acknowledgments:**

The success of this transformation was made possible by the dedication and expertise of cross-functional teams, including developers, business analysts, quality assurance professionals, and end-users. Their collective efforts ensured a seamless transition and a robust foundation for future growth.

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