

Is AI the fuel oil and gas needs?

The oil and gas sector faces challenges on multiple fronts. AI-enabled finance may provide a way to address them.

February 2026



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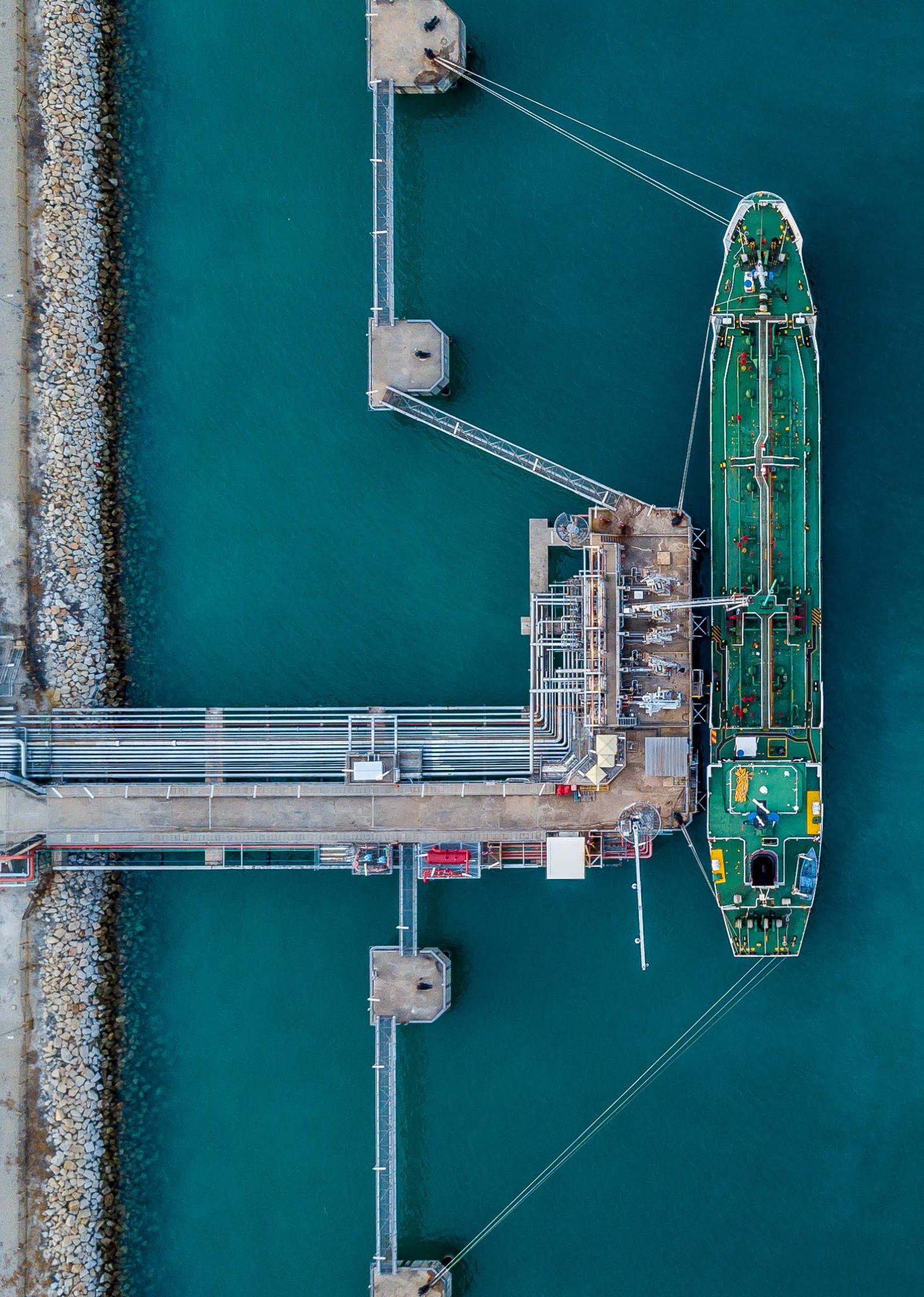


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Executive summary

Oil and gas CFOs face a liquidity paradox.

You are funding the largest capital transformation in the industry's history – decarbonization programs, digital infrastructure, hydrogen investments and asset renewal – while crude volatility and refining margin compression squeeze free cash flow. Traditional funding sources are tightening. Credit markets remain cautious. The capital gap is widening.

Yet billions remain trapped on your own balance sheets – locked in receivables, disputes and fragmented order-to-cash processes that span legacy systems built for a different era.

The scale is staggering. EY analysis shows approximately billions of dollars trapped across top corporates, with persistent inefficiencies in receivables, inventory and payables even in mature industries. In North American oil and gas organizations alone, CAD\$230 billion¹ remains unnecessarily tied up despite improvements in the cash-conversion cycles over the past decade. Independent estimates suggest a large, multi-year upside. The World Economic Forum's Digital Transformation Initiative estimated US\$1.6 trillion² of cumulative value potential for the oil and gas sector by 2025 from digitalization across the value chain. Building on this trajectory, EY assesses that scaled digital operations (AI, sensors, cloud, autonomy) can unlock more than US\$2.5 trillion³ over the next decade as programs move from pilots to enterprise deployment, equivalent to 10% of their aggregate sales.

This is not about operational fine-tuning. It is about strategic survival.

Three forces are converging to make cash release urgent:

First, energy transition investments are accelerating – and most will be funded internally, not through

external debt. Second, commodity cycles are compressing faster, leaving less time to react when liquidity tightens. They are compressing because of faster demand shifts, geopolitical shocks, algorithmic trading, real-time customer procurement and shortening contract durations from airlines, distributors and industrial buyers. This volatility shortens CFO reaction time, destabilizes credit exposure and Days Sales Outstanding (DSO), and amplifies working-capital swings. Third, digital finance and AI have matured to the point where predictive, autonomous cash orchestration is no longer experimental – it is deployable today.

What is now possible is different. Companies that deploy AI-driven working capital management, real-time order smoothing and agentic automation are releasing cash at speeds that the industry has never seen. EY estimates⁴ that digital transformation across the oil and gas ecosystem could generate between US\$1.6 trillion to US\$2.5 trillion in combined operational, production, sustainability and decision-quality value across the global oil and gas sector over the next decade. This figure is not a single-year savings estimate; it is neither an operating expense (OpEx) savings/AI value, nor is it specific to working capital only. It is the total value pool combining efficiency gains, avoided losses, increased production, sustainability benefits and improved decision-making across the entire oil and gas value chain.

Top-quartile performers are achieving:

- DSO reductions of 5 to 10 days through predictive dispute prevention and automated collections.
- Cash conversion cycles (CCC) turning negative (-10 to -30 days), meaning they collect cash faster than they pay it out.

- Disputes falling below 2% of Account Receivables (AR), down from 10% to 20% in fragmented environments.

The momentum is unmistakable. About 78% of CFOs⁵ plan to increase or maintain digital investments even during inflationary cycles and finance adoption of AI grew 57%⁶ year-on-year in 2024. Cash flow improvement and real-time visibility are now the top two investment priorities for finance leaders globally (Everest Group CFO Survey⁷, 2024).

This paper lays out the playbook. We present five enterprise levers that together form an integrated cash engine for oil and gas: (1) AI driven credit-to-cash excellence to reduce DSO and eliminate dispute leakage; (2) order smoothing and demand-supply alignment to prevent credit blocks and re-deliveries; (3) customer to cash integrity, leading to an uplift in customer experience (CX) that accelerates payment behavior; (4) digital finance and platform integration to create real time cash intelligence across ERP, CRM and OTC automation systems; and (5) an operating model shift toward a CFO-CIO led, agentic automation.

We show how leading oil and gas companies are deploying these capabilities today, quantify the value at stake and provide a CFO-CIO roadmap from stabilization to autonomous cash orchestration.

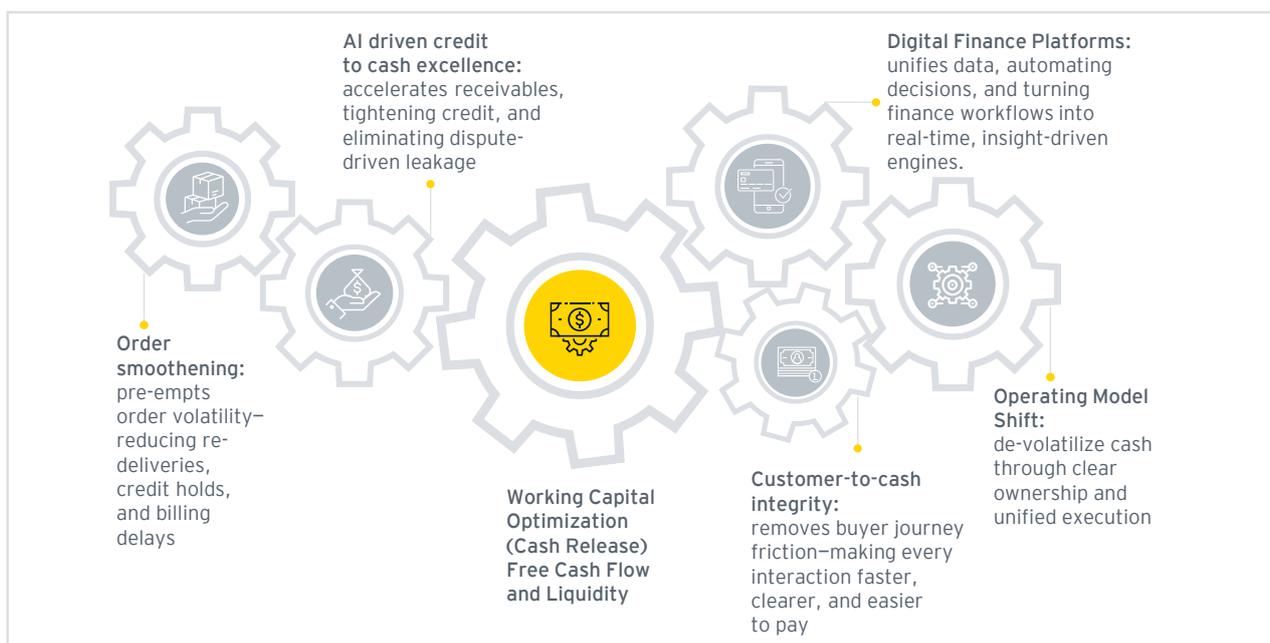
Oil and gas cash cycles are structurally different from those in other industries. Multi-channel customer models – fleet cards, bulk deliveries, aviation refueling and retail POS – create fragmentation that manual

processes cannot resolve at the speed required. Add commodity-linked pricing, complex rebate structures across multiple tax regimes, geopolitical supply disruptions and real-time trading exposures and you have a system where delays in one area cascade across the entire value chain. Companies that try to "manage harder" within legacy processes hit diminishing returns. What is needed is not effort within old processes, but a fundamental redesign – aligning the five interconnected capabilities so the entire Order to Cash (OTC) flow behaves as a coordinated, self-correcting cash engine: one that senses delays early, resolves them automatically and keeps cash flowing.

Think of cash release like a Formula One pit stop. If the tire change is perfect, but the fuel flow is slow, you lose the race. In oil and gas, even if working capital processes are optimized, failures in order smoothing or platform integration create systemic drag that compounds across quarters.

The five levers below function as synchronized gears, not independent workstreams. Friction in one area, such as delayed trading settlements, fragmented platform data, or billing errors that spill into customer queries, creates drag on the entire system. True liquidity optimization requires aligning these interdependent capabilities so that the order-to-cash system behaves as a coordinated, self-correcting engine. When these gears run in sync, outcomes such as working capital excellence, a cleaner customer experience and stable cash velocity naturally occur.

Figure 1: The five enterprise levers for cash release. Each gear represents a distinct capability; when synchronized, they transform working capital from a finance metric into a strategic funding engine for the energy transition.



01

Five enterprise levers for cash release



The following five levers represent the capabilities that separate top-quartile cash performers from the rest. They are presented in order of their typical impact, but your prioritization should reflect your current maturity, systems landscape and organizational readiness.

Most companies start with levers A (working capital excellence) and B (order smoothing) for the highest ROI and fastest payback, then scale to C, D and E as digital capabilities mature.

Time to first cash release

Levers	Pilot launch	First measurable impact (value drops)	Typical cash release
A. AI-driven credit-to-cash excellence	3-6 months	6-9 months	3-7 days DSO reduction
B. Order smoothing	4-8 months	9-12 months	10%-15% reduction in order delays
C. Customer-to-cash integrity	6-9 months	12-15 months	20%-30% dispute reduction
D. Platform integration	12-18 months	18-24 months	Automated OTC and real-time cash visibility
E. Operating model	Month 1 (governance)	18-24 months (GCC maturity)	15%-20% faster resolution

Most companies see the first material cash release within 9-12 months from activating levers A+B. The full transformation value is realized over 24-36 months.

Caveat: Timelines vary significantly based on starting ERP maturity, data quality, organizational readiness

and geographic complexity. Companies with modern ERPs such as SAP S/4HANA and centralized processes move faster; those with legacy systems and decentralized operations may require 36-48 months for full transformation.

A. Credit-to-cash excellence: The foundational cash engine

The problem

Oil and gas companies operate in highly volatile markets where credit exposure, order timing, pricing adjustments and billing accuracy fluctuate daily. Legacy credit policies, inconsistent billing checks, manual dispute handling and fragmented processes produce avoidable delays that inflate DSO and lock up cash, especially during commodity-driven demand swings.

Cash impact

Across downstream, chemicals and retail, companies face significant DSO volatility, which is the month-to-month swing in actual collection days driven by market shocks, operational delays, billing defects and customer-behavior changes. It is common for DSO to fluctuate by 5–15 days, meaning a business may collect in 38 days one month and 50 plus days the next. This unpredictability forces CFOs to hold larger liquidity buffers and masks underlying working-capital exposure.

At the same time, 2% to 4% of revenue is routinely locked in avoidable disputes arising from uplift mismatches, tax errors, rebate miscalculations and multi-channel customer complexity. Recurring credit blocks are often triggered by static credit limits during price spikes or incomplete exposure data, and they stall millions in near-due orders every week. These combined pressures create working-capital drag not because customers are unwilling to pay, but because internal credit-to-cash workflows cannot keep pace with the volatility and complexity of the oil and gas sector operating environment.

Example

One of our clients, a US-based oil and gas supermajor, saw its DSO spike by 10% over four years (industry average: 35-50 days). As the COVID-19 era demand collapse, the 2022 price surge and Russia-Ukraine supply disruptions created severe order, pricing and credit-exposure volatility. At the same time,

non-standard regional OTC processes, manual uplift-to-invoice reconciliations and fragmented systems amplified billing delays and disputes. The spike was driven not by customer behavior, but by external shocks overwhelming internal process complexity, slowing cash conversion at scale.

Digital levers

- Dynamic credit exposure tied to commodity prices: Real-time recalculation of credit limits as Brent/WTI prices move, preventing unnecessary credit blocks when order values surge.
- Terminal uplift-to-invoice matching: Automated reconciliation of Bill of Lading (BOL) data, uplift volumes, taxes, surcharges and excise rules before an invoice is created.
- Price-formula engine integration: Automated validation of Platts/Argus-linked pricing formulas and FX indices to eliminate invoice disputes.
- Predictive collections for large distributors: AI modeling of fleet-card portfolios, aviation customers and B2B distributors to prioritize high-risk accounts based on consumption patterns.
- Chemicals and lubes batch level matching: Optical Character Recognition (OCR)/ Natural Language Processing (NLP) based extraction of batch numbers and Certificates of Analysis (COAs) to prevent technical disputes in packaged or specialty products.
- Cash-app logic for multi-entity payments: AI auto-splits consolidated payments from airlines, logistics customers, or distributors across multiple business units/entities.

Governance and controls

Audit-traced AI decisions, human review for high-value overrides, SOX-compliant in-platform approvals and real-time anomaly alerts on override patterns.

B. Order smoothing: Protecting cash velocity

The problem

Oil and gas supply chains span refineries, terminals, trading desks and global logistics, making them extremely sensitive to adverse weather conditions, geopolitical shocks and price spikes. That volatility creates order churn and credit blocks that stall billing and cash flow.

Cash impact

Order volatility delays billing and adds three to five days to DSO. Around 15% to 20% of downstream orders are re-deliveries and demurrage inflate logistics costs by 2% to 4%, while credit blocks stall millions in near-due revenue.

Example

When storms threaten Gulf Coast refineries, AI forecasts storm-driven refinery outages and smooths order releases before credit blocks freeze billing. Trading signals prioritize high-margin orders during price spikes, while terminals use AI scheduling to slash demurrage and keep cash moving.

Digital levers

- Predictive order management: AI forecasts order swings using trading signals, refinery runs and terminal capacity – minimizing last-minute changes.
- Capacity forecasting: AI integrates logistics and production data to spot bottlenecks early and reroute volumes before congestion occurs.
- Smart order release: AI risk-scoring system adjusts limits in real-time and pushes low-risk, high-value orders first.
- Volatility simulation: Storm and geopolitical scenarios are modeled in advance, so teams' smooth orders before disruption occurs.

Governance and controls

Order changes are rule-bound, escalated when high-impact events occur and approved only within the platform. Live alerts catch abnormal reschedules or capacity overrides early, so cash is not impacted downstream.

C. Customer-to-cash integrity: Reduced friction = improved CX = faster cash

The problem

In oil and gas, customers operate across diverse channels: airlines refueling, fleet cards, bulk deliveries, Point of Sale (POS) retail and industrial buyers. Each channel has its own contract terms, pricing structures, tax treatments, rebate schemes, delivery schedules and documentation. When order, pricing, tax, delivery and billing data do not align cleanly, customers experience friction, which leads to queries, delayed approvals and avoidable disputes.

Cash impact

Most "Customer experience or CX issues" in the oil and gas sector are billing integrity issues. Errors in rebates, surcharges, uplift data, tax codes or contract logic directly increase dispute rates, elongate the order to invoice cycle and extend DSO. Customer friction shows up directly in cash: dispute rates run 3% to 7% in high-volume segments, billing queries delay payments and missing self-service adds 2 to 5 days to collection cycles.

Cross-industry insight: How better CX prevents revenue leakage: An American convenience store chain

Customer experience failures in oil and gas often trace back to misclassified disputes, incomplete information and fragmented support workflows – all of which slow billing, inflate disputes and delay cash. A comparable cross-industry transformation illustrates the scale of value at stake.

The problem

Our client, a leading American convenience store chain, had large annual spend on maintenance truck rollouts across its thousands of stores. Inefficiencies in its facilities helpdesk – such as misclassified incidents, duplicate work orders, mis prioritized tickets and incomplete information – drove unnecessary costs and prolonged equipment downtime, leading to 20% of its spend translating into equivalent revenue loss across key categories.

Solution

EY re-designed the operating model into three layers that map closely to CX needs in the oil and gas sector:

- Foundational layer: Standardized taxonomy and AI-ready troubleshooting guides (*oil and gas parallel example: pricing/tax/rebate schema harmonization*).

- Intelligence layer: Automated incident classification and real-time analytics (*oil and gas parallel example: AI-based dispute coding, uplift/tax validation*).
- Experience layer: Unified agent desktop and self service chatbots (*oil and gas parallel example: omnichannel customer portals with order/invoice/Proof of Delivery or POD visibility*).

Impact

Foundational fixes alone unlocked annual savings across all BUs by reducing downtime.

Relevance to the oil and gas sector

The case demonstrates that clean CX processes directly accelerate cash, thus reducing disputes, preventing revenue leakage and improving billing accuracy at scale.

Digital levers

- Rebate and incentive validation: Automated application of complex tiered rebates for lubes, commercial fleets and dealer networks across multiple tax jurisdictions.
- Aviation uplift validation: Automated cross-checks of uplift data from refueling trucks with flight schedules, tail-number logs and contracted quantities.
- Excise-tax intelligence: Real-time validation of federal/state excise tax rules, surcharges,

green-levy rules and GST/VAT variations across countries.

- Multi channel customer visibility: One portal for aviation customers (integrated with platforms such as World Fuel Services), fleet card buyers, POS retail, distributors and B2B bulk customers to view invoices, PODs, uplift data and credit notes.
- AI-driven classification of petroleum disputes: Automatic categorization of disputes into common oil and gas buckets like uplift mismatch, wrong Platts window, incorrect tax, rebate over-claim and freight mismatch.
- Dealer-network chargeback prevention: AI detection of invalid discounts and promo claim submissions from downstream retail dealers.

Governance and controls

Customer-facing changes to pricing, tax, or rebates are rule-bound and approved only within the platform. High-impact edits trigger human review, while real-time alerts flag recurring billing fixes or query spikes before they spill into disputes and cash leakage. A unified customer-to-cash operating model which aligns sales, pricing, tax, billing and customer operations to shared cash KPIs, supported by root-cause feedback loops and recurring error-pattern reviews.



D. Platform integration: Real-time cash intelligence

The problem

Oil and gas companies run on a patchwork of ERP modules, terminal systems, trading platforms, billing engines and field apps that rarely speak the same language. Broken integrations create mismatched data, manual reconciliations, and latency that slows order release, billing and cash realization.

Cash impact

Disconnected systems lead to missing uplift data, late credit checks and broken handoffs, which add three to seven days to billing, inflate disputes by 20% to 30% and tie up millions across terminals, trading and downstream operations.

Example

Platform fragmentation in downstream mobility and convenience retail business: Indian oil and gas company.

Recent discussions with our client, an Indian oil and gas company in their mobility and convenience business, show how fragmented platforms slow cash in high-volume downstream retail. Inventory, credit card, payables, fixed-asset and bank reconciliation operations were performed manually in excel, with matched items posted into PDI and unmatched items chased via email, delaying book closure and cash visibility. Non-EDI invoices were scanned and manually classified, while fuel-price mismatches triggered invoice rejections. Lack of integration between PDI and SAGE also created GL-subledger discrepancies. When

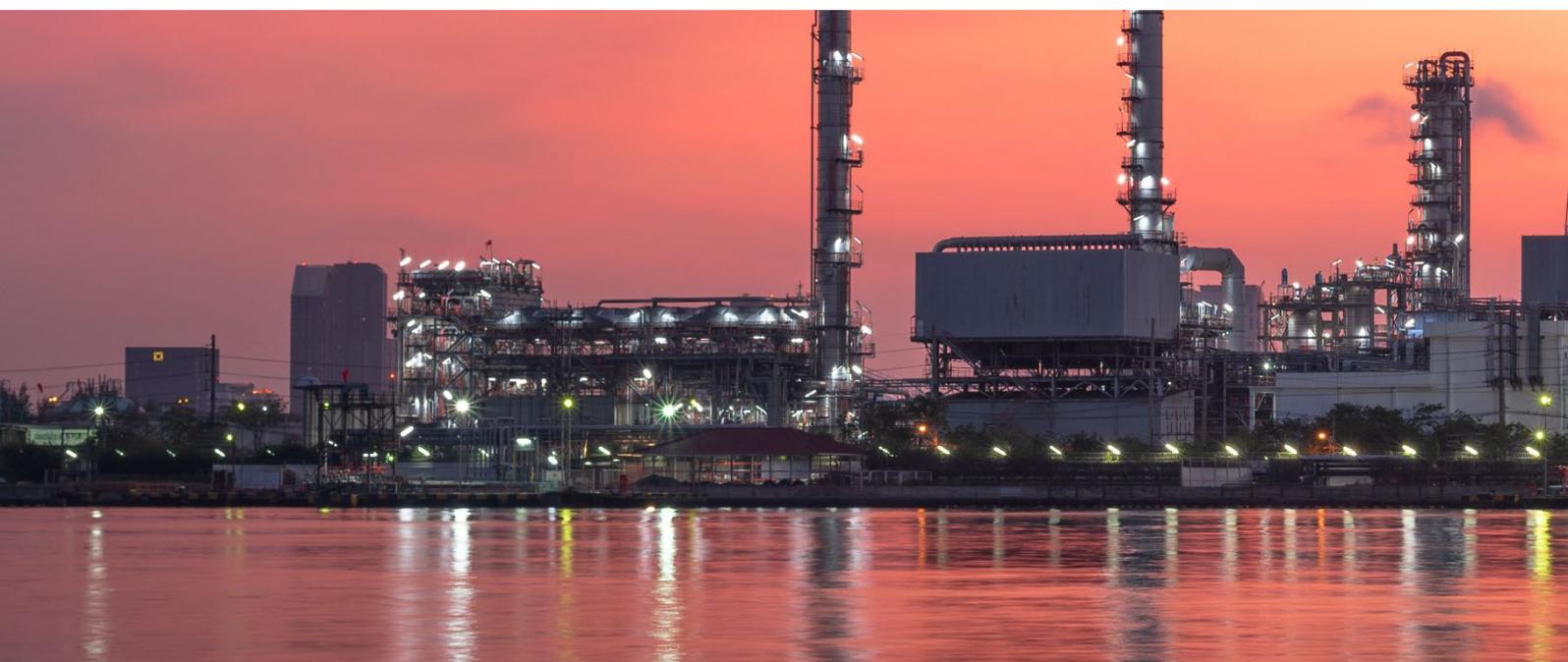
store, finance, pricing and asset systems are not connected, cash velocity, reconciliations slow down and preventable revenue leakage increases.

Digital levers

- Terminal automation system (TAS) with ERP integration: Real time movement of uplift data, density corrections, product codes and temperature adjusted volumes into ERP.
- Trading exposure integration: Automated pull of mark-to-market exposure, hedging information and counterparty risk from trading systems into credit engines.
- Retail POS-to-ERP nightly consolidation: Automated ingestion of thousands of daily transactions from convenience stores, fuel pumps and card networks.
- Bunkering and marine operations integration: For marine refueling operations, digital ingestion of bunker delivery notes (BDNs), fuel-sulfur-content data and vessel documentation leads to faster billing (usually two to seven days before an invoice can be raised).

Governance and controls

Core integrations run on standard connectors; only essential custom logic is allowed. High-risk overrides require human sign-off and the system flags abnormal reschedules, mismatched uplift data, or repeated data corrections before they become cash leakage.



E. Operating model shift: CFO-CIO-led cash orchestration

Oil and gas organizations still run order, delivery, credit, billing and dispute work in functional silos. Each team optimizes locally, leading to slow handoffs, inconsistent decisions and cash-critical issues being addressed only after they impact billing.

Cash impact

Without unified ownership of the order-to-cash flow, cycle times stretch, errors repeat and disputes linger. In refining, lubes and trading-linked segments, this fragmentation can add 5 to 10 days to cash conversion and multiply leakage through avoidable corrections and write-offs.

Example

One of our clients, a global integrated energy company, redesigned its commercial and customer operations model by moving from siloed regional processes to a unified, enterprise wide OTC structure. Commercial operations, pricing, logistics and credit were consolidated into a single global process organization.

Operating model levers

- GCC-enabled OTC playbooks: Standardized, digitally enforceable rulebooks for fuels, lubes, aviation, marine and chemicals businesses worldwide.

- Cash-aligned roles: Teams measured on shared cash KPIs – exposure accuracy, uplift-to-invoice time, dispute closure and billing quality.
- Cash aligned KPIs: Cash aligned KPIs, including the cash velocity indices (including DSO, dispute cycle time, promise to pay adherence), cash release value (liquidity unlocked through transformation) and customer experience metrics (Electronic Invoice Presentment and Payment (EIPP)/self service portal adoption linked to payment speed).
- OTC control tower for energy operations: Real time view of order holds, refinery outages, terminal constraints, uplift mismatches, credit exposure and disputed values.
- Agentic AI for OTC orchestration: Automated decisions across credit, billing validation, dispute routing and collections outreach, all within predefined commercial guardrails.

Governance

A single OTC rulebook governs decisions, with defined approvers for exceptions and regular cross-functional routines, surfacing recurring order, uplift, or billing issues before they hit cash.



02

The maturity framework: From cash constrained to cash excellence as an engineered outcome

Progression to top-quartile performance is driven by the simultaneous activation of these five levers. The gap between quartiles reflects the shift from a local, siloed efforts to a unified enterprise approach.

Details/oil and gas company quartiles	Laggards- fragmented and cash-constrained	Median performers - stabilized, partially integrated	Top quartile performers - cash excellence as an engineered outcome
Status of each lever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manual working capital b. Reactive "push" logistics c. Fragmented customer touchpoints d. Multi-ERP silos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Standardized OTC b. Improved demand-supply alignment c. Hybrid GCC models d. Emerging digital workflows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. AI-driven working capital b. "Order Smoothing" via real-time logistics c. Frictionless CX d. Mature GCC with global decision rights
Days sales outstanding (DSO)	DSO ~45-60 days	DSO ~35-45 days	DSO ~25-35 days
Cash conversion cycle (CCC)	CCC typically ranges from 10 to 40 days, (cash collections lagging cash payments)	CCC between 0 and 10 days, (cash collection and payment timings at par)	CCC between -10 and -30 days (collecting cash faster than paying cash)
Inventory days	Inventory ~20-30 days	Inventory ~15-25 days	Inventory ~ 10-18 days
Disputes % of AR	Disputes 10%-20% of AR	Disputes 4%-8% of AR	Disputes < 2% of AR
Impact on the office of the CFO	Structurally high cash volatility and elevated borrowing needs	Reduced volatility and a 30%-50% reduction in disputes, but lacks "engineered" predictability	Predictable, structural cash release to fund core operations and the low-carbon transition
Typical transformation timeline	Laggard to median performer: 12-24 months	Median performer to top quartile performer: 24 to 36 months	

*Cash release estimates are based on DSO reduction, dispute elimination and CCC optimization. Actual impact varies by company size, starting maturity, geographic complexity and transformation scope. A US\$20b-revenue company moving from bottom to top quartile typically releases US\$1b- US\$1.6b over 24-36 months. Early pilots (levers A+B) often show 1% to 2% revenue impact within 12 months.

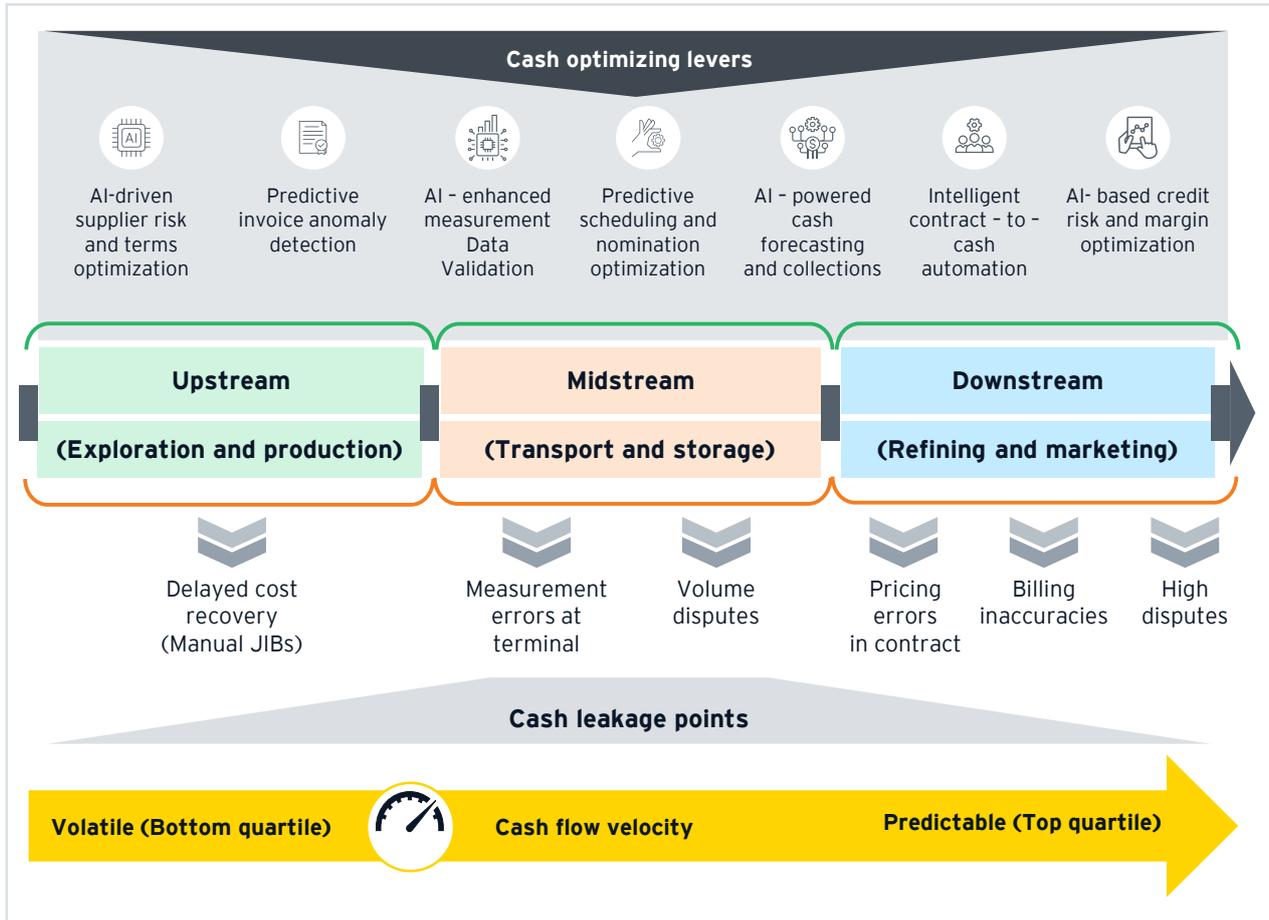
Case study: Mid-size refiner and marketer

Bottom-quartile to near-top-quartile cash performance in 24 months

Section	Details
Profile	Fictional mid-size oil and gas enterprise; US\$10B revenue; fuels, lubes, B2B; DSO 52 days, disputes 15%, CCC +25 days; decentralised OTC; terminals and SAP/legacy mix
Lever A - Credit-to-Cash	<p>Fixed the credit-to-cash foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced dynamic credit-limit monitoring linked to price volatility (Brent/WTI). Automated uplift-to-invoice matching using terminal data feeds. Standardized billing rules across seven regional teams (tax, surcharges, density corrections). Implemented risk-based collections with promise-to-pay tracking. <p>Impact: Led to 6-day DSO reduction</p>
Lever B - Order Smoothing	<p>De-bottlenecked order flow and supply alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built order-smoothing models using refinery run-plans, weather forecasts and terminal capacity. Reduced "last-minute order churn" by creating a single order-release playbook across supply, trading and credit. Introduced AI-based credit checks that prevent false blocks during price spikes. <p>Impact: Two to three days faster uplift-to-invoice time; 12% reduction in redeliveries.</p>
Lever C - Customer-to-Cash Integrity	<p>Removed customer-to-cash friction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmonized tax codes, rebate rules and pricing logic across fuels and lubes. Rolled out a unified customer portal for invoices, PODs, credit notes and dispute submission. Implemented automated dispute classification and root-cause analytics. <p>Impact: Disputes dropped from 15% to 5% of AR.</p>
Lever D - Platform Integration	<p>Integrated core platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected terminal automation systems (TAS) with SAP for real-time uplift data. Integrated pricing engines (Platts-linked) with billing to avoid mismatch disputes. Consolidated POS and card-network feeds into one nightly ERP reconciliation. Integrated Salesforce with HighRadius for a one-pane customer view of invoices, disputes and interactions. <p>Impact: Eliminated 70% of manual reconciliations; billing cycle reduced by three to five days.</p>
Lever E - CFO-CIO Operating Model	<p>Shifted to a CFO-CIO led cash operating model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created an OTC control tower with daily visibility over credit exposure, stuck orders, billing failures and dispute volumes. Formed a global cash COE with standardized processes across commercial, credit, pricing, terminals and billing. Embedded cash KPIs (DSO, dispute closure rate, exposure accuracy) into sales, credit and supply chain incentives. <p>Impact: Structural reduction in bottlenecks; faster decision cycles; fewer escalations.</p>
Outcome	<p>Transformation outcomes (24 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSO: 52 to 35 days (17 days) Disputes: 15% to 5% CCC: +25 to +5 days
Cash Released	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSO improvement: $17 \text{ days} \times (\text{US}\\$10\text{b} / 365) = \text{US}\\466m Dispute reduction: $10\% \text{ of } \sim\text{US}\\$1.5\text{b AR} = \text{US}\\150m Inventory optimization: $5 \text{ days} \times (\text{US}\\$10\text{b} / 365) = \text{US}\\137m
Strategic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded multi-year energy-transition and digital initiatives Reduced external borrowing by ~US\$500m Strengthened resilience during commodity-price volatility

This example demonstrates how aligned operating models, cleaner billing, integrated platforms and cash-focused governance can shift an oil and gas

business from bottom-quartile to near-top-quartile performance – releasing hundreds of millions in trapped liquidity.





03

Introducing Agentic AI: The next frontier in cash acceleration

Agentic AI is reshaping cash performance in oil and gas – not by analyzing data, but by acting on it.

Unlike traditional automation or dashboards, Agentic AI behaves like a digital cash operator: interpreting unstructured inputs, detecting risks early, making decisions across ERP, AR automation platforms and CRM and triggering corrective actions in real time. It is the shift from automation to autonomy – and it is unlocking liquidity at a scale the industry has never achieved before.

The blocked order that never happened

At 3:12 a.m., an AI agent monitoring North American downstream credit exposure detects a subtle pattern: a regional distributor's payment behavior has slipped by two days for the past month, Brent prices have spiked 7% and their next scheduled lifting would exceed their credit limit by morning.

Under today's processes, this would trigger a credit block, delaying product loading, frustrating the customer and locking cash behind operational friction.

But the agent does not wait. It crosschecks the AR automation tool for recent remittance patterns, confirms an inbound payment expected within 24 hours, validates the customer's risk class and reviews the contract commitments in their CRM. Within seconds, it drafts a temporary limit-extension recommendation, attaches the evidence pack and notifies the credit manager for one-click approval.

Before the refinery starts its day, the order has already been cleared – no block, no delay, no revenue disruption.

AI then logs the decision in the CRM, updates credit exposure forecasts in the ERP and reprioritizes collections follow-ups to enable the expected payment to arrive on time.

What used to be a firefight is now a self-correcting, cross-system cash orchestration loop – running quietly in the background.

This is not the future state. Leading operators are deploying Agentic AI in production, starting with narrow use cases (cash application, dispute classification) and expanding to autonomous credit decisioning within 12-18 months. For one of our oil and gas clients, we have built an Agentic AI proof of concept on our EY Catalyst platform for their end-to-end quote-to-cash process. A caveat to note is that all agentic decisions operate within guardrails: transaction limits, approval thresholds and human-in-the-loop escalation for high-stakes actions.

More examples of Agentic AI use cases in oil and gas

Agentic AI transforms OTC from a reactive process into a self-optimizing cash engine – predicting issues, acting across systems and releasing liquidity before friction ever appears.

Accelerating cash application: Across every format and channel

Agentic AI becomes the "universal interpreter," reading remittances from emails, PDFs, portals and bank files. It predicts missing remittances, proposes matches using historical patterns and multi-system context and collaborates with HighRadius to auto-clear payments – reducing unapplied cash to near-zero.

Eliminating billing errors: Before invoices go out

Instead of waiting for disputes, Agentic AI performs pre billing diagnostics, comparing invoice drafts in ERP to contracts, pricing rules, freight logic and tax codes. It auto corrects discrepancies, flags leakage and

enables every invoice leaves the system clean, compliant and dispute resistant.

Reducing disputes: With AI that investigates and resolves

Agentic AI reads emails, notes and documents to classify disputes, predict root causes and build complete resolution packs from ERP, AI automation tool, CRM and shared drives.

It even drafts negotiation positions and identifies abnormal patterns – compressing dispute cycles and protecting margins automatically.

Driving faster collections: With autonomous action

Beyond scoring accounts, Agentic AI continuously reprioritizes worklists, predicts payment dates and adjusts strategies based on sentiment and risk. It autonomously drafts outreach messages, executes low-value voice calls and escalates only when needed – turning collections into a precision, self-optimizing workflow.



04

The CFO-CIO agenda:

Six actions to start this quarter

For CFOs and their teams

1. Elevate cash release to a board-level KPI; add cash conversion cycle (CCC) and days sales outstanding (DSO) to quarterly business reviews alongside EBITDA and ROACE.
2. Commission a working-capital diagnostic. Quantify trapped cash by lever (A through E) and identify the top three quick wins versus 18-month transformation plays.
3. Align incentives cross-functionally. Embed cash metrics into scorecards for sales, supply chain and customer operations – not just finance.

For CIOs and their teams

1. Audit your data architecture for cash. Can you answer in real-time: "What is our credit exposure by customer? Which orders are at risk of dispute? Where are payments stuck?" If not, start with a

unified data fabric spanning ERP, CRM and OTC platforms.

2. Pilot Agentic AI or an OTC automation platform in a contained workflow. Start with cash application or dispute classification – prove ROI in 90 days, then scale.
3. Build the governance backbone. Establish model operations, data quality controls and approval workflows before scaling AI. This prevents "innovation sprawl" and enables audit-readiness.

Joint CFO-CIO priority

Stand up a cash command center – a cross-functional team with real-time dashboards, predictive alerts and weekly huddles to course-correct. EY benchmarks show companies with dedicated OTC CoEs achieve 15% to 20% faster dispute resolution and five to eight days DSO reduction within 12 months.



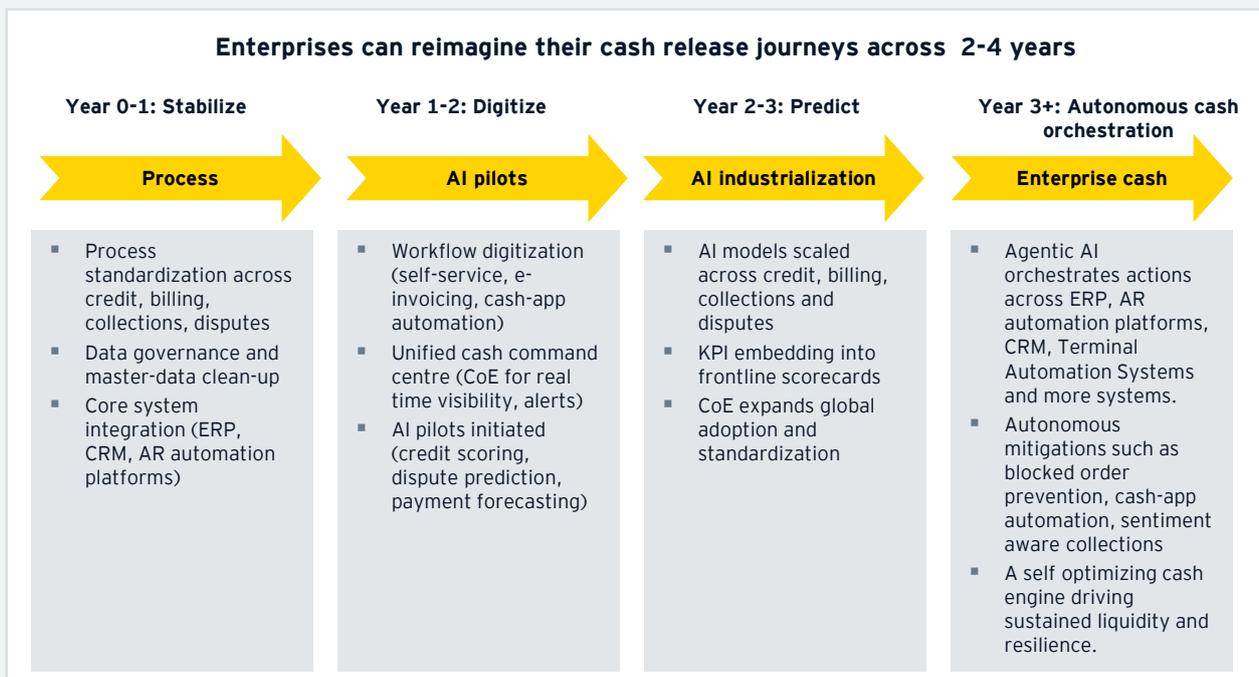
05

A cash release roadmap for oil and gas

From stabilization to autonomous cash orchestration

Oil and gas CFO and CIO teams are increasingly recognizing that sustainable cash release requires a structured, multi-year transformation journey. The path begins with foundational hygiene, builds through

digital enablement and AI scaling and moves toward autonomous cash orchestration — that is, an end state where Agentic AI predicts issues, triggers interventions and coordinates cross-system actions with minimal human touch.



Indicative milestones for each phase:

- Phase 1 (Stabilize): Achieve a 70% cash application automation, reduce the dispute backlog by 30%, establish a baseline DSO.
- Phase 2 (Scale): Deploy predictive credit models in three regions, integrate 80% of the OTC data sources, pilot Agentic AI in cash app.
- Phase 3 (Autonomous): Agentic AI handling 60%+ of routine decisions, providing real-time cash forecasting across global operations.

Typical resource requirements:

- Phase 1 typically requires six to eight FTEs and an external systems integrator.
- Phase 2 scales to 12-15 FTEs and AI/ML specialists.

Expected timeline:

- Phase 1: 6-9 months
- Phase 2: 12-18 months
- Phase 3: 18-24 months

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What separates leaders from laggards

The oil and gas companies that emerge stronger from this transition era would not be those with the best geology or the largest budgets. They will be the ones who mobilize internal liquidity fastest – converting their trapped working capital into fuel for reinvestment, resilience and returns. The technology exists. The playbook is proven. The only question is the execution speed.

Three questions for your leadership team

1. Are your order, billing and dispute workflows fast enough to prevent revenue leakage, not just report it? (Most CFOs cannot answer how much cash is trapped within their OTC processes within \pm US\$50 million. Top performers eliminate delays with automated issue routing, real-time prioritization and integrated CX platforms handling high-volume deductions at scale.)
2. Can your systems predict which orders will be disputed before invoices go out? (If not, you are reacting, not anticipating. Leaders prevent leakage at source with AI-driven validations, clean master data, and dispute prediction embedded across the OTC cycle.)
3. Do your systems talk to each other well enough to prevent compliance risk, reconciliation errors and manual rework at the source? (Mature enterprises run integrated platforms where pricing, fuel rates, asset data, PODs, deductions, collections views and cash payments flow cleanly – reducing exceptions and accelerating cash.)

If you are uncertain about any of these, you are leaving valuable liquidity untapped.

Ready to quantify your opportunity?

EY finance-transformation team can conduct a rapid OTC diagnostic in four to six weeks:

- Quantify trapped cash across the five levers (A-E)
- Benchmark your performance versus regional and global peers
- Identify three to five quick wins that can release cash within 90 days
- Develop a roadmap tailored to your ERP, data maturity and organizational readiness

EY India contacts

Rishabh Jain

Partner, Finance Transformation

Rishabh6.jain@in.ey.com

Avinash Vishnu

Director, Order to Cash Centre of Excellence

Avinash.Vishnu@in.ey.com

Rahul Duttgupta

Sr Manager, Order to Cash Centre of Excellence

Rahul19.gupta@in.ey.com

The companies that move first will be the ones funding their energy transition from internal sources – not external debt. Which side of that divide will you be on?



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Our offices

Ahmedabad

22nd Floor, B Wing, Privilon
Ambli BRT Road, Behind Iskcon Temple
Off SG Highway, Ahmedabad - 380 059
Tel: + 91 79 6608 3800

Gandhinagar

8th Floor, Building No. 14A
Block 14, Zone 1
Brigade International Financial Centre
GIFT City SEZ
Gandhinagar - 382 355, Gujarat
Tel: + 91 79 6608 3800

Bengaluru

12th & 13th Floor
"UB City", Canberra Block
No.24 Vittal Mallya Road
Bengaluru - 560 001
Tel: + 91 80 6727 5000

Ground & 1st Floor
11, 'A' wing, Divyasree Chambers
Langford Town
Bengaluru - 560 025
Tel: + 91 80 6727 5000

3rd & 4th Floor
MARKSQUARE
#61, St. Mark's Road
Shantala Nagar
Bengaluru - 560 001
Tel: + 91 80 6727 5000

1st & 8th Floor, Tower A
Prestige Shantiniketan
Mahadevapura Post
Whitefield,
Bengaluru - 560 048
Tel: + 91 80 6727 5000

Ecospace
1st Floor, Campus 1C
Ecospace Business Park
Outer Ring Road,
Bellandur - Sarjapura Area, Varthur Hobli,
Bengaluru Urban - 560103

Bhubaneswar

8th Floor, O-Hub, Tower A
Chandaka SEZ, Bhubaneswar
Odisha - 751024
Tel: + 91 674 274 4490

Chandigarh

Elante offices, Unit No. B-613 & 614
6th Floor, Plot No- 178-178A
Industrial & Business Park, Phase-I
Chandigarh - 160 002
Tel: + 91 172 6717800

Chennai

6th & 7th Floor, A Block,
Tidel Park, No.4, Rajiv Gandhi Salai
Taramani, Chennai - 600 113
Tel: + 91 44 6654 8100

Delhi NCR

Aikyam
Ground Floor
67, Institutional Area
Sector 44, Gurugram - 122 003
Haryana
Tel: +91 124 443 4000

3rd & 6th Floor, Worldmark-1
IGI Airport Hospitality District
Aerocity, New Delhi - 110 037
Tel: + 91 11 4731 8000

4th & 5th Floor, Plot No 2B
Tower 2, Sector 126
Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.
Noida - 201 304
Tel: + 91 120 671 7000

Hyderabad

THE SKYVIEW 10
18th Floor, "SOUTH LOBBY"
Survey No 83/1, Raidurgam
Hyderabad - 500 032
Tel: + 91 40 6736 2000

THE SKYVIEW 20
2nd Floor, 201 & 202
Right Wing, Survey No 83/1
Raidurgam, Hyderabad - 500 032
Tel: + 91 40 6736 2000

Jaipur

9th floor, Jewel of India
Horizon Tower, JLN Marg
Opp Jaipur Stock Exchange
Jaipur, Rajasthan - 302018

Kochi

9th Floor, ABAD Nucleus
NH-49, Maradu PO
Kochi - 682 304
Tel: + 91 484 433 4000

Kolkata

22 Camac Street
3rd Floor, Block 'C'
Kolkata - 700 016
Tel: + 91 33 6615 3400

6th floor, Sector V,
Building Omega, Bengal Intelligent Park, Salt
Lake Electronics Complex, Bidhan Nagar
Kolkata - 700 091
Tel: + 91 33 6615 3400

Mumbai

14th Floor, The Ruby
29 Senapati Bapat Marg
Dadar (W), Mumbai - 400 028
Tel: + 91 22 6192 0000

5th Floor, Block B-2
Nirlon Knowledge Park
Off. Western Express Highway
Goregaon (E)
Mumbai - 400 063
Tel: + 91 22 6192 0000

3rd Floor, Unit No 301
Building No. 1
MindSpace Airoli West (Gigaplex)
Located at Plot No. IT-5
MIDC Knowledge Corridor
Airoli (West)
Navi Mumbai - 400708
Tel: + 91 22 6192 0003

18th Floor, Altimus
Pandurang Budhkar Marg
Worli, Mumbai - 400 018
Tel: + 91 22 6192 0503

Pune

C-401, 4th Floor
Panchshil Tech Park, Yerwada
(Near Don Bosco School)
Pune - 411 006
Tel: + 91 20 4912 6000

10th Floor, Smartworks
M-Agile, Pan Card Club Road
Baner, Taluka Haveli
Pune - 411 045
Tel: + 91 20 4912 6800

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